



February 2007



TAMPA BAY 56ers NEWSLETTER

**Membership Meeting
Sunday, February 18, 2007
1:30 PM
Clearwater Countryside Library**



We have not had a regular meeting in several months, so we have several items to discuss at this first membership meeting of 2007. We will have a demonstration by Carol Williams on how to make trees. We will also have door prizes, a raffle, 50/50, and maybe even a game.

Barbara Wallis will be coordinating the food so call her at 727-576-8585 if you would like to bring a dish.

We will be having a contest to design a new banner for the club. Details will be provided at the meeting.



President's Message

By *Joyce Gillen*



The Tampa Bay 56ers had a very busy December and January. Thanks to Barbara Wallis for coordinating the "Adopt a Family for Christmas" program. Besides all the gifts that the members generously donated, the club provided a complete turkey dinner with all the fixings. The family was very pleased and the kids had a wonderful Christmas.

The Christmas Party was a lot of fun as we enjoyed ourselves with food and drink, mingled with friends and received a gift from Santa. Sally Colangelo did an outstanding job taking care of all the arrangements. It was nice that two of our sponsors, Skip Maslowski, and Linda Combs came to the party. Thanks to Skip and Linda for donating buildings for the occasion. Thanks to Denis Gillen for the fun games we played. We found out who's originally from Florida, who played on their high school basketball team, who was a U.S. Marine as well as other facts about our members. Another thank you goes out to Domenick Prestia for taking the photo's at the party.

I want to thank all our sponsor's, The Christmas Room, Skip's Florist and Christmas House, and Robert's Christmas Wonderland. We appreciate all you do throughout the year.

In January we had our annual house tour. Thanks to Marlyn King for another great house tour. All six of the houses on the tour were spectacular. Thank you to Carol & Roger Fournier, Ida & Dick Johnson, Conrad Krause, Sally & Dan Collangelo, Pam & Dominic Prestia and last but not least Kathy Dorsey & Diana Cortright for opening up their houses. Kathy & Diana were gracious enough to volunteer their home for the end of the tour house party. Food was great and a good time was had by all. Thanks Kathy & Diana.

See you at the February Membership Meeting on the 18th. Don't forget to wear your Tampa Bay 56er's shirt.



HELP WANTED

Roger Grieves needs to borrow approximately 20 tray tables (19 1/4 by 14 3/4) for displays at the Suncoast Southern Regional Gathering. Please contact Roger at 581-8199 if you can loan him any trays tables. Remember to put your name on the bottom of the trays tables.

BOARD MEMBERS WANTED

We want you to start thinking about running for the Board. As stated in the By-Laws - Elections are handled as follows:

1. We nominate candidates at the April Meeting.
2. A vote is held at the May Meeting, if more than one person runs for the same position; otherwise no vote is required.
3. All positions take office on June 1st.

We encourage old and new members to run for the Board. Even if someone has already said they would like to run for a certain position, there's no reason that we could not have a contested race.

If you would like to run for the Board, the following vacancies are available:

President - current position held by Joyce Gillen

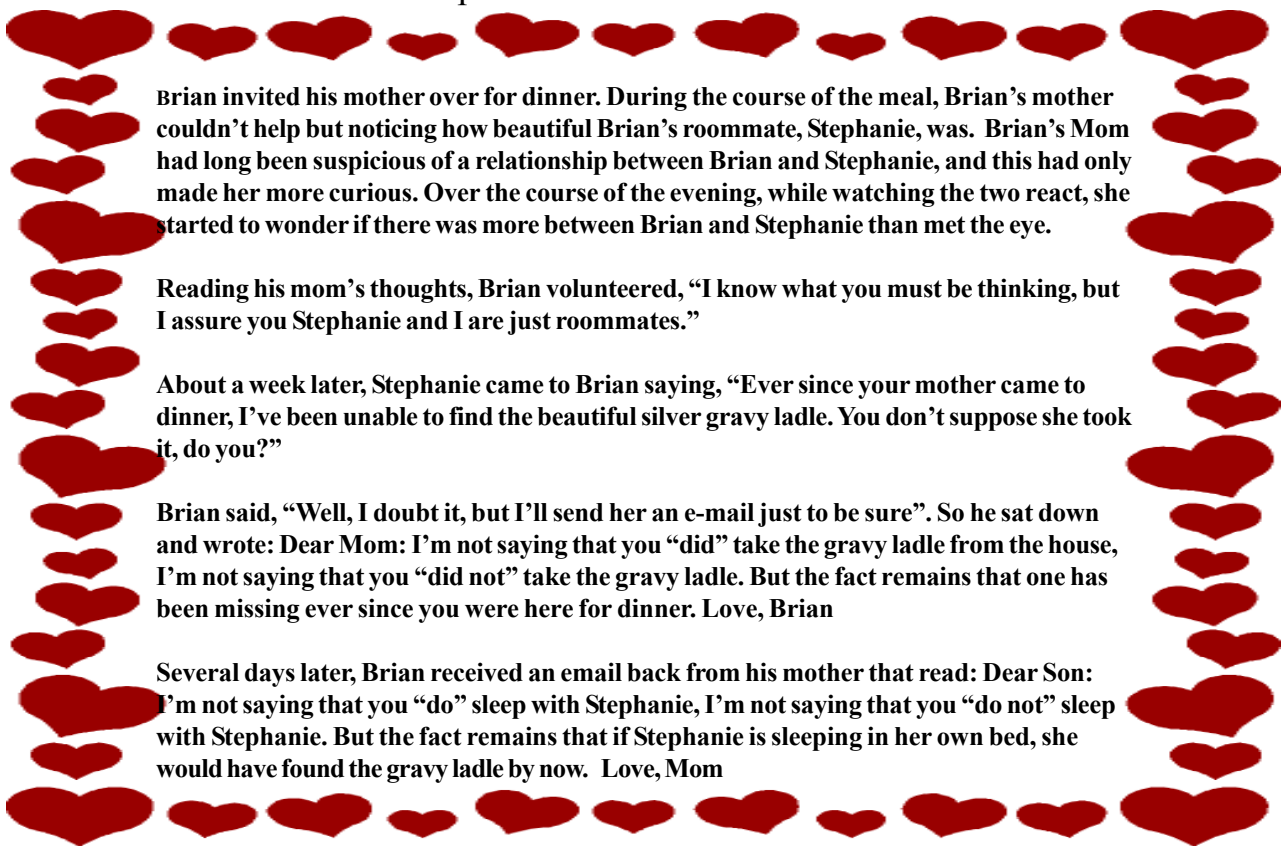
Vice-President - current position held by Cindy Swinehart

Treasurer - current position held by Dick Johnson

Director - current position held by

Contact Sally Colangelo 784-5324 or E-mail her at dcolangelo@g.mail.com.

Sally Colangelo, Terri Williams, Roger Grieves, and Bill Foelker will remain in their positions for one more year. Ellen Wilcox will remain as Newsletter Editor and Conrad Krause as Membership Chairman.



Brian invited his mother over for dinner. During the course of the meal, Brian's mother couldn't help but noticing how beautiful Brian's roommate, Stephanie, was. Brian's Mom had long been suspicious of a relationship between Brian and Stephanie, and this had only made her more curious. Over the course of the evening, while watching the two react, she started to wonder if there was more between Brian and Stephanie than met the eye.

Reading his mom's thoughts, Brian volunteered, "I know what you must be thinking, but I assure you Stephanie and I are just roommates."

About a week later, Stephanie came to Brian saying, "Ever since your mother came to dinner, I've been unable to find the beautiful silver gravy ladle. You don't suppose she took it, do you?"

