



**Bouke Atema** started out in the profession of carpentry. Studying decoration and restoration stimulated him to be more creative. This led in to the world of sand sculpting in 2002. He started with local festivals and competitions and expanded to a global profession. Bouke lives in the Netherlands is passionate about nature photography. His website is [BoukeAtema.com](http://BoukeAtema.com)



**Christy Atkinson** lives in Franklin, Texas (on a 30-acre farm known as the Funny Farm) where she makes homemade jelly and creates one-of-a-kind costumes and custom clothing. She is happily married to Darren Atkinson, the love of her life. She is self-employed, creating art and helping others have fun as Christy the Clown, Ruby the Pirate Queen, and other characters. "I have had some great jobs," Atkinson said. "From working at Disney World to working as a clown for Ringling Bros. Circus. I love entertaining people. Sand is just another way to bring smiles to everyone." She is thrilled to be competing at the Siesta Key Crystal Classic with her amazing Dad, THE Amazin' Walter.



**Dan Belcher** is from St. Louis, Missouri and has been creating professional sand sculptures since 1990. He is honored to have learned from many pioneers of the art form, and now to get the privilege of collaborating with, and learning from a family of many of the best and most talented sand sculptors from around the World.

During this time, he has won 14 world Championship in the Team, Doubles, and Solos categories, and competed in scores of other contests and hundreds of professional projects across the country around the world including Japan, China, Denmark, Italy, Australia, Great Britain and many other wonderful destinations. He loves the balance of the physical and creative sides of working with sand. He is also a Landscape Architect with a degree from Kansas State University. He has been a professional brewer and has run a few marathons when his schedule allows.



**Amanda Bolduc** was born and raised in beautiful Maine, Amanda received a degree in Psychology from Univ. of Maine, Farmington while working for the Maine Army National Guard. After graduation, she worked in the field of H.R. until 9-11 and decided to make the Army her full-time job and became a Combat Engineer Officer. This was all well and good until the babies started coming. She hung up her M16 for a new role, a “homeschool mama”. Fast forward 13 years and she still is homeschooling one of her three children.

Amanda Bolduc's sand sculpting journey began on the beaches of Florida. During family vacations she would attend sand sculpting events year after year, and in 2006 finally decided she wanted to try it herself. Armed with nothing but a shovel and a bucket, Amanda, along with her mother, set to work creating her first sculpture. She quickly realized that sand sculpting was not as easy as it looked. It took hours of hard work and determination to create a sculpture that was both aesthetically pleasing and structurally sound. But the satisfaction of hearing the crowd’s reaction, made her realize this first sculpture was worth all the effort.

Since then, Amanda has gone on to compete throughout the U.S. at Semi-Pro competitions and recently moved up the ranks to Master Sculptor! Additionally, Amanda started carving snow in 2015 and competes annually at the U.S. National Snow Sculpting Championship in Lake Geneva, WI along with fellow sand competitor Bruce Peck and Dan Belcher.



**Ian Deibert** was born and raised in southern New Jersey where he spent his childhood on the beach with his family. It was here that he was introduced to the art of sand sculpting by his father, and after a childhood of forced labor in the sand-apprenticing trenches of New Jersey beaches, he earned a BA in Graphic Design from Liberty University in 2013. Since then, he has worked in many different art mediums, including design, illustration, sculpture and film. His professional sand career has included competing in the Travel Channel show Sand

Wars twice (winning in 2013 with his father), earning a People’s Choice award at the Neptune International Sand Festival in 2018 and a 3<sup>rd</sup> Place award at the Siesta Key Crystal Classic in 2021. However, when it's time to go home and pay the bills, he works for a countertop fabrication company. Ian is married and is a proud father of four beautiful children, Rose, Callum, Oliver & Finnegan.”



