

Gulfport Messenger

Newsletter of the Gulfport FL Merchants Association

April-May-June 2010

Member Highlight: Stella's Deli & Gelato

Nestled in the last block of Beach Blvd., Stella's Deli & Gelato joined the roster of Gulfport's dining options in November 2009. Co-owner Theresa Kunkle, originally from Pittsburg, moved to Gulfport two years ago to be near her daughter, co-owner Jeanne Kunkle and her partner Barbara Danno. Theresa, a young 70 years old, became motivated to get involved in the community soon after coming to Gulfport, so she became a volunteer at the Gulfport Chamber of Commerce. When she mentioned to friends there that she would like to open a business, the overwhelming suggestion was that Gulfport needed an old-fashioned breakfast place in the heart of town. So two mothers, Theresa along with JoAnne Danno, joined forces with their two daughters, who are also partners, Jeanne and Barbara. They found a niche on Beach Blvd. and opened their new business. (Sing to the tune of a certain old sitcom): "That's the way they became the Stella's bunch." Stella's is a bona fide hit and the ladies have been quite busy ever since.

JoAnne recently moved away from Gulfport to care for a family member and new co-owners have joined the Stella's bunch: Chrisan Herrod and Colleen Murphy. Stella's Chef is Frank Wolf, originally from Germany, with many years of professional experience. Altogether, their staff consists of about nine people, all of whom have a hands-on part of operating Stella's. The namesake of the business is a member of Barbara's family, a nun named Stella who passed away some years ago. There is a picture of Stella with other nuns from her order on the wall of the restaurant.

The breakfast menu is traditional American fare offered at reasonable prices. Stella's lunch menu is fashioned after a New York deli once operated by Barbara's grandfather, offering simple but flavorful hot and cold sandwiches and side salads. They have recently added dinner to their schedule on weekends, with comfort food selections such as meat loaf, chicken schnitzel, and a unique but popular "Waldorf salad wrap." Stella's offers catering and also sells deli meats,

Member Highlight (continued)

cheeses and salads by the pound. Beer and wine are available. Stella's is open for breakfast/brunch on Sundays from 7AM to 2PM, 7AM to 11:30AM Tuesday through Saturday for breakfast and 11:30AM to 2PM for lunch. Dinner is on Fridays and Saturdays 5 to 7PM. Due to popular demand, their dinner hours and days may be expanded soon.

Stella's dining room is a bright and simple space with a few pieces of local art work for sale adorning the walls. Outdoor seating allows customers to enjoy the open air and also offers dog owners an opportunity to bring along their canine companions. The emphasis is on good food, reasonable prices and small-town-style friendly service, satisfying without being fancy. Gulfport has responded by keeping Stella's full since they opened.

Jeanne moved to Gulfport six years ago after discovering it and falling in love with it while living in St. Petersburg. Theresa came to Gulfport after a 33-year career as a cashier at Kroger supermarket in Pittsburgh. She is happy to be close to Jeanne and partner Barbara. And as for Gulfport, she says "I love everything about it. I love the people, the atmosphere. Everyone is so friendly."

Stella's joined the Gulfport Merchants Association even before they opened for business. According to Theresa, GMA and Chamber-sponsored activities such as Art Walk and special events are some of their best nights. In fact, she says, "Springfest was our best day ever! The events are terrific and great for business. The people love to come down and spend time walking around and enjoying the town. And at Art Walk, they love our gelato!"

Gulfport Merchants Association: Thanks to Our Members

The Gulfport Merchants Association continues to make strides in attracting visitors to Gulfport and creating traffic in local businesses. Creating and maintaining a healthy business climate in Gulfport's Waterfront District is the primary purpose of the GMA. Art Walks, the Tuesday

Thanks and Farewell (continued)

as well as delicious desserts throughout their tenure. They have also been very active and contributing members of the community and the Gulfport Merchants Association. The GMA extends its sincere thanks for their hard work and community spirit. Their presence will be greatly missed.

Tuesday Fresh Market Gears Up For Season

If you haven't been to Gulfport's Tuesday Fresh Market lately, you will be pleasantly surprised to see a growing contingent of vendors. The size of the Market has slowly grown in size over the past several weeks as "the season" approaches and Florida welcomes its "snowbirds" back into the fold. Lining more than a full block of Beach Blvd. below 29th Ave. South, there is something for nearly everyone at the Market this season. The Fresh Market is an event sponsored by the Gulfport Merchants Association.

