

The Marco Men's Club

December 2023

# Newsletter

P.O. Box 5035  
Marco Island, FL. 34146  
www.MarcoMensClub.com

Established 1992  
A non-profit organization

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### Greetings!

There was Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Cyber Monday and Giving Tuesday.

So, what's left to spend money on? DUES!  
Your Marco Men's Club Dues are now due.

**Ed Crane** has done another great job setting up the website for easy credit card payment.

Find a link to pay on the home page of our website. Despite all the inflation, we are able to hold the dues at the current \$60 per year thanks to the Board and Committee Chairs watching their spending!

Thanks to **Warren Uhl** for chairing the Nominating Committee for 2024 officers.  
The following are the list of nominees:

President: **Mike Ballenger**

VP: **Mark Haynes**

VP: **Don Koppel**

VP: **Tom Kramer**

VP: **Rob Reiley**

VP: **Arne Sandberg**

Treasurer: **Rudi Landwaard**

Secretary: **Jerry Defibaugh**

Final nominations will be from the floor at the regular December meeting with voting at the January meeting.

We are looking for someone to take over the lead in scheduling the speakers for our regular monthly meetings. **John DeMado** has been doing a great job but will be stepping away from the role.

He has speakers scheduled through February.

The flyer for the annual Holiday Lunch is on the website. It will be Tuesday, December 12 at Naples Lakes Country Club. Check with **Bruce Dahlquist** (see the flyer) to see if there are any seats available.

The 2024 Bocce League starts in January. Still room for a couple more teams. Contact **Rick Johnson** if interested. (See the website Bocce Page)

SAVE SOME DATES:

Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup> – Anniversary Lunch after the General Meeting

Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> – Welcome Back Party!

Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> – New Member Breakfast

Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup> – Sweetheart Ball

Theatre Update – Renovations at the Sugden Theatre (home of the Naples Players) are behind schedule.

They are rescheduling their spring schedule. “The Producers” show is moving from March to Sunday, July 7<sup>th</sup>. Check with Don Lally about your tickets if you already ordered. There are additional seats available for the new date. (see the new flyer)

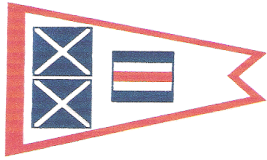
The May performance of “The Play that Goes Wrong” will move to January 2025.

More updates on this show when we announce our 2025 theatre schedule.

Cruise Update – **Bill Rogers** just announced the 57<sup>th</sup> Cruise: 11 Night BRITISH ISLE PASSAGE ABOARD OCEANIA CRUISE LINES “5.5” STAR SHIP “SIRENA” from Amsterdam October 22 - Nov 3, 2024

Celebrate your favorite year-end holidays!

***Dave Tobiasz***



December 2023

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## COMPUTER/TECHNOLOGY CLUB



The monthly meeting was held on Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at Ori's. Spouses and significant others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Need help with your new iPhone, Ring camera, iPad or other device? Having problems downloading a new App? Don't understand what this thing called WhatsApp is and how it can save you money on your next cruise trip? This is the place to get help! In September, we spoke about Chat GPT and AI tools; we will continue that discussion. Bring your topics to discuss!

Contact **Steve Furlong** at 309-662-9101

Or [stevenrichardfurlong@gmail.com](mailto:stevenrichardfurlong@gmail.com).

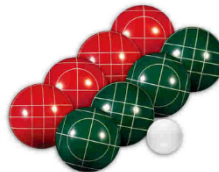
## INVESTMENT DISCUSSION CLUB



This is a gathering where opinions are valued, facts are appreciated and experience is not necessary, but prized. An open and broad discussion of topics relating to investment raised by those present, is conducted. The Club meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1:30PM at the Marco Lutheran Church in the choir room, please enter through the administrative offices.

Contact Don Koppel Ph:856-906-4318. Meeting status will be through an eBlast the week before the meeting.

