

The Florida Connection

Sandpaper

March 2020 Volume 82 Issue 4

ymca
ALUMNI
connect ▼ travel ▼ serve

The mission of the YMCA Alumni is to enable members to promote a nurturing worldwide Christian fellowship that provides educational, social and charitable opportunities.

C. B. Willis Chapter Officers

Co-Presidents

Debra and Larry Garvin
lgarvin@me.com

Co-Vice Presidents

Tony and Patty Borton
giantstb@bellsouth.net

Co-Treasurers

Janet and Bob Ferguson
rhferguson@tampabay.rr.com

Secretary

Carl Gaites
treebender8@gmail.com

Past Co-Presidents

Tony and Patty Borton
giantstb@bellsouth.net

The Florida Sandpaper is the newsletter of the C. B. Willis Chapter of YMCA Alumni and is published six times a year.

Sandpaper Editor

Phil Wortman
wortmanii@aol.com

April Planning Meeting CANCELED

No surprise ... the COVID-19 Virus has caused the April Fellowship and Planning Meeting to be canceled until a later date after the concern for exposure to the virus has dissipated ... perhaps in June or July.

We will try to keep everyone updated on what is happening with our Willis Chapter family over the next couple of months through emails and other means of communication.

With that purpose in mind, please email me directly with any news about you and your family, and other chapter members. My email is wortmanii@aol.com.

Make sure Janet Ferguson has your current email address. Her email is rhferguson@tampabay.rr.com. I'll be using the email addresses she has for the periodic updates.

We have over 470 Y retirees who live in Florida, and over 100 Willis Chapter members. Please keep

them all in your prayers, and lets open up our fellowship to be ready to help any and all that may find themselves in need during and after this crisis has run its course.

As the most vulnerable of our extended Y retiree family will be self quarantined where they live, unable to leave and have contact with others, please take the opportunity to give them a call, even just to say, "Hi," and talk for a moment. It lets them know that you care. It gives them a chance to have some contact with others and brightens their day.

This is a great opportunity for us to proactively act on our organization's mission, "promoting and nurturing a worldwide Christian fellowship," by starting right here in Florida with our chapter members.

So let's take this opportunity and fulfill it with the enthusiasm of our Y careers of serving others and improving people's lives.

C. B. Willis Chapter - Connect-Travel-Serve

Messages and Reports

Co-Presidents' Message:

Larry and Debbie Garvin



Greetings
Folks ... It is Larry
and Deb Garvin ...
as we always like to
say, "Hoping this
note finds everyone
well."

Let's begin by
saying that we
greatly appreciate
the following people
volunteering to han-

dle some of the necessary responsibilities for our Willis Chapter:

- Membership Chair—**Don Macher**
- Hospitality Char—**Larry & Carole Lieving**
- Vice-President—Vacant (we need someone to fill that position)

Moving forward, I want to share the following information. The Willis Chapter membership contributed \$6,450 to the 2019 World Service Campaign. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this worthy cause.

According to National, as of March 2nd we have 96 members in the Willis Chapter. Nationwide, YMCA Alumni has increased from 1,250 units to 1,280 units ... a 78 percent membership retention rare from 2019.

As you may be aware, in 2019 YMCA Alumni provided all new YMCA retirees a one year membership to YMCA Alumni for free. Of those who received the one year free, 38 percent of them renewed for 2020. When asked why they renewed their membership they gave the following responses:

- Connected—81%
- Fellowship—64%
- Newsletter—45%
- Have fun—27%
- Travel—18%

Some of the reasons given for choosing not to renewing their membership were the long travel distance in order to attend chapter events, lack of interest in chapter programs, and finally, lack of communication from their chapter. So obviously, a significant number of YMCA retirees definitely want to stay connected.

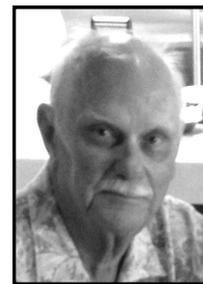
As I mentioned in the business meeting in Fort Myers, the 2021 Regional YMCA Alumni Reunion is the

(Please see "Co-Presidents" page 4)

Ft. Myers Report

Carl Gaites, Secretary

It was February 20th, a Thursday, when a bunch (17) of YMCA Alumni invaded Ft. Myers, Florida. Most were members of the Willis Chapter, but there were two snowbirds from Indiana, **Kirby and Claudia Falkenberg**, and two from Michigan, **Dan & Marilyn Stager**. And, like TV Star Fred Rogers said, "It was a beautiful day..."