So far, the ever-expanding line-up includes: an extensive variety of fresh fruits and veggies, fresh cheeses, fresh bread, bagels and scones, seafood, local honey, nuts, herbs and herbal teas, live plants, homemade candy, hot apple cider, homemade sauces, flavored olive oils, hand-made jewelry, hand-painted accessories and objects, hand-made pet accessories, tie-dyed clothing, and much more. Astrological readings are also offered periodically. Live music by and for "men (and women) of a certain age" is provided each week, courtesy of local singer/guitarist Frank Hewlett, aka "The Geezer." New vendors are appearing each week as the Market continues into its fourth year. This weekly gathering provides food for the body and community spirit for the soul.

The GMA is sponsoring a Gulfport information tent during each Market to offer information about Gulfport events sponsored by a variety of groups, including the GMA, Chamber of Commerce, the City of Gulfport, the Public Library, the Lion's Club and other organizations promoting activities in our City. Cooperating to publicize all of our events is seen as a way to benefit all non-profit organizations which are trying to make a positive difference in our community and attract visitors. The GMA is also offering Market-goers information about shops,

Tuesday Fresh Market (continued)

restaurants and other businesses that are GMA members. If your business would like to make cards or other small promotional materials available to the public during the Market, drop off your materials to Daniel Hodge at the Market on any Tuesday. Also at the Gulfport tent, donations of non-perishable food, toiletries and personal needs are accepted for the Gulfport Senior Center Pantry. Please consider dropping off these donations at the Market on any Tuesday.

Gulfport Goes Gladly... to the Dogs

Get Rescued...In Gulfport, the animal rescue festival and fundraiser, is preparing for its sixth annual event to take place on Saturday, February 27th from 10AM to 5PM. Animal rescue organizations, many appearing with adoptable pets, take over Beach Blvd. to raise money and awareness for their causes. Additionally, animal-related vendors, artists and crafters offer their wares to festival-goers. Each year, hundreds of attendees, many accompanied by their own canine companions, make their way to Gulfport to participate in what has become a beloved tradition. Participants are encouraged to bring donations of dog and cat food and cat litter to be distributed to the rescues. This popular event, which GMA helps to sponsor, has evolved from one block and a handful of animal rescue groups in its first year to a popular and beloved event representing over 60 animal rescue groups from throughout the region. It is one of the largest such events in the nation. All proceeds from vendor fees and sponsors benefit the non-profit rescue groups.

The event was conceived and has flourished under the supervision of two GMA members: Lynda Shehan of Auntie Lynda's Pet Care and Mary O'Malley of Reef Dog Gifts and Grooming. Over the years, Lynda and Mary have added additional fundraising events to tie in with the main Get Rescued event. One component which continues this year is a Get Rescued Celebration held later in the evening after the daytime event. This year, the Celebration will be held at the Gulfport Casino from 7 to 11PM. Festivities will include music and dancing, cash bar, hors d'oeuvres, opportunity drawings and silent auctions with a wide variety of items

Gulfport Goes Gladly (continued)

provided by Gulfport merchants and supporters of the individual rescues. \$20 tickets for the Celebration will be available in advance at Reef Dog or Domain Home Accessories, or tickets can be purchased at the door.

Leading up to Get Rescued, fundraising has been taking place since the Fall on the first Friday of each month at Ecco Bistro & Tapas in Gulfport. Coinciding with the first Friday Art Walk, Ecco is donating 20% of its receipts to Get Rescued. The monthly event, next occurring Friday February 5th, has attracted many diners who are anxious to contribute to the Get Rescued effort by simply enjoying dinner or a glass of wine. Media exposure from the Ecco event also prompted an offer from Savannah's Restaurant in St. Petersburg to offer a similar fundraising opportunity to Get Rescued on Sunday, January 17th from 4 to 8PM when all gratuities offered to bartenders and servers will be donated to the effort.

