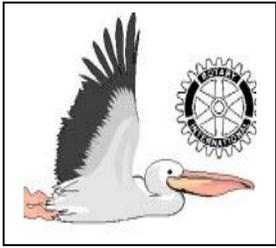


August 21, 2015



San-Captions

District 6960 Sanibel-Captiva Rotary Club Organized 1979 *
Chartered March 18, 1980

www.sanibelrotary.org

Board of Director Officers:

President: Chris DeCosta
President Elect: Charlie Emerson
Vice President: Holli Martin
Secretary: Chet Sadler
Treasurer: John Danner
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Jack Alexander 18
Scot Congress
Bob Guggino 17
Dorrie Hipschman 18
Holli Martin-17
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Chair, John Grey
Treasurer, Tony Gropp
Secretary, Mike Raab
Rotary Foundation, Chet Sadler
Lee Almas
Scott Congress
John Harries
Bill Rahe (Immediate PP)

SPEAKER SCHEDULE:

TODAY August 21st – Kelly Sloan – SCCF Biologist and Sea Turtle Coordinator

Ty S. (ty@centurylink.net) will be the local contact for the summer months to help coordinate speakers. Please send speaker info to both of us: rich5u@yahoo.com and ty@centurylink.net) Thanks.

ROAD KILL 8/15 - is now scheduled for the third Saturday of every month.

Article submitted by Chet Sadler
August 14, 2015 –

The Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva has partnered with their Rotary District 6960 and is proud to give a \$5,000 Rotary District Designated Grant to the Children's Education Center of the Island (CECI). Funds will be used to purchase outdoor play toys for the all the students at the center.



Why has The Rotary Club of Sanibel Captiva decided to support the CECI? First Education and Child Health are two of the pillars of focus for Rotary Grants. CECI is Sanibel Island's nonprofit preschool for children ages 2-5, a target group for Rotary. Also, Rotary Club members will have the opportunity to contribute their time by helping with a playground cleanup and trimming the many trees on the school's campus. Many Rotarians of the Sanibel Captiva Club have had family attend or currently attend the preschool.

This grant will be used for the purchase of versatile, sturdy, wooden block play equipment for their large playground. Some of the toys are pictured below. There are blocks which will help provide all the benefits of open-ended block play with a system of interlocking blocks and planks. In a world where outdoors play is becoming a thing of the past, the need for children to play in and on natural components in a place for structured and unstructured play will provide an important early connection for children with nature and create future environmental stewards. The equipment will provide an opportunity for both physical and creative play and support the children's physical, intellectual, and emotional development. The benefits of natural play are lifelong.

**DISTRICT #6960
GOV. 2015-2016
CINDY DORAGH**



**RI PRESIDENT
2015-2016
K.R. Ravindran**

**Waiting on official
Picture.**



CLUB SONG

**Giver of all things good, We Thank you for this food,
With one accord
Lead us we humbly pray, Onward in Rotary's way
Of service day by day, Most Gracious Lord
(Tune of My Country Tis of Thee)**

SPEAKER NOTES: On August 14th the Sanibel-Captiva Rotary Club got right down to business. Instead of a speaker for Friday's morning meeting Rotarian, Robert Monk with the LAW OFFICE OF ROBERT MONK, ESQ. suggested that we should have a roundtable discussion basically with the intent of examining the current business environment on Sanibel and Captiva. It's no big secret that Sanibel-Captiva Rotary has a fairly good number of retired professionals in the club but we also, have a pretty good percentage of business professionals in the club actively engaged in the business community here on our Islands.

Talking Points for the round table were retail, trends in real estate, and personal and business changes seen by our Island Professionals. First to speak was Scot Congress of CONGRESS JEWELERS. Being in the higher-end jeweler business, CONGRESS JEWELERS was definitely affected, like all Island businesses, by the U.S. economic downfall in recent years and although the economy is recovering, customers are slightly more conservative in their spending. The jeweler business itself has had to adjust to higher gold prices and the devaluation of diamonds. This summer the traffic counter at the store registered an uptick in the number of people coming into the store. The average sale is up from the last few years but not back to before the economic crisis. High-end jewelry sales are down but people are still buying quality jewelry pieces including the CONGRESS SEALIFE COLLECTION. Although business comes in waves in the summer, the store has seen customers coming in from SUNDIAL BEACH RESORT and SOUTHSEAS ISLAND RESORT. This is definitely a healthy sign, tourists are getting more comfortable with higher-end vacation spending, and this will help all Island businesses.