We boarded the Capt JP J. C. Cruise paddle wheeler in downtown Ft. Myers and meandered east on the Caloosahatchee River. We saw birds of all kinds, went through a canal lock, caused bridges to open, waved to folks in other boats, waved to cars waiting for the bridges to come down, ate a pretty good lunch on the second deck, wished we'd put on sunscreen sooner and generally had a good time.

Then it was off to the Ft. Myers YMCA for a short tour and a business meeting led by **Larry and Debbie Garvin**, Chapter Co-Presidents. Larry is also the YMCA Alumni East Region Vice-President. **Dorothy Markell** shared a well-received message about friends and family. **Janet Ferguson** reported on our treasury balances. A comprehensive treasurer and membership report will be provided at the April 22nd Planning Meeting. Larry mentioned that World Service contributions totaled \$6,450 from Willis Chapter members. Larry reported that National YMCA Alumni membership from Jan 2019 to Jan 2020 showed an increase from 1,250 member units to 1,280 member units; and individual members increased from 1,985 to 2,060.

Don Macher, a member of the YMCA Alumni Travel Club Committee, promoted the Y Alumni Travel Program. All Willis are encouraged to give a second look to the trips, itineraries and ships.

Our chapter officers asked for HELP! They really need some chapter positions filled, namely: Vice-President; Membership Chair; Program Chair(s); and Hospitality. Don Macher volunteered to take on Membership. Most of all, they need a lot of chapter members attending the April 22-23 Planning Meeting in Clearwater.

Larry and Debbie are charged with planning the 2021 YMCA Alumni East Reunion. Locations suggested are Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans and Sarasota. This item will be on our Planning Meeting Agenda and we really need everyone's input.

With time approaching Ft. Myers' rush-hour traffic, many of us headed home while some reconnoitered to the Three Fisherman Restaurant in North Ft. Myers to meet with **Nancy Kelly**, a local chapter member who assisted the Gaites' with much of the planning. Anyway, Nancy picked an excellent restaurant and we really appreciated her help.

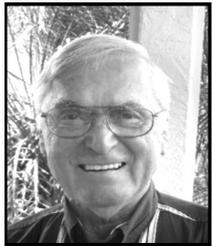
Food For Thought

(A recipe for living)

Reverend. Joseph DeGroot

Lent 2020 John 3:1-17 BACK TOTHE BASICS

As I was looking at the menu of readings for Lent, the John reading



wet my appetite. Growing up in a beautiful gothic church I remember that passage highlighted in the stone.

“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, THAT WHO EVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE”

You had to turn around to read the whole scripture as it was inscribed on the ceiling dome. It has stuck with me all my life. It became my personal creed and, for me, a basic faith statement.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, (one who practiced strict adherence to the Jewish law) saw something special in Jesus and his teaching, so much so, he joined Jesus in the cover of darkness.

Jesus said “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

Wow! Of course we can’t enter the womb again. Being born from above is a spiritual statement.

Knowing Christ brings new meaning to our lives. We, in a sense, are renewed. Our lives are changed.

The relationship establishes these truths for me. They can be basic truths for all of us.

Who Is Doing What

Dorothy Markell , Correspondent

I got the news from **Carole and Larry Leiving** that they were heading to Texas to cele-



brate the wedding of one of their grandsons. It will be an extra special event because all 10 (TEN!) of their grand children

will be in the wedding in one capacity or another. All the way from the groom to the flower girl and ring bearer and everything in between. Naturally all four of Carole and Larry’s daughters and their husbands will be there. They are also happy that they could fly non-stop from Sarasota to Dallas.

I also know - because Carole told me - that they were invited to arrive early to help their Dallas daughter who had remodeled her kitchen and parts of her home and needed help putting things back to rights before the wedding. Mom and Dad to the rescue. Sound familiar to anyone??

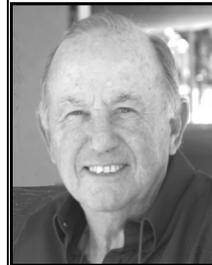
Carl and Alice Gaites went to a **Franklin Graham** event in Fort Myers recently. It was held in Hertz Arena which holds about 8,000 people. And the arena was packed! Carl reports that Franklin is every bit as good a preacher as his father Billy Graham and those are big shoes to fill. It was a well run event except that it took them over an hour to get out of the parking lot as there were no police around to direct traffic. Says

(Please see “What” page 4)

Fitness: Feel Good!

