

# GUM DIPPER REUNION 2024

## Our 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Reunion

October 24 – 27, 2024

Our GumDipper reunion will be held on Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 24 thru Oct. 27, 2024, at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort on Clearwater Beach, Florida.

Please make your hotel reservation directly with the Sheraton.

Call their Reservation Department at **(727) 595-1611** and identify yourself as a Gum Dipper

**Do NOT call the Sheraton National Reservations System!!!**

Shirts for the Friday Welcome meeting will be provided. Please indicate your size.

**Please complete and return the following for our planning purposes**

(1) Reunion Registration		Shirt Size
Gum Dipper Attending (name)		
Spouse/Guest Attending (name)		
Staying at the Sheraton (y/n)		
Years of Company Service?		
Branch of company		
Years a Gum Dipper member		
Is This Your First Reunion?		

(2) Event Participation	Friday Night Barbecue	Saturday Trip To Tarpon Springs	Saturday Reunion Banquet
Number Attending			

**The Saturday Trip to Tarpon Springs is free.** HOWEVER, please reply ASAP as the trip will be limited to the first 60 people to reply since we have limited seating on two Jolley Trolleys.

The Friday & Saturday night dinners are limited to a GumDipper member plus one significant other/guest. Additional attendees require a \$100 per meal fee.  
**Our reunion is an adults only event. Please be sure your dues are paid for 2024.**

**Friday & Saturday night meals are provided by our generous sponsors!**  
 All attending should return this form ASAP to:

Mr. Russell Burr  
 c/o The GumDippers  
 P.O. Box 189 Tarpon Springs, FL 34688



# *The Gum Dippers*

## Summer Newsletter 2024

### **SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2024**

#### **JUST A REMINDER - ANNUAL DUES – 2024**

Most of our Gum Dippers are members for the sole purpose of receiving our newsletters and rosters so that they can “stay in touch” with friends and co-workers. We appreciate all letters to the editor which make it your newsletter. The primary purpose of our organization is to generate this information and pass it on. We sent out a separate due's invoice earlier. We follow up in April. If you DID NOT pay your dues, you are PAST DUE! Widows are free.

**Are your dues current??? If not, PLEASE remit \$20, payable to:  
the Gum Dippers, (or send \$100 for a lifetime membership) and mail to:**

**Mr. Russell Burr Treasurer P.O. Box 189, Tarpon Springs, Fl. 34688**

**Make sure your dues are paid prior to attending our 2024 reunion.**

Any **changes** to the roster: address, phone, e-mail address, should be shown with your payment...**REMEMBER---CHANGES ONLY!** or email changes to Russ:

**toplinetire@mindspring.com 727-943-8825**

**PLEASE DO IT PROMPTLY**

#### **HOTEL INFORMATION – 2024 GUM DIPPER REUNION**

**THE DATES ARE: GUM DIPPER REUNION THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24<sup>th</sup>,**

**DEPARTURE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**

**MANY MEMBERS LAST YEAR REGISTERED AT THE HOTEL BUT FAILED  
TO SEND IN THE REUNION REGISTRATION FORM. YOU MUST DO BOTH**

**SO THAT WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR RESERVATION WE CAN  
COORDINATE THE HOTEL GUEST LIST AND OUR REUNION GUEST LIST.**

**Guest Room Rates: \$224.00 plus tax & service fees for 2024**

Sheraton Sand Key does not charge a resort fee. Reservation includes all hotel amenities, tennis, WIFI, fitness center, computer room, pool and beach access and complimentary transportation throughout Clearwater Beach via the Jolly Trolley for all registered hotel guests (room key must be presented upon boarding).

**Book your group rate for Gum Dippers 2024**

You will find the information for your online reservation link below. If you have questions or need help with the link, please do not hesitate to ask. We appreciate your business and look forward to a successful event.

**Event Summary:**

**Gum Dippers 2024**

**Start Date: Thursday, October 24, 2024**

**End Date: Monday, October 28, 2024**

**Last Day to Book: Thursday, October 3, 2024**

**Hotel offering your special group rate:**

- **Sheraton Sand Key Resort for \$224 USD per night**

**Book your group rate for Gum Dippers 2024**

**Call the reservations department directly at (727) 595-1611 and identify yourself as a Gum Dipper. Hours are Monday to Friday 9-6. Please do not use the Sheraton (800) reservations number.**

***Message from the hotel: we have a 48-hour cancellation policy...so you need to cancel 48 hours prior to arrival. Your deposit will be refunded. Therefore, you have nothing to lose, and you can reserve now and “ride it out” and wait and see by the time the reunion rolls around.***

**You should make your reservations now before 10/3 to be guaranteed \$224 rate as you can always cancel. By making your reservations now it helps us plan...we get an idea of who is coming...**

**BE SURE TO BOOK YOUR ROOM EARLY.**

**MAKE RESERVATIONS AS SOON AS YOU GET THE JULY NEWSLETTER....THE SHERATON ALWAYS HAS A LOT GOING ON. THIS IS A BUSY PLACE SO SECURE YOUR RESERVATION NOW!**

