



Serving Dr. Phillips ... Windermere ... Bay Hill ... Orange Tree ... Ocoee ...
Downtown... Winter Garden ... Williamsburg ... Baldwin Park ... Winter Park ... Maitland ...
Casselberry...

PRICE 75 CENTS

ESTABLISHED 1980 • SPECIAL EDITION

MAY 07, 2020

REMEMBERING OUR FOUNDER ROGER SWANSON: 1925-2020

Born in 1925, Roger Swanson grew up in Kansas City, MO and from a young age took to journalism and aviation. His grandparents were poor farmers from Sweden and Germany.

Though his father barely graduated the fifth grade, he worked his way up in a photo engraving firm to provide a middle class living for his three sons and wife even during the Great Depression. Swanson attended Paseo high school and rose to the position of editor for his school year book. While at Paseo he also enlisted in Army JROTC, both events being preludes to his future path.

Following graduation from high school, Swanson enlisted in the US Army Air Force without being drafted. He quickly completed officer training, and graduated as a Second Lieut. His official duties were public relations officer and navigator in B-17s and B-24s.

Serving in the US Army Air Force, his career took him all across the US and then to East Anglia briefly at the close of the war in Europe. Swanson spent the bulk of his service in WWII guarding the Panama Canal Zone and flying on missions throughout Latin America. His responsibilities included conducting

patrol missions for aerial reconnaissance on Japanese subs as an aerial navigator and serving as the chief editor for *The Beach Times* in Rio Hato, Panama. Following the war, Swanson returned home to begin college and attended Kansas State University. He graduated with a degree in Journalism and picked up a job with the *Kansas City Star* while studying as their official correspondent in Manhattan, KS.

While he wrote and studied, Swanson cultivated a close working friendship with the President of the school, Milton Eisenhower whose brother Dwight Eisenhower served in WWII as the Supreme Allied Commander. While at KSU, he also met his wife Shirley Bynum. The two wed in Kansas City, MO on the Plaza the day he graduated. They then honeymooned in Florida, a foreshadowing of things to come.

During his tenure at the *Kansas City Star* from the late 40s through the early 1970s, Roger Swanson served as both Assistant Editor for the Sunday edition, jet-setting the globe as a Travel Editor, visiting over 100 countries. Swanson also learned to fly and remained a pilot for nearly 50 years... **CONTINUED PAGE 3**



KEEPING THE FAITH IN GOTHA

GOTHA, FL

When you think of Gotha, you probably imagine beautiful houses on the lake, Yellow Dog Eats and the gorgeous white church. The town of Gotha originally served as a German settlement in the year 1885. Though the growth of the town did not pick up until the 1960-80s, the town did develop its own character up until that time. The white church or chapel in the town center remains a centerpiece and icon to this day.

Founded by Lutherans who still own the property, the church is now rented out by a bilingual Hispanic church in the area which ministers to residents who speak both English and Spanish. Though Coronavirus may dampen religious services, the church still continues online with virtual services. The church is pastored by Emmanuel Lugo who is from the denomination of Apostolic Churches... **CONTINUED PAGE 5**



LAST ORANGE GROVES IN SOUTHWEST?

WINDERMERE, FL

Time moves so quickly that on occasion we lose track. Over the years with the increase in development, Orange County's namesake, oranges, vanished from the scene at lightning speed. While most welcome the development (albeit with the obvious traffic issues as a major negative), some old timers feel as if things moved a little too fast and that history disappeared along with the groves. Teenagers once upon a time drove back into many of the groves for a bit of adventure in their new pickup trucks. Families took hikes among the groves to pick the Oranges which were in such number that the owners didn't seem to mind. Development is key to the future of Florida. When the pandemic is over with, some experts suggest we may remain in this so-called new normal, although... **CONTINUED PAGE 4**



ROGER SWANSON: A LIFE IN PHOTOS



ABOUT THE ORLANDO LOCAL NEWS

The Orlando Local News was originally founded by Roger Swanson in 1980. His founding of *The Local News* followed a distinguished career in media and public relations that began in the US Army Air Force and eventually took him to the Kansas City Star where he served as Travel Editor and Sunday Editor. Later, Swanson moved to Florida where he served as Vice President of Public Relations at Walt Disney World. He then branched out into broadcast news on Channels 9 and 6 in Orlando before founding *The Local News*.