## BOCCE BALL



The Bocce League will start the first week of January. 20 teams have signed up for the 2024 season. There are still spots open. There is still room for 4 more teams on Tuesdays. Sign up deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to participate, please send your name and names of your teammates to me. Contact **Rick Johnson** at [MMC.BocceLeague@gmail.com](mailto:MMC.BocceLeague@gmail.com)

## TRAVEL DISCUSSION GROUP



Lively discussion planned regarding latest travel developments and favorite destinations. Plan your travels for the 2024 year. Popular River Cruise destinations and tips from seasoned travelers. Spouses and significant others are welcome. Add your input, ask any questions. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 10:30AM at Ori's Bakery. (See you there)  
Contact Joe Covelli at 412-527-5876 or [jeffersonjoe@comcast.net](mailto:jeffersonjoe@comcast.net)

## MMC TRAVEL CLUB



Marco Island Men's Club has added a new benefit to all members. We have been working on establishing a group travel activity

alongside our Cruise offerings. Future trips will include many destinations that club members have suggested. Our first trip was a 9 Day classic tour of many of our National Parks; MT RUSHMORE, YELLOWSTONE AND GRAND TETON WITH BADLANDS. The Total Cost was \$3164 per person. The trip began on September 19 from RSW and ended on September 27 departing from Salt Lake City.

Contact **Tim Clune** [tclune@gmail.com](mailto:tclune@gmail.com)  
248-980-6142

## SPORTS UPDATE

The NY Jets vs Miami Dolphins football game on Sunday, December 17, 2023 is **Sold Out.**

Also, anyone interested in early season Everblades games or the Harlem Globetrotters in early May, please let me know. **Contact, Jack Martin** at 347-837-2131 or [jitpm11697@yahoo.com](mailto:jitpm11697@yahoo.com)

## HOSPITALITY

Thanks to the guys who set up the room. Chairman, **DON KOPPEL, RICH CARLSEN, DON LALLY,** and **DEREK MULLINDER.**

## MMC HATS AND SHIRTS

The order form for Hats and Shirts is available on-line on the MMC Website, under the **MISCELLANEOUS** header. Click on **CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES** to obtain Order Form and Instructions.

## SICKNESS AND BEREAVEMENT



Club member William Knapp passed away during Thanksgiving week. We Just received notice on bereavement services and celebration of life. Services and memorial will be at San Marco Catholic Church. Funeral mass will be at 10:30AM on Friday, December 15. A reception in the San Marco Parish Hall will follow. Cards may be sent to Liz Knapp, 100 N. Collier Blvd #603, Marco Island, FL 34145

I am saddened to report the passing of club member Steve Riley this last weekend. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Julie and family. At this time, funeral and memorial arrangements are pending. Cards may be sent to Julie Riley, 680 Thrush Court, Marco Island, FL 34145.

Please telephone George Vitta at 586-942-8056 or email [golflover3@yahoo.com](mailto:golflover3@yahoo.com) regarding information of illness or death of members, their spouse, and immediate family. George will notify the MMC board.

# CRUISES



**THE MMC “55<sup>th</sup>” CRUISE**  
**CRUISING SAN JUAN, ST. MARTIN,**  
**ST. THOMAS, DOMINICAN REP.**  
**MARCH 9 – MARCH 16, 2024**

SEVEN NIGHTS ABOARD CELEBRITY’S NEW “APEX” 5 STAR RATED SHIP. THE NEWEST SECOND SHIP IN CELEBRITY’S “EDGE” CLASS. IN ADDITION TO ALL THE AMENITIES MMC EXPERIENCED ON THE “EDGE”, MAGIC CARPET, BEAUTIFUL DESIGN, DÉCOR, INFINITE VERANDAH, BLU ROOM DINING EXCLUSIVE FOR (AQUA CLASS A2) THE NEW ICED MARTINI BAR, A CRAFTED SOCIAL BAR WHERE GUESTS CAN EXPERIENCE DRAFT BEERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THIS SHIP OFFERS FINEST ACCOMODATIONS, “4” CARIBBEAN PORTS OF CALL, EXCLUSIVE OF MEXICO PORTS IN VIEW OF COUNTRIES PRESENT PROBLEMS.

CRUISE “7” NIGHTS ABOARD NEW APEX, REQUIRING NO AIR, ONLY ENJOY A MMC ROUND TRIP MARCO COACH TO SHIPS FT. LAUDERDALE, FL, PORT. THIS MMC CRUISE PACKAGE, INCLUDES ROUND TRIP

COACH FROM MARCO ISLAND TO SHIPS FT. LAUDERDALE, FL. PORT., “7” NIGHTS ABOARD CELEBRITY’S LUXURIOUS NEW SHIP, “THE APEX”, CLUB’S STATEROOMS HAVE THE INFINITY BALCONY, “3” FREE PERKS. 1-CLASSIC BEVERAGE PACKAGE. 2. GRATUITIES. 3. WI-FI, ALL TAXES, FEES, & PORT CHARGES. MMC HAS A SECURED EXCELLENT DISCOUNTS WITH OUR “GROUP RATE”. CURRENTLY “33” PEOPLE BOOKED. SAILING ABOARD A NEW CELEBRITY SHIP IS A WONDERFUL TREAT.