## **Friday & Saturday night meals are provided by our generous sponsors!**

Our hotel is once again the beautiful SHERATON SAND KEY RESORT (1160 Gulf Blvd., Clearwater Beach, FL. 33767-2799). For all the information on this beautiful resort go to:

**www.beachsand.com** "Pre" and "post" Reunion accommodations may be secured, on a space available basis at the **Reunion Rate of \$224, 3 days prior and/or 3 days following the main group occupancy.** A block of rooms will be held until **October 3rd,** at which time any



rooms not reserved will be released for general sale. In the past we ran out of rooms because we exceeded the block. Individuals requesting rooms after the cut-off date will risk being placed on an availability basis at the prevailing room rate, which will be substantially higher. In order to receive the group-negotiated rate, **you must call the reservations department directly at (727) 595-1611 and identify yourself as a Gum Dipper.** **Please do not use the Sheraton (800) reservations number.** Reservation requests may also be EMAILED to **group.reservations@sheratonsandkey.com.** All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit.

### **PLEASE - Make your reservations immediately!**

If you make your reservations immediately, deadline at this price you will be **guaranteed a room at this price** and more importantly, if we fill up fast, we can perhaps get more rooms reserved and set aside for us. At one of our previous reunions, we had to put members in another hotel quite a distance away from our host hotel. We need you to **act FAST! ALSO MAKE THOSE AIRPLANE RESERVATIONS NOW...** Airlines are cutting back on flights and prices are going up...the earlier you reserve, the better deal you get! Florida tourism is booming and once we use up our allotted rooms, we may not be able to get more.

**We hear from so many members who have become ill or can no longer travel, telling us that they are no longer able to attend but wish they had made the effort previously. If you really want to come to a reunion don't put it off, do it now before you are no longer able.**

## **THE 2024 REUNION SIGN UP FORM IS ATTACHED**

Please fill out your reunion sign up form immediately and return it to:

**Russell Burr Firestone Gum Dippers P.O. Box 189**

**Tarpon Springs, FL. 34688**

It is extremely important that this form is sent to us immediately. We have a **TREMENDOUS** amount of work to do **in a very short period** of time **with a very small local committee** to be ready for this event. Let us know which nights (or both) you will be there for dinner and **let us know if you are coming for the first time.**

Fill out the rest of the form and get it back **As Soon As Possible.**

WE ALWAYS EXPECT A LARGE ATTENDANCE, and we have some special guests. It makes it **very difficult for us when we have late reservations.**

We look forward to seeing you at our reunion. **Don't put it off!**

## **WE WILL NEED HELP AGAIN THIS YEAR**



**Complementary coffee and pastry on Friday and Saturday morning...9:00 to 10:00.**

**A complementary sandwich bar from 12:00 to 1:00 on Friday and Sat.**

**Food and drinks should not be removed from the hospitality Suite area.**

**HOWEVER, you can bring food and drinks out to OUR patio area.**

We always need help in the Hospitality Suite where everyone congregates.

We need assistance to greet arriving Gum Dippers and get them registered, to keep the bar well stocked, the snack bowls filled, the soft drink, beer and water coolers filled, and to assist with any questions about the reunion. **We**

*serve complementary coffee and pastry on Friday and Saturday morning & a complementary self-serve lunch also.* Our Hospitality Suite in 2023 was as usual always busy with members interacting, enjoying **free snacks, beer, non alcoholic and alcoholic beverages, plus coffee, donuts, and Danish in the mornings, sandwiches 12 to 1.** Sue and Bob Meyer and beverage chairperson **Russ Burr**, set us up with the absolute finest wines, alcoholic beverages, beers, soft drinks and snacks. *We also had a free sandwich buffet available on Friday and Saturday afternoons.* Bob and Sue were assisted by members of the Committee, Holly & Russ Burr, Ritch & Chris Mucciolo, Dave & Mabel Wonsetler, John & Glenna Johnsen, Nancy Spencer, Sandra & Richard White, Sue & Tom Markferding, Vin & Ann Donovan, and Rhonda Ferestad. In addition, we have volunteers that make this an easy reunion freeing committee members up to do other things and take a break. We thank those volunteers for giving their time to help us and make this a truly fun reunion. Among them were the **Ted & Sue Welsh and Betty & Eli Neidert**. They were of valuable and much needed assistance. Volunteers give the committee a break filling in for them at the registration desk. They also get the benefit of meeting everyone that checks in during their shift.

## **2024 FIRESTONE GUM DIPPER REUNION AGENDA**

**CHECK THE HOTEL LOBBY FOR SHUTTLE SERVICES & LOCAL TROLLEY SERVICE. CHECK IN ANYTIME THURSDAY/ FRIDAY/ SATURDAY**

**Pick up reunion agenda at the front desk when you check into the hotel**

**REGISTER ANYTIME, AFTER 2pm THURSDAY IN THE GUMDIPPER HOSPITALITY SUITE. (COASTAL ROOM).**

Registration hours Thurs. 2-6, 7:30-9, Fri. 9-4, Sat. 9-4

**\*Fri & Sat night receptions are for member and significant others...there is a \$100 fee for any additional guests each night!**

Be sure to pick up Reunion Newsletter with all the information about the reunion.

