

The Country Club of the Crystal Coast

...where friends connect

By Bill Knecht

I hope everyone had a safe and happy Thanksgiving. We should all be thankful that we had the right to express our opinion and vote for the candidates of our choice in the recent elections. Now that we have done that, I hope that as a community and nation we can put all of the negativity behind us and work with our elected officials for the common good of all. Let us not forget the ultimate sacrifice that those before us gave to our great nation so that we still have the freedom to speak and vote our conscience.

The town of Pine Knoll Shores and the club were well represented at the Morehead City Veterans parade on November 5. On behalf of the club, I wish to thank the Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club for their sponsorship, in cooperation with the town and the National Garden Clubs, Inc., of the Blue Star Memorial marker erected at the corner of Pine Knoll Boulevard and Highway 58 as a tribute to not only our Pine Knoll Shores veterans, but to all veterans, past, present and future. At the dedication ceremony on November 9, many veterans living in town were honored. The club thanks and salutes all who helped with or participated in the dedication ceremony. It is truly a privilege and honor to live in Pine Knoll Shores.

Under the leadership of Chris Baile, USPTA Head Tennis Pro, we had a successful 7th annual Pro-Am tennis tournament at the club in October. There were over 45 participants and eight teaching pros from around the state for the teaching clinic and tournament. The ladies' amateur champion was Chris Sherman and the men's amateur champion was Ken Wilkins.

Congratulations to Lee Sullivan and Susan Thomas, respectively, for being the Ladies' 2016 LGA 9-hole and 18-hole champions. A special recognition goes to Susan Thomas for being an eight-time champion. Congratulations to Susan Griffin for winning the 2016 CCCC North Carolina Women's Golf Association State Play Day Tournament. Lastly, congratulations to Roy Martin for his hole-in-one on #15 green on October 19.

If you are still looking for a place to hold your holiday party, the club has a few remaining dates available. For more information, please contact Assistant Manager and Director of Sales Barb Costanza at 726-1034, ext. 16.

Our last open house in 2016 for prospective new members is on December 9 from 5 to 6 p.m. Complimentary hors d'oeuvres and beverages are served. Bring a friend and come see what the club has to offer.

From all of us at The Country Club of the Crystal Coast, thank you for your support in 2016. Enjoy the holiday season, have a happy New Year's Eve celebration and, most importantly, don't drink and drive for your safety and the safety of others.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the club, *where friends connect.*

DINING OUT

At this point, the tourists have clearly returned home until spring. Part-time residents have essentially done the same. Lines of patrons at restaurants have disappeared for several months, so it is time for full timers here on the Crystal Coast to eat out more often.

Among the eateries well worth a visit, even more than one visit, is Caribsea, a

relatively new restaurant located in Emerald Isle. Caribsea offers patrons what is justly described as "upscale modern coastal cuisine" that is "prepared with Southern flair." The restaurant serves both lunch and dinner, with interesting menu preparations that are often unique to itself.

The lunch menu is both compact and inviting. Entrees are typically sandwiches, some with familiar names that are prepared in inventive ways. The Caribsea Burger, for example, is a grilled ground steak and pork combination, topped with gruyere, mozzarella or smoked Gouda cheese according to the patron's choice, and accompanied by caramelized onions, Roma tomatoes, butter greens and roasted garlic aioli, served on a brioche roll. The Gourmet Grilled Cheese Sandwich is certainly not typical of the genre, bringing together brie and mozzarella cheeses with heirloom tomatoes, fresh basil, an orange reduction and roasted garlic aioli. Grilled chicken may be added to make this sandwich even more substantial. The Ultimate Cuban Sandwich centers on pork shoulder meat and joins it with gruyere cheese, "Cuban Dijon mayo" and dill pickles. These and other sandwiches on the luncheon menu are served with a choice of confit potatoes, pickled slaw or a side dish specific to the day, and customarily cost between \$8 and \$15.

Also available are a few salads, which include an arugula and beet salad (with chevre and roasted pistachios); a grilled green tomato salad, combining the green tomatoes with caramelized shallots and "brulee" gorgonzola cheese in an arugula pesto vinaigrette; and a simple salad with gorgonzola cheese, to which grilled chicken or pan-seared scallops may be added for an additional charge of \$4 or \$8, respectively. Salads are priced at either \$6 or \$8.

The core dinner menu at Caribsea is organized into three categories: fish, prime and raw. The creative fish options, often available as either small plates or large plates, include crab cakes, shrimp and grits, and pan-seared scallops. The Caribbean Crab Cakes are plated with mixed field greens in a lime-mustard beurre blanc and

orange vinaigrette. The Charleston Shrimp and Grits blends North Carolina shrimp with rice, house-cured bacon, and cremini and shiitake mushrooms. Pan-Seared Scallops are served with Sea Island pea cakes, spicy tomato fume, crème fraiche and bacon-onion confit. Small plate versions of these entrees range in cost from \$12 to \$15, while large plates range from \$26 to \$32.

Prime, or meat, items on the dinner menu number three: pork belly, duck and Delmonico steak. The pork belly is "pastrami cured" and presented with "quick pickled slaw" that is composed of baby carrots, fennel and kohlrabi. The duck breast is plated with corn-pancetta succotash and summer grape compote. The Delmonico steak, prime aged and certified Angus beef, is bathed with a mustard seed demi-glace, and then served with roasted baby carrots, grilled spring onions and Yukon Gold potato confit. Small plate versions of some of these meat dishes are available and priced at \$15, while large plates are priced between \$26 and \$45.

The most interesting raw possibility on the menu is beef carpaccio—thinly shaved raw beef accompanied by fried capers and compressed baby heirloom tomatoes. It costs \$12.

Beyond the choices in these three core categories, Caribsea offers patrons both salads and charcuterie on its bill of fare. Most interesting among the "Green" items is the Heirloom Tomato Salad, which brings together compressed heirloom tomatoes and house ricotta cheese with basil pesto. The three salad options on the dinner menu are all described as small, and are priced at either \$9 or \$10.

More enticing possibilities on the dinner menu are listed under Charcuteries and Specialties. The baked oysters, for instance, feature six oysters with green tabasco butter, crispy pork and braised collards in a béchamel sauce. The Bone Marrow entry comes with parsley and kohlrabi salad, summer berry conserve and crostini. Naturally, also available under this heading is a Charcuterie Board, beckoning the customer with pate, cheese, jams, various meats and flatbread to enjoy. These and the additional options in this category cost between \$6 and \$23.

Diners will also happily find a wide choice of specialty cocktails, beers and wines to drink singly or to complement their meals. They may be enjoyed at the dining table, the indoor bar or in the outdoor Torpedo Lounge atop the building.

Caribsea is located at 8921 Crew Drive in Emerald Isle. The restaurant is open every day, serving lunch from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., and dinner from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. The website is caribsearestaurant.com, and reservations may be made by calling 424-8400.