The background of the entire page is a photograph of a sunset over a marina. The sky is filled with warm orange and yellow hues, transitioning into cooler blues and purples at the top. Silhouettes of several sailboats are moored in the water, their masts reaching upwards. In the distance, the dark silhouettes of palm trees and some buildings are visible against the bright horizon.

November 16, 2012

# THE SARASOTA News Leader

*The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida*

**BOND DEAL CLOSE**

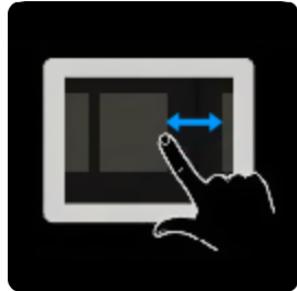
**14 MONTHS LATER ...**

**HISTORY TALKS**

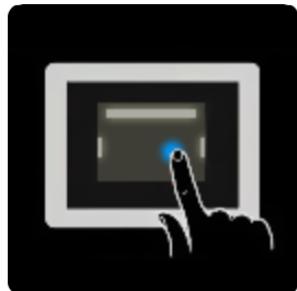
Inside

Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.

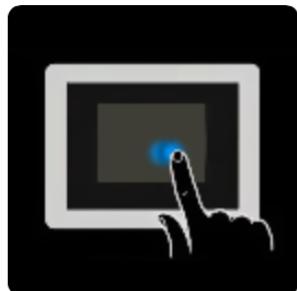
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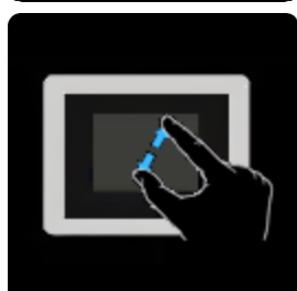
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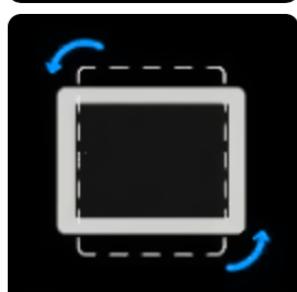
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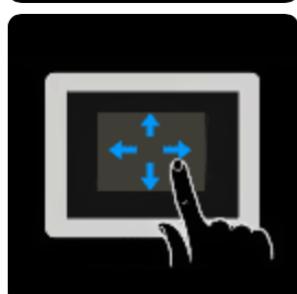
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A.K.A.  
**HELP**

# SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

*The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida*

**Rachel Brown Hackney**

Editor and Publisher

Rachel@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Cooper Levey-Baker**

Associate Editor

Cooper@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Stan Zimmerman**

City Editor

Stan@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Norman Schimmel**

Contributing Photographer

NSchimmel@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**David Staats**

Contributing Writer

DStaats@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Fran Palmeri**

Contributing Writer

FPalmeri@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Harriet Cuthbert**

Contributing Writer

HCuthbert@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Elinor Rogosin**

A&E Writer

ERogosin@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Scott Proffitt**

Staff Writer

SProffitt@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Tyler Whitson**

Contributing Writer

TWhitson@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Vicki Chatley**

Copy Editor

Vicki@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Cleve Posey**

Production Manager / Graphic Designer

Cleve@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Robert S. Hackney**

General Manager

Robert@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Advertising Sales**

Sales@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Trish Ivey**

Advertising Account Executive

Trish@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Subscription Services**

Subs@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

**Press Releases & News Tips**

News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com



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# Welcome

Some weeks we at the *News Leader* cannot believe our good fortune in the amount of interesting news popping up around us. This has been one of those weeks.

Perhaps the City and County commissions and the School Board are just focused on getting things done before the holiday season begins in earnest.

Whatever the reasons, you won't hear us complain — except that we wish we had more time. We strive diligently to cover the news we think you will find most worthy of your attention. However, we also keep looking over agenda items and eyeing scraps of paper on our desks that bear tidbits of information we heard, knowing some readers would be drawn to that news as well.

Alas, as my husband is fond of saying, the only person ever to get everything done by Friday was Robinson Crusoe.

This week, for your reading pleasure, we invite you not only to take note of Stan Zimmerman's usual resourcefulness in ferreting out news of the city of Sarasota, but also his satirical take on the incident involving a homeless person and a police officer in Gillespie Park.