**Welcome to our 2024 GumDippers' Reunion**

## **HOSPITALITY SUITE hours (in COASTAL ROOM)**

THURSDAY	2pm to 6:00pm	7:30pm to closing
FRIDAY	9am to 3:30pm	9:00pm to closing
SATURDAY	9am to 5:00pm	9:00pm to closing

## **FRIDAY Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 to 10:00am    **Complementary Coffee, Tea & Pastry served in Hospitality Suite**

12:00 to 1:00pm    **Complementary *Self-serve sandwich platters, Hospitality Suite.***

4:00pm              **Official opening ceremonies Bay Room lobby hall**

**Prizes awarded only at this meeting...you must attend to win**

6:00 to 7:00        **RECEPTION POOLSIDE– (open bar)**

7:00 to 9:00pm    **GRAND POOLSIDE PARTY** and Barbecue with roasted pig  
Dress attire: Pure casual: *wear your sand in your shoes clothing.*

## **SATURDAY – Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 to 10:00am    **Coffee, Tea & Pastry served in Hospitality Suite**

9:30 am             **Meet in hotel lobby to board trolleys for today's trip.**

12:00 to 1:00pm    ***Self-serve sandwich platters, help yourself. Hospitality Suite.***

6:00 to 7:00pm    **PALM/BAY ROOM RECEPTION-(open bar)-**

7:00pm              **ISLAND BALLROOM BANQUET - Greeting**

7:05pm              **INVOCATION**

8:00pm              **BANQUET**, dancing to the music of the  
At Large Band, Lotte & Tim Bernard.

**MEN ARE REQUESTED TO WEAR DRESSY COLLARED SHIRTS AND SLACKS. (no shorts OR jeans)**

**SUNDAY – OCTOBER 27<sup>th</sup>** *Departure Day*



## **FRIDAY GOLF October 25<sup>th</sup>**

John Johnsen is collecting names for those of you who are interested in playing golf at Clearwater Country Club on Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. Two tee times have been reserved beginning at 8AM. If you have any interest at all, please call John at:

**(727)-365-1151, or email: [jjohnsen1@live.com](mailto:jjohnsen1@live.com)**

Please contact John prior to Oct 1st, so he can make arrangements for additional tee times if necessary.



## **OPENING CEREMONY FRIDAY 4 P.M. ---BAYROOM**

Our guest speaker from BSAM this year will be Matt Metzelaars, Director of Partnership and Alliances in the Enterprise Strategy Office. Matt will provide a general update on



Bridgestone activities, as well as some specific insight in his area of strategic alliances with some customer partners that they are working with on a deeper level to drive innovation and new business.

Matt is the Director of Alliances and Partnerships at Bridgestone Americas. He is focused on leading collaboration with strategic business partners to co-develop, co-create, and co-invest in

solutions that drive Bridgestone's short and long-term business goals. Matt's career with Bridgestone has spanned 21 years in several different areas of the business. He started in sales with Bridgestone Retail Operations at a Firestone Complete Auto Care store and was promoted into a store manager position. He eventually moved to corporate and has spent time supporting recruiting and retention, talent acquisition and HR operations, brand and program management, and more. Matt is a founding member and Executive Committee representative of BRAVO, the company's Employee Resource Group for

teammates who are military veterans or family/supporters of military veterans. He graduated from Western Michigan University in 2006 and holds Bachelor of Science in Professional Sales and Marketing.

**YOU DEFINITELY WANT TO ATTEND THE OPENING CEREMONY** and all attending the reunion should make it their business to be at it. Come...**WIN our opening day PRIZES including sets of tires, gift certificates, cash a stay at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort and more (you must be present to win gifts)** plus a review of our reunion events. This event is about an hour, and you have plenty of time to run up to your room and return for cocktails at the pool area at six. **Without the generous help and support of Bridgestone Americas** our event would not be as great as it is. Without the participation of the executives, we would not have a successful opening ceremony. **ALL PRIZES ARE AWARDED AT THE FRIDAY OPENING CEREMONIES ONLY.**

