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LIGHTNING OR THUNDER?
Come Inside Immediately Says Expert...
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Coastal BREEZE news

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Photos Courtesy of Oscar Espejo Jr.

The Marco Island Flying Club in 1971. Oscar Espejo Sr., the man who started Marco Island's mosquito control program, is on the far right. The tiny Marco Island Airport is in the background. For more on Espejo and his legacy, see "An Absolute Hero" on A/20.

Council Approves Two Controversial Petitions

Pastor Responds to Cemetery Decision

"In my opinion, it's the least egregious thing we can do," was the comment from Marco Island City Councilor Palumbo when calling for a vote on the variance on the property adjacent to the Marco Island Cemetery. The property at 588 Bald Eagle Drive, owned by VO Capital LLC (Gary Van Cleef, Anthony J. Oliverio), had requested a reduction in the setback from 15 feet to three feet.

After Mary Holden, City Planning Manager, moved the request forward and made her introduction, Councilor Brechnitz immediately cut to the heart of the issue before council. "In an issue such as this, am I not correct that the petitioner must demonstrate a hardship," said Brechnitz. "Can you identify what the petitioner's hardship is in this case?" Holden read directly from staff paperwork, "Not taking into consideration monetary, it would appear a literal interpretation would not work (for) unnecessary or undue hardship."



Photos by Steve Stefanides

Later in the presentation, Andres Boral from Boral Engineering, representative for the applicant said that the hardship "requires a minimum area for the building so that the project is feasible and without having this size building and the required parking we would have to go to a second story building," which would be more costly. "For that reason, we are basically needing to encroach in the buffer."

Applicant Anthony Oliverio pointed out that the conversation was on the landscape buffer and not setback noting that

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Photos Courtesy of Niki Bauer

A rare shot of the original Little Bar. Note the pool player is using a broom instead of a pool cue.

Iconic Little Bar Changes Hands

By Scott H. Shook

Selling the Little Bar was a traumatic experience for Niki Bauer, who has co-owned the iconic Goodland restaurant with her brother Ray Bozicnik for the past 45 years.

"It's like losing a child," Bauer said as she sorted through the boxes of photographs and memories that form a tapestry of the iconic Goodland landmark. "The little bar with the big, big heart has just been sold. I have been told they are keeping everything the same, even the pictures on the wall."

One of the new owners is a well-known - and popular - island restaurateur, Sami Rahman, owner of Sami's on Collier Boulevard. His partner in the venture is local investor Gary Van Cleef.

"Gary's not only a friend, I think he's more of a mentor," Rahman said. "Great guy, very down to earth. He and his wife, Louise, they are the nicest people. When you meet people like that, you feel that there are still good human beings in this world."

Those words have to be soothing not only for the Little Bar family, some 70-strong, but also for the legions of devoted customers who have formed a love affair with The Little Bar for its great food, great music, great staff - and its quirkiness (the annual Spammy Jammy celebration comes to mind). Rahman doesn't plan to fool with that formula.

"Everything is going to stay just the way it is," Rahman said. "They have something unique, something different. But having the best food - and people

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