Phil Wortman, Roberts-Gulick Award

In January “PARADE” magazine did a cameo piece on Kelly McGonigal, Ph.D’s new book, “The Joy of Movement.” In it she talks about some of the ways that exercise can boost our minds as well as our bodies.



McGonigal points to a 25 year old study published in the “Journal of Personality and Social Psychology” that found physical activity the most effective way to reduce stress. It was superior to the eating effect, sleeping and talking with friends.

The “feel better effect” can be realized from any type of exercise ... anything from stretching and walking to a full exercise workout. While exercise doesn’t eliminate stress, it does help in handling it. It tends to give a sense of satisfaction and sets the mood towards a more positive outlook.

The physiology is simple. The brain releases endorphins and endocannabinoids into the blood stream during exercise which increases the feeling of pleasure, especially when connecting with others, like taking a walk with a spouse or friend.

Some feel that regular exercise can aid in protecting from Alzheimer’s disease and the brain from stress, relieving depression.

McGonigal classifies these chemicals as being “hope molecules.” She says, “These chemicals can help people recover from trauma. Every time you move, you are giving yourself an intravenous dose of hope.”

McGonigal promotes group exercise classes and exercising to music. “We can take strength from seeing others’ efforts ... you get a stronger endorphin rush than when exercising alone,”

(Please see “Good” page 4)

Special Interests

Y-USA COVID-19 Statement

CHICAGO, (March 13, 2020)

As an organization dedicated to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the YMCA is taking the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic very seriously. The safety and well-being of all Y members, participants, staff, volunteers and the communities we serve have been and always will be a top priority.

YMCA of the USA (Y-USA), the national resource office for the country's 2,600 YMCAs, has been diligently monitoring the developments surrounding COVID-19 and communicating with leadership of local Ys.

Each local Y is keeping a close eye on the developing news and recommendations from national and local health authorities. Ultimately, each Y is responsible for taking the steps it deems necessary to best ensure the safety of everyone in its community.

We understand this is a very concerning situation. We are asking everyone to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and take their own measures to protect themselves, including frequently washing their hands with soap and water, covering their coughs and sneezes, staying home if they do not feel well, and practicing social distancing by avoiding large crowds or close contact with others.

What?

(Continued from page 3)

Alice, "It was worth the wait."

Pat Frazer reports that she has had a rough start to her year. To begin with there was a pinched nerve between her collarbone and first rib so she was in physical therapy. Shortly after she fell in her neighborhood she broke and dislocated her left wrist (OUCH). This called for major surgery to put it back together and now has therapy for that! This too must pass as she has a trip to Ireland with her friend **Ilse** in June.

As for me I stepped into a new world of the Sarasota Circus - no, no - only as an usher but my first day "on the job" was a challenge to remember where each section was, which way the numbers go (left to right in section 2, right to left in section 1, and the box seats are lettered). It was fun and I plan to do it again next year.

On the home front **John (Mercier)** who felt just fine, thank you, went to the hospital and got a pacemaker. Upped his pulse from about 40 to about 80 and he says he feels better, more energetic. He must feel better - he's looking around for the next fundraiser job.

And last, if you have any news please send it on to me - at this new email address - **dmarkell174@gmail.com**. I will save it for the next issue of the Sandpaper. Thank you all.

If by some chance you haven't renewed your membership, please do so today at ymcalumni.org

Good

(Continued from page 3)

she says. She adds, "When you listen to music, the brain activates the motor system, which is why it's used for stroke survivors and those with Parkinson's disease."

With most of us having access to a Sliver Sneakers program giving us memberships at the Y, private fitness centers, city recreational facilities and more, there isn't any reason not to embark on or continue an exercise program ... even if it is just getting out of the house to get there. As McGonigal encourages, "What matters is that you move."

Co-Presidents

(Continued from page 2)

responsibility of the five chapters in the East Region of YMCA Alumni.

Preliminary discussions have identified the following locations as possible sites—Sarasota, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Baltimore ... in that order. In addition, the possibility of a cruise has been suggested as well.

The following is an interesting statistic we've learned. The majority of people who attended the last two reunions are folks who have been retired for 8-10 years. In other words, recent retirees have not been attending reunions. Obviously we are interested and concerned about this trend.

As the East Region YMCA Alumni Vice-President, I am gathering data and working with the leadership of the other four chapters in the East Region in order to make plans. I'll keep you updated as the reunion project progresses.

Check out the new YMCA Alumni Travel Club web page!

Photos Ft. Myers



Food is good, but the fellowship is better!



Are they seasick or just looking over the side?