### **SATURDAY TRIP Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> - TARPON SPRINGS**

**There is no cost this year.** We plan on traveling to Tarpon Springs and the sponge docks area filled with shopping and restaurants. Last year we charged \$20 and gave it back to assist with lunch, but this year we are not doing that, just providing transportation via Jolley Trolley. **LUNCH WILL BE ON YOUR OWN.** The area has locations such as Rusty Bellies Waterfront Grill, Bayou Bistro, Hellas Restaurant & Bakery, Dimitri's On The Water, Yianni's Greek Cuisine, Sponge Exchange (shopping mall), Tarpon Shell Shack (gift shop), Fudge Factory and other locations nearby. The Trolleys will park at the sponge docks on Dodecanese Blvd and most all locations mentioned are on that road. Rusty Bellies is a short walk (approx. 0.4 mile) down to end of Dodecanese Blvd and all other locations mentioned are before that. We will meet in the lobby at 9:30am to board trolleys and be transported to Tarpon Springs. It's approximately a 12-mile, 50-minute ride. **THIS IS A LIMITED PERSON EVENT SINCE WE ARE RESTRICTED BY SPACE ON THE TROLLEYS. YOU MUST SIGN UP NOW ONCE THE TROLLEYS ARE FULL WE CAN NOT TAKE ANY ADDITIONAL TRAVELERS.** You must be signed up prior. Remember space is limited and we repeat, **this is a first come first served event, so we will not take any last-minute folks who decide they want to go when they arrive at the reunion.** The first 64 to respond are in. **Again, free trip, lunch on your own.** You might meet a new GumDipper...look for the smiley face on their name tag.

## **HISTORY FACTORY**

Also joining us once again is Jenn Andreola of the History Factory along with Erin Narloch and Brittany Rubin. Their request is as we prepare for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Firestone's founding, we want to capture the powerful stories of those who have experienced the company's history firsthand --- YOU! We encourage Gum Dippers to bring items that represent your experience working at Firestone over the years to be donated to the Firestone Archives. We welcome everything from advertisements to photographs to physical objects (but no tire ash trays, please!). On-site, you'll have the opportunity to share the story behind your artifact using a video booth. We appreciate your help preserving Firestone history!

### **Erin Narloch**

#### **Senior Director, Business Insight and Performance**

Erin leads History Factory's research team, leveraging her career of 20-plus years in global brands, museum administration, culture and consulting roles to actively collaborate with diverse teams and talents in order to expand capabilities, refine methodologies and deliver the best experiences and products for our clients. Erin is a Wisconsinite and holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin (go Badgers!) and Johns Hopkins University. She's lived and worked in the Midwest, South, Northeast, and western Europe and is married with two kiddos, one bossy corgi and a chinchilla.

### **Jenn Andreola**

#### **Lead Archivist, Description and Metadata Services**

Jenn has two decades of experience as an archivist working for Fortune 500 companies, nonprofits, educational institutions, accrediting institutes, medical societies and the federal government. As History Factory's lead archivist, her daily duties include accessioning, arrangement and description, preservation, reference requests and digitization. Jenn is a tried-and-true New Yorker now living just outside Washington, D.C. Previously, she relocated to Jacksonville, Florida, to take on the monumental task of leading a team of rotating archivists to review more than 3,400 linear feet of the Firestone Archives over the course of six years.

## **Brittany Rubin**

### **Account Manager**

Brittany acts as the account lead for History Factory's work with Firestone. In her role, she leads project teams on storytelling campaigns from strategy to implementation. She has had the opportunity to work with the Firestone brand over the past several years, including on Harvey Firestone's 150th birthday, an Indy 500 archives pop-up display for teammates and planning for the upcoming 125th brand anniversary. Hailing originally from Massachusetts, she holds a degree from The George Washington University and lives in Washington, D.C.

## **BSAM CORPORATE NEWS**

### **Bridgestone supports global roster of athlete ambassadors for Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024**



Bridgestone Corporation is partnering with dozens of elite athletes around the world as a Worldwide Olympic and Paralympic Partner. The company is forming a global roster of Team Bridgestone brand ambassadors on the road to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024.

In total, the Team Bridgestone ambassador roster for Paris 2024 consists of 40 athletes across 9 countries and over 20 sports. The group features 20 past Olympic and Paralympic medalists who have won a combined 46 medals.

Of note, the list of Team Bridgestone ambassadors includes gold medalists Amandine Buchard (judo) and Mandy François-Elie (Para athletics) from France; Malaika Mihambo (athletics) from Germany; Gianmarco Tamberi (high jump) and Gregorio Paltrinieri (swimming) from Italy; Kosuke Hagino (swimming) from Japan; Saúl Craviotto (canoe) from Spain; Adam Peaty (swimming) and Charlotte Worthington (BMX freestyle) from

the United Kingdom; and Daniel Romanchuk (Para athletics) and Susannah Scaroni (Para athletics) from the United States.

“We are honored to work with this inspiring team of athlete ambassadors who are making an impact both on and off the field, and we will be proudly cheering for them on the Road to Paris 2024,” said Thierry Jupsin, Vice President of Brand Marketing, Bridgestone Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). “These individuals truly embody our belief that what really matters is enabling all people to perform at their best regardless of background or ability — not just today, but for years to come.”

The roster of athletes was selected based on an alignment of values with the Bridgestone brand. The personal stories and passions of Team Bridgestone ambassadors will be celebrated and amplified by the company through a combination of marketing initiatives, employee and customer events, and community activities on the journey to Paris.

