



A quarterly newsletter sponsored by *The Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park, Inc.*

Dune News

Spring-Summer 2008

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John D. MacArthur Beach

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Working with MacArthur

by Malcolm Wells

The following is an excerpt from an article written by Malcolm Wells and published in the Labor Day, 2006 issue of the Cape Cod Voice. It is published with the permission of the author and Seth Rolbein, Editor of the Cape Cod Voice. The Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park extends its sincere appreciation to Mr. Wells and Rolbein for their kindness.

Billionaires today seem to be almost a dime a dozen, but 40 years ago there were said to be only two or three of them. I met one of the three, John MacArthur, in the early 1960s. All I had ever heard of him was the word "billionaire." He was said to have come out of the Depression as a Chicago insurance salesman.

You have to sell a lot of insurance to pocket a billion dollars. Here he was in his mid-sixties, living in a modest bungalow on a side street in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. And there I was, about to knock on his green-painted screen door. Parked at the curb was his big Cadillac. I had no idea what it would be like to meet one of the richest men in America. It was 1962 and I was 36 years old.

My knock was answered by a woman who introduced herself as "Catherine." She led me into the living room where half a dozen men sat in an

turning to leave the room. MacArthur's response was, "Bring in another plate of that smoked swordfish, Catherine."

MacArthur was holding court, as he did most mornings, either at a local restaurant or at his house. As various supplicants came and went, I was surprised to see that even the latest arrivals called him "John," not Mr. MacArthur, in what I took to be pathetically transparent attempts to show that his fabled wealth hadn't unduly impressed them.

I was an architect from New Jersey. My client, RCA, had made some sort of deal with MacArthur for the construction of a manufacturing plant to be built on part of his vast

Continued on page 5.



He treated me with respect, apparently mistaking a young architect's bravado for independence.

informal circle of chairs facing a man, who, it became clear, was John MacArthur.

"Here's Mr. Wells," she said,

An Island In Time CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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THANK YOU ALL!

Another Successful NatureScaping Event

By Art Carton, *Park Services Specialist*

On March 29, over 1,900 visitors attended the Park's 12th Annual NatureScaping event. For the third year in a row, the Great American Cleanup was included as part of the event. Approximately 100 people scoured the 1.6 miles of MacArthur Beach. At the end of the day, the trash that was collected filled a full size trash dumpster.

This year's NatureScaping event included 55 vendors and exhibitors, educational speakers, live animal shows, eco-crafts, and music. A kid's activity—designed by Park Services Specialist, Kathryn Rothenburg—included a passport book with information and logos of six different exhibitors at the event, where kids had their passport books stamped. When all six stamps were collected, they were given a toy turtle.

Along with the always popular live animal shows presented by the Palm Beach Zoo and Busch Wildlife, new vendors and exhibitors included the Resource Depot of West Palm Beach, who had a booth to learn the importance of reusing and recycling; the Palm Beach County Beekeepers Association had a live observation hive and told visitors about the importance of these winged pollinators.

There also were educational talks on Florida-friendly plants, dune restoration, and reptiles. For shoppers, the silent auction had many great deals, including gift certificates, artwork and native plants. At the end of the day, proceeds from the silent auction totaled over \$3,400. Thanks to all the local businesses and volunteers who donated items to the auction.

I trust that everyone had a great time at the event and learned something, as well. Park staff and volunteers hope to see everyone back next year. And don't forget that every day is Earth Day!

Welcome, New and Returning Members

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Mr. Brant Williams
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Ms. Karen Darnell
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...

Shorelines

Leni Bane Named Environmental Champion

by Art Carton, *Park Services Specialist*

Leni Bane was honored with the Environmental Champion Award at John D. MacArthur Beach State Park on Saturday, March 29 at 1:00 p.m. during the Earth Day celebration event—*NatureScaping 2008*.

A passionate proponent of the environment and environmental education, Leni Bane has a long history of public service in Palm Beach County. She was president of the Junior League of the Palm Beaches in 1983. In November 1989, when MacArthur Beach State Park opened, she began working as a Park Ranger and was the first director of the Nature Center. Her influence on the Park and the school children of Palm Beach County was felt immediately. Leni organized and started the school program and summer camp to be implemented at the Park. Both programs are still in use today reaching over 4,000 students annually. Along with Marjorie Gordon, she compiled the Marine Education Resource Bibliography, still in use at the Park and in the school system. Leni co-authored, with Alex Marsh, *Life Along the Mangrove Shore*, a principal resource for environmental educators in Palm Beach County.