**Matthew Deibert** was born and raised in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Living close to the beaches, Matthew spent many days playing in the sand. As a child Matthew showed an interest for the arts. Living close to the beach, and number 7 of 8 children, family trips to the beach were frequent. Sand was a medium readily available and affordable. Sandcastles, large decorative walls, tunnels and motes were some of his favorites. Through the school years he returned to the beaches, abandoning sand as an art form, but to serve the public along the beach as an Atlantic City lifeguard. It was the birth of his first son Ian and their early trips to the beach

that sparked a new relationship enjoying the sand. This enjoyment transformed into a passion after studying the Art of sand sculpture and discovering the history of sand sculpture and its connection with Atlantic City. At present Matthew holds a BA from Mercyhurst University with an emphasis in Graphic Design. He is a retired Atlantic City Firefighter Captain, where he met John Gowdy, who was very influential in his sand career. Matthew is married with six children. His two oldest sons, Ian and Matt Jr. have joined him on the sand pile. He is the creator and owner of SandCreation, LLC. He has been competing and working with sand professionally since 1999. During his free time, he can usually be found with family and friends on the New Jersey Shore. He also enjoys playing golf...one place where he **tries** to stay out of the sand.

Matthew has worked with other sculptors, some of the large events are: Beach Fest Atlantic City, Super Bowl Tampa FL., Bloomberg Manhattan, NY, Sun Fun Fest Myrtle Beach, SC, Grand Opening South Carolina Aquarium, Summer Fest Winter Haven, FL., World Record Attempt Wildwood, NJ, Schenectady NY, The White House Commission on Remembrance "Sands of Remembrance" 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary D-Day, Omaha Beach, Normandy, France, Wawa Welcome America in Philadelphia, Atlantic City Beerfest and Downbeach Seafood fest, Margate Beachstock, Somers Point Bayfest, Tropicana Casino and Ocean Casino.

Matthew has competed in solo and team events. Some of his honors were: 3<sup>rd</sup> Place team-Expo Cite Quebec 2000, 1<sup>st</sup> Place team-Expo Cite Quebec 2001 with John Gowdy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place solo Old Orchard Beach, ME 2001, **People's Choice World Championship-Solo** Harrison BC Canada 2001, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Solo North American Championship Virginia Beach VA 2001, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place solo-Expo Cite Quebec 2002, and **1<sup>st</sup> Place-Team World Championship** Harrison BC Canada 2002 with Karen Fralich, 1<sup>st</sup> Place team North American Championship Virginia Beach VA 2003, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Solo North American Championship Virginia Beach, VA 2004, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Team-Expo Cite Quebec 2005. **1<sup>st</sup> Place New Jersey Championship 2007 & 2008.** He competed on "Sand Blasters

2007”and 2008, it was shown on the Travel Channel. 2nd place Solo 2011 North American Championship. Winner of “Sand Wars” with Ian Deibert, March 2012 featured on the Travel Channel. In 2018, the father and son team won “People’s Choice” at the Virginia Beach International Championships.



**Karen Fralich** has been creating sand sculptures since 1994. She began her sculpting career at age 14 in a pottery studio in Guelph, Ontario. In 1994, a professional sand sculptor invited her to help him on a small sand sculpture in a local mall. Fralich was immediately addicted and spent the next 4 years learning the rudiments of sand sculpture while still working full time in restaurants, clothing sales and mascot costume construction. In 1998 she entered her first international contest and by 2001 she was working full time as a freelance sculptor. Her work takes her around the world. Fralich has competed in 92 master level international sand sculpture contests, is a 4-time World Champion and 4-time North American Champion and is the only woman to win the Solo Canadian World Championship.



**Isabelle Gasse** Born in a country with harsh winters, it was with her hands in the snow and ice that she approached monumental sculpture, in order to sow a little more poetry in the world and allow herself to question it. Working in several national and international events, including the Quebec Ice Hotel and Carnival, she alternates the snow suit for sandals and short pants at times! It is therefore, with her heart inked in ephemeral art and natural materials, that she ventures (among other things) into the sand. Thank you for welcoming me to your idyllic beach.



