

## Press Association Appreciation Dinner Notes - 04/07/2026.

### East Activity Center Clearwater Room

Even though Doug had reserved a desirable shelter at Safety Harbor's Phillippe Park far in advance of our dinner date, Mother Nature decided to blow up our plans by sending a damp and windy day and, followed by an evening of the same, we expected. Several members of our staff indicated that they were unable to attend due to adverse weather conditions. VP Donna Gagnon and Secretary Joanne Cordes planned to attend but were skeptical that our catered food would stay at the table because of the reported windy weather reports.

Doug was first alerted to the possibility of bad weather on Thursday, April 2, and research showed that while the Crystal Beach Room and Belleair Room were not free, the Clearwater Kitchen Room was free as a backup plan.

On April 7, Doug spoke with a staffer who refused to attend if the park was the venue. Following the conversation, Doug sent an email to everyone on the original invite list, asking if they would rather go to the park or the EAC. The return vote was 12/4 for the EAC, Doug related to us. He also noted that a few more staff decided to come since it was now within the community.

Doug quickly amended our plans, calling the Clearwater Family Restaurant with an amended order and venue. And then he notified us of the change to EAC, same time -- 5 p.m.

Doug and Donna arrived early to set up tables, decorations and organization for the food, traffic-flow, etc. Roy Lemnus and Joanne also arrived early to help with set-up and greet our guests.

Seventeen staff members arrived by 5 p.m., just after the food was delivered by the restaurant. Doug gave a brief "Congratulations to You!" for a terrific paper all during our recent season. He thanked everyone and explained that our Appreciation Dinner honors a tradition started decades ago by OTOW founder Sidney Colen, as recognized by the OTOW Newspaper.

All enjoyed the BBQ Chicken, mashed potatoes, and tossed salad provided by Clearwater Family Restaurant, a consistent advertiser in our newspaper. Staff brought desserts: Betty Spoerl's cupcakes, Pat Hayes' Chocolate Chip Cookies, Joanne Cordes' Lemon Bars.

During the dessert phase, Joanne stood up to extemporaneously announce the star staffers who had fourteen or more story contributions during the year. These were: Tom Chalupka and Randae Vandenoever with fourteen; Jim LeBlanc with sixteen; Dave Beaven with nineteen; and Pat Hayes with twenty. Kudos to all!

Thanks to all who stayed to help clean-up.

Thanks to all who came to share in the OTOW Newspaper's pride in completion of another fabulous year of 'good news!'

Summary submitted by: Joanne Cordes 04/08/2026

### Attendees

**Table 1** - Dave Beaven, Betty Spoerl, Sally Herman; Deb Russell; Roy Lemnus, Irene Piper.

**Table 2** - Diane Like, Dick Broadhurst, Donna Gagnon, Joanne Cordes, Pat Hayes, Renee Ingrassia.

**Table 3** - Mary Ann Nargi, Patti Branch, Randae Vandenoever, Kathleen Walter, Mary Lou Wall, Mary Connelly (?).

**Table 4** - Edwina Schick, Doug Kates.