Brian said, "Well, I doubt it, but I'll send her an e-mail just to be sure". So he sat down and wrote: Dear Mom: I'm not saying that you "did" take the gravy ladle from the house, I'm not saying that you "did not" take the gravy ladle. But the fact remains that one has been missing ever since you were here for dinner. Love, Brian

Several days later, Brian received an email back from his mother that read: Dear Son: I'm not saying that you "do" sleep with Stephanie, I'm not saying that you "do not" sleep with Stephanie. But the fact remains that if Stephanie is sleeping in her own bed, she would have found the gravy ladle by now. Love, Mom



The annual tour of homes occurred on Sunday, January 7, 2007. After visiting fantastic displays at six (6) homes, everyone enjoys an enormous buffet put together by Kathy Dorsey. On Page 6 are pictures of the displays by Diana Cortright and the ending party/dinner. President Joyce Gillen cleaned out the “club closet” with a large bag of door prizes. No dancing on the tables, but we did have our “birthday” girl. Thank you to everyone that opened their homes.

Pictures of the displays done by Roger & Carol Fournier and Conrad Krause



**Pictures of displays from top row to bottom
Dick and Ida Johnson; Domenick and Pamela Prestia;
Dan and Sally Colangelo**







THINKING VILLAGES

Lenox CEO Susan Engel Quits

JANUARY 08, 2007 — After months of criticism from shareholders, Lenox Group Inc. Chairwoman and Chief Executive Susan Engel stepped down Friday as the Eden Prairie-based company said it expects to post a loss for 2006, reports the *Pioneer Press*.

The maker of dinnerware, tabletop collectibles and giftware said that Marc Pfefferle, a partner with Carl Marks Advisory Group LLC, would be the interim replacement for Engel, who was CEO for 10 years. Stewart Kasen, the lead director on the board, was named chairman.

The company's largest individual shareholder, John Morgan, has been a vocal critic of Engel and has called her a "terrible manager." But he said Friday that the board of directors ultimately is to blame for the company's poor performance.

"It's a disaster but one that I forecasted and told the board it was going to happen," said Morgan, who disclosed in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing last month that he may seek to sell his shares.

During Engel's tenure, the company's stock lost about three-quarters of its value.

Engel couldn't be reached for comment but said in a statement Friday that based on preliminary results for December, the company's results for 2006 will not meet earlier expectations.

Lenox expects a loss from continuing operations of \$2.07 to \$2.17 a share for 2006. Excluding certain items, the loss from continuing operations is expected to be between 20 cents to 30 cents per share, the company said.

Company brands include Department 56, Lenox, Dansk and Gorham. At Department 56, delayed shipping from overseas vendors resulted in canceled orders and excess inventory in the fourth quarter.

The company said it's started discussions with its lenders to obtain waivers to be in compliance with loan agreements. It also hired a team from the Carl Marks group to assist Pfefferle in addressing business improvements and making operational changes.

Department 56 used to be the name of the whole company. It acquired Lenox from Brown-Forman Corp. in 2005 for \$190 million and took on the Lenox name.

Engel, 60, was named chief executive in 1996. She earned \$605,000 in base salary in 2005. Her compensation for 2006 has not been disclosed. As of March 6, 2006, she held 566,428 Lenox shares, including options to acquire 484,500 shares, according to the company's proxy.

At the time she was named CEO, the company was best known for its Heritage Village, Original Snow Village and Snowbabies collectibles and other giftware products and was looking at ways to aggressively grow the business.

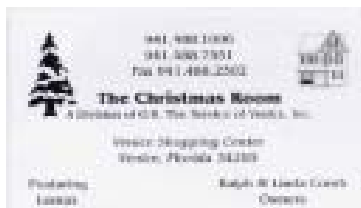
Executives said during the acquisition of Lenox that the deal should immediately boost the company's quarterly and long-term profits. "We think we really can make hay on the strength of their brand names in every channel," Engel said at the time.

But that hasn't been the case. For the first nine months of 2006, Lenox Group posted a \$42.9 million loss with most of that due to a \$35 million impairment charge to write down good will related to its Department 56 wholesale unit.

Morgan, who is chairman and CEO of Golden Valley-based Winmark Corp., has been critical of Lenox in recent months, blasting it for what he said has been a decade of dismal financial results.

Lenox said it rejected Morgan's recent consulting proposal that would have paid him \$500,000 to help manage the company because it contained several "unacceptable" conditions. Company officials declined an interview request Friday.