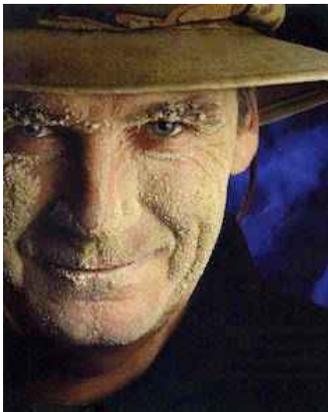
**Maxim Gazendam** started sand sculpting in 1998 by coincidence after taking part in a workshop. A few months later he participated in the International Sand Sculpting Competition in Scheveningen and over the years his love for sand became bigger and bigger. After graduating at the Technical University of Delft in The Netherlands in 2005 (Master of Science of Architecture) he now works full time with sand, snow and ice. He started his own one-man-business under

the name puremaxim. Over the years he still participates in various international competitions and festivals. You can follow him on Facebook and Instagram under the name: puremaxim or on his website, puremaxim.com.



**Justin Gordon** is from Groveland, Mass, and has been wood carving since 1974. He started sculpting professionally in 1991 after a lay off from his engineering job. He now sculpts in ice, snow at ski areas, wood, including chainsaw and tree stump carvings, wax for the jewelry industry and bronzes, foam, clay, stone, sand, pumpkins, and chocolate. Sand sculpting has taken Justin to Taiwan, Kuwait, Oman, the Caribbean, BC and Quebec, Canada,

and throughout the US. Justin also does 50-ton sand sculptures at the Topsfield Fair in MA and the Champlain Valley Fair in VT. Justin now concentrates mostly on fine wood carved custom clock cases, architectural carvings, fine wood sculptures, carved canes for college graduates, bronzes, and period gun stocks. You can learn more about Justin on his website: [www.ElwinDesigns.com](http://www.ElwinDesigns.com)



**John Gowdy** sculpts sand, marble, and paints portraits for audiences around the world. He is a retired fire fighter having worked 27 years in The Fire Department of Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA where he was born. He earned the rank of Captain and was placed in charge of the Rescue and Special Operations of the city. He has also worked for 7 years as a beach lifeguard in Atlantic City.

John has been sculpting sand for over 33 years and has a sand sculpture company "Sand Sculptures by John Gowdy & Company LLC". He and his teammate and wife, Laura, have managed The Sand Sculpting World Cup Competition in Atlantic City, NJ. They have been invited to The Vatican to sculpt sand for Pope Francesco and have worked for The White House Commission of Remembrance on the beaches of Normandy, France!

He has earned many international and world titles in sand sculpture: 5-time International Champion at The Neptune Festival in Virginia Beach USA; 6-time American Champion at The American Sand Sculpting Championship in Ft Myers Florida USA; World Champion by peoples' choice and Grand Master Champion at The World Championship in Harrison Hot Springs BC Canada; 2-time first place at the International Championship in Jesolo, Italy; and many more awards in many other countries around the world such as Italy, England, Peru, Qatar, Taiwan, South Korea, Canada, Japan, to name a few!



**Laura Cimador-Gowdy** comes from Castelfranco Veneto, Italy (near Venice). She has earned her master's degree in Modern Languages and speaks two languages fluidly, Italian and English. Her interest in the arts led her to the beaches of Jesolo, Italy in 2005 where she met her husband John Gowdy who was working there at a sand event. They married on the beach of Fort Myers Beach, Florida in 2011.

She fell in love with sand sculpture and now Laura and John have teamed up in the competitive world of sand sculpture. They have won many awards as a two-person team in world class sand events in Cervia, Italy and Texas Sandfest 2019. In 2011 they won the nationally televised "Sand Wars" professional sand sculpting competition in Siesta Key, Florida. On April 18, 2018 Laura and John had the honor of being invited to the Vatican, Rome to personally meet Pope Francis and donate to him a sand sculpture which was carved inside Saint Peter's Basilica.