A one of a kind publication, this newspaper seeks only to protect and enhance the interests of the citizens living in these communities, to become a guardian in a sense of the beauty, the privileges, the freedoms and the challenges which make this area such a desirable and delightful place to live. We have no axes to grind; no particular philosophical or political point of view to expound. All of us engaged in the newspaper are neighbors or friends of these communities.

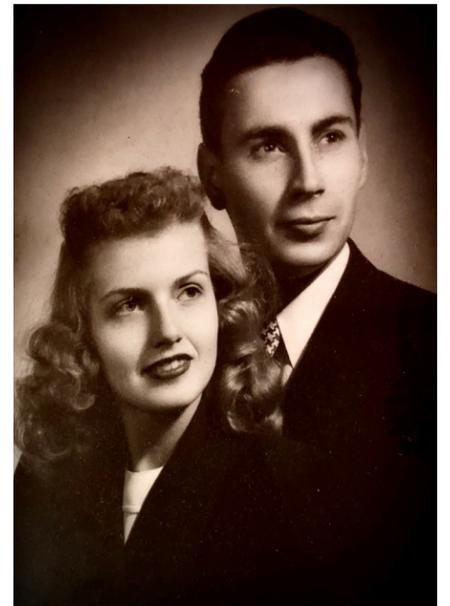
The editor of *The Local News* is Marshall Swanson, who has been involved in radio, government,

philanthropy and politics for many years. The main reason for the existence of The Orlando Local News is bringing a voice to a wilderness- a wilderness that lacks a voice, a point of view — or simply lacks the coverage of news, current events and personalities in these communities most wish to hear. Other publications simply have not paid much attention to these residents.

We refuse to submit to the pattern of conformity so prevalent among a majority of news publications in this area: out of touch, out of town corporate newspapers seeking nothing less than to gin up division and ideological propaganda in our homes.

The editorial board of this paper will certainly give opinions on matters and topics pertinent to the community represented in this publication. However, we will allow any of those opposed to our point of view a place to voice their opinions, unlike most papers in this area.

TOP RIGHT: Swanson and his wife Shirley Jane, not only a soulmate, but also advertising manager for *The Local News*. Her recipes were featured in the section "Shirley Jane's Cook Book." The two bore three children.



BOTTOM LEFT: Most important to Swanson was his family, taking them across the globe as a pilot. The children later took part in the management of the paper. Pictured left

Editor Emeritus..... Roger Swanson
Editor..... Marshall Swanson



PHOTO KEY*

See "ROGER SWANSON: A Life in Photos" on page 2

1. A young Swanson learned to love bow-ties, a trait he acquired and kept for the rest of his life. During his time at Paseo High School he served as yearbook Editor of the Paseon.

2. One of Swanson's bombing crews during his time as an aerial navigator in WWII. Crews on B-17s and B-24s referred to their planes as "ships" but the job came with far more danger than a pleasure cruise. Aside from the possibility of enemy attack, mechanical and weather issues caused many hazards. Swanson recounted that on one landing, the pilot hit ground rough, the plane almost flipped. However, that didn't stop the mess hall from having a good laugh that evening as the band played "Straighten Up and Fly Right."

3. Swanson published a newspaper for the US Army Air Forces in Panama called *The Beach Times* distributed in Albrook, Rio Hato and surrounding cities.

4. Traveling to over 100 countries as Travel Editor for the Kansas City Star, Swanson is pictured here in Egypt at the Great Pyramids in Giza, Cairo.

5. Paris, London and Rome were Swanson's favorite cities. He is pictured in the photo at the Trevi Fountain in Rome.

*Photos read clockwise from top left quadrant of page

..... Moreover, the Star frequently dispatched him on a wide variety of special investigations and interviews where he encountered everyone from politicians to gangsters, though his Republican sentiments made him ask if there were a difference. In the 1950s, Disneyland took off and transformed into a national icon overnight. To cover the new park for the Star, Swanson, traveled to meet Walt Disney and tour Disneyland with his public relations director Charlie Ridgeway. That decision opened the path way years later to move to Florida as the Vice President of Public relations for the new Disney Florida project in the 1970s.

