

## Kiwanis Club of Greater Pine Island

With April comes Easter and with Easter comes the end of season. Things start to return to their normal relaxed state here in Southwest Florida. Of course we did have an unusual winter and we may see the season linger later than usual. It always surprises me how every fall people seem to think that season is later than usual, but then by April they can't wait for it to be over. Of course come May everyone will say how early it all ended. This time of year always brings an onslaught of fundraising events. Every festival under the sun takes place this time of year, as we all try and make the most of what our beautiful, if sometimes unpredictable, weather brings us. Kiwanis is no exception to this rule.

With the end of one event comes another. We wrapped up our Treasure sale, and thanks to all of you who came out to support us and found something you just couldn't live without. It was a smashing success for our first time. Now just days away is our annual Waterfront Day event.

The Owners, JD and Gina Hollway are gracious enough to allow us to pirate the restaurant for a single day every year. We have so much fun and you will too. Come dressed as a pirate and you may win the costume contest, or just come and let us shuck some of the freshest oysters you can find. There will be FANTASTIC food, FANTASTIC beer, and FANTASTIC raffles!

Come by boat, bike or car and join us in beautiful St. James City at the Waterfront Restaurant. Did I mention the beer and the prizes? Mark your calendars, one and all for April 3<sup>rd</sup>, good food, good entertainment, and a good cause.

April 2<sup>nd</sup> is Good Friday and we would love for you to celebrate with us. One of our greatest club traditions is our Good Friday meeting. We all bring our favorite breakfast dishes and share good stories, times, and smiles with good friends. We have some good speakers coming up this month. April 16<sup>th</sup> Rob Mazzoli, the Pine Island Elementary Principal will be with us. We look forward to hearing how the school and students are doing.

And on April 23<sup>rd</sup> Donna Schneider from Pine Island Tropicals will tell us all about her and her husband Gary's business. Have you heard of the slow food movement? Do you want to buy food from your backyard and not some far away country? If you live on or near Pine Island and you are interested in local organic produce you should plan on attending this meeting. I know I say this every week, but I truly do hope I see you at Bert's on Friday morning. I'll buy your breakfast when you show up and if you can't make it in the morning come to our monthly evening meeting.

Scarlett Player

www.pineislandkiwanis.com

## View from the Marina by Barb Hansen

### Notes about Seasonal Affective Disorder

As I write this it is 81 degrees in N. Fort Myers and zero in Chicago. I am reminding myself not to call my boating friends in Chicago, Indianapolis or Milwaukee (or anywhere else "up north") and brag about our Florida weather. I've done that before and most of the responses can't be repeated. One friend said, not kindly, "Do you feel better now?"

Now, having grown up in the Midwest, I know my friends don't consider themselves victims. Midwesterners exact pleasure (okay, perverse pleasure) out of the fact that they can survive in a cold climate. In Wisconsin when somebody asked what we did in the summer, the standard reply was, "If it falls on a Sunday, we have a picnic."

That attempt at humor masked our Seasonal Affective Disorder. That diagnosis wasn't invented when I was growing up. We called it The Blahs. Either way, there is a pill that people from the north have been taking for SAD for more than a hundred years. It's called Florida sunshine. Put a boat in that picture. And yourself. That's the ultimate cure.

Sometimes, of course, sunshine alone does not cure The Blahs. In these cases, we prescribe another pill called Attitude Adjustment. Our kit of supplies for students at Florida Sailing & Cruising School includes a bumper sticker -- Attitude is the difference between an ordeal and an adventure. Vic and I adopted it after we heard more than a few students say things like, "What if it rains," or "What if we lose the wind." I tell them, "We don't charge extra for that."

Mother used to tell me, "It's all in your head." She was right. Remember the story about the kid who received a bucket of oats for his birthday? An optimist, he ran around the house, looking out of windows, and asked excitedly, "Where's the pony?" See? It's all in how you look at it. Say you're on a cruise and it starts to rain. Some will say to themselves, "Oh darn. It'll probably rain all day and ruin our cruise." Others, like me, will say, "Oh, good. Let's anchor in a cove, listen to the rain, and read a good book." We are not so much what we eat. We are what we think. The problem is not always Seasonal Affective Disorder. It's sloppy thinking.