They have recently teamed up to compete in the Canadian reality show Race Against the Tide where they challenged the Bay of Fundy's tide.



**Greg J. Grady (G2)** is a New Hampshire native, a self-taught artist and a 2nd generation sand sculptor. What started as a hobby on summer vacations as a young child has turned into following in the footsteps of his father. His Irish luck would have him apprenticing under the world's best sand sculptors, playing in the biggest of sand boxes, and traveling to beaches across the country. A passion for sand had turned into a career over the last decade. Greg has made sand sculptures for just about every event imaginable, from the simple but very important wedding proposal, to the largest of corporate events, to being a part of successful attempts at setting Guinness World Records.

A honed talent and love for creating has expanded to working with other mediums over the years such as snow, wood, foam, stone, pumpkins and more. [ItsJUstSand.com](http://ItsJUstSand.com)



**Carl Jara** “I’m actually a pretty simple guy, when I’m not hanging out with my amazing daughter, I enjoy woodworking, gardening, food, a good book, and beer. I have two of the most envied jobs in the world; exhibits creator for the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and professional sand sculptor. I’ve earned the opportunity over the last 32 years to travel the world, win six dozen or so medals, and to work

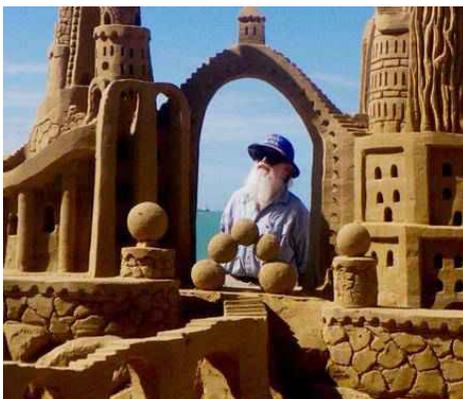
with and compete against almost every sand sculptor in the business, many of whom have become like family. I create sand sculpture because I worship it, it is my spiritual experience. It is my opportunity to illustrate the profound changes, moments, and efforts of my own personal narrative and it gives me great pleasure to be able to share it with you.”



Since 2001, **Matt Long** has created innumerable sand sculptures around the world for every type of event imaginable. From small but impressive table-top sand sculptures at trade shows to sculptures well over a hundred tons. They are always suited to the client, well thought out, and skillfully designed.

Matt has placed in four World Championship Competitions and was a cast member for the two-season run of the Travel Channel Show Sand Masters. He has created sand sculptures as far away as Thailand and New Zealand to Times Square and Rockefeller Plaza. Matt has also designed and patented

Can You Dig It Sand Tools that are used by participants in all his team building events.  
[www.sandsculptor.com](http://www.sandsculptor.com)



**Amazin' Walter MacDonald** “Sand has been very good to me. I discovered a love for stacking sand in 1978 as I dribbled my first sand on South Padre Island, TX.

Sand has taken over my life and has taken me around the world. I credit the SPI sand itself for my interest and enjoyment in sand sculpting. South Padre Island has some of the best natural beach sand I’ve found anywhere. And I’ve looked.

I have won medals in master level sand sculpting competitions all the way up to the World Championships and have built sand castles in far-away places like China, Japan, Belgium, Holland, Bermuda, Mexico, Canada, Taiwan, Qatar and Australia and all over the USA. I produce my own line of sand sculpting tools and have taught hundreds of others how to build a better sand castle.

The immediate and fragile characteristics of sand as an art medium, challenges me and feeds my fantasies. I'm honored to share this passion with an international community of sand gypsy friends. Why castles? It is traditional and it still excites me to hear a casual observer comment, "now that's a real sand castle"!

