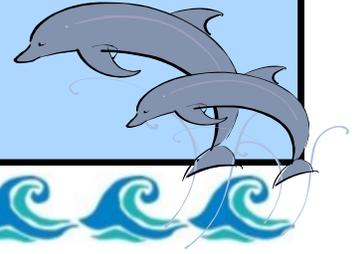


Nautical Notes



Vol. XVIII Number 03

A Publication of the Mariners of PGI

March 2026



**Mike Guler,
Commodore**

We are all deeply saddened by the passing of our great friend Brad Betting. Brad and Laurie have always been among the first to step up, volunteer and make Mariners of PGI a more exciting

club to be part of. Brad was always proactive in helping our members with any personal projects or issues. He will be missed by all of us.

Please consider joining one of the board committees. Susan Hills needs volunteers to join the social committee. Our signature regatta event is fast approaching, so give Susan a call and see how you can assist. Bobby Conte has some great ideas to keep us all safer on the water. I've always benefited from getting refreshers on topics such as first aid, navigation rules and local boating laws. Please support Bobby with your suggestions and volunteer to be a presenter. Our meetings are more interesting when we include a program. All our board members are working hard to continually improve our club. Thanks to Gary Towers for making sure we have plenty of cruise options and thanks to Tracie and Paul who have been testing ideas to attract new members. Say "Thanks" to Keith and Jaqueline who work behind the scenes to keep all running smooth. And my special thanks to Joyce and Carol for backing me up when I'm unavailable.

There are plenty of slips available for the Mariners Spring Regatta Weekend. Reserve yours today or plan to drive down and enjoy the fun! See you there!

Splice the Main Brace!



**Brad Betting
Farewell Conch
Blow**



**Gary Towers,
Cruise Director**

February made for some tricky cruise planning. No less than four cold fronts passed through our home port bringing cool temperatures, wind and choppy waters. It seemed just as things got back to normal another front passed through.

Our planned lunch cruise to Barnacles, North Captiva on February 7 was canceled due to unfavorable weather conditions. Despite the interruptions, Mariners still made it to the docks starting with Mike's Birthday Cruise to Venice and Sarasota. Below is his cruise leader report.

Mike's Birthday Cruise

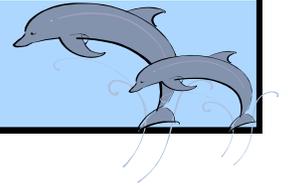
Michael Mankin – Cruise Leader

This cruise started the day after Super Bowl, February 9. I mention that only because my birthday was actually on the 6th. No matter! The initial destination was the Crow's Nest in Venice. The water was like glass with warm sunshine. There were five boats attending this cruise. The first night we had three boats, Mark and Judy Whitcher aboard Just a Splash, Gary DiLillo aboard Con Sea Quence and Crystal and I aboard Crystal Blue. Of course we dined at the Crow's Nest Restaurant, and of course the food was great. And oh yes, we enjoyed birthday celebration number one!

With a slight change of plans, the next morning we cranked up and headed for Marina Jack in Sarasota. More great weather! While traveling we got a call from Gary Towers informing us that they were headed for Sarasota also. Also got a call from Dennis Ceseri, they were arriving at the Sarasota Yacht Club at about the same time. Our fifth boat!

For our evening dining, Crystal had made us a reservation at Kojo's in town. Our first time there. It was great. It is kind of an Asian fusion place. Thanks to Gary and Julie Towers I think we tried every appetizer they offered. Birthday celebration number two!

(see page 3 Cruise Director)



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Editor's Note: I will confirm, via e-mail, receipt of each NN submission. If you do not receive confirmation, PLEASE contact me.

MIKE GULER, Proofreader

Editor's Note: direct contact information for all Mariners is located on the [website](http://www.marinersofpgi.org) : www.marinersofpgi.org

March Birthdays

3/4 Michael Gordon

3/8 Wayne Sharp

3/10 Dennis O'Brien

3/17 Stephen Gordon

3/18 Shawna Flanders

3/22 Mark Whitcher

3/27 Sharon Gordon

3/30 Diana Miller

3/31 Susan Hills

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Meetings

General Membership

PGICA, 2001 Shreve St.

