

SANIBEL SHELL SHOCKED

Heartbreak in Sanibel: The Top Ten Stories of 2012

By Art Stevens

2012 has been a tumultuous, unpredictable and volatile year in Sanibel. News headlines were made almost daily with events that not only captured the imagination of Sanibel residents but forced many to seek counseling. Now that 2012 is almost behind us we can take an objective look at the major stories of the year.—and hope that 2013 will be considerably less excitable.

Here are the top ten news events of 2012 as reported in the Islander. Hopefully, lessons can be learned from the painful memories left behind.

1. A new white line was painted down the center of Sanibel-Captiva Road. This exercise in road improvement caused considerable mayhem because a different paint gloss was used this year.
2. A Michigan visitor rejected an entrée of blackened grouper at a local restaurant claiming it wasn't spicy enough. When the entrée was returned to the kitchen the chef immediately took to the bottle and had to be restrained from quitting on the spot.
3. A Sanibel City Council member showed up for a Council meeting five minutes late thus altering irrevocably the agenda for that morning. The most important item on the agenda – a discussion on Donald Trump's offer to build a casino in Sanibel – was deferred indefinitely.
4. A power outage at a Sanibel theater stopped the performance of a murder mystery late in the third act just as the murderer was about to be revealed. At first the audience thought that the lights going out was part of the play. But when twenty minutes went by and no actors appeared on stage the audience began to boo and hiss and had to be restrained from ripping the seats from the floor. Half the audience left while the other half remained until power was restored at three in the morning.
5. A Sanibel causeway toll attendant was relieved of her duties when she failed to give a motorist the correct change. The attendant was detained by the Sanibel police and was forced to submit to a lie detector test. A ten-year record of not making a single error in giving motorists the correct change came to an abrupt end and the morale of the toll collectors was in shambles.
6. A major news headline was made the day Bailey's ran out of Smucker's Cherry Preserves causing a mass demonstration in the jams and jellies aisle. Top executives from Smucker's flew in from their corporate headquarters to try to mollify the crowd.
7. After forty-three years of marriage a Sanibel woman filed for divorce because her husband had failed to put the cap back on the toothpaste tube that morning. She told the

media that she could put up with everything else, including his life long addiction to White Castle hamburgers. But that the toothpaste episode was the last straw.

8. A valuable Junonia shell disappeared from the purse of a Minnesota visitor when she absentmindedly left it on her seat at the Sanibel cinema. Nothing else was taken from the purse which included her Botox needle, ten thousand dollars in cash, a Superman comic book and a Ty Cobb baseball card. She was inconsolable and had to be medicated with blackened valium.

9. A Wisconsin couple sued the city of Sanibel for failing to provide at least one visible alligator during their visit. The couple claimed that they had saved money to visit Sanibel to celebrate their fortieth year of estrangement. And that the sole purpose of their visit was to see at least one alligator. They sued Sanibel for reckless negligence, mental cruelty and aggravated insensitivity.

10. And, finally, the top news story of 2012 was the day a Sanibel resident tried to make a phone call from his home and couldn't get a dial tone. The stock price of CenturyLink nosedived by 20% and the chief executive officer was called before a Congressional committee to explain his company's failure. A blue ribbon panel was convened by Congress and sent to Sanibel to investigate this outrage. It appears that heads will roll as a result.

These, then, are the top ten heartbreaking stories of 2012. Let's hope that 2013 will be a better year.