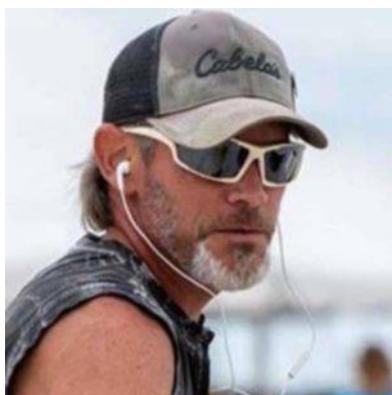
I'll be at the Siesta Key Crystal Classic again this year with my BFF Abe Waterman as returning champions from 2016. Games on! Sons of the Beach Pledge: I promise to: Have FUN, help others have FUN, and UNLITTER!"



**Craig Mutch** is from Canada and is a seasoned artist of many hats; sand, snow and ice sculpture, travel photography, pumpkin/wood carving and body painting. Sand sculpture is his prime medium which takes him all around the world on special sand events: Middle East, Europe, Asia and USA. Snow and ice sculpture -Whistler BC; GMC, 2010 Winter Olympics, Coca Cola.

Craig and his doubles partner were the overall first place winners at the Crystal Classic 2012 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place winners 2018-2019. He is currently working in the film industry as a set artist/sculptor on feature films such as 'Planet of the Apes'.

[CraigMutchCreations.com](http://CraigMutchCreations.com)



**Bruce Peck** was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri (Home of the Stanley Cup!). His freshman year of college studying architecture scared him far away from the arts, into a lifelong career as a CPA. A move to the Gulf Coast of Florida near some of the top ranked beaches in the U.S. gave him the opportunity to use sand sculpting as a path back to his love for art. It all started right here in 2014!! In just his second sand sculpting competition, Bruce won First Place in the Amateur Division of the American Sand Sculpting Championship. That win is what ignited a new

passion for competitive sand sculpting! Sculpting over the past five years at the Advanced Amateur level has been mostly an education through trial and error. The

camaraderie and festival atmosphere have kept him hooked to this magical art form. With several wins in the past couple years, the time has come for Bruce to compete against the best in the world at the Master Level!



**Morgan Rudluff** is a beach-loving born an' raised California girl who serendipitously stumbled into sand sculpting in 2007. By 2011, she was traveling full time, appearing on TV shows, giving media interviews, professionally competing, and spreading general joy through art and creativity to people far and wide. Rudluff considers herself to be quite privileged and very lucky to have been able to make a living doing such fun unique work, and still to this day, is grateful for the opportunity to travel and be creative.

In 2018 Rudluff made the complicated choice to put sand sculpting on the back-burner and focus on a new career in the healing arts. She now currently works full-time as a massage therapist splitting her time between her private practice in Oakland, CA and as a massage therapy instructor at the San Francisco School of Massage & Bodywork. Rudluff considers all her years as a sand sculptor to have been instrumental in how she approaches bodywork: "Both of my careers have been equal parts art, design, science, composition, education, adaptability, attention to detail, creativity, intuition, and absolute love for what I am doing. Plus, I usually get to work barefoot doing both!" When not doing massage or sand sculpting, Morgan spends her time in the Bay Area taking improv classes, working in her garden, and going to see live music.



**Emerson Schreiner** is a painter and sand sculptor from west Michigan. He now lives in Galveston, Texas where he runs the Galveston branch of Sandy Feet Sand Castle Services. Emerson has been giving sand castle lessons and creating sand sculptures for events and competitions for many years and has taken home prizes in several Master's events, including South Padre Island's Sand Castle Days, Texas Sand Fest, and right here at The Crystal

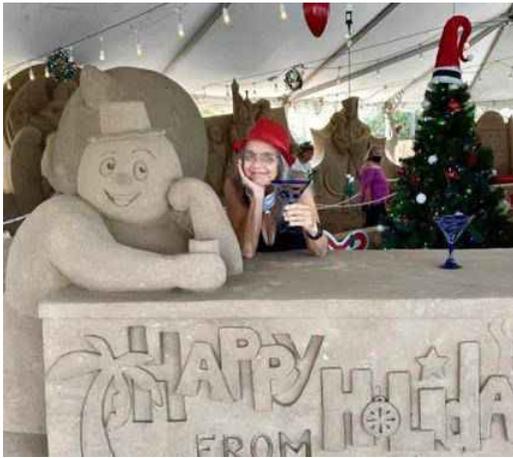
Classic. When he's not on a pile of sand, you can find him climbing rocks, playing guitar, or trying to make friends with the local cats. This is Emerson's 4th time competing in The Crystal Classic.



