

Bringing the past alive



Most of Florida's fishing villages are lost in history. But Cortez Village is still a working fishing community with boatyards and fisheries, original 1920s-era bungalows and quaint dockside fish joints. Despite that, many of the folk skills and heritage crafts of the people who lived here are at risk of being forgotten. That's why the Florida Maritime Museum, which collects, preserves and shares traditional knowledge, cultural artifacts and stories specific to Florida's fishing and maritime heritage, recently opened the Folk School at Florida Maritime

Museum. "People can come here to learn new skills and refresh old ones," says Kristin Sweeting, the museum's supervisor. "We all crave a connection to the past and seek experiential education, authenticity and hands-on experiences." There will be plenty of that at the school, which offers regular classes (including net mending, fish filleting, papermaking, memoir writing and canning) and also provides a "supportive environment where anyone can learn skills, share stories and participate in preserving a vanishing culture." According to Sweeting, this is the only folk school in Florida with a focus on maritime skills and traditions. 4415 119th St. W., Cortez; 708-6120; FloridaMaritimeMuseum.org.

Keeping the beach close



Sarasotans are proud of our sand; after all, it's celebrated around the world. Now you can keep some of that sand forever in a work of artisan-crafted fine jewelry at Molly's! A Chic & Unique Boutique. The collection is called Dune Jewelry and the designs are created by Holly Daniels Christensen and her team of "sand artists". Molly Jackson, owner of Molly's, says that this "exquisite" line features more than 100 designs in earrings, bracelets and rings. "Some pieces are nautically themed," she says, "but others are strikingly modern and sleek; the star

of the show is the sand." What inspired Daniels Christensen to use sand as a medium? "Holly loves the beach and beach culture — and she realized many other people do, too," says Jackson. "They treasure their vacation memories and it clicked with her one day that this is a way to keep the beach close to the heart even when it's far away." Jackson adds that the sand comes from more than 3,000 locations around the world, including Fenway Park in Boston, the D-Day beaches of Normandy in France — and, of course, from Sarasota County's award-winning beaches. Even better? Dune Jewelry donates a portion of proceeds to coastal preservation programs. 1874 Stickney Point Road, Sarasota; 921-1221; mollyssarasota.com.

Lisa O'Driscoll Blogger



Lisa O'Driscoll and her husband, Jon, recently moved to Sarasota from Atlanta with their two daughters, 5 and 9. Lisa, who had taught kindergarten for 14 years, decided to give teaching a rest when she started the Fun Money Mom blog, a forum for busy mothers looking for easy recipes, money saving ideas, kids' activities, parenting tips, travel advice and more. "I'm not a Martha Stewart-type mom," she says. "I'm just an everyday mom who enjoys sharing what I've learned along the way, with a sense of humor and a glass of wine." O'Driscoll also writes for TravelingMom.com and The Huffington Post. Her blog is funmoneymom.com.

What is "fun money"?

Fun money refers to the money some women keep stashed away for such "fun" things as shoes, handbags or a girl's night out. My blog originally began as a shopping blog and that's where the name originated. Eventually, I found that I preferred writing about family-related topics and that's when Fun Money Mom became more of a lifestyle blog.

What inspired you to start a blog?

After leaving teaching, I wasn't used to having my nights free. I never had any plans to start a blog, but that's exactly what happened after an extra glass of wine one night. While I write a lot about parenting and food, I also cover topics such as travel and home decor. I try to make my blog a fun and informative resource for mothers.

You love coffee and wine. Where do you enjoy imbibing locally?

Does my car count as a coffee drinking spot? I don't have much opportunity to go out for coffee because I'm usually so busy in the mornings. My favorite wine places are all on the water. I love The Sandbar on Anna Maria Island for sentimental reasons. My husband and I had driven down from Atlanta to check out Sarasota just to be sure we'd like it here. As we sat overlooking the water, drinking wine and watching the sunset, we knew this was the perfect place for us!

What do you like to do when you're not working?

I love to grab the family and go exploring. There are so many great places in Sarasota and we love to discover new places or just wander through our favorites. You can never go wrong with downtown Sarasota, St. Armands, Siesta Key Village, Southside Village and Lakewood Ranch Main Street.

Have you found the area to be child-friendly?

Yes; Sarasota has completely surpassed our expectations. There's always something fun to do, including festivals, outdoor concerts, sandcastle building tournaments and even strawberry picking. My girls also love the Circus Park at Payne Park, Selby Gardens, The Ringling, splashing around in Bayfront Park and, of course, the beach!

Any plans for new blogs in the future?

While it was originally just a hobby, I found that I truly enjoy writing and creating and it's been very exciting to watch my blog grow. I just teamed up with two other bloggers and we launched a new site — Beautiful Budget Life, which focuses on living well within a budget and covers topics such as food, home, travel and more.