Trent Peake, Membership Services Manager of SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE spoke in general about the visitors to the Sanibel and Captiva during the summer. Businesses on the Islands are reporting great numbers this summer. Room rates are less expensive during summer and that is bringing in nearby visitors from Tampa, Orlando, and Miami for family travel. They may be traveling on a budget but they still are enjoying all our Islands offers... renting bikes; visiting Ding Darling, the Shell Museum, and CROW; eating out; and retail therapy.

Although the Islands are still seeing foreign travelers from Canada and Europe, the concern for the value of the Euro and fluctuations in overseas economies impact travel plans for this visitor pool. Balancing that out this year will be Fort Myers Beach road construction project during season. This construction will send the day-tripper heading our way, so get ready! Good for business, not so good for residents.

There definitely is great optimism in our island business community. We have seen a number of new businesses open up on the Island over the last few months and new restaurants are definite going to increase dining options.

It's pretty much a given, most of our Island residents first came to the Islands as visitors. So how about the Real Estate market? Prices are trending up; there is an increase in new house construction starts and definitely confidence in investing in Island real estate. The resale real estate market is getting stronger, particularly in the mid-range category.

Holli Martin, Insurance Agent for HEIDRICK & COMPANY INSURANCE is seeing the effects of Real Estate Sales in her office. Business is booming for both new sales insurance coverage and the generational shift of inherited property. Because Florida has not had any major natural disasters in recent years, our state's property insurance corporation, Florida's Citizens Insurance Company's cash reserves are strong and some of their policyholders have seen premiums going down. Since 2013, Florida lawmakers want Citizens to get out of the insurance business. Private insurance companies are now capable of taking on the risk of insuring some of Citizen policyholders at reasonable cost. The state has selected a number of private insurance companies they have confidence in and basically encouraging customers to transfer to these companies. Right now, higher-end properties over \$900,000 will continue to be covered under Citizens till their contract expires but then will not be eligible for coverage through Citizens and will have to go to private insurance coverage. January 2016 the coverage limit amount is reduced to \$800,000 and in 2017 the coverage limit will be \$700,000. Flood insurance policies held by Citizens are going to cost you more if you own property on Island and to not reside in the State for the required six-month period per year or if you rent your property on Island.

We had many more Rotarians join in on the conversation regarding the Island economy and how traffic concerns are causing great apprehension for business owners, particularly during season. Rotarians had a lot of ideas about this including some out-of-the-box thinking, so off we went in that direction.

According to statistical quotes from Trent there were 3.4 million cars coming over the Causeway in 2001 and in 2014 the figure was 3.2 million. So, even if it seems like traffic is increasing, that really doesn't reflex itself in the numbers.

The traffic problem really is concentrated at peak times when cars coming on and going off Island log jam Periwinkle Way. Can this problem be solved? Well the City of Sanibel is studying that, good luck to them. Dorrie Hipschman, Executive Director of the BAILEY-MATHEWS SHELL MUSEUM reported that visitor traffic to the museum has been increasing throughout the year and that they regularly inform their visitors about traffic problems during peak times. The SHELL MUSEUM suggests that visitors stay longer on Island have a great meal somewhere on Sanibel or Captiva or just enjoy a walk on the beach and look for shells.

Just an IDEA...Possibly some cross promotions between Island Restaurants and non-profits like the Shell Museum, CROW, Ding Darling, SCCF, and BIG ARTS this might entice island visitors to extend their day past peak times enjoy a pleasant meal and wait out the traffic. There was also a suggestion that possibly Island businesses could be encouraged by the City to reconfigure employee work schedules to encourage staggered release times.

Rachael Tritaik, owner of ISLAND THERAPY CENTER told us about her unique way of managing her need to transport her son to school off Island, return to the Island during the peak morning traffic, get to work at I SLAND THERAPY to open, and reverse the process to pick up her son after school in peak afternoon traffic. This is good...she drives her son to school off-Island, returns to the Island...but here's the twist...when she comes over the causeway she parks her car legally, takes out her folding bike, and pedals to work...and, again, reverses this action in the afternoon... folds up the bike... and drives her car to pickup her son. BRILLIANT...one less car on Periwinkle during peak traffic hours. How about a Park & Pedal car lot near the causeway on Island? Maybe the city could test this out and see how many people would give this a try.