Cooper Levey-Baker put on his political reporter's cap to cover a legislative issues breakfast involving a broad array of area nonprofit groups; then, he pulled out his county reporter's credentials to cover final County Commission action on a proposed new assisted living facility.

Scott Proffitt also has done double duty — offering a report on a program about how integration affected Newtown residents, then turning his attention to the Sarasota County Public Schools' new plans for career and technical education.

The best part for us is that we are bringing you stories you likely will not find anywhere else.

**Rachel Brown Hackney**

*Editor and Publisher*



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## Enter To Win A New iPad



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**News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com**



# I like to take my time.

Sure, it's a temptation to rush. Each issue of *The Sarasota News Leader* is brimfull of in-depth coverage of all the news and goings-on in Sarasota County. And it has delightful and informative feature stories. Thanks to its partnership with *This Week In Sarasota*, I always know what the most exciting happenings are each week. Plus, it is simply so beautiful, with photography that takes my breath away.

There is so much there, I don't know where to begin. So it is hard to resist the urge to read it all at once. But I know better. Take your time and indulge in all that it has to offer.

***You have a whole week.***

# TOP STORIES



## BOND DEAL CLOSE

*City's auditor and clerk has failed to comply with the city charter's bond stipulation since she was appointed to the post two years ago — Stan Zimmerman*

Since she accepted the position of city auditor and clerk in the City of Sarasota two years ago, Pamela Nadalini has not been able to obtain the bond required for the job by the city's charter.

*The Sarasota News Leader* learned this week Nadalini has secured one quote from a bonding company, although two sources say the rates are roughly 20 times the amount paid for the same coverage for the other city officials required to have bonds.

City Human Resources Director Kurt Hoverter said he is “shopping” for a lower-cost bond with other vendors, and he said he might “save a few thousand dollars” over the first figure he received. ([Full story here](#))



## 14 MONTHS LATER ...

*County Commission was told in September 2011 that it would see a completed design for the Siesta Public Beach improvements by fall of this year — Rachel Brown Hackney*

On Sept. 14, 2011, the Sarasota County Commission voted unanimously to ask staff to come back the following month with design and construction options for completing the Siesta Public Beach Park improvements on an accelerated schedule.

The goal, Commissioner Joe Barbetta said, was to take advantage of low construction costs and interest rates.

It appeared the project could get under way in the summer of 2013, according to the staff presentation, headed up by then-Project Manager Spencer Anderson.

The commission also approved the staff goal of completing the design work in the fall of 2012.

Staff did not come back to the board with those options in late October. ([Full story here](#))

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# TOP STORIES



## HISTORY TALKS

*Longtime community residents discuss how integration affected Newtown students when school busing was mandated in the late 1960s — Scott Proffitt*

Carolyn Mason was a teenager in Newtown, preparing to enjoy her senior year in high school, when federally mandated school busing came to Sarasota County.

“My senior year was supposed to be the best year, but it was by far the worst. I remember feeling so alone,” she told an audience Tuesday night, Nov. 13, at Crocker Church in Pioneer Park.

The vice chairwoman of the Sarasota County Commission, Mason was moderating a discussion about integration’s effects on Newtown — one in a series of talks being sponsored by the Historical Society of Sarasota County.

She shared a table with three other longtime Sarasotans at the front of the church, which dates to 1901. ([Full story here](#))



## SQUEAKING THROUGH

*With a split vote, the city's Planning Board gives its approval to Walmart for a supercenter on the site of the Ringling Shopping Center — Stan Zimmerman*

The surprise was not that the Walmart store proposed on Charles Ringling Boulevard was approved Wednesday evening, Nov. 14. The surprise was that two Sarasota Planning board members found serious reasons to vote against it.

By all appearances, this was an open-and-shut case. The growing-everemptier Ringling Shopping Center, at 97,000 square feet, would be replaced by a 98,000-square-foot Walmart Supercenter with a grocery. Every metric — zoning, city codes, parking requirements, traffic — had a green light from city staff.

Even the associations for the two adjacent neighborhoods were not opposed to the project. Those same two neighborhoods — Alta Vista and the Gardens of Ringling Park — fought Ron Burks’ high-rise School Avenue project to a standstill several years ago, but this time they were muted. ([Full story here](#))

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# TOP STORIES



## CLEAR ON PRIORITIES

*Community Alliance calls on state lawmakers to stop fighting the feds — Cooper Levey-Baker*

The Community Alliance of Sarasota County presented its 2012 legislative priorities to one incumbent state representative and staffers for other Florida lawmakers Tuesday morning, Nov. 13, and one message stood out: Stop fighting

Obamacare.

