



# I Remember When

## Coastal Cleanup • June 11 World Ocean Day

I remember, over 50 years ago when I was a 10-year-old kid, my curiosity often exceeded my common sense. Example: one afternoon, I was bicycling down Bayshore Boulevard and spotted a blue crab swimming toward the seawall. In order to get a better view, I stuck my head through the balustrades. After observing the crab for a few minutes, I tried to pull my head out but, unfortunately, my head was locked between the columns. I was stuck. Panic engulfed me and I ignored my ears and pulled, forcing my head out. The results were two bloody ears, but I learned an important lesson — often it is easier to get into something than it is to get out.

Fast forward 50 years and the Bayshore landscape is much improved. Now there are even crab traps 100 yards off the seawall.

While this is a good sign, there still are a few other issues to address. The city allocates considerable resources to maintenance of the roads, the beautification of the medians and sidewalk repairs. However well maintained the landside of Bayshore Boulevard is, the waterside is left to its own devices.

I guess the city has its hands full not addressing problems with the bay such as higher than normal salinity levels with the residue salt being dumped into the bay from the desalination plant (when it is working), slag mountains of low level radioactive

Reported by **Bayshore Bob**, Hyde Park resident  
Photos by **Stewart Lippe**, Hyde Park resident

sand left over from the phosphate extraction process and even raw sewage overflowing into the Hillsborough River and into the bay when there is excessive rain, which is very often in the summer.

However, there is some good news; there are citizens who take their personal initiative to solve problems city government ignores.

I was very fortunate to talk recently with Dr. Elizabeth (Liv) Carpenter and Maj. David Zielinski about their organization Beautify Bayshore's Waters, which is under the umbrella of "Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful." The inspiration for Liv and David's organization came after last year's Gasparilla parade when the bay was littered with plastic cups, bottles, broken coolers,





Dr. Liv Carpenter and Major David Zielinski



beads and other debris left over from the parade. While the boulevard was cleaned up overnight, the bay was left to the winds, tides and currents. Unfortunately, that solution doesn't solve the problem; it just disperses the problem, since it takes 25,000 years for some of these items to decompose, meanwhile disturbing the habitat of all marine life.

Dr. Carpenter, a jogger who wears out the sidewalk on Bayshore, has a deep appreciation for the natural aquatic world that exists in the bay. She has seen everything from dolphins capturing "jacks" to peaceful manatees munching on seaweed, mullet jumping to sea turtles. Besides a parade of seagulls and pelicans, there is also an incredible variety of birds: ospreys, great blue and gray herons, snowy egrets, anhinga, cormorants and even an occasional roseate spoonbill. As she said, there is a whole world out there for us all to enjoy, much better

than Sea World. However, the trash interferes with the aesthetic experience. Even more important are the plastic bags, bottles and other debris that pose a threat to the ecology of the underwater environment and all the marine life in the bay.

Liv and David put their ideas into action and on their own time and expense. With their crew of volunteers, I had the pleasure of joining them on their most recent clean up. The volunteers are a wide-ranging group from pre-med students at USF to Army and Air Force personnel, all of whom are very enthusiastic. They don't hesitate to slide into the murky waters to retrieve whatever piece of trash has been spotted. They work hard doing a hard job and with such cheerful dispositions. It was a treat to witness such a cooperative community spirit as they retrieved hundreds of plastic cups and bottles, coolers, beach chairs, tires and even a shopping cart. People passing by on Bayshore Boulevard sidewalk would shout out their thanks and gratitude, which was encouraging to the team's spirit. They collected 20 55-gallon garbage bags full last time out. They go out once every three months on pontoon boats made available by MacDill Air Force Base with experienced boat

captains. They catalogue all the trash recovered and send this information to a state, national and international data bases so the information can be compared and contrasted with other part of the world and analyzed for further research.

These two remarkable individuals are pillars of the Hyde Park community. Dr. Carpenter's day job is administering her patients and Maj. Zielinski's job at MacDill is defending our country. These are both consuming careers, yet they still find the time to take on local environmental problems. They are not only kind and generous but heroes and an inspiration for all of us to emulate.

**If you would like to learn more about Beautify Bayshore's Waters, volunteer for the next clean-up or make a donation, go to their website, <http://www.BeautifyBayshore.com> or email at [Beautify.bayshore@gmail.com](mailto:Beautify.bayshore@gmail.com).**