### **Firestone adds new sustainably-sourced raw materials to race tires for the Indianapolis 500**



The Firestone brand is celebrating 25 years as the exclusive tire supplier of the NTT INDYCAR SERIES and the Indianapolis 500. As we look to help sustain the sport into the future, Bridgestone is once again accelerating the use of more sustainable materials and technologies in motorsports.

For 2024, Bridgestone has produced a Firestone Firehawk Indy 500 race tire that incorporates two monomers sourced from the waste residue of palm oil processing. The bio-styrene and butadiene monomers included in this year's race tires are certified by the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) for the transparency and traceability of sustainable raw materials throughout the supply chain.\*



“Our racing heritage with Firestone dates back more than 100 years to the very first Indy 500 in 1911, and we remain focused on helping sustain the sport we love for future generations,” said **Cara Krstolic**, Executive Director of Race Tire Engineering and Production, Bridgestone Americas. “The demands of racing also offer the ultimate challenge for our innovation. In proving the same premium performance can be delivered at this level through more sustainable materials and technologies, we can work to extend these efforts beyond motorsports into solutions being designed for the future of mobility.”

Using sustainably sourced monomers in this year’s Indy 500 race tires is the latest example of Bridgestone’s efforts to prove and accelerate sustainable materials and technologies through the NTT INDYCAR SERIES.

## **Bridgestone’s “Airfree” tire takes first public road test**



Since 2008, our BSJ teammates have been developing Bridgestone’s “Airfree Concept”, a next-generation tire that doesn’t require air inflation – and brings major benefits as a result.

By design, an air-free tire overcomes arguably the biggest threat to tire safety, longevity and cost efficiency: punctures. And with no air pressure management required, the air-free tire reduces maintenance demands to provide further savings. But really the most important benefit introduced by this new concept tire is in recyclability. Bridgestone’s Airfree Concept tire applies resin-made spokes and tread rubber – both fully recyclable – alongside a retreadable surface.

“We have realized a sustainable business model with Airfree,” says Yoshida-san, Manager of Bridgestone Corporation's Solution Development Section 5, who oversees the Airfree Concept’s design. But the over 15-year project hasn’t been without its challenges.

“At the time of development in 2008, it was made of metal and had a much more complicated structure than today,” says Yoshida-san. “However, that presented a productivity challenge, and we decided to use thermoplastic resin, or roughly speaking, plastic, as the material.

“Then, we struggled to maintain the recyclability of the resin while at the same time making it function as a tire that supports the vehicle.”

After overcoming many challenges and setbacks, the revolutionary tire would be taken from the B-Mobility course in Kodaira, Tokyo, and driven on public roads for the first time earlier this year – a major moment on its roadmap to public rollout. The public road test is key for any new tire or vehicle, but especially in the case of a first-of-its-kind air-free tire. On public roads, vehicles will face issues they won’t encounter on the track – like ruts, manholes and fallen leave – so by running in such road environments the team would gain new insights into the tire’s performance.

The date was set for 27 March 2024 and the location Tokyo’s Kodaira City.

But before that – specifically, the day before – an internal test ride event was held for related departments within BSJ. Testers commented that the handling performance was the same as that of passenger car tires on the market, and that although the ride was at times stiff, the tires felt well supported, allowing them to drive with peace of mind.

The Airfree Concept’s public road test would help to verify the tire’s characteristics and functions on various road surfaces and road environments.

“By going out on public roads, our hope is to gain new insights that we didn’t notice during the test runs at B-Mobility and link them to improvements,” says Yoshida-san. “We would also like to improve the ride quality in the future.”

The tire’s public road test is a significant milestone on not only its own journey, but also Bridgestone’s as we work toward a more sustainable future of mobility.

And now we can safely drop the word “Concept” from the tire’s name!

## PAST REUNIONS



**WHERE ARE THE OLDTIMERS?** As we review the roster, we see so many old-timers who we have not seen in years, too many of **you keep putting it off and eventually can no longer travel.** We would like to see some old friends we worked with for years and have not seen in years. We relocate, retire and move on and lose track of our workplace friends. **COME ON DOWN before It is too late.**



## **JOLLEY TROLLEY....A GREAT TRIP IN YOUR FREE TIME**

**The JOLLEY TROLLEY** has a route which operates daily on Clearwater Beach and south for many miles down to the famous turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century pink DON CESAR hotel. The service also operates to the north stopping at the following locations: (It is free if you show them your room key). Clearwater, Old downtown Dunedin, Old Palm Harbor and the historical sponging and fishing village of Tarpon Springs. This is about a twelve-mile ride. You will be able to **board this shuttle right outside the hotel lobby** (we repeat **show your room key for a free ride**) and go north with a great view through Clearwater, home of the Scientologists (watch for them with black slacks and white tops) and then along the water with great water views to **Dunedin, a big tourist stop** for many visitors...with its restored downtown full of **shops and fine restaurants**. You will then proceed through Old Palm Harbor. You may want to **stop in Dunedin, on your way back** from Tarpon Springs, if time allows as it is **a place worth visiting** or for lunch if it is still early. **You can get on and off the trolley wherever you desire and catch the next one.** You head north to the **antique district of Tarpon Springs**, a turn of the century village, where you may want to get off to visit the shops, re-board another trolley and then **on to the water front with its sponge docks**, shrimp and sponge boats, boat tours, **shops, great restaurants**...and magnificent history. The trolley tour will take you past many old and historical landmarks. You **may want to get off here, especially at the sponge docks** to visit the shops and restaurants, **dine on the water** or just stay on for the tour through **this Greek Village in Florida**. This is a true ethnic Greek community just as they exist in Greece.



**Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks...Dodocanese Blvd.**

## Downtown Dunedin



For those of you that are **adventurers** you may want to take the exciting ferry ride from Clearwater Beach Marina to the **Dunedin** Waterfront stop in Downtown Dunedin and enjoy the views as you ride along Saint Joseph's Sound, sometimes surrounded by dolphins and visit the shops and restaurants downtown, where you can shop or have a meal.

## SOMETHING ELSE TO DO AT THE REUNION

We have an extraordinary and interesting sight at the enlarged and newly renovated Clearwater Marine Aquarium, which is only a short distance from our reunion hotel site and is a huge tourist attraction. Free trolley ride from the hotel.

OR!

A trip to the Tampa Hard Rock Casino if that is to your liking.



## **WHY DO WE KEEP COMING BACK TO CLEARWATER???**

**The Sheraton Sand Key** has been our choice to hold the Gum Dipper Reunion for the last 20 years because it offers the Reunion members many pluses. We consider it our home base. They provide discounted room rates that are difficult to get at a beach resort in Florida. The rates are extended for those that come early or want to stay a few days longer. The location is excellent for sightseeing, shopping, recreation and restaurants for dining allowing you to come early and leave later and enjoy a vacation with a lot to do. In addition, we cannot find another **hotel that will provide us with a hospitality room and allow us to bring in our own wine, beer, liquor, snacks, etc.** The other hotels want our hospitality food, drink and supplies purchased from them which is prohibitive. With the help of BFS we have been able to establish a great relationship. This is why we do not locate the reunion in other areas. They look forward to our coming in the fall. In addition to what the wonderful facilities offer the Tampa Bay area is a magnificent resort area and destination point. The Sheraton Sand Key is part of all the activity in the Clearwater beach area. Just to the north is the main Clearwater Beach strip with its boat rides, restaurants, souvenir shops and tourist accommodations. The Beach Jolly Trolley Ride has a stop at our hotel that will take you north and south or on a great tour and is free if you show your hotel key, compliments of the hotel.

St Petersburg is a great tourist area where you can visit the **Dali Museum**, the historic Vinoy Hotel, many museums and sights including the PIER out in the gulf water and the racing site for the Firestone Grand Prix every March. To the south is Sarasota, another fine resort and shopping dining area.

WE COULD GO ON AND ON AS TO WHY WE CONTINUE TO RETURN TO SAND KEY. SIGN UP FOR THE GUM DIPPER REUNION AND SEE FOR YOURSELF. Rated one of the five best hotels in Tampa Bay...

### **A REMINDER! DID YOU SEND YOUR 2024 DUES IN YET ?**

***You must be current when we receive your REUNION reservation***

***DO IT TODAY, ONLY \$20 (or \$100 lifetime)***

## **WHY ARE WE CALLED THE GUM DIPPERS?**

We are called the Firestone Gum Dippers. Do we all know where this name came from? Gum Dipping was a process that Firestone used in the manufacture of tires. Much of the credit for Firestones technological base goes to Chemist John W. Thomas. Thomas was hired as the company's first research director in 1908. His work was so respected that

Thomas eventually led the corporation as its president and later as chairman of the board. One key development under Thomas's leadership was the process of *GUM-DIPPING* cord fabric. In 1915, the search for increased tire strength led to the first experiments using cord fabric for tire plies instead of square-woven cloth previously used. More flexible and resilient, cords proved a great improvement, doubling a tire's life. However, internal friction created intense heat buildup, which caused the tire to separate. This could be a major disaster. We found this out again in later years with steel cord. In 1920, Firestone's engineers finally perfected a method of "*GUM-DIPPING*" cords to completely impregnate them with rubber, insulating them against heat build-up and ply separation and increasing the life of the tire. One good turn deserved another and along with dramatically improving tire wear and resiliency. "*GUM-DIPPING*" allowed for another major Firestone first, the balloon, or low-pressure tire. Softer balloon tires made the hard tire casing a thing of the past. Within a few years Firestone's balloon tire was the standard tire for the world. All Firestone tires were branded "*GUM DIPPED*" for years and years. Are they still branded "**GUM DIPPED**"? ***Take a look!***

Our group was originally called the "Twenty Year Club" when first organized in 1980, as you had to have been a Firestone employee that long. They began to refer to themselves as the Gum Dippers in some of the literature starting with a post reunion newsletter on November 1, 1984. In 1992 they started to call themselves the Gum Dippers." The name "Gum Dippers" first appeared on our letterhead in 1995.

***"It has been my experience that every department of the business rises or sinks to the level of the man at the head. Therefore, it devolves upon the company to pick men of good character as its executives."* Harvey Firestone**

**HELP US GROW OUR MEMBERSHIP!**  
***THE COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO MAKE THE FIRST YEAR'S DUES FREE, SO ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO JUST FILL OUT THE APPLICATION AND SEND IT IN. No First-year dues required.***

**NO! WE DO NOT HAVE THE ANSWERS!**

Russ Burr our treasurer and Dave Wonsetler receive calls from Gum Dippers inquiring about their benefits at BFS. We do not have the answers to questions regarding your medical plan, employee discount cards and or program, pension, nor do we have any access to your personal files.

Attached are pages printed from our Facebook group that provides HR & Benefit contact phone numbers and web sites along with a copy of the current employee discount programs available through Firestone Stores.

**We DO NOT post our membership roster on-line for obvious privacy concerns. Our roster is furnished to active members in print form only and is attached to the Spring newsletter. Please do not redistribute or share with anyone.**

**We Like to HEAR FROM YOU –LETTERS TO THE EDITOR-PHOTOS-IDEAS**

We like hearing from our members. If you have anything you would like to tell your fellow Gum Dippers, drop us a line and we will get it in our newsletter. Also let us know about obituaries, about moves, weddings, trips, graduations, children, grandchildren, major anniversaries, new careers.... mail or e-mail to:

**John Johnsen, EDITOR** 727-365-1151,

815 Lantern Way, Clearwater, FL 33765 e-mail: [\*\*jjohnsen1@live.com\*\*](mailto:jjohnsen1@live.com)

Please send any photos from past or current reunions, to: DAVE WONSETLER,  
SECRETARY 813-324-8273, 803 Knight Street, Seffner, FL. 33584  
e-mail: [\*\*mabeandave@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:mabeandave@gmail.com)

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: [\*\*http://www.gumdippers.net\*\*](http://www.gumdippers.net)

**WE GET LETTERS**

Hello Russ,

With a heavy heart, I am informing the Gum Dippers of the passing of Harriet Turnof... I put together her obituary to share her accomplishments and passing with former colleagues... I did receive approval from her husband Jack to share with the group.

BTW – John Brady and I will see you in October at the Gum Dippers reunion.

Thank you, Ralph Levy

Thank you, Russ! I appreciate the time and effort you and others put into publishing the “Gum Dippers” newsletter and info. I greatly enjoy seeing and hearing from former friends and B/F associates. Keep up the good work and God bless!

Mike Wolf

Former Pres. Firestone Int’l Company

Gentlemen,

I am writing to thank all the persons who were involved in my receiving the set of Bridgestone tires that I won at the Firestone Gum Dippers Retirement Party in Clearwater, Florida on October 27, 2023. Special thanks to Keith Cawley, Davis Smith Adams, and Karina Gonzalez.

I became a Gum Dipper member through Serge Abramovitch, who was a Firestone shop manager in Hudson, Florida. His son Patrick got his start in that shop, leading to his affiliation with Firestone/Bridgestone and becoming a Gum Dippers member. Patrick became “my son” when I married Serge’s widow.

When I started driving in the 1950’s, my first tires were Bridgestone. Through the years on numerous cars, trucks, RVs and a Bridgestone motorcycle, I have driven many miles on Bridgestone and Firestone tires. I am truly enjoying the quiet and smooth ride that these new Bridgestone Driveguard Plus tires are giving me.

Thank you again, sincerely,

David T. Corum

Russ,

Have you considered “zooming” the featured Bridgestone corporate speaker for the “somewhat” mobility impaired who cannot travel to Florida?

Best from Akron,

Joe Walter

Russ,

Should have sent \$100 years ago, but who knew I would live this long.

Bob Musel

## **IN MEMORIAM**

**HARRIET TURNOF**, 79, of Wayne, NJ passed away on December 11, 2023 at her home with her loving family by her side. Mrs. Turnof had an undiagnosed cancer, which surfaced after a fall at home. She was born in the Bronx, NY and was married in Queens, NY to her loving husband Jack for 58 years. They had two children, Danielle Turnof Fox (husband Trevor), and Aaron Turnof (wife Stacy). She also had five grandchildren, Simon, Laurel, Kayla, Cole and Chase.

Mrs. Turnof was a trailblazer at Firestone, first as a store manager then a district manager. In those days, there were few woman store managers in the tire industry. She ran a very successful store in Huntington, NY, winning sales awards and was subsequently promoted to Assistant District Manager. She was given an opportunity to become a District Manager, her dream job, so Harriet, Jack and family moved to North Jersey where she managed the North Jersey district for 20 years. Over the years, Harriet and her teams won many awards for store profit and opening CFNA credit card accounts. In 2004, the North District team were the Bridgestone Firestone National Champions, Retail Group.

Harriet mentored many teammates that went on to become store managers, district, region, and operations managers. Harriet was very compassionate with her team, but always had high expectations.

Harriet retired in 2010 and was a snowbird traveling with her lifelong companion Jack to Palm Beach Gardens, Florida in the winter. They were not golfers but loved walking on a “72” hole golf course. She loved to travel, loved her garden of flowers and especially loved her family. She will be missed fondly by all that knew her. RIP Harriet.

Ralph Levy

**FRANK GALLI** passed away November 14, 2023.

**SIGGI WEISS**, passed away December 18, 2023.



**CHUCK WETTERGREEN** passed away March 24, 2024. Chuck worked in Chicago, Liberia, and Akron. He is survived by his wife Susan and two children and three grandchildren.

### **OUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION WEBSITE IS**

**www.gumdippers.net** the web site contains links to all recent newsletters from which you may view or print, information about the GumDippers, a membership application, and contact information, an e-mail link to the GumDippers, and photos from our reunions. **You can also get an application for membership at this site for friends and potential members.** We **DO NOT** post our membership roster on-line for the obvious privacy concerns. Our roster is furnished to active members in print form only and is attached to OUR APRIL newsletter. It is not intended to be used for commercial use or soliciting.

### **THE “GUMDIPPERS” ON FACEBOOK**

The Gum Dippers is a social network of retirees and friends of Bridgestone Americas and its subsidiaries including the former Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, Firestone Complete Auto Care, Tires Plus, Total Car Care and various manufacturing and distribution operations in addition to all Bridgestone operations..

WE NOW HAVE OUR OWN GROUP ON FACEBOOK, log in to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Gumdippers>

Sign up now to be up to date daily on Gum Dipper and Bridgestone/Firestone activities.....**remember, we welcome all former BFS employees to this group in hopes they will join THE GUM DIPPERS**

**Open a Facebook** account—if you don’t already have one—is easy and free. You just need to go to Facebook.com and follow instructions. (Naturally, you have to first have a Facebook account before you can join the Gum Dippers group on Facebook.)



## **YOUR GUM DIPPER COMMITTEE**

We now have a method to e-mail all Gumdippers. E-mails will be sent, and it is o.k. to open them in your browser. Some of you may hesitate if you don't know the sender, which will be Gum Dippers. Do we have your current email address? Our address: [gumdipper@gmail.com](mailto:gumdipper@gmail.com)

**CHAIRMAN: John Johnsen**, Newsletter: Editor, writer & producer (727) 365-1151 [jjohnsen1@live.com](mailto:jjohnsen1@live.com). Reunion; hotel arrangements, banquets, prizes

**TREASURER: Russ Burr**, Dues, Finance & Roster (727) 943-8825 [toplinetire@mindspring.com](mailto:toplinetire@mindspring.com), please advise him on any roster changes.

**SECRETARY: Dave Wonsetler**, Newsletter, Photographer (813) 324-8273 [mabeandave@gmail.com](mailto:mabeandave@gmail.com). Reunion; planning, gifts and organization.

**CHAIRMAN EMERITUS: Richard Mucciolo**, (727) 773-9017, [rpmucciolo@gmail.com](mailto:rpmucciolo@gmail.com)

### **REUNION HOSPITALITY SET UP AND ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Bob & Sue Meyer**: chairpersons ((941) 456-8131) [rhmeyer1@outlook.com](mailto:rhmeyer1@outlook.com)

**Russ Burr**: Beverages (727) 943-8825 [toplinetire@mindspring.com](mailto:toplinetire@mindspring.com)

**SPECIAL EVENTS: John & Glenna Johnsen** (727)-365-1151 [jjohnsen1@live.com](mailto:jjohnsen1@live.com)

**COMMUNICATIONS: Sue & Tom Markferding** (352) 804-7482 [tom11164@cox.net](mailto:tom11164@cox.net)

### **DIRECTORS:**

**Vin & Ann Donovan** (239) 362-2497 [Ann.donovan64@comcast.net](mailto:Ann.donovan64@comcast.net)

**Nancy Spencer** [nana.spencer@verizon.net](mailto:nana.spencer@verizon.net) 727-207-8076

**Sandra & Richard White** 813-973-3045 [swhite53@MSM.com](mailto:swhite53@MSM.com)

***You received the Roster attached to the April newsletter, review it and send the following application to your friends that are not on that roster:***



# The GumDippers

**Welcome to the GumDippers, an association formed to allow Firestone & Bridgestone employees, both retired and approaching retirement stay in touch with old friends.**

**Annual dues for new members are waived for first year**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the GumDippers? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background Information (Optional but encouraged)**

Are you still working? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, when did you retire? \_\_\_\_\_

If presently working, where? \_\_\_\_\_

Bridgestone Anniversary date? \_\_\_\_\_ Years of service? \_\_\_\_\_

Last position held? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership dues are \$20 annually, \$100 lifetime.**

**New member dues are waived for the first year.**

**MAIL APPLICATION TO:**

**The GumDippers c/o RUSSELL BURR**

**P.O. BOX 189**

**TARPON SPRINGS, FL. 34688**