(Side note to interested readers: We can call the Affordable Care Act “Obamacare” now that President Obama himself is cool with it, right? Good. Carry on.)

The Alliance, a coalition of nonprofit health and human services organizations, held its Second Annual Legislative Breakfast to directly communicate its legislative goals to the Sarasota County delegation. Representatives from organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers, First Step of Sarasota and the Early Learning Coalition lined up to lay out their hopes for the Florida Legislature’s spring session, which convenes March 5. ([Full story here](#))



## EMPHASIS ON CTE

*Sarasota County Schools superintendent to propose consolidation of career and technical education in Sarasota County — Scott Proffitt*

On Nov. 20, Sarasota County Schools Superintendent Lori White will present to the School Board a plan to consolidate the array of district programs relating to career and technical education under the management of one person, school officials have announced.

That person — Todd Bowden — would report directly to White, a district news release says.

Bowden is the director of the Sarasota County Technical Institute (SCTI), the Suncoast Polytechnical High School (SPHS) and the Adult and Community Education program (ACE) in the district.

The CTE, or career and technical programs, are offered at all of the public middle schools and high schools in Sarasota County, according to the CTE website. ([Full story here](#))

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## BOND DEAL CLOSE

*City Auditor and Clerk Pam Nadalini and City Commissioner Paul Caragiulo listen to remarks by City Attorney Robert Fournier. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **CITY'S AUDITOR AND CLERK HAS FAILED TO COMPLY WITH THE CITY CHARTER'S BOND STIPULATION SINCE SHE WAS APPOINTED TO THE POST TWO YEARS AGO**

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

Since she accepted the position of city auditor and clerk in the City of Sarasota two years ago, Pamela Nadalini has not been able to obtain the bond required for the job by the city's charter.

*The Sarasota News Leader* learned this week Nadalini has secured one quote from a bonding company, although two sources say the rates are roughly 20 times the amount paid for the same coverage for the other city officials required to have bonds.

City Human Resources Director Kurt Hoverter said he is "shopping" for a lower-cost bond

with other vendors, and he said he might "save a few thousand dollars" over the first figure he received.

Bond costs for the city manager and city finance director run in the \$500 to \$700 range annually for \$100,000 of coverage. The "20-times figure" could push the premium for Nadalini's bond to \$10,000 or more.

On Monday, Nov. 29, the City Commission is expected to touch briefly on bond limits in general. Each year the commission must set the level of coverage the members wish

for their bonded officials. Normally, this is \$100,000, but they are allowed to change it.

Hooverter said the city commissioners will be aware of the size of Nadalini's premium, but they probably will not revisit the issue once Hooverter and Nadalini decide on a bonding company.

A bond application requires a substantial amount of paperwork, far in excess of that for any insurance policy. Unlike insurance, bonds hold employees personally accountable for losses.

Nadalini told the *News Leader*, "What's important is this gives us an opportunity to move forward." **SNL**

## **WOMEN ARRESTED AFTER STABBING ON SIESTA KEY**

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office arrested Carmela Angela Benevento, 50, for attacking the manager of a Siesta Key hotel on Nov. 13.