4th Monday at 7 p.m. (except **December**)

Board

PGICA, 2001 Shreve Street

If you or anyone
you know is ill
or in need of some
Sunshine,
please contact
Lynne Matthews
sunshine@marinersofpgi.org



**Cruise Director (continued from page 1)****Gary Towers**

The second night Dennis and Shirla joined us for dock tails and then we headed for an Italian place called Clasico Chop House. A Mark Whitcher discovery. Another great meal was had! As you can tell our cruises are very dinner oriented. And yes, another birthday celebration!

The following morning Mark and Judy and Gary and Julie headed for home. Crystal and I enjoyed walking around Sarasota that day. Later we met up with Dennis and Shirla at the Sarasota Yacht Club for drinks and then walked to the Columbian for dinner.

The following morning, we headed back to Punta Gorda. Another great trip for Mariners of PGI.

On February 18, Mariners took over most of the dock space at the Riviera for a lunch Cruise. Thank you to cruise leaders Bill and Kate Albers. Below is a report from Bill.

Fourteen Mariners enjoyed lunch on a beautiful day at the Riviera Bar and Grill on Wednesday Feb. 18. Kate and Bill Albers were the cruise leaders. Attending by boat were, Garry and Sheila Wiens, Linda and Mike Wiens, Joan and Wayne Erickson, Nancy and Bill Eggert. Also joining us were Kip Connor, Alan Singleton, and Julie and Gary Towers.

Bill Albers

March will start with Mariners Sunset Full Moon Cruise on March 2. Sailboats and power boats participating on a cruise that goes out for the sunset and returns with the light of the moon. There will be a lunch cruise added soon.

There are still slips available for both the Thursday lunch cruise before the regatta and the Friday-Sunday Annual Regatta. Please sign up asap for this highly anticipated event. Make sure you sign up on the website as well as with Dockwa.

Cruise participation is reported monthly and is visible on the website under "Participation Report." If you participated in a cruise with 3 boats or more there will be a credit.

Safe cruising!

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Social Director

Susan Hills



There were some fun social activities in the month of February.

The first Sunday of the month breakfast at the Tamiami Traven continues to attract members to enjoy some social time and great food. Thank you to Peggy Northrup for making sure the reservation is always made.

Due to the cooler weather our first happy hour of the month was a souper social with lots of delicious soups at the Betting's home.

Thank you to Richard Northrup for putting together the Webb Lake bike ride on February 13.

The Sundance orchids and bromeliads was well attended on February 5. Thank you to Julie Scharpf for organizing this.

The ladies luncheon was held on February 25 at Blossom and Brie. Such a welcoming location. Thank you to Sheila Wiens for covering this.

Please contact me with any suggestions for future social activities. Your ideas are welcome.

Education Director

Bobby Conte



HELP WANTED

The Education Director of the Mariners of PGI is looking for a few volunteers to plan and execute its new

"1ST Mate Safety/Information Program".

- A person with Medical Background that will help develop training in CPR, Wound and Cut, Bruises Care, etc.,
- One or Two people with Nautical Radio and Navigation equipment background that will help develop training in Radio Operation, Cruise Chart Planning, and Location Identification.
- One or two people with Artistic Ability to put together slides, Brochures, Laminated Instruction Material, and other printed information material to be utilized for information and instruction.

Please call Bobby Conte at 941-646-9160
to assist in the development of this
much needed,
and at times
Life Saving,
information and training.