Still, I find myself hoping my friends realize they do not have to be trapped by the weather or thinking patterns. While their harbors are iced up and their boats are wrapped in tarps, they can still tend to their boating addictions in a meaningful way. Hey. Get on a plane. Fly south. Get on a boat.

Think of it as the marine equivalent of starting cocktail hour at 5 p.m. instead of 6 because somewhere in the world it really is 6 o'clock. Yes, somewhere in the world, you could be soaking up warm sunshine and floating on blue water in the boat of your choice.

Come see us. Bring your children and grandchildren.  
*Barb Hansen*

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Now that our nightmare of a winter has finally ended it's a huge relief to have my phone ringing once again and my schedule filling up for the spring. After our January fish kill made the news literally around the angling world, I was seriously worried that Southwest Florida's reputation had been damaged beyond repair.

Every e-mail I received over the last two months started with someone asking me if we still had anything alive down here. I felt like smashing my head against the keyboard but I couldn't blame these folks for asking. Yes, we lost a lot of prized snook and other gamefish here in Southwest Florida and no one, including the federal agencies like FWC, will ever be sure of the real numbers. But the mainstream media loved the story and turned a very bad but totally natural event into the environmental disaster of the century. To read the press accounts that spread across the country you'd think the Exxon Valdez ran aground off Pine Island.

The reason the press loves a good disaster is obvious; they're the easiest stories to cover. The sensational stuff is built right in and it doesn't take any skill as a journalist to translate the shock and horror to the audience. That's why Geraldo Rivera covers wars and hurricanes and not Supreme Court confirmations. I'm surprised he wasn't on TV standing in one of our canals and crying over a rotting snook. Piles of dead animals make headlines no matter where they're found. Unfortunately for us, those piles of dead snook were worth a lot more money when they were alive.

So now that the worst fish kill in recent memory is over and even the local press has moved on to other stories, where does that leave us? As I mentioned before, no one is really sure how many fish we lost but here's a few of my observations after being on the water nearly every day last month.

## Wild Fly Charters

Capt. Gregg McKee

For starters, our redfish population is just fine and in fact I've never seen so many. They were totally unaffected by the cold snap and I didn't spot a single dead redfish anywhere in Matlacha Pass or Pine Island Sound. Right now they're everywhere and it's not uncommon for my charters to get shots at more than one hundred different fish during a day. Getting them to eat has been a different story thanks to the extra clear water and my freshwater anglers struggling with their saltwater fly casts. I've learned one thing for sure this past year; a tailing Matlacha redfish is every bit as tricky as a Key West bonefish. Reds are rapidly climbing my list of favorite species to target with a fly rod and right now they're tied with the bones at number three behind tarpon and permit.

Speaking of tarpon, we should be seeing them in good numbers very soon. The cold did manage to kill a number of these fish. Fortunately tarpon are a migratory species and the bulk of their population was off in

warmer waters during January. The only dead tarpon I personally saw were several resident juveniles around the Pineland area. I've heard horror stories from other parts of the state but I think our upcoming tarpon season will go off without a hitch. My buddies in the Keys are already hooking them in the channels and they'll be making their way on to our flats very soon.

The snook clearly took a beating but I'm convinced that most of the big breeders made it through the freeze. I'm still seeing plenty of slot sized fish cruising along the mangroves and sunning themselves in the potholes. Most of the dead snook in our canals were less than twenty four inches and I only spotted a few serious trophies floating belly up in the Pass. Just like with the tarpon, I've heard worse horror stories from all over the state and saw the photos that proved the carnage, but I don't believe the snook population was damaged beyond repair.

So things are quickly getting back to normal and the anglers who weren't frightened away by the bad press are seeing this first hand. I'm finally wearing shorts again on my boat and looking forward to a great spring season. After what we've endured this past winter, Mother Nature owes us one.

*Capt. Gregg McKee*



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