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**THE MMC “56<sup>TH</sup>” CRUISE**  
**ALASKA “8” NIGHT PRE-HOTEL/**  
**CRUISE ABOARD CELEBRITY**  
**“SUMMIT” WITH “6” NIGHT PRE-**  
**LAND OPTION.**  
**MAY 25 – JUNE 7, 2024**

“8” PORTS OF CALL...ANCHORAGE, TALKEETNA, DENALI, SEWARD, JUNEAU, SKAGWAY, ICY STRAIT, KETCHIKAN, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

PACKAGE INCLUDES: AIR (\$1200 ALLOWANCE) 1 NIGHT PRE-HOTEL (EMBASSY SUITES ANCHORAGE), 7 NIGHT CRUISE, TAXES, PORT CHARGES, TRANSFERS, UNLIMITED DRINK PACKAGE, GRATUITIES, WIFI. AQUA CLASS PASSENGERS DINE IN THE SHIP’S BLU DINING ROOM, AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY TO AQUA CLASS GUESTS. BLU REQUIRES NO ADVANCE RESERVATIONS FOR BREAKFAST OR DINNER.

**OPTIONAL “6” NIGHT PRE LAND TOUR:** ARRIVE IN ANCHORAGE WITH AN OVERNIGHT AT ANCHORAGE MARRIOTT. LATER, EMBARK ON A LUXURIOUS RIDE ABOARD THE

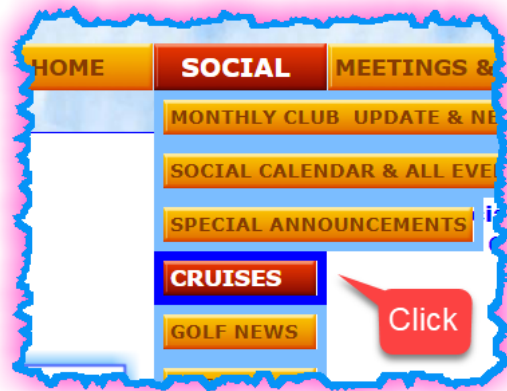
WILDERNESS EXPRESS GLASS-DOMED RAILCAR FOR A SCENIC RIDE TO ONE OF THE MOST PICTURESQUE TOWNS IN ALASKA – TALKEETNA; YOURS TO EXPLORE. FROM THERE YOU WILL BOARD YOUR DELUXE MOTOR COACH FOR THE RIDE TO DENALI AND YOURS TO DISCOVER. 2 NIGHT STAY AT DENALI PARK VILLAGE. THEN EMBARK ON A SCENIC RIDE ABOARD A DELUXE MOTOR COACH TO ANCHORAGE, OVERNIGHT AT HOTEL ALYESKA (GIRDWOOD) AND THEN ON TO SEWARD WHERE YOU JOIN THE CELEBRITY SUMMIT FOR YOUR 7 NIGHT CRUISE TO VANCOUVER.

AT DINING VENUES OR IN ROOM\*\*\*, AND SPECIALTY DINING.

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**GO TO THE CLUBS WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EACH CRUISE. USE THE DROPDOWN MENU (See Image Below) ON ANY WEBPAGE TO GO TO THE CRUISE WEBPAGE FOR THE LATEST FLYER, TRAVELEX INSURANCE, COVID UPDATE AND MUCH MORE.**

**...OR FOLLOW THIS LINK:**

<https://marcomensclub.com/Cruises.htm>



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**THE MMC “57<sup>TH</sup>” CRUISE  
CRUISING BRITISH ISLE PASSAGE  
VISITING AMSTERDAM AND “10”  
PORTS OF CALL  
OCTOBER 22 – NOVEMBER 3, 2024**