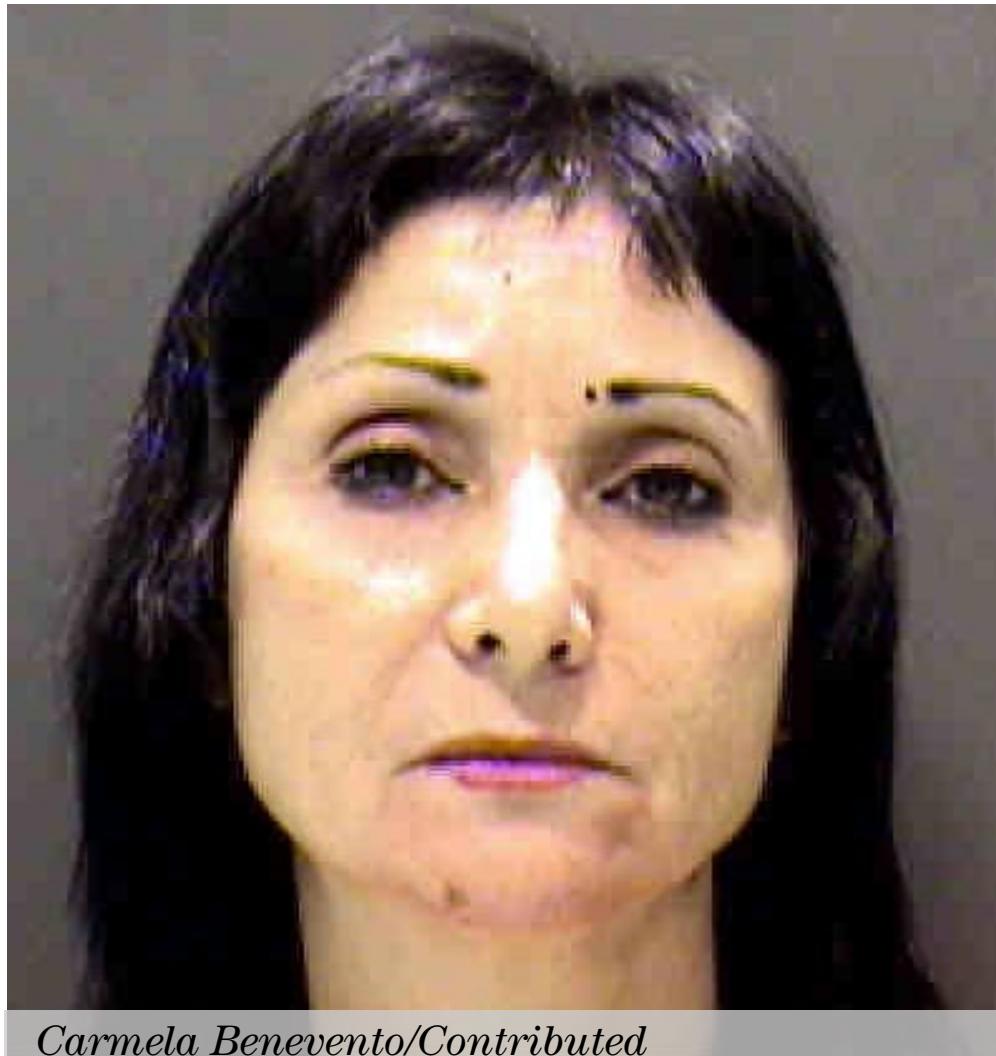
Deputies responded just after noon to The Siesta Key Bungalows, located at 8212 Midnight Pass Road, according to a Sheriff's Office report. The victim, 39-year-old Lisa Chavez-Barrera, said she had told Benevento that Benevento would have to vacate the property, but the woman became angry, broke off a landscaping light and stabbed Barrera in the stomach with the pointed end of the stake, the report says.

Witnesses told deputies the suspect then threatened a bystander with the same weapon.

Benevento was immediately taken into custody, the report notes. She was charged with

one count of Aggravated Battery and one count of Aggravated Assault. Bond was set at \$15,000 on each count, according to the Sheriff's Office's website. Her arraignment is set for Dec. 14.

The victim was treated at Sarasota Memorial Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries, the report adds. **SNL**



Carmela Benevento/Contributed



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## 14 MONTHS LATER ...



TODAY'S ARCHITECTURE INC.	DATE: March 2012
Conrad Sweet Sparkman	Version: 0.01
1000 Main Street	Page: 1 of 1
Sarasota, Florida 34202	File: 1000main
PH: 941.366.1000	Ext: 1000main
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SIESTA BEACH IMPROVEMENTS	
EAST CONCESSIONS	
Brewster & County Parks	
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DEPARTMENT BY: AR:	
AREA OF PROJECT: AP:	
CROSS-HATCH CAD FILE: CO:	
PRINTING DATE: 03/01/12	
DRAWING NUMBER: 1000main	
SHEET NUMBER: A15	

*Sweet Sparkman Architects have been working with Kimley-Horn and Associates and Sarasota County staff on designs for the Siesta Public Beach improvements, including new walkways to the beach itself. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

## COUNTY COMMISSION WAS TOLD IN SEPTEMBER 2011 THAT IT WOULD SEE A COMPLETED DESIGN FOR THE SIESTA PUBLIC BEACH IMPROVEMENTS BY FALL OF THIS YEAR

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

On Sept. 14, 2011, the Sarasota County Commission voted unanimously to ask staff to come back the following month with design and construction options for completing the Siesta Public Beach Park improvements on an accelerated schedule.