I'm holding on because I thought I saw a wave.



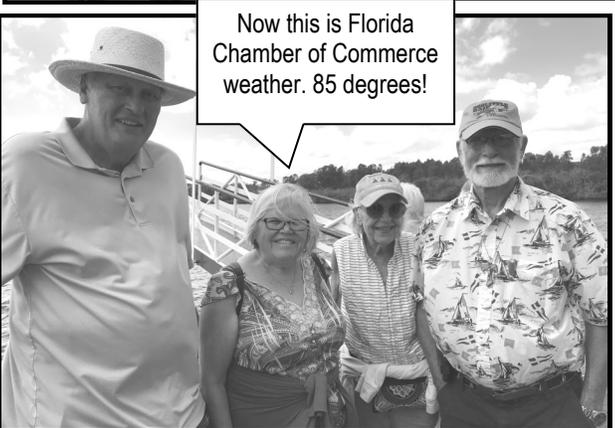
I've got the pose, now when do I flex?



You have to be cool to wear this hat.



It's a self-defense move ... you reach down and grab and squeeze.



Now this is Florida Chamber of Commerce weather. 85 degrees!



Your Southern hospitality gets me right in the heart,



Gee, Alice told me to sit here until I can behave.



No, you should have gone before the meeting started. Now just sit there and hold it.



It must be 5:00 somewhere!

Editorial: Survive?

Phil Wortman, Sandpaper Editor

Will YMCA Alumni chapters survive? That's not just a question raised to grab attention. That is a real question ... and the answer may not be the one we'd like.

We had 22 chapters when I joined IARD (International Association of Retired Directors) in 1994. Yes, that was the name then. The name changed to NAFYR in 1997 (North American Fellowship of YMCA Retirees) ... then to AYR (Association of YMCA Retirees) in 2009. It became YMCA Alumni in 2017.

We now only have 17 chapters and two of those have been in decline over the past several years. I don't want to sound glum, but we – the C. B. Willis Chapter – aren't in a growth spurt. Where 25 years ago we'd have up to 60+ participate in a Willis Chapter event, now we hope for 30 or so.

The 80/20 rule (Prado's Principle) as to who will provide active leadership to the chapter has become more of a 95/5 situation with only a few carrying the load of serving the organization.

We're even having trouble finding someone to volunteer to be Vice President. Past President Tony Borton only volunteered to help out until we can find one.

The age of our membership is increasing as number of new retirees joining is low. The time is now to re-evaluate what we are doing in order to attract the new retiree.

As mentioned in an earlier editorial, socio-demographic changes are real. I could list a litany of them, but – from a membership perspective – the most important ones are related to the change in the Y leadership work force. In many cases the Y retiree's spouse has a significant career too ... higher salaries increase the options for recreational expenditures ... many become involved in other ventures and lose their interest in retaining a Y contact ... and on and on.

So what do we do? The first thing is to recognize the problem and have an open mind as to how to address it both on a chapter and a national basis. We have a planning meeting coming up in Clearwater on April 22-23. You need to be there. Let me rephrase that: We need you to be there.

Even if you've never been to a Willis Chapter event, we need your input which is probably more valuable than the input of those who regularly participate. You are the chapter ... member or not,

(Please see "Editorial" page 7)

Nutrisystem—An Interview

Nutrisystem ... hard to watch TV for more than an hour without seeing a Nutrisystem commercial. But, what is the "inside story" on it? Best way to find out is to talk to someone who has actually tried Nutrisystem.

Don Macher sat down for a phone interview in January to talk about his experience with the Nutrisystem program. He had needed to lose a few pounds and his daughter had a successful experience with Nutrisystem, so he decided he'd give it a try and enrolled. His daughter had enrolled in the basic plan, but he decided to do a more expensive customized program which gave him more flexibility and options in food choices.

Don was in the program for three months and lost 21 pounds ... and has kept it off. He says that one of the important things the program taught him was portion control, a "learning experience" he still employs to maintain his weight loss.

Expensive, yes, about \$400 for the first month in the program, but as he learned more about his options his cost fell to about \$300 for the second month; and, then was about \$200 for the third month ... and he still had some food left over after the third month was completed.

Based on his food choices, and there was a large variety, the food came pre-prepared either frozen or vacuum packed. One or so minutes in the micro-wave and it's ready to eat ... and it actually tasted good, even delicious.

He kept a log on everything he ate and drank on the app that Nutrisystem provided. Each day there was a breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, dinner, snack – a total of 1,500 calories per day. Yes, Don said he was hungry during the first two weeks, but having a snack in between each meal helped.