During his time at Walt Disney World, Swanson escorted celebrities and held events for famous movies stars and important guests such as Jonas Salk, who discovered the vaccine for Polio. In addition, Swanson helped organize the now infamous Nixon "I am not a crook" press conference at the Contemporary Resort. One of his greatest honors included announcing the preliminary plans for constructing EPCOT, Walt Disney's final wish.

Leaving Disney at the close of the 1970s, Swanson branched out into television broadcast news as

a local anchor for several news stations including Channel 9 News and Channel 6 News.

His experience with being Sunday editor and travel writer at the Star left a yearning for print journalism. The foundations of his career were based in writing and he sought to bring about a new type of journalism to central Florida - one that spoke the language of the reader and not that of some left-wing do-gooder at a corporate paper.

In his time as Editor, *The Orlando Local News* stretched from Lake Buena Vista to central Seminole County. Based in Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill, Swanson and his family enjoyed a friendship with Palmer and always specially promoted the Bay Hill Classic.

Though Swanson retired a decade after opening the paper, his legacy lives on with the rich central Florida history found on its pages. Upon hearing of his death, Congressman John Mica stated, "he was truly part of the greatest generation and I was honored to know him." Roger Swanson's life represents the American Dream at its best.

His belief in the values of patriotism, faith and hard work embody the best in America and live on to this day in his family and

legacy. He and his wife Shirley bore three children (Mark, Nancy and Anne), five grandchildren and one great grandchild. Swanson passed away in Winter Garden on May 7, 2020.

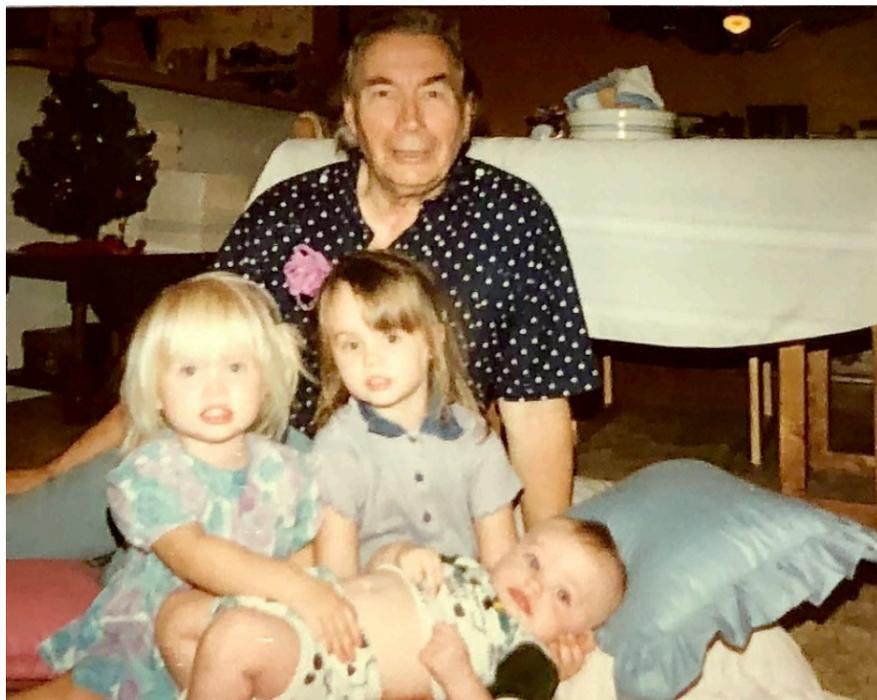
TOP LEFT: Swanson waves goodbye in his Piper Arrow as he taxis toward the runway. A strong Christian man of faith, his favorite scriptural passage found in Psalm 91 verse five was in part derived from his flying: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day."

* * * * *

BOTTOM LEFT: Swanson with his grandchildren-Christie, Nikki, Marshall

* * * * *

BOTTOM RIGHT: Swanson and his parents at his childhood home in Kansas City, MO. His two older brothers Lester and Russell predeceased him.



"ORANGE YOU COMING BACK, GROVES?" SOME LONG - TIME RESIDENTS PONDER...