Membership Director

Paul Baird & Tracie Goin



Hello fellow club members! As we head into Spring, we wanted to share a quick update from the Membership Committee. While we've had some headwinds this past year, our club remains a special place full of great people who love the water and each other — and that's worth celebrating. Our current membership stands at 121. Yes, that number is lower than we'd like, and we feel the impact of a few families moving away, and the general ups and downs that many clubs are facing right now. We're not alone in this — several nearby clubs have seen similar trends. We did make a strong push to bring in new faces by running targeted ads on Facebook and Meta platforms. While the campaign didn't bring in the new members we hoped for, it did get our club's name in front of thousands of people in the area. Every exposure plants a seed, and we're confident those seeds will sprout when the timing is right. The good news? Our current members continue to make this club what it is: welcoming, fun, and full of shared experiences on the water. That spirit is alive and well, and it's the best recruitment tool we have. Looking ahead, we'd love your input! If you have ideas for attracting new members — or if you know someone who might enjoy joining us — please reach out to any committee member. Sometimes the best new members come from a personal invitation. Thank you all for being the heart of this club. We're looking forward to a great season on the water together, making memories, and hopefully welcoming a few more smiling faces to our ranks. Fair winds and calm seas.

Please see our advertisement that we have been running.

A colorful cartoon illustration for a recruitment poster. It features a group of diverse, smiling people of various ages and ethnicities on a boat. The background includes nautical symbols like an anchor, a rope, a seagull, and a sun. At the top is a red and blue flag with a white 'M' and a white dolphin. The text is bold and white with blue outlines.

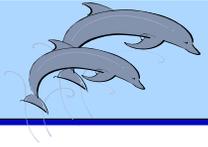
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Nautical Notes



Mariners Cruising



Upcoming Cruises

[Burnt Store the Day Before the Regatta Lunch Cruise, Apr. 9, 2026](#)

[2026 Spring Regatta Weekend, Apr. 10-12, 2026](#)



(More Cruises to be determined)...



We want your ideas for lunch or overnight cruises! If you have an idea for a day cruise or overnight to one of your favorite places – or one you’ve wanted to visit – let Gary Towers know and we’ll get it on the calendar. Also – please consider leading a cruise – either to one already on the calendar that needs a leader, or one you propose to a favorite restaurant or marina.

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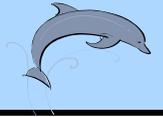
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Upcoming and Recurring Social Events

[Happy Hour every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m., at Village Brewhouse](#)

[Pickleball \(Summer Hours\) every Tuesday and Thursday at South County Park from 8-10 a.m.](#)

[Gilchrist Park Thursday Gathering, 4-6 p.m.](#)

[Bullets & Brunch on second Wednesday of each month](#)

[Tamiami Tavern Monthly Breakfast, April 5, 2026](#)

[Ladies' Lunch at Kings roadhouse Bar & Grill, Mar. 26, 2026](#)

[2026 Spring Regatta Weekend, Apr. 10-12, 2026](#)



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Bears Down Happy Hour , January 28

Tracie Goin & Julie Towers

When Cold weather came to Punta Gorda a couple Mariners got creative and moved our regular outdoor happy hour indoors to Tracie's and Paul's home. Julie Towers and Tracie Goin hosted the Chicago Bears themed happy hour with Chicago-style hot dogs, Italian beef sandwiches and a host of other Chicago themed side dishes and desserts provided by the attendees.

But no Super Bowl hopes. Maybe next time Bears fans!



February Game Night, February 2

Joyce McCandless

A small but playful group of Mariners met at the PGICA February 2 for our "First Monday of the Month" game night. Our original intention was to play Trivial Pursuit, however after batting in the "low one hundreds" (think of it like a baseball batting percentage) for correct answers to questions in the Best of Genus edition of the game, we agreed to pursue something more fun. This TP edition is rated for ages 12 and up; I guess we all have younger brains.

Tacking quickly (we are a boating club, after all), we switched to a two-deck card game called "2500", taught to the rest of us by gamesters extraordinaire, Brad and Laurie Betting. After playing several rounds of the game, Brad was the first to reach 2500 points, thus winning; he treated us all to his great smile when his name was announced. The game was a lot of fun, but we also found using the rotary crank card shuffler entertaining (or maybe we're just easily amused).

Brad and Laurie were the initiators of "First Monday of the Month Game Night". Thanks to them both for all the fun they have brought to countless Mariner activities over the years. We offer prayers and our most supportive thoughts to Laurie and the families in this time of loss.





Souper Social Happy Hour, February 4

Laurie Betting

I know most of you are old enough to remember Hints from Heloise...consider this Hints from Laurie. If you want to get your home cleaned up and all your dishes done by boating first mates, host a Mariner party at your home. If you want cuisine and can't get a reservation, host a Mariner potluck party at your home. If you don't feel like going out but still want to see all your wonderful friends, host a Mariner party at your home. Finally, if you want to have the best time ever on the water or off, become a Mariner. The proof was on display Wednesday night with a follow-the-great-idea from Tracie, Paul, Julie and Gary's successful home social the week before. We used the excuse of more crappy weather; however we had a reprieve of one day; nonetheless we prevailed in good weather. After all we are Mariners!

The theme was Souper Social and I've said it before but it bears repeating, this club can cook! There were at least 10 crockpots of different soups, all equally delicious. If there had been voting based on which emptied first, then Gary Dilillo with his Mexican Cheese Soup was the clear winner. I got there just in time for the last 2 tablespoons. Rosie Rissel's cornbread in a cast iron skillet also did a disappearing act. Some had seconds and some never got a taste, not naming anyone, Patti. Folks were encouraged to bring containers and do some soup swapping at the end. Also, some of our fabulous members brought homemade breads, salads and desserts. We celebrated Dawn Hayworth's birthday a few days early. As if we needed an excuse to party? In fact, if you are reading this, consider it an open invitation to just show up at my house, cook my supper and clean my kitchen all while keeping me entertained. Mariners are the best people.





Sundance Orchids & Bromeliads, February 5

Julie Scharpf

“Beauty and the Eats”

On February 5th, five intrepid Mariner gals set out in the cold, on a blustery, rainy day in search of beauty and good times. Peggy Northrup, Carol Barkow, Joyce McCandless, Debbie Dehmel and Julie Scharpf ventured Southward to Ft Myers looking for adventure and safe harbor at Sundance Orchids and Bromeliads. There, they got lost among thousands of exotic, beautiful plants searching ever so diligently for those perfect specimens to bring back to PGI. Luckily, they were able to secure an amazing array of flora with patience and their trusty credit cards. Stuffing their precious cargo into their vessels proved challenging, but Mariner girls are a tough sort and so managed with both skill and grace.

For those who have never experienced orchid procurement, it is an exhausting endeavor, so afterwards, these stalwart ladies sought out nourishment at Fat Katz Sports Bistro before beginning their arduous journey back North.

This particular odyssey proves yet once again that Mariners sure know how to have fun on their many adventures!





Riviera Bar and Grill Lunch Cruise, February 18

Bill Albers



Mariners Lunch with the Ladies, February 25

Sheila Wiens

On February 25, thirteen adventurous mariner ladies traveled and carpoled to Ft Myers to partake in a lovely lunch at Blossom and Brie! It was a fun afternoon as we enjoyed a great lunch and even better company! The farm to table food was a nice change from many local restaurants, and the beautiful animals there added to the ambiance! Many thanks to Laurie Betting who originally organized the outing. Our hearts and prayers go out to her during this time...





Webb Lake Wilderness Bike Ride and Picnic, Feb 13

Richard Northrup

Eleven intrepid Mariners were not deterred by Friday the 13th date to brave the, first in many years, **Webb Lake Wilderness Bike Ride!** We all met at the Lake at 9:45 a.m. It was a beautiful morning with the temperature in the upper 60's and very little wind! The day started with Dawn losing her earring and the whole group roaming around the parking lot looking for it. Fortunately, it was found and the group proceeded on our bike ride. This was a nice flat paved road that goes five miles along Webb Lake. Lots of trees and birds and conversation. A brief rest and the return trip. No alligators were spotted and no mechanical issues. Once we had all returned to the parking lot, we put the bikes away and had a wonderful picnic lunch together. Lots of good Mariner Comradery. Everyone expressed a desire to repeat this event in the near future! Thanks all for joining Peggy and I on a most pleasant bike ride with our good Mariner friends!

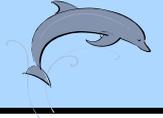


Mike's Birthday Overnight Cruise to Venice & Sarasota, Feb 18-21

Mike Mankin



Nautical Notes



Sunset Full Moon Cruise, March 2

Hugh Bass