Don kept commenting on the variety of the foods and how you could learn to pick and choose to make the program easy to follow and the cost lower. He said that Nutrisystem regularly runs specials with as much as 50% off on various food items.

Okay, the "inside story" is that Nutrisystem is a viable weight loss program. It offers different cost plans and a wide range of food choices in a relatively easy to follow portion and nutritionally controlled 1,500 calorie diet.

Should the person recognize the importance of portion control, spaced eating and the caloric/nutritional value of foods while in the program, they can reduce the yo-yo effect that follows ending most weight loss programs. Of course, all that can be done without enrolling in Nutrisystem or any other weight loss program. You are just paying them to do it for you.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This column is not an endorsement of the Nutrisystem program; rather it is a personal interview to share an individual's experiences while participating in the program.

Lagniappe

Lyft, James, YMCA

From Y-USA web site



Lyft has partnered with the YMCA, LeBron James, and his organization, Uninterrupted, to create a program called LyftUp, dedicated to meeting the transportation needs of youth. LyftUp is looking to distribute “thousands” of free, one-year bike-share memberships to eligible youth, ages 16 to 20, starting this spring in New York City and then in Chicago.

Through the help of the YMCA, the LyftUp program will identify eligible youth to receive memberships and education on bike safety. The program’s goal is to improve transportation access for youth, which in turn could lead to better opportunities.

The announcement came on January 21, as the program was unveiled at a YMCA in Harlem in front of a group of 50 or so local teenagers, who were the first to receive free memberships. James made a surprise appearance and talked about his love of bikes and how a bike can change a kid’s life for the better. “Growing up, a bike changed everything for me. It was more than a way to go see my friends or play basketball—it was a way of life,” James said, “A bike opened doors, allowed me to get to safe places after school, and gave me access to opportunities I never would have known.”

This isn’t James’s first excursion into bicycle-related charitable efforts.

His organization, Uninterrupted, aims to empower athletes through the LeBron James Family Foundation, and he opened a school for at-risk youth in his hometown of Akron, Ohio, where each student receives a bicycle. Before launching his school, there was the annual King for Kids Bikeathon, through which he donated hundreds of bicycles to kids.

James has also been candid much he benefited from his local YMCA when he was a kid.

Editorial

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involved or not, you are the reason the organization exists. Want to maintain a Y connection but didn’t renew, then why not? Don’t want to attend chapter events, membership cost too high, aren’t interested in the activities, don’t know anyone ... we’d like to know.

Please join us on April 22-23. We’ll have a good time looking for new and better ways to make our chapter an “I want to join” chapter in the future.

Stubborn Ounces

To one who doubts the worth of doing anything if you can’t do everything.

You say the little efforts I make will do no good: they never will prevail to the tip of the hovering scale where Justice hangs in the balance.

I don’t think I ever thought they would. But I am prejudice beyond debate in my right to choose which side shall feel the ounces of my weight.

Bonardo W. Overstreet

Check out the YMCA Alumni web page at ymcaalumni.org



Quotes on Value

The timid man yearns for full value and demands a tenth. The bold man strikes for double value and compromises on par.

Mark Twain

Men understand the worth of blessings only when they have lost them.

Plautus



Your YMCA Alumni Organization

History



Boy Scouts/Christian Citizenship Training Program

From Spring/Summer 2001 YMCA Discovery Magazine

Edgar M. Robinson, the first YMCA National Director of Boy's Work, is perhaps best remembered for his involvement in establishing the Boy Scouts of America as a separate organization from the YMCA. He organized the first boy's work assembly in Culver, Indiana, in 1913. Most of the 289 delegates had never heard of "boy's work" as a career path for YMCA secretaries.

At the Culver Assembly, Robinson played off the Boy Scout's organizational structure and incentive program to encourage participation and formed the Christian Citizenship Training Program (CCTP) which included standardized manuals and achievement awards much like the Scout badges.

The CCPT never came together because, despite for a call for uniformity, each YMCA still wanted to develop its own standards. However, the CCPT was influential in improving YMCA youth work when it appointed Adel J. Gregg as director. In 1924 he wrote a book called "Group Leaders and Boy Character" which set the tone for future programming for boys and girls. There would be 13 assemblies between 1913 and 1965 and their significance in the mid-1940s cannot be overstated. In 1944 assembly action gave national approval to four existing programs and the highly successful YMCA Four Fronts Program was established.

Check out ymcaalumni.org for more information!