NOSTALGIA: A LONGING FOR OLD FLORIDA

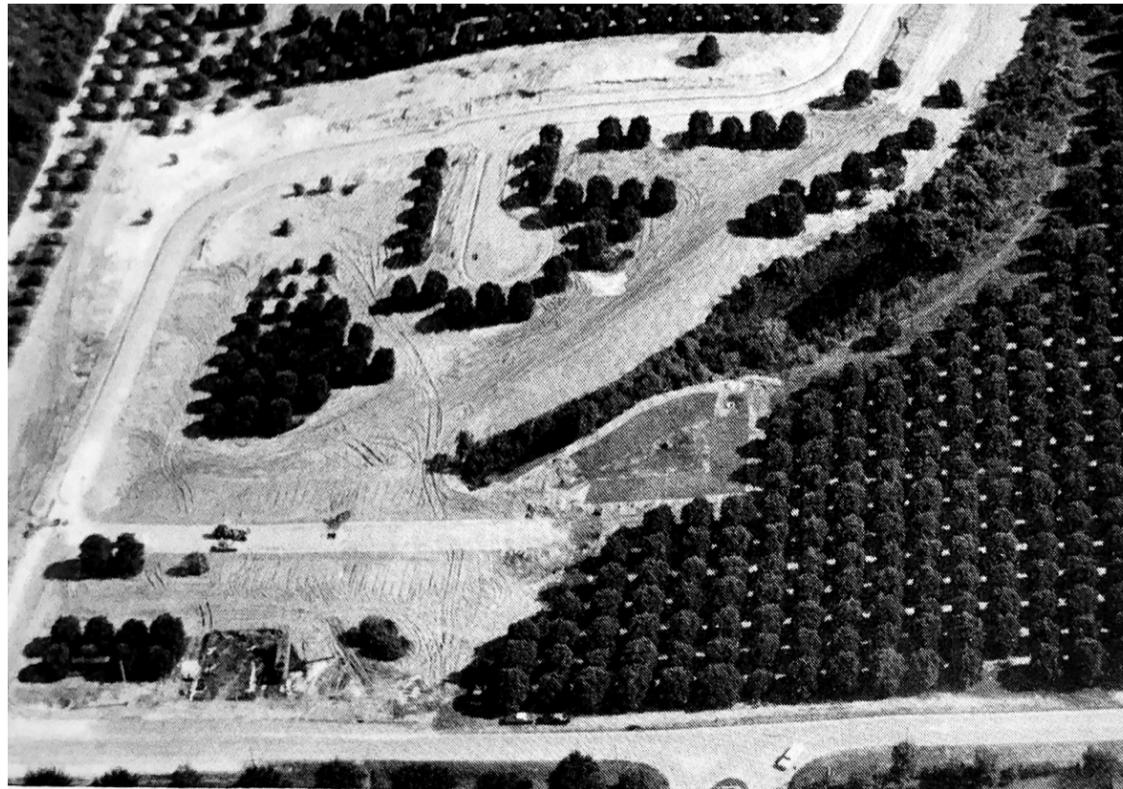
...their opponents reject this idea. If the latter is right and development returns to normal following the pandemic, what will become of the last few remaining orange groves in our area of FL?

Meandering around town on a Sunday drive from the Sand Lake area to Windermere, one can still witness a few remnants of this fading Florida past stamped out almost entirely by theme parks, houses and developments everywhere. The last Orange grove in Dr. Phillips disappeared around 2016-17 as the construction of a new health center began to take place adjacent to the Southwest Public Library.

The picture at the top right of this piece is in Windermere where only two Orange groves

exist. The property obviously holds more value than the groves produce. Likely in both cases the reason for their existence has less to do with nostalgic sentiments and more with tax breaks for agricultural property. The same situation exists off Sand Lake near Darryll Carter Parkway.

Undoubtedly these will disappear too. Property with a value as high as these should not be wasted on sentimentality. However, all residents should be encouraged to keep the tradition alive by planting their own Oranges. In the age of social distancing and Coronavirus, self sustenance is key to economic preservation. What better way to start than by planting your own Orange tree, in the neighborhood or the county?



TOP RIGHT: A piece of prime real estate on the road into downtown Windermere showcases freshly planted orange trees.

