

# ON THE MOVE

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## Early Learning



Reynolds

The Board of Directors of the **Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida** announced **Kathleen Reynolds, Ph.D.**, as the new Executive Director. Charged by the State of Florida with running this area's coalition for school readiness services and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten, Reynolds will guide the coalition's programs in Lee, Collier, Hendry and Glades counties. The coalition's mission is to help area families access early learning opportunities for their children, ages birth to five, with the goal of increasing educational success through quality preparation for school.

## Public Relations



Cooper

The annual award recognizes those public relations professionals who go above and beyond to ensure the success of the Chapter. Selection criteria

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The **Southwest Florida Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association** named **Ginny Cooper**, President of Divine Events & Marketing, the 2008 Chapter Member of the Year.

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for the award includes: dedicating time and energy in the areas of creative thinking and actual participation in chapter programs and projects; supporting the chapter to help raise the level of professionalism in our community; exemplifying a professional attitude and standard of conduct and supporting fellow public relations professionals. Cooper is President-Elect of the Chapter and has served the organization in other leadership capacities. Divine Events & Marketing specializes in marketing and public relations strategic planning, event design and custom gift merchandising.

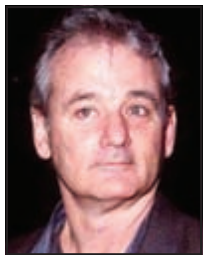
## Travel

**Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau** welcomed a new member to the staff: **Crystal Revak**, brand integrator. Revak will be the brand steward for The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel. She will integrate the brand through the various marketing divisions of the VCB and implement the brand strategies working along with the bureau's advertising agency, BVK. Also, she will team with tourism industry partners to maximize efforts coordinating promotions in target markets. Revak most recently directed communications for SmartDisk Corporation, a public company, which markets high tech hardware to consumer industries including digital photography. She led the marketing and investor relations for FlexiInternational Software, which provides back office accounting software and conducted market research at HPT Research, a consulting firm to a Fortune 100 company. All of these firms are located in southwest Florida. ■

# PLAY BALL

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Murray and Buffet, along with others like producer Lorne Michaels and John Alexander (who designed the cover art for the Rolling Stones' album, "Urban Jungle") invested in the team in the late 1980s in Miami. That was a few years before



Murray

the eclectic group of baseball lovers asked Veeck to be involved, and moved the Miracle to Fort Myers in 1992. (Minor league baseball started here in 1926 with a team called the "Fort Myers Palm.")

"When they bought the club, they hired me, because I lived in Fort Lauderdale and I had a reputation for being a little off kilter," Veeck said. "Murray and I are neighbors, so we're friends that hang out all the time. Buffett works during the summer."

The sometimes wacky promotions reflect Murray's sense of humor in particular, but are also done in the tradition of Veeck's father, Bill, the late baseball owner/administrator and Hall of Fame inductee. He was famous for his leadership of major league clubs in Chicago. His own promotions included hiring a midget to bat for the White Sox. At one point in his career, he planted the well-known ivy on Wrigley Field's outfield wall.

"As Bill Veeck always says, it's meant to be fun," wrote Roger Angell in "Late Innings," a 1982 book about the state of the game then.

Baseball is still at the heart of the fun, Gliner said, but he also considers the ball

park an entertainment venue, with live music, prizes and contests which run alongside more standard, yet also joyous fair - thirsty Thursdays, two for Tuesdays, an all-u-can-eat Wednesday night buffet and Friday happy hour. And of course, the always magnanimous mascot, Miss-A-Miracle.

"On certain nights there may be fireworks," Gliner said. "We do many, many different food and beverage specials."

"The goal is to provide fans, when they come out, with a great experience. We're fortunate that we're able to keep those prices affordable...it's kind of what we're all about."

Gliner said fans come from all over to see the team and partake in the fun - but mostly from Lee, Charlotte and Collier counties. "We have a pretty good reach." (Tickets for the games are only \$5 and \$7).

The team also does some traditional television ads (Gliner and President Linda McNabb star in one this year). But Gliner said the best marketing has been grass roots efforts - for example, the front office staff is going to businesses in Southwest Florida and giving out pocket schedules. There are Hurricane Awareness nights, and fundraisers for organizations such as The Red Cross and the American Heart Association.

All this gives people a reason to attend games, which becomes its own promotion.

"When people ultimately come out here for a game - that's the best form of advertising," he said. "Because they go out and tell friends and family what a great time it was."

And just like some of the Miracle players who make it to the major leagues, the fans will do much the same.

"At the minor league level, we develop new fans and send them along," Veeck said. "Eventually they have to go see the best."

Play ball. ■

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