The goal, Commissioner Joe Barbetta said, was to take advantage of low construction costs and interest rates.

It appeared the project could get under way in the summer of 2013, according to the staff presentation, headed up by then-Project Manager Spencer Anderson.

The commission also approved the staff goal of completing the design work in the fall of 2012.

Staff did not come back to the board with those options in late October.

## PROJECT STATUS

Fourteen months later, in the space of eight days, the commissioners have railed twice against rising cost estimates, questioned who has been making the decisions that have led to those cost hikes and demanded staff give them answers quickly.

During almost 40 minutes of discussion on Nov. 13, Reid told the board that a 45-minutes staff presentation on the beach project has been scheduled for Dec. 11.

Moreover, Reid said, "I can do an audit [regarding] who directed who to do what. I'd be happy to do that."

Alan Maio, representing Kimley-Horn and Associates, the county's consulting firm on the beach park design work, promised the commissioners, "We will work with your staff between now and Dec. 11 to get you some documents that are a little more straightforward" than the staff memo provided to them this week.

During the Sept. 14, 2011 commission meeting, Anderson explained that the estimated cost of the project was just under \$17 million.

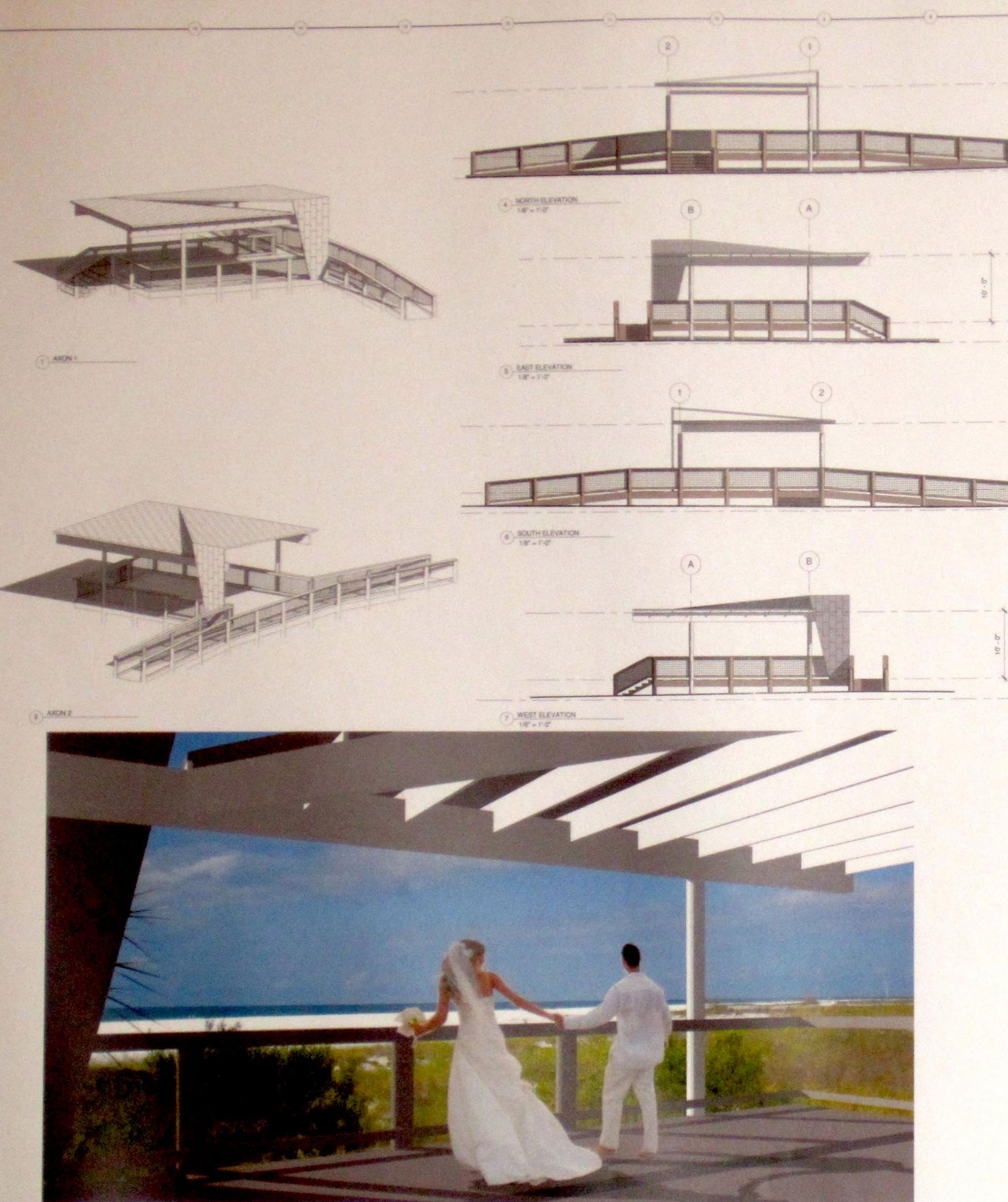
During an open house-style meeting on the project, held the evening of Nov. 13 at St. Michael the Archangel Church on Siesta Key, a member of the county's communications staff told *The Sarasota News Leader* the figure is at \$21.5 million.

However, during the board meeting hours earlier, Maio told the commissioners that what they had authorized was a figure below \$17 million.

The memo they received that morning from Carolyn Brown, general manager of the Parks



During the Nov. 13 open house at St. Michael the Archangel Church, Kim French looks at a proposal for the main parking lot at Siesta Public Beach. Photo by Rachel Hackney



A Sweet Sparkman Architects design shows how a new wedding pavilion could look at Siesta Public Beach. Photo by Rachel Hackney

and Recreation Department, and county Chief Engineer James K. Harriott Jr. says two scenarios have been devised for the improvements: One would cost up to \$26,693,000, including engineering and design work as well as staff time; the second would cost as much as \$20,937,000.

"There are additional things that different focus groups and stakeholder groups have asked for," Maio told the commissioners, though he added that Kimley-Horn consultants are "not at a lot of those meetings."

That was why the figures had escalated, Maio added.

Harriott recently had told him, Maio continued, that Parks and Recreation staff had asked for more features in the plan, for example. "It's just the laundry list of things that people are going to ask for."

Still, Maio said, when he heard Harriott tell the board last week that the upper range of the project estimate was \$27 million, "Quite frankly, I came out of my chair ...."

Barbetta pointed to copies of Public Works Department staff letters, dated Sept. 26 and Oct. 2, that said the project team had been asked to keep the work at the 60 percent design level.

The Sept. 26 letter from Project Manager Curtis Smith to Michael L. Sturm of Kimley-Horn says that directive was "Based on management direction ...."

The Oct. 2 letter, also from Smith to Sturm, says Kimley-Horn has authority "to continue with certain specific tasks and activities," including preparation and submittal of permit applications to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would be needed for the project.

However, the letter states that it "is not an authorization to proceed with 90% design plans under/or construction documents."

That Oct. 2 letter adds, "Given the importance of this project to the community, its high visibility and great potential, it is essential that both the public and the County Commission have the opportunity to observe and discuss the status of the project at critical junctures. ... During the next few

weeks, staff will continue to develop and share information concerning the status of, and options for, the project's final design."

Among the staff members copied on the letter were Harriott and Brown.

During an interview with *The Sarasota News Leader*, at the open house on Nov. 13, Harriott said, "The letters are right."

Without knowing what options the commissioners would like to pursue out of the various alternatives that have been proposed, he said, it was not possible to proceed to the 90 percent design level.



*I think when you're in this situation, communication could always have been better.*

James K. Harriott Jr.  
Chief Engineer  
Sarasota County



He likened the process of choosing those options to remodeling a house. For example, a couple might ask for plans including marble countertops, he said, only to be taken aback by the estimated cost. Still, Harriott said, if they decided they really prefer the marble, they might proceed with that option and find a way to pay for it.

"That's what we're going through right now" with the beach improvements plan, he added.

Many ideas had been put forth about what the improvements should entail, he pointed out. The goal, he said, "is to figure out the ones that make sense."

Additionally, Harriott said, while the commission might decide to forgo certain options at this point, it might want the leeway to include

them later, as more funding became available. Those points had to be taken into consideration in the design, he said.

Asked whether he felt a lack of communication between staff and the commissioners was a key factor in the frustrations that had been aired over the past eight days, he said, "I think when you're in this situation, communication could always have been better."

## OPTIONS

During the commission's discussion with Maio on Nov. 13, Commissioner Nora Patterson pointed to a couple of proposed cost-saving measures that she said she found troubling.

One called for using lighting in the new parking lots that met the minimum standards of

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>
<b>Beach Road Enhancements</b>	\$ 306,000.00
<b>East Concession &amp; Restroom</b>	\$ 2,658,262.50
<b>East Parking (Pervious)</b>	\$ 2,296,283.70
<b>East Multipurpose Structure</b>	\$ 720,000.00
<b>East Playground Area</b>	\$ 1,808,707.50
<b>Esplanade</b>	\$ 1,261,210.50
<b>Maintenance Facility</b>	\$ 300,000.00
<b>West Overlook &amp; Pavilion</b>	\$ 153,000.00
<b>Historic Structure Area Restoration &amp; Enhancements</b>	\$ 1,948,701.00
<b>West Concession, Retail, Public Safety, First Aid and Commissary Buildings</b>	\$ 3,438,045.00
<b>West Parking (Impervious)</b>	\$ 1,822,212.00

**Total Preliminary Design Project Construction Estimate**

**\$ 16,712,422.20**

**- Estimates Include 20% Contingency -**

A slide in a PowerPoint presentation presented to the County Commission on Sept. 14, 2011 shows projected costs for the beach park improvements. Image courtesy Sarasota County

the county code, instead of being sea turtle-friendly in keeping with the other lighting planned throughout the park.

"Well, if this were [a] private [development], we probably would require turtle-friendly lights," she added.

Second, she said, the notation regarding code-minimum trees and plantings is "not going to fly. ... Those aren't great for something that is really intended to enhance a beach that's pretty spectacular anyway."

She had predicted earlier that if the county put in less mature plants as proposed to save money, 70 percent to 80 percent of them would die and end up having to be replaced.

Maio noted the 15-foot-wide esplanade, which has been designed to extend the length of the park, has been proposed to be constructed of concrete with some paver details at intersecting points. Those paver enhancements, he said, are "not gold-plated, for goodness' sakes."

Barbetta noted a line item for enhancements to Beach Road in the more expensive scenario, at a cost of \$799,000. "That's not in the original proposal," he said.

"In September 2011, Barbetta added, "the commission approved a plan. I'd like to get it designed to 100 percent and put out for pricing, because we're just guessing at these numbers."

## Next Steps

- Issue Bid Documents for Beach Road Drainage Improvement Project
- Negotiate Design Contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates for Recommended Approval at October 25, 2011 Commission Meeting
- Complete Design and Construction Plans: Fall 2012
- Phased Park Construction Begins: Summer 2013

## OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

Among the 60 people who had signed in at the open house by 6 p.m. Nov. 13, Siesta resident Rodger Skidmore told the *News Leader* he would prefer more parking spaces to “planting [trees] to die” in the main lot, as “[that] does not make sense.”

As for proposed changes to the historic pavilion, he pointed out that it seemed to have weathered flooding just fine, and he was opposed to plans for a large new concession in conjunction with the redesigned structure.

He was at the beach for an hour earlier that day with his own survey, he said. Among his findings: Even though the restrooms have been cited often as among the features most needing enhancements, Skidmore said 80 percent of the people with whom he talked had noted the facilities were pretty clean. One common comment, though, was that tiled floors would be preferable, he added.

While he was walking from one end of the park to another, Skidmore said, he did have an interesting encounter with a woman tourist. People were coming to meet her out there, he said, and she wanted to know how to find the numbers for the individual paths to the beach itself.

Skidmore said he discovered that of the 16 paths, only five or six were numbered, and one of those had two different numbers on it.

The county could do “lots of things … very reasonably,” he said that would be helpful to the public.

Between her discussions with residents, Patterson told the *News Leader*, “I think the beach and the area deserve some beautification.”

While she and Barbutta did not agree on all the details, she said, “My goal is the same as his, I think”: Until the project is put out for bids, no one is going to know what the final price will be. **SNL**

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## HISTORY TALKS

*Crocker Church stands in Pioneer Park on 12th Street in the northern part of Sarasota. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

### **LONGTIME COMMUNITY RESIDENTS DISCUSS HOW INTEGRATION AFFECTED NEWTOWN STUDENTS WHEN SCHOOL BUSING WAS MANDATED IN THE LATE 1960S**

**By Scott Proffitt**  
*Staff Writer*

Carolyn Mason was a teenager in Newtown, preparing to enjoy her senior year in high school, when federally mandated school busing came to Sarasota County.

“My senior year was supposed to be the best year, but it was by far the worst. I remember feeling so alone,” she told an audience Tuesday night, Nov. 13, at Crocker Church in Pioneer Park.

The vice chairwoman of the Sarasota County Commission, Mason was moderating a discussion about integration’s effects on Newtown

— one in a series of talks being sponsored by the Historical Society of Sarasota County.

She shared a table with three other longtime Sarasotans at the front of the church, which dates to 1901.

Dorothy Smith taught school in Newtown and had done so for 17 years when, in 1967, she was sent to teach in Venice, a long commute made worse by the fact that she was not allowed to eat in any of the restaurants in that city if she had to work late, such as for a PTA meeting.

Smith went on to become the first black Teacher of the Year in the county and the first black principal in the county (Southside Elementary for 12 years) before retiring; her last post was at a school in Venice.

Dr. Edward James, a longtime community activist, said of the forced busing, “We didn’t ask to come; we were forced to come [to other schools].”

James is a recent recipient of the NAACP’s President’s Award. He has hosted and produced *Black Almanac* on ABC7 for 38 years.

Lou Ann Palmer, longtime city commissioner, mayor and teacher, added, “The black kids were scared, and so were the white kids.”

While all four speakers said it in different ways, with different emphasis, they seemed to agree that the busing program was not handled well.

“When the mandate came down, a boundary line was established, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way was the boundary line,” Mason said. “Those students living north of the boundary were assigned to Riverview High School; those students living south of the line were assigned to Sarasota High School. Kids who had bonded and formed lifelong relationships were separated. I am still upset by the way it was done,” she added. “Both black and white students should have been prepared. While on paper this achieved the balance the government was seeking, it was traumatic in that black and white students were just thrown together.”



*The sign for Pioneer Park marks the spot for two of the community's historic buildings. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

As a teacher, Smith said she felt nobody communicated well with the black students about where they would be attending school and what they were going to encounter. She pointed out, "You don't send soldiers off to battle without the proper ammunition."

Mason asked each speaker if he or she felt racial balance was achieved in the community through busing.

"I don't think it was achieved then and I don't think it is achieved now," said James.

"We were named the most segregated city in America about six or seven years ago," Palmer noted.

***Kids who had bonded and formed lifelong relationships were separated. I am still upset by the way it was done. Both black and white students should have been prepared.***

Carolyn Mason  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

each other."

She added, "And teach our children to love, respect and honor, regardless of race, color or creed."

## THE NEXT TALK IN THE SERIES

The next *Conversation at the Crocker* will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. The church is located at 1260 12th St. in Sarasota.

For more information, go to [www.HSOSC.com](http://www.HSOSC.com). 



(From left) The panelists for the discussion on integration's effects on Newtown were Dr. Edward James, Sarasota County Commissioner Carolyn Mason, Former Sarasota Mayor Lou Ann Palmer, History Society of Sarasota County President Howard Rosenthal and Dorothy Smith. Photo by Scott Proffitt

"I don't think so," Smith said. "We need to expose students to each other and let them get to know each other — have an opportunity to socialize like little children do — and they will work their problems out. It all makes a difference when we get to know



## SQUEAKING THROUGH

*Sarasota Planning Board member Jennifer Ahearn-Koch noted during the board's Nov. 14 discussion that the existing shopping center on Ringling is an assembly of small shops. A Publix store anchored the center. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **WITH A SPLIT VOTE, THE CITY'S PLANNING BOARD GIVES ITS APPROVAL TO WALMART FOR A SUPERCENTER ON THE SITE OF THE RINGLING SHOPPING CENTER**

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

The surprise was not that the Walmart store proposed on Charles Ringling Boulevard was approved Wednesday evening, Nov. 14. The surprise was that two Sarasota Planning board members found serious reasons to vote against it.

By all appearances, this was an open-and-shut case. The growing-ever-emptier Ringling Shopping Center, at 97,000 square feet, would be replaced by a 98,000-square-foot

Walmart Supercenter with a grocery. Every metric — zoning, city codes, parking requirements, traffic — had a green light from city staff.

**“Anything you can do to make it better for the neighborhood, it would be appreciated. It’s excruciatingly important.”**