* * * * *

SECOND FROM TOP: Sand Lake groves awaiting development near Turkey Lake Road and Darryl Carter Pkwy.

* * * * *

THIRD FROM TOP: The last groves in Dr. Phillips, removed around 2016-17.

* * * * *

LEFT: Orange groves in a subdivision now adjacent to the YMCA on Wallace Road in Doctor Phillips c. 1980s, photo credit Roger Swanson.

BAY HILL BALLYHOO

For years Gladin Court in Bay Hill seemed just like the rest of the neighborhood: beautiful but aging. Dated homes and structures everywhere fall under the keen eye of investors seeking to flatten the old and raise the new. As seen in the photo pictured right, smaller and more modest Bay Hill originals fall and mansions rise in their place. Though both Bay Hill and neighborhoods such as Isleworth attract buyers of proximate wealth, each subdivision represents a different vision and spirit.

By removing aging and less mammoth houses in Bay Hill, the neighborhood loses the quaint charm it possessed in the heyday of the neighborhood's development. Certainly Arnold Palmer was no poor man. His wealth grew and grew to the point of his passing and beyond.. Why did Palmer decide not to build and buy multi-million dollar homes everywhere in the world, including Bay Hill?

THE LAST OF PALMER'S BAY HILL?

The answer is simple: his humility and Christian modesty. There is nothing wrong with living "high on the hog" or "keeping up with the Joneses" in every case. After all, Palmer did create the Isleworth Golf and Country Club from his own imagination. However, most days in Bay Hill, you'd find Arnold Palmer riding his golf cart with his dog.

Palmer lived for the most part in a condo by the marina. He always went out of his way to chat with everyone no matter the station they came from or their current economic or social status. He often paid for secret college scholarships for poor workers and never asked for anything in return.

The same quaint, modest and moral qualities that Palmer lived out in his life manifested in his golf course, living quarters and development. To erode the original nature of Bay Hill does an injustice not only to Arnold Palmer, Frank Hubbard and so many more, but also to the sense of community among neighbors and neighborhoods in the area.



TOP: A new home built in place of a previously modest house.
BOTTOM: A vacant lot on Gladin Court.



LET'S REPAINT DOCTOR PHILLIPS' WATER TOWER



Most residents of Dr. Phillips agree: the water tower needs a revamp. When taking into consideration the number of years since the tower last felt the brush of wet paint and the public appetite for such a project, an opportunity for great improvement abounds. Towns such as Casselberry found this opportunity a boon not only for their town spirit but also a way to increase property values.

The tower in Dr. Phillips certainly does not suffer the same level of decrepit aging as Casselberry's did. However, a simple glance comparison of the two leaves no room for doubt that improvement is necessary now. Why don't our leaders see the need to improve a potentially beautiful work of art but instead spend most of their efforts on worthless aerial crosswalks such as the one by Colonial Drive and I-4? With only a small portion of tax dollars, or even funds from generous coffers of the Dr. Phillips Foundation,

this task can be easily brought to fruition. Imagine the Dr. Phillips water tower with the beautiful logo painted on with pride! For many years, the brick wall which now exists bordering the Sand Lake Hills subdivision failed to be built for several reasons, including the lack of a homeowners association. Finally, the task underwent completion after enough residents complained. Today, the wall can be credited not only with greater privacy for residents but also raising property values in the area.

With impending development constantly on the fringes of our community, a project such as this could bolster our community's standing in Central Florida and make Dr. Phillips an even more pleasant place to live. Our water tower should be a place of pride and honor - and this project will accomplish that in a wonderful way by preserving a centerpiece of our community, especially in these difficult times.



**STILL OPEN!!!
COME AND
SEE US NOW!
AT
MCDONALD'S**

GOINGS ON IN GOTHA

KEEPING THE FAITH IN GOTHA CONTINUED...

Despite the fact that the original German-American community is all but extinct in the area, residents still recall the past. When the wilderness of Gotha originally met the settlers from a small town in Germany, nothing could be better for the community.

A new town hall was built and the town witnessed real and substantive growth. The work of that growth proceeds today at lightning speed and will undoubtedly progress in the future.