**Edith van de Wetering** “When I was young, I hated sand in between my toes, but now I could not live without it. I started sculpting sand through my architecture education at the Technical University. Participating in the sand sculpture festival in Scheveningen started as a hobby, but got out of control very fast. And I have been traveling around the world to build sand, snow and ice sculptures for already over 15 years.”



**Wilfred Stijger** “I started sculpting sand on the beach of Katwijk, where I was born, after reading a book of Pieter Wiersma. His work impressed me a lot. I got a lot of good reactions from the people passing by and joined the sand-sculpture festival in Scheveningen. There I met Gerry Kirk and he invited me to work with him. Through his network I got invited to festivals and competitions. And since then, I travel around the world to give the people beautiful sculptures in sand snow and ice. One day I hope to organize my own festival.”



**Lucinda “sandy feet” Wierenga** is from South Padre Island, Texas and has won a modest amount of international fame with her sand-sculpting skills, carving at major contests and festivals world over since 1987. She has taught generations of SPI visitors how to build a better sandcastle — and has reached untold numbers more with her best-selling book, “Sand Castles Made Simple.” She helped establish SPI Sandcastle Days back in 1987, and she continues to be an event organizer and competitor. [www.sandyfeet.com](http://www.sandyfeet.com)

The South Padre Island Sandcastle Trail - [sandcastletrail.com](http://sandcastletrail.com) was established by Lucinda in 2012, this collection of sculptures created from local sand and carved by some of the most talented sculptors on the planet, is truly unique. Thanks to South Padre’s temperate climate and a talented crew of local sculptors, SPI is able to maintain these “semi-permanent” art installations for visitors to enjoy year-round. Read about the sculptures and the artists who created them at [sandcastletrail.com](http://sandcastletrail.com).

Exhibitions: Over the past four years, Lucinda’s company - sandy feet sandcastle services - has organized and created large, multi-sculpture exhibits in such locales as The San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeo, as well as the South Padre Island Holiday Sandcastle Village — an ever-changing sand sculpture gallery featuring the works of some of the most talented artists on the planet. See more at [sandcastlevillage.com](http://sandcastlevillage.com).



**Brian Wigelsworth** has been an artist his whole life, long before he went to art school. He began his art career by drawing portraits of his Junior High teachers while ignoring the lesson being taught. The principles undoubtedly became his biggest critics and fans. Growing up in California if the surf wasn’t up, his sand creations were. After getting his degrees in Illustration and Graphic Design he immediately opened his own studio in downtown Minneapolis. He loved learning any new art form or technique, working in pen and ink, oils, acrylics,

watercolor, airbrush and even stained glass. When he moved to Siesta Key he would enter the amateur sand sculpting event every year until someone told him he was too good and needed to move up. “I didn’t know there was a move up!” He found himself

at the Fort Myers American Championships competing in the Pro-am division, where he placed first and the organizers invited him back to the Masters the next year. He then found himself low man on the totem pole, dwarfed by the incredible master talent that attended that event.

It wasn't long before he realized his home Siesta Key sand deserved its own Master event. After 2 years of touting the possibilities to the Siesta Chamber of Commerce, they worked together to create the Siesta Key Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Festival. After starting his professional sand company, SandVenture Crew, he coordinated the sand competition for ten years and with the help of the Chamber grew it into the largest event on Siesta Key. Two years ago, passing the reigns to his business partner, Andy Daily, with the desire to compete in this wonderful event. After placing 2nd in doubles last year, he's back to play in this incredibly gorgeous white sand again!!