Volunteering is another passion



of Mrs. Bane. In 1991, she was awarded the Davis Productivity Award for devising the largest, most comprehensive volunteer program in the Florida State Park System. She is past president and still serves on the Board of Directors of The Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park. She is also the immediate past president of the Nature Foundation.

Leni Bane established and continues to edit *The Dune News*, the quarterly newsletter for the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park. Leni is also an active beekeeper and educates the public about the importance of these pollinators.

Leni's words and actions have touched generations and influenced many to have a positive impact on the environment in Palm Beach County.

60/40 Raffle to Benefit New Educational Ctr.

by Cheryl Houghtelin

Dear Supporter of John D. MacArthur Beach State Park: The Capital Campaign has raised a little over \$1,230,000 of the \$2,000,000 needed to begin construction on the new Education and Welcome Center and new Interpretive Exhibits for the Nature Center. Our goal is to raise the remaining \$770,000 by the end of September of this year.

Please help us reach our goal by supporting our 64/40 Raffle. Buy your tickets on the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park website, using your credit card or PayPal: www.macarthurbeach.org/capitalcampaign/raffle.php.

Ticket donations are \$10 each or 3 for \$25. The more tickets sold, the closer we will be to our goal, and the bigger the "Winner's Pot" will grow.

Sixty percent of the proceeds will go to the Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park Capital Campaign; 40% of the proceeds will be divided between 3 winners. Our goal is \$100,000 worth of tickets donated. This means \$20,000 for 1st place; \$12,000 for 2nd place; and \$8,000 for 3rd place!

The drawing will occur at 5:00 p.m. on June 18, 2008 at the Nature Center. Winners need not be present; notification will be by phone and mail.

For more info about this raffle and the Capital Campaign, visit our Website: www.macarthurbeach.org/capitalcampaign/cc.php; or contact:

Cheryl Houghtelin,
Director of Community Relations
John D. MacArthur Beach State Park
10900 Jack Nicklaus Drive
North Palm Beach, Florida 33408
(561) 776-7221
cheryl@macarthurbeach.org

AN ISLAND IN TIME CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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☐ I wish to make a pledge of \$_____ to be paid over a period of 3 years.

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Mail to:

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Campaign Office Phone: (561) 776-7221 • www.macarthurbeach.org

Gab of the Gifts

Ahoy! The fleet is in! Fourteen brand-new kayaks are in the water and ready for rental. Kayak rentals were only slightly higher than in 2006, as were sales in the gift shop. The economy and lower tourism accounted for these small increases. We are looking forward to a much bigger Gift Shop year in 2008. We will keep you posted on our plans.



Avoid the Rush; Buy Your Raffle Tickets Now. The 60/40 Raffle tickets to benefit the Capital Campaign are available in the Gift Shop. Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25.

The 20% Off Sale Is Here! From May 1-30, members of The Friends of MacArthur Beach, Volunteers, and Staff are entitled to a 20% discount on all purchases in the Gift Shop. This excludes however, kayak rentals, State Park Passports, and raffle tickets.

Membership News: Friends Memberships now total more than 500! Thanks to Donna and the weekend crew, headed by Debra Coyle, for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Miscellany: We have a new credit card machine in the Gift Shop. It makes the ringing of credit sales much faster. Please shop and see the speed with which we can ring up your sale!

Marty

Gift Shop Guru, Administrator,
Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park

All profits from the gift shop go to the Park to support the programs and activities that you, your family and your friends enjoy all year long.

holdings in those as yet largely untouched pinelands. RCA and a new golf course were the magnets that would lure people to Palm Beach Gardens.

This was RCA's first, and I believe only, venture into data processing. Computers at that time were still cumbersome giants the size of walk-in refrigerators.

Instinctively, I never called Mr. MacArthur "John," never leaped when he said "Jump." It was obvious to me that he wasn't impressed by kowtowing. Consequently, he treated me with respect, apparently mistaking a young architect's bravado for independence. He failed to see that I wanted only to design a showplace in that pine and palmetto country.