The most admirable thing about the community of Gotha is its enduring small town charm, despite the changes in the times. With Coronavirus many things change, but in Gotha, the centerpiece of the town will always be a place of pride, whoever occupies the buildings.

Only the destruction of these structures themselves could alter the nature and character of the town. Until that day, yellow dogs, chickens and smiling residents will continue to cross the road to the sunny side of every Gotha street.

WARBIRD ADVENTURES!

**LEARN TO FLY VINTAGE WAR MACHINES!!!
EXPERIENCE THE PAST AS NEVER BEFORE!!!**



www.warbirdadventures.com

Tel. 407-870-7366

CHRISTINI'S AND LINDA'S: OUR PICKS TO GET YOU THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

TAKE THE MASK OFF AND GRAB A BITE



BALDWIN BANTER

LINDA'S LA CANTINA

We went to a classic Orlando establishment, Linda's La Cantina, which first opened in 1947 and has been known for their amazing steaks. Linda's is located on the edge of Baldwin Park. Before Baldwin Park existed, it was a Naval Air Station and they served servicemen and women here for years. Their walls pay tribute to those military veterans and their history here in Orlando. Due to the pandemic, Linda's La Cantina was closed on their anniversary - March 17 which is St. Patrick's Day. In their entire history, they have never had to close like this. Like all restaurants in (most of) Florida, Linda's can only be at less than normal capacity. It's tough for any restaurant to survive this way, but the owner, Karen (Al & Linda's daughter) has been running the place since she took it over in 1984.

Linda's daughter Karen worked her way up from the bottom to the top. She began as a server and then became not only the Vice President of the company but eventually the owner of the restaurant. Her mother Linda passed roughly ten years ago but the steaks still taste as good as they did in 1947. Karen's family came from German lineage and many of their secret recipes derive ingredients from their heritage. Her grandparents, Edie and Rudy, lived in Louisville, KY and were originally jewelers. Her parents bought Linda's La Cantina from the D'Agostino family who also owned a restaurant on 17-92 called Villa Nova Restaurant.

A fire in 1994 nearly wiped out the business and the family. In the end, the family's faith and perseverance led to the preservation of their restaurant. Karen credits her grandfather's strong faith in God to his success. When asked about his deepest held belief Karen said: "My grandfather always said, 'In life, when you help people, whenever you see one little thing you can do that's the most important thing.'" Near the end of the meal, she came by and chatted with us for nearly a half hour, telling us stories and answering our questions. People like her are like libraries full of stories and history.

Linda's La Cantina has 31 full-time people on staff here and they've been able to hold on to all of them. She applied for the PPP loan but nothing has come in yet, but she's hopeful they will get something - 75% of the government grant will go to payroll for her staff. After just a few days of being reopened, Karen told us she feels like they will survive and we will all be fine. People are not afraid to come out and eat there. In fact, she has had to turn people away to keep with the lesser capacity rule.

Linda's La Cantina takes reservations and we had to come here late on one of the initial nights the dining establishment re-opened. The rest of the week, they are only available for 4:00pm and 9:00pm reservations. All other times are booked! During the shut down, they took the opportunity to paint the veranda outside and install some new designer "backs" to those booths, which are usually more open between tables. These booth backs provide an additional way to keep everyone safe and more socially distant. There's probably a reason they've been in business for over 73 years. They have thought of every way to survive and keep the secret family recipe alive for patrons like us.

During the first week restaurants were re-opened after the Coronavirus shutdown, we took the opportunity to dine out at a restaurant every day to support these local businesses and their wait staff, but this one was probably the most special one - and we came dressed for the occasion! In fact, this was the first opportunity I had to wear my new sport coat which I had ordered before the pandemic! It finally got some mileage tonight. Thank you to the Editor for introducing me to Linda's La Cantina.

WHAT'S UP DOC? D.P. CHAT

CHRISTINI'S RESTAURANT

Though many restaurants now operate at 25% capacity following the partial opening of business, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic seems to linger on without end but one restaurant in particular runs with an energizer-bunny like resilience. Christini's Ristorante Italiano's longevity over the years places the world famous restaurant in a special category all of its own: icon. How did such a restaurant last with so much success for so many years, you might ask? Hurricanes, fierce corporate competition, recession and now the COVID-19 pandemic present major obstacles to most business enterprises and restaurants. Christini's restaurant overcomes these challenges as a result of their high quality service and distinguished reputation. Many establishments do not live up to the hype. Christini's surpasses expectations.