Gulfport merchants can become involved in Get Rescued by sponsoring an individual animal rescue group for \$50, which will include a prominent sign at that group's Beach Blvd. booth. Additionally, donations of merchandise or gift certificates for the silent auction and drawings will be appreciated. For more information, contact Lynda Shehan at 727-323-3892 or email no1ringmaster@aol.com.

SpringFest On the Horizon

The GMA's annual SpringFest will be held Saturday, March 27th from noon to 8PM. The event will include dozens of art and craft vendors on Beach Blvd. as well as live music stages, street performers and kid-friendly activities. SpringFest is a popular festival which will draw several hundred visitors into the Village. Promotion of the event will be highly visible. Watch for more details about this year's event as they become available. Sponsorships for SpringFest are available now. For more information, contact Lori Rosso at 727-343-4445 or email rsvp@seabreezemanor.com.

Coming Up Soon

The following activities and events are reported as known at publication time. Changes may occur, so verify dates, times and locations as necessary.

- Fri. Jan. 1: New Year's Day
- Fri. Jan. 1: Art Walk 6-10PM
- Tue. Jan. 5: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Sat. Jan. 9: Lions Club spaghetti dinner 4PM
- Sat. Jan. 9: (through Sun. Jan. 24) Gulfport: The Musical @ Catherine Hickman Theater; Thu.-Sat. 8PM; Sun. 2PM
- Tue. Jan 12: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Tue. Jan. 12: GMA General Meeting @ Peg's Cantina 5:30PM
- Fri. Jan. 15: Theater on the Bay 6PM
- Sat. Jan. 16: Art Walk 6-10PM
- Mon. Jan. 18: M.L. King Day (observed)
- Tue. Jan. 19: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Tue. Jan. 19: (through Fri. Jan. 22) Health & Beauty Fair @ Senior Ctr. 9AM
- Fri. Jan. 22: Arbor Day Celebration @ Veterans' Park 2PM
- Tue. Jan. 26: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Sat. Jan. 30: Full Wolf Moon
- Sat. Jan 30: Floridiana Festival/Highwaymen Art Show @ Casino 10AM-5PM
- Tue. Feb. 2: Groundhog Day
- Tue. Feb. 2: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Fri. Feb 5: Art Walk 6-10PM
- Fri. Feb. 5: Get Rescued Fundraiser @ Ecco 6-10PM
- Tue. Feb. 9: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Tue. Feb. 9: GMA General Meeting @ Sea Breeze Manor B&B 5:30PM
- Wed. Feb. 10: Chinese New Year (Tiger)
- Fri. Feb. 12: Mardi Gras Ball @ Casino 7PM
- Sat. Feb. 13: Valentine Dance @ Casino 8PM
- Sun. Feb. 14: Valentine's Day
- Mon. Feb. 15: Presidents' Day
- Tue. Feb. 16: Mardi Gras
- Tue. Feb. 16: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Wed. Feb. 17: St. Patrick's Day
- Fri. Feb. 19: Theater on the Bay 6PM
- Sat. Feb. 20: Art Walk 6-10PM
- Tue. Feb. 23: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
- Fri. Feb. 26: Gulfport Historical Society Centennial Celebration Dance/Show @ Casino 7-11PM

Coming Up Soon (continued)

Sat. Feb. 27: Get Rescued 10AM-5PM
Sat. Feb. 27: Get Rescued Celebration @
Casino 7-11PM
Sun. Feb. 28: Full Snow Moon
Tue. Mar. 2: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Fri. Mar. 5: Art Walk 6-10PM
Tue. Mar. 9: City-wide Gulfport Elections
Tue. Mar. 9: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Tue. Mar. 9: GMA General Meeting @
Peninsula Inn & Spa 5:30PM
Sat. Mar. 13: Pink Flamingo Tour of Homes
Tue. Mar. 16: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Fri. Mar. 19: Theater on the Bay 7PM
Sat. Mar. 20: Spring Equinox
Sat. Mar. 20: City-Wide Yard Sale
Sat. Mar. 20: Gulfport Elementary Yard Sale
Sat. Mar. 20: Art Walk 6-10PM
Tue. Mar. 23: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Sat. Mar. 27: Spring Fest 12-8PM
Mon. Mar. 29: Full Worm Moon
Tue. Mar. 30: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM

Something to Think About

**“I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”**

Robert Frost