“10” PORTS OF CALL... AMSTERDAM,  
NETHERLANDS...EDINBURGH,  
SCOTLAND...KIRKWALL,  
SCOTLAND...ULLAPOOL,  
SCOTLAND...BELFAST, NORTHERN  
IRELAND...HOLYHEAD,  
WALES...CORNWALL,  
ENGLAND...PORTSMOUTH,  
ENGLAND...HON FLEUR (PARIS)  
FRANCE...BRUGES, BELGIUM.  
CRUISE PACKAGE INCLUDES: 11NTS  
ABOARD OCEANIA’S “5.5” STAR SHIP  
“SIRENA”, TAXES, PORT CHARGES,  
GRATUITIES, TRANSFERS, \$1000 AIR  
ALLOWANCE, \$400 PER PERSON  
EXCURSION CREDIT, UNLIMITED  
“HOUSE SELECT” BEVERAGE  
PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDES  
UNLIMITED CHAMPAGNE, WINE AND  
BEER DURING LUNCH AND DINNER

**Contact Bill Rogers at:**  
239-259-8945  
973-978-8884

The Marco Men's Club  
**Speakers Calendar**  
Program Director "OPEN"

**December 13, 2023**

**Dr. Leslie Ricciardelli**  
**Collier County Superintendent of Schools**

**THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN COLLIER COUNTY**

It is my distinct honor to present Dr. Leslie C. Ricciardelli to the MMC membership. Dr. Ricciardelli is the 20<sup>th</sup> superintendent of the *A-rated* Collier County Public School District (CCPS), which, in 2023, celebrates 100 years of excellence in education. CCPS is responsible for educating approximately 50,000 students and employing slightly under 7,000 full- and part-time employees. Dr. Ricciardelli's experiences and expertise within the district and the community have provided her with an in-depth understanding of the expectations and values the people of Collier County have of our public education system.

Earlier in her career, Dr. Ricciardelli worked in three other Florida counties — Broward, Orange, and Seminole — where she served as a teacher for students with disabilities and returned to Collier County to work as an inclusion teacher. Dr. Ricciardelli has served in a variety of capacities: exceptional student

education assistant, teacher, assistant principal, principal, and various district leadership roles where she led in a variety of positions, including Executive Director for Secondary Programs, School Leadership and Performance Officer, and Deputy Superintendent. **Please come share the pride for what we do for students in Collier County!**

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**January 10, 2024**  
**Melissa Blazier**  
**Supervisor of Elections**  
**Collier County, FL**

**Securing the Integrity of the Collier County Voting Process**

Melissa Blazier was appointed as Collier County Supervisor of Elections by Governor DeSantis in May 2023. She has worked for the Supervisor of Elections office since 2006 most recently serving as Chief Deputy Supervisor of Elections under Jennifer J. Edwards.

Blazier holds a bachelor's degree in business administration, magna cum laude, from Hodges University. She received her designation as a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA) from the National Association

of Election Officials (Election Center) and is a Master Florida Certified Elections Professional (MFCEP) through the Florida Supervisors of Elections (FSE).

She is a graduate of the Associate Leadership Collier program spring class of 2010, Leadership Collier class of 2014 and Leadership Marco class of 2019. Melissa was named one of Gulf Shore Business's Top Forty under 40 in 2014, Distinguished Fundraising Volunteer via the Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2018, the Leadership Collier Foundation's Volunteer of the Year in 2020 and was most recently named Kiwanian of the Year by the Kiwanis Club of Naples in 2022.

Blazier is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Post 135, Election Center, Kiwanis Club of Naples, Leadership Collier Alumni Association, League of Women Voters, Men's Republican Club of Collier County, Naples Republican Club, Republican Club of South Collier County, Republican Women of Southwest Florida Federated, and the Women's Republican Club. She currently serves on the Leadership Collier Foundation Advisory Council and is President of the Kiwanis Club of Naples.

***In an age where the legitimacy of the voting process has repeatedly been called into question, it is important to know what is done in Collier County to secure the integrity of the vote.***

**February 14, 2024**

**Brittany Piersma**

**Field Biologist**

**Audubon Western Everglades (AWE)**

I am pleased to present our Valentine's Day speaker, Ms. Brittany Piersma! Brittany will speak to the membership regarding the 3 critical conservation projects here on Marco: Burrowing Owls, Gopher Tortoises and Shorebirds.

Brittany has a BS in Environmental Science and previously worked as a zookeeper at the Naples Zoo for 4 years. She has a wide range of experience with Southwest Florida's wildlife from volunteering with FWC (Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission), Rookery Bay, Panther Refuge, and Audubon.

Ms. Piersma worked as FWC's Critical Wildlife Area Shorebird Biologist for the last three summers on Marco Island, where she monitored nesting shorebirds out on Sand Dollar. The last two winters she worked as a Shorebird Steward for Audubon Western Everglades surveying the migratory flocks, training volunteers, and doing outreach with the public.

As Field Biologist for AWE, Brittany maintains continuing wintering bird surveys, assists with the burrowing owl program as well as our new Gopher Tortoise land study.

**Come learn more about the creatures that share Marco Island with you!**



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**Please contact your Program Director, with any speaker recommendations or topics that you would like to have presented at the monthly meeting.**

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**Program Director “Open”**

December 2023

# Golf News



John Laird, Golf Chairman

Cell: 920-366-4652

Email: [jglaird64@gmail.com](mailto:jglaird64@gmail.com)

## December Golf News

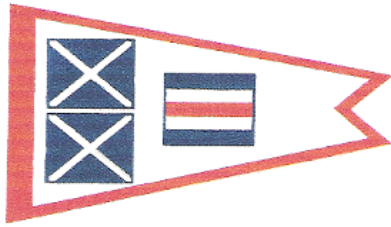
The newly renovated Hibiscus golf course opened December 1<sup>st</sup>. The frequent player card will cost \$325+tax and will cover December through April 2024. Green Fees for our group in December will be \$98 plus tax w/o the FPC and \$76 plus tax with the FPC. Green Fees January through March will be \$125 plus tax w/o the FPC and \$98 plus tax with the card. April fees will be comparable to December and will be finalized at a later date.

### MMC GOLF COORDINATORS WINTER 2023-2024

December	Monday	<b>Lou Makris</b>	<a href="mailto:loumak42@aol.com">loumak42@aol.com</a>	781-258-0456
January	Monday	<b>Roger Smith</b>	<a href="mailto:rsmith186@aol.com">rsmith186@aol.com</a>	910-975-5221
February	Monday	<b>Ron Bales</b>	<a href="mailto:rpbmi@comcast.net">rpbmi@comcast.net</a>	239-389-5587
March	Monday	<b>George Vitta</b>	<a href="mailto:golflover3@yahoo.com">golflover3@yahoo.com</a>	586-942-8056

Thank you to all of the coordinators! Our group would not function without you.

**John Laird**



# THE MARCO MEN'S CLUB

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*The Newsletter is published by the Marco Men's Club.*

*The Board of Directors is the Editorial Board.*

**December 2023**

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Dave Tobiasz  
**President Emeritus:** Warren Uhl  
**Senior Vice President:** Mike Ballenger  
**Vice President:** Steve Furlong  
**Vice President:** Tom Kramer  
**Vice President:** Rob Reiley  
**Vice President:** Arne Sandberg  
**Secretary:** Jerry Defibaugh  
**Treasurer:** Rudi Landwaard

### APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

**Membership Chair:** Byron Farrell  
**Hospitality:** Don Koppel  
**Public Relations:** Dave Walsh  
**Theater Chair:** Open  
**Golf Chair:** John Laird  
**Sports Chair:** Jack Martin  
**Bocce Coordinator:** Rick Johnson  
**Program Director:** "Open"  
**Cruise Chair:** Bill Rogers  
**Sergeant-At-Arms:** Mike Levine  
**Sickness/Bereavement Chair:** George Vitta  
**Newsletter Editor:** Lou Makris  
**Constant Contact eBlasts:** Les Konkoly  
**Investment Discussion Club:** Don Koppel  
**Computer/Technology Club:** Steve Furlong  
**Travel Discussion Group:** Joe Covelli  
**MMC Travel Club:** Tim Clune  
**Webmaster:** Ed Crane

[www.marcomensclub.com](http://www.marcomensclub.com)

### Past Presidents (\*indicates deceased):

1992: Paul Kurtzman	1993: Bill Perdichizzi	1994: Harold Penn*	1995: Bob Marks
1996: George Kuntz*	1997: Alan Wetjen*	1998: George Godfrey	1999: Jerry Stought*
2000: Jerry Stought*	2001: Ned Wright	2002: Al Bozzo	2003: Ken Molander
2004: Bob Gaffney	2005: Wayne Boose	2006: Tom Traeger*	2007: Joe Cassidy*
2008: Fred Stavola	2009: Joe Varano	2010: Bill Sullivan	2011: Sam Miloro
2012: Randle Grossman	2013: Jack DeHanas	2014: John Superits	2015: Warren Dettinger*
2016: Dan Flynn	2017: Silky Sullivan	2018: Bill Rogers	2019: Jeff Dywan
2020: Jerry Swiacki	2021: Jerry Swiacki	2022: Warren Uhl	