A comment found on the Internet after Susan Engel was fired - It may take a while before we see price drops. According to SEC filings, Ms Engel will receive \$1,957,000 in severance pay. Collectors will need to buy a lot of village buildings to pay that off. Not bad for such incompetence as a CEO. The Board of Directors deserves to be the next ones on the chopping block. Of course we should all feel sorry for her, she no longer will have her \$605,000 yearly salary.





The board decided to buy a Thanksgiving meal for two needy family, as well as Christmas presents and meals for the families at Christmas. Barbara Wallis had located the families through Blanton Elementary School and delivered the presents and dinners. Thanks goes to Barbara Wallis for handling this project. The following are the thank you notes received from these families.

Thank you so much all you did to give my children and me a Good Thanksgiving and a very *It was so nice of you!* Nice Christmas - my Boys were so Happy -
Thank you Thank you
Tasha Platt

my family thanks you for your Blessing of Kindness to us for a enjoyable thanks - giving Dinner and Christmas Dinner with surprise little gifts and fruit bowl - We are truly Well Blessed to have people like you, and the sweet lady who delivered it to us. Our Blessings to you all.

Mrs Cox
and children

**FLORIDA'S LARGEST
TRAIN STORE**



H&R TRAINS

Tampa Bay 56ers Christmas Party



ANNUAL PICNIC

The annual picnic is scheduled for March 18 at Philippe Park. Complete directions will be published in the next newsletter. We have invited three other clubs to join us: Orange Blossoms, Tri-County and Gulf Coast Villagers. This a pot luck dinner so everyone is asked to bring a dish. Kathy Dorsey will be coordinating the food. We will have several games and need volunteers to man the games. We are also doing the Cake Walk again so anyone interested in bringing a cake should contact Kathy. There will be a sign up sheets passed around at the next meeting. The fee is \$4 per person and children under 8 years old are free. The fee needs to be paid in advance of the picnic. We will also have Swap and Sell if anyone is interested. Any questions, give Kathy Dorsey at 727-869-7107.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by Richard Johnson



For December

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$2,346.75 |
| Income | \$ 601.00 |
| Debits | \$ 372.26 |
| Ending Balance | \$ 966.47 |



Happy Birthday!

| | | |
|------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1/1 | Frances | Swinehart |
| 1/6 | Stacey | Schwieterman - Smith |
| 1/7 | Judy | Schwieterman |
| 1/14 | Vi | Hill |
| 2/20 | Conrad | Krause |
| 2/28 | Katherine | Zeller |
| 3/5 | Jim | Wittliff |



Living Wills.....be careful in their use

While I was watching the NFL playoff games one weekend, my wife and I got into a conversation about life and death, and the need for living wills. During the course of the conversation, I told her that I never wanted to exist in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and taking fluids from a bottle. She got up, unplugged the TV and threw out all my beer.

Sometimes it's tough being married to a smart ass.



CLEARANCE SALE

We will have our clearance room full and ready for the members to see it first on Febuary 17th We are open 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. All the retired overstock will be 50% off starting that day. Hope to see you at our shop! Skip



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



- February 18- Sunday Membership Meeting
1:30 PM
Clearwater/Countryside Library
Clearwater, FL
Tree Making Demonstration
- March 18 - Sunday Annual Picnic
Philippe Park
Safety Harbor, FL
12:00 Noon
- April 15 - Sunday Membership Meeting
1:30 PM
Clearwater/Countryside Library
Clearwater, FL

Tampa Bay 56ers 2006 Officers

- President: Joyce Gillen
727-796-7606
- 1st Vice-President: Cindy Swinehart
941-922-7419
- 2nd Vice President: Sally Colangelo
727-784-5324
- Secretary: Teresa Williams
727-568-0172
- Treasurer: Dick Johnson
727-539-1076
- NCC Rep: Bill Foelker
813-657-8949
- Director: Vern Schwieterman
727-531-3112
- Director: Roger Grieves
727-581-8199
- Past President: Marlyn King
727-367-4226

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**This newsletter printed
especially for**