



# THE CORNERSTONE

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All City residents are eligible for this program and can receive a free smoke detector, if they meet the following guidelines:

- 1) Single-family homeowner
- 2) The resident must not already have a detector installed, or an additional one if the home requires it.
- 3) The homeowner is willing to allow City firefighters to install the detector.

Boat owners can also benefit from the smoke detector program, if they do not already have one located near the cabin of their vessel. Firefighters will even assist with the installation, if requested.

The Fire Department recently purchased a special smoke detector for a hearing impaired couple who live in the city. The special detector kit includes a portable 6" audible, 9 volt battery that attaches to a wall or ceiling and sends a transmitted signal to a receiver. This receiver unit attaches to the wall or can be placed on a nightstand and plugs into an electrical outlet. It receives

## Smoke Detector Installation

### Artificial Reefs Provide Underwater Refuge

As population growth continues in Southwest Florida, there is little doubt that our fisheries have experienced a decline as a result. Factors which have contributed to this decline vary, but over-fishing, both commercial and recreational, and the loss of habitat are major contributors. Human activities have reduced fish populations, decreased habitat, and impacted water quality.

However, while Charlotte Harbor waters are not as pure as they once were, science provides us with a unique opportunity to better manage our resources. Technology and education have enabled us, as resource users, to become better stewards of aquatic and estuarine environments.

Artificial reefs are an example of how

575-5529.

we can help revitalize our aquatic ecosystems. Most boaters, anglers and scuba divers are familiar with the term "artificial reefs." The purpose of these structures is to provide habitat for biotic life, which in turn congregates fish and hopefully, produces more fish.

Although there is still debate on the "attraction versus production" issue related to reefs, most resource managers agree that artificial reefs are beneficial to the marine ecosystem. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the State of Florida where we have nearly 400 artificial reefs, more than any other state. There is no doubt that artificial reefs provide user satisfaction to divers and anglers by giving both groups a destination where they can locate aquatic life.

This year, the Charlotte Harbor Reefs Association (CHRA) is initiating an effort to deploy "reef balls" under docks in local canals with the primary purpose of providing nursery habitat for juvenile fish. Reef balls are precast concrete structures with a low profile and high stability, specifically designed for artificial reef applications. The reef structures will then be monitored to determine their value as nursery habitat and also as fish attractors.

The CHRA is hoping to reopen the Charlotte Harbor reef site for reentry. This will involve repermitting the existing site (southwest of the mouth of Alligator Creek) and deploying more than 200 reef balls over the next two years. A major benefit of this project will be the creation of additional habitat in close proximity to a large number of anglers.

This article was contributed by Rich Novak, Marine Agent with the Charlotte County Cooperative Extension Service. If you have any questions regarding artificial reefs, please feel free to contact him at 639-6255.

### We Want You To Meet: Helen Rogers

Helen Rogers is the City of Punta Gorda's Customer Service Supervisor. In this position, Helen oversees a staff of six employees (four clerical personnel and two meter technicians). The Customer Service Division is responsible for reading approximately 8,900 water meters, and preparing the billing statements for all water, wastewater, and refuse accounts. In addition to maintaining these accounts, Customer Service also handles the annual billing for advanced water impact fees and for mowing services.

Helen began her career with the City in April 1989, as a secretary in the Public Works Department. Since that time, she has been promoted three times, first to Program Applications coordinator

in 1989, then to Customer Service Chief in 1991, and finally, to her current position as Customer Service Supervisor in 1992.



Helen attends the annual HTE/HUG conference in an effort to keep apprised of the changing technologies and computer applications that impact her division's responsibilities (e.g., billing applications, etc.)

Helen moved to Punta Gorda 17 years ago from City, New York (a small town just outside Syracuse). She has an 11 year-old son, Dustin. In her leisure time, Helen enjoys spending time with her son and her pets (she has three cats and a dog), reading, sewing, and music.