Born to a poor Greek and Italian family in Sparta, Greece, like his ancestors, Chris Christini has always been a fighter. Immigrating to the United States, he worked his way up from the bottom as he trained in New York under restaurateur Joe Baum. His history prior to founding Christini's Ristorante Italiano includes being a veteran of such establishments as the 21 Club in New York, The Four Seasons and opening the original Italian Pavilion at EPCOT among many more great posts. In the early 1980s, development in Orlando boomed but wilderness still abounded in the mean time. This wilderness served as the launch pad for Christini's world famous restaurant. Chris Christini took a gamble that many believed would fail. Instead, his restaurant achieved heights thought to be impossible by most his contemporaries. This paper served as one of the earliest supporters of Christini's and continues to give his incredible establishment an A+.

With a history of four decades of fine dining in the Central Florida area, Christini's boasts of guests as varied as Pat Sajak, Rudy Guiliani and Kiss. The late Arnold Palmer held a close friendship with owner Chris Christini and many local power players and socialites dine frequently in addition to the thousands of guests who flock to the restaurant from around the world.

Of course many people also enjoy the classy and nostalgic atmosphere for special occasions as they dine to the serenade of a world renown accordionist over Christini's finest wine and some delicious veal or pasta. The Coronavirus pandemic may have brought this charming evening extravaganza to a brief pause in April, but the good news is you can still order Christini's for carry-out, or dine in the restaurant social distancing style. And while may we not be able to travel to Italy at the moment, we can bring some of Italy home, compliments of Chris Christini.

JULIAN PROPERTIES
(407) 291-4900

**LOOKING FOR
YOUR**



HOME SWEET HOME?

CALL NOW!!!!

VETERANS CEMETERY IN PERIL AS DEVELOPER FLATTENS LAND



DR. PHILLIPS, FL

An unassuming forest lies on the outskirts of Doctor Phillips, Florida nearby Walt Disney World Resort. At first glance, the landscape appears typical of any pine forest in Central Florida. But walk a few yards into the wood and a cemetery begins to emerge. Founded in the 1880s, not much persists of the old town of Vineland in the year 2020, except for the graves of a few forgotten Union soldiers.

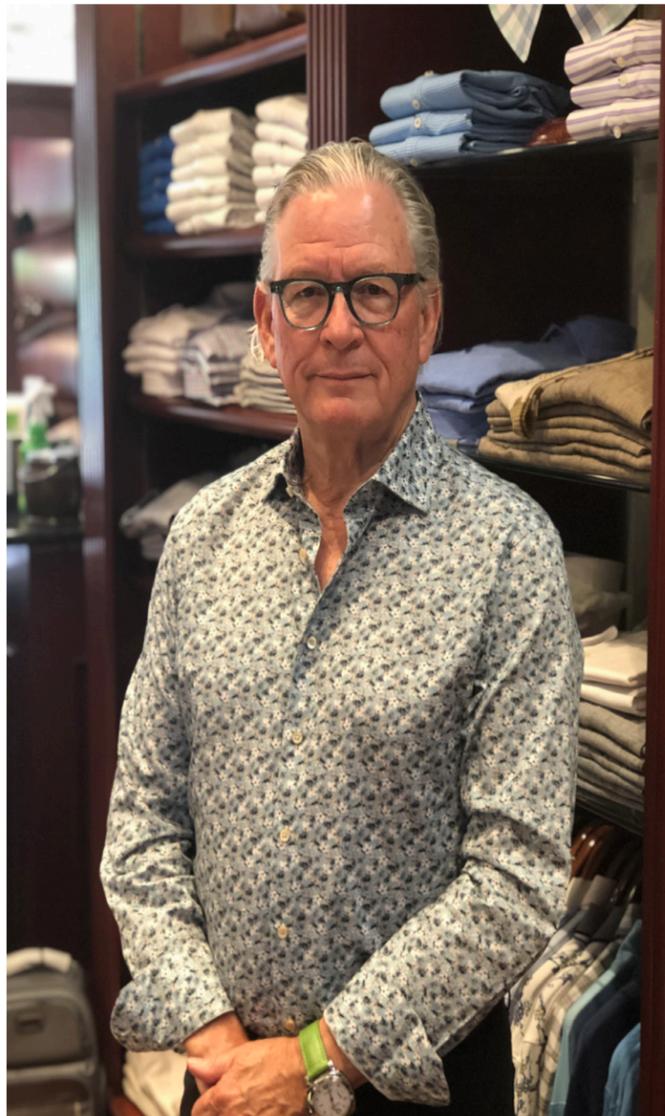
The constant hum of bulldozers and cranes next-door remains a steady reminder of the land's impending fate, just as the building of a mega mosque nears completion in the neighboring lot. Following the conclusion of the mosque project, the forest will be razed to make way for the construction of a new strip mall to service the burgeoning community in the area. The project originally called for a park to be built around the cemetery. However, community leaders and the developer decided against this provision and instead opted to place a shopping mall on the lot.

