

Know Your Neighbor

Resident helps seniors with care options

Margate women starts business to care for elderly.

By **MARISA BEYERL**
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Until eight years ago, Margate resident Olga Brunner was living aboard her 29-foot sailboat, The Loon, in San Diego.

"I sailed my boat every day and watched live concerts at night from the Humphreys stage with the other boaters," she said.

Things changed when her mother needed care due to her deteriorating

health.

"But things will happen when you're the only family caregiver. I sold my boat and moved to Florida," Brunner said. "I found out that mom almost caused a gas explosion. Due to her rapidly progressing dementia, [she forgot] an unlit stove she had lit."

Her mother had a stroke and was placed in a long-term care facility.

The incident led Brunner to what she was meant to do with her life, she said.

"I took the opportunity to return to school for a

masters in health care administration with nursing home licensure option," Brunner said. "I visited the home every day and observed how things go right and how they go wrong."



Olga Brunner

It was then Brunner was determined to open a business to help others navigate through elder care.

She founded A Good Daughter, representing seniors and the families caring for them. It helps inform families of options for their parents and elders.

Forum: Who influenced you the most when you were a teenager?

Brunner: That would have to be my mother who taught me the value of education, responsibility, and the importance of observing the golden rule. She gave me the tools and skills necessary to be successful. I guess I always felt responsible for her since she had come from another country and was not conversant in English when I was growing up. Sure, it was difficult as a child, but without that experience, I would not be the person I am today.

ential book you have read.

Brunner: I have a soft spot when it comes to other caregivers since I lived it myself. But the book that helped me get through that very difficult period when I cared for mom at home, and helped me understand what dementia was all about and how I could help her most was, "The 36 Hour Day," by Dr. Peter Rabins, whom I recently heard lecture in Palm Beach.

Forum: Where and when was the last place you traveled?

Brunner: Every year, I try to get back to San

Forum: Name an influ- **BRUNNER** continues on 13

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Diego and visit with my daughter and close friends. Because of our care management business, I haven't been able to get to the West Coast in two years. I guess I'll wait for the National Association of Care Managers to have their convention in California, and this way, I'll be able to justify it to myself.

Forum: What is your favorite ethnic food?

Brunner: I'm a complete pushover for good Italian food of which we have a great variety in Margate.

Forum: When did you throw your last party and what was it like?

Brunner: In the time I've lived in Florida, I've never had a party, but since I'll be getting mar-

ried next month, I'm planning a simple beach wedding followed by a great luncheon at a beachside hotel.

Forum: What would your dream house be like?

Brunner: Since I love the sea, I'd love to one-day return to living on the water.

Forum: What sports do you like watching most?

Brunner: I don't know if it's considered a sport, but I love watching ballroom dancing. It goes back to growing up watching Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movies.

Forum: If you could change anything about Margate, what would that be and why?

Brunner: I wouldn't change anything about Margate. I love its small-town feel and the friendliness of our neighbors. The only problem is that it's

too far from the beach. There is one item, the problem of ever-increasing traffic heading south and westbound at 5 p.m. on any given weeknight. It's a nightmare. If more people would carpool, and if we had a more efficient rail system that was reliable, we'd have less congestion on our roads.

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