In any case, we got along well, and soon became friends, trading lighthearted wisecracks when others weren't around. My job also involved selecting a local architect to carry out my design for the new facility; then I had only to travel to Palm Beach Gardens once or twice a month to see that the design was on track.

MacArthur often had something extra for me to do even though I was paid only the bare-bones expenses for those extras. He wasn't too loose with his change. I often sat in on meetings, listened to loan requests from big-city developers, and traveled with MacArthur when time allowed. It was fun for me to see how this man, with no visible office staff, could handle so much money with such apparent success.

I designed sand-formed domes of concrete for some of the MacArthur brainstorms. He had only to snap his fingers for construction crews to appear. I'd just begun to think about putting buildings underground, and the experience with those domes was a good archetype for that kind of architecture.

We flew directly from MacArthur's airstrip over to Nassau in his new Aero Commander. He had a staff pilot do most of the flying, but

having been a fighter pilot flying the wood and fabric airplanes of World War I, MacArthur liked to take the controls sometimes. Seeing my look of envy, he let me do some of the flying, too. Sitting in the right hand seat, looking down at the brilliant Gulf Stream, was unforgettable; the sea below was so luminous it seemed to paint the bottoms of the clouds.

John MacArthur was not a mean man but, having worked his way up from a nickel-and-dime insurance selling job, he wasn't about to give any money away. Those who had heard of all that money and wanted to share it had to have good deals to offer. His testing of the supplicants sometimes seemed almost cruel, but once he trusted someone he offered his full support.

I was mainly having adventures in Florida while seeing that RCA's new factory got built right, and didn't have to get into the money side of MacArthur's accounting. When school was out he invited me to bring my wife Shirley and our three kids to Florida. He'd send us over to his suite on Bimini, or he'd trot out his yacht for luncheon cruises on those parts of the as-yet-unspoiled Indian River. He owned over a mile of untouched ocean beach. It was a virtual tangle of huge old trees, a jungle full of bird calls and animal tracks. To burst out of that deep shade onto the brilliant white beach was as stunning as the sight of those blue and white clouds floating above. I was one spoiled architect, believe me.

On one of our river trips, MacArthur's splendidly uniformed yacht captain leaped overboard before the rest of us could collect our wits to rescue Mr. MacArthur's son. A loose section of railing had given way when he'd leaned on it. MacArthur thought it was all a great joke. My kids didn't know whether to laugh or turn away in embarrassment.

Working with MacArthur *Continued from page 5.*

After the RCA job was completed, my stops in Florida were few. Now and then I would get a call from John MacArthur asking me to come down and talk with someone who had just bought some of the Palm Beach Garden land and needed architectural advice. On such trips I would seldom do more than get a local architect started and then turn it over to him. I'd never

Think what you could do with [all those millions] instead of playing with these two-bit projects.

leave, though, without doing my talk on the environmental crisis. By the mid-sixties my focus was increasingly on earth-covered construction. Its benefits were so rich I had trouble—then and now—understanding why they were so seldom recognized.

Most of my travels were to architectural schools where I lectured to eager students (and unconvinced professors) about the glories of earth-

shelter. I was drifting away from the man I'd always called "Mr. MacArthur." But I did see him one more time. He was into his seventies by then and asked me to stop by on my way home from a Georgia Tech lecture trip.

There he was, diddling with two-bit construction matters on a new motel, still involved in details about color schemes or what to name the place. I was happy to see that he now had Catherine involved and listened to her advice. But I had to smile seeing a big Cadillac parked at the curb—some things never change.

I was then a true believer in underground design. It was what I called gentle architecture. The environmental movement was getting started and an Arab oil embargo had politicians hoping to find alternatives to our wasteful ways. The crisis passed before long, and conservation was largely forgotten but it had evidently moved John MacArthur. He even sat still for my usual scolding talk of energy waste and land destruction. Before, it

had rolled off his back, but now I could see he was really concerned. We got into it for an hour or so.

"All those millions, Mr. MacArthur. Think what you could do with them instead of playing with these two-bit projects."

Maybe I had shut up in time, for a change. In any case it was obvious that I had at last touched this canny old man.

When we shook hands for the last time it seemed that he held on for an extra beat or two. Then I was off into my own world again.

I'd occasionally wonder about John—and Catherine—MacArthur but in time they were forgotten until I heard an NPR broadcast that had been sponsored by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. You can imagine my surprise when I heard, a few weeks later, that the foundation was giving away \$500,000 grants for all kinds of good works.

It was a perfect ending to my MacArthur adventure. It's why I smile every time I hear those two names. Even though they come from my radio, I can see my MacArthur years in full living color.

Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park, Inc.

Membership Application

A Not-for-profit Citizens Support Organization

☐ Benefactor...\$500+ ☐ Patron...\$499-100 ☐ Family...\$75 ☐ Individual...\$40 ☐ Student...\$20

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please send this application along with your donation to:

The Friends of MacArthur Beach State Park, Inc.
PO Box 32395
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33420

For more information on the "Friends" please call (561) 776-7449.

A copy of the official registration and financial information of the "Friends" may be obtained from The Division of Consumer Services by calling (800) 435-7352.

Events

UP-N-COMING

APRIL

06	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Introduction to Kayaking by Adventure Times Kayaks
10	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
12	Saturday	7-9 p.m.	MacArthur Under Moonlight Concert: <i>Mary Flower</i> , Blues Music
13	Sunday	9:30 a.m.	Birding at MacArthur Park
13	Sunday	1-2 p.m.	Volunteer Orientation
20	Sunday	1-5 p.m.	Bluegrass Music
24	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
26	Saturday	11:00 a.m.	Butterfly Walk
27	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Recreational Skills: <i>Beach Ultimate Frisbee</i>

MAY

04	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Introduction to Kayaking by Adventure Times Kayaks
04	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Birding at MacArthur Park
04	Sunday	Noon	Recreational Skills: <i>Introduction to Snorkeling</i>
08	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
10	Saturday	11:00 a.m.	Butterfly Walk
11	Sunday	Noon	Recreational Skills: <i>Introduction to Snorkeling</i>
11	Sunday	1-2 p.m.	Volunteer Orientation
17	Saturday	7-9 p.m.	MacArthur Under Moonlight Concert: <i>Band TBA</i>
18	Sunday	Noon	Recreational Skills: <i>Introduction to Snorkeling</i>
18	Sunday	1-5 p.m.	Bluegrass Music
22	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
25	Sunday	11:00 a.m.	Recreational Skills: <i>Cast Netting</i>
25	Sunday	Noon	Recreational Skills: <i>Introduction to Snorkeling</i>

JUNE

01	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Introduction to Kayaking by Adventure Times Kayaks
05	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
07	Saturday	10-Noon	Guided Reed Tour; Reservations Required
08	Sunday	1-3 p.m.	Volunteer Orientation
15	Sunday	1-5 p.m.	Bluegrass Music
15	Sunday	11:00 a.m.	Birding at MacArthur Park
19	Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Yoga on the Beach
21	Saturday	10-Noon	Guided Reed Tour; Reservations Required
28	Saturday	10-Noon	Guided Reed Tour; Reservations Required

Every Weekend at 11:00 a.m.: Animal Feeding in the Nature Center
Every Sunday at 3:00 p.m.: Snake Talk in the Nature Center



More than just a beach!

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Summer Camps at MacArthur Beach State Park



Little Turtle Art Camp

June 23-27, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Little Turtle Art Camp is designed for children 7 and 8 years old. The camp offers a variety of crafts, games and stories based on a Native American theme. Indoors and outdoors. Snacks will be provided daily. Cost: \$80

Junior Ranger Camp

Session 1: June 9-13, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Session 2: June 16-20, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Junior Ranger Camp is designed for children 9 and 10 years old. Campers will explore the beach, maritime hammock, and rock reef in the park and learn about the natural communities in South Florida. Children must be good swimmers. Snorkel equipment is required. Snacks will be provided daily. Cost: \$80 per session, one session per child.



Marine Biology Camp

Session 1: June 30-July 4, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Session 2: July 7-11, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Marine Biology Camp offers 11 through 13 year old children a rare opportunity to learn about the marine environment of the park through snorkeling, beach exploration and mudflat walking. Campers must come with an enthusiasm for learning, willingness to explore, and be good swimmers who are comfortable swimming in the ocean. Snorkel equipment will be required. Snacks will be provided daily. Cost: \$95 per session, one session per child.

These camps fill up quickly, so register now! For more information call Art Carton: (561) 624-6952.

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