Several years ago, a Boy Scout troop restored the cemetery. One of the scouts, who now studies politics in college, said this about the lack of leadership in our community on the issue: "Woke activists and the so-called 'moral capitalists' of corporate America laud the removal of Confederate statues and monuments they consider evil. At the same time, many of the historic places and memorials in honor of the Union, like Vineland Union Cemetery, waste away without regard." "Without value as a political tool, these sites serve little purpose in the arsenal of left-wing activists, nor do they figure well into the publicity stunts pulled by corporate America or the media in an effort to appear more conscientious about past injustices."

We here at The Orlando Local News believe that our veterans deserve more than being dishonored by having their final resting place desecrated by bulldozers, parking lots or apartment buildings. We ask for government officials to step up to the plate and make right this injustice toward those who gave the last full measure of devotion.

JOHN CRAIG: STILL OPTIMISTIC THROUGH PANDEMIC

WINTER PARK PASTIMES



Many people leave a legacy. Ever heard of John Craig? You may know that name from Park Avenue in Winter Park. Today Craig DeLongy owns two stores on the Avenue which provide the highest quality male clothing to buyers in the Florida area, and the world. He currently owns seven stores across the state of Florida. He got into the business after starting several sports stores in the mid-1990s but gradually gravitated towards clothing. Though he did not know his grandfather as intimately as you might think, he wrote a book along with other family members about his past.

However, this past was mainly fictional. Nonetheless, it followed historical lines that his grandfather might have followed. In honor of his grandfather's past he set about naming his new business after him: John Craig.

As to the COVID-19 pandemic, Craig says he isn't worried about his business but more so health: "It's very serious but some of the restrictions have gone too far... When we came in Monday we scoured this place and we scrubbed everything on Sunday and we were ready to open Monday... We have been doing very good business since we opened back up but not like before. By Christmas I think our losses will taper down and profits will increase over time."

We asked Craig about business on the Avenue and he said that the community seems to be working together to support each other and that he likes the community cohesiveness in Winter Park:

"There's a lot of businesses that still remained closed but through social media and friends people still do business and remain connected."

Though President Trump and Governor Ron Desantis have been criticized by the main stream media for their efforts in the pandemic, Craig gave a different perspective: "I have zero problem with either one. I think they've done a beautiful job. Everyone knows President Trump will say the wrong things at the wrong time. If the Congress hadn't been so hellbent on impeaching this president in January they could have tackled it. As far as DeSantis I think he inherited this mess of unemployment and he's doing the best he can."

His most important business investment he says is his people and his customers: "the two biggest assets I have are my people and my incredible customers." His most important virtue? "Putting customers first!"

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES, WE WILL MISS YOU!

REMEMBERING ROGER SWANSON:

1925-2020



About the Editor:

Marshall Swanson is the grandson of founder Roger Swanson. He is the current Editor of The Orlando Local News. He previously worked in the US House of Representatives, operated in the field of political activism and campaigns, as well hosting a radio program on both the AM and FM dial. In addition, he has traveled to Iraq on numerous occasions for charity and research which he submitted to Members of Congress and the National Security Council at the White House.

SUPPORT US!

Advertise, sponsor, subscribe

or contribute NOW!

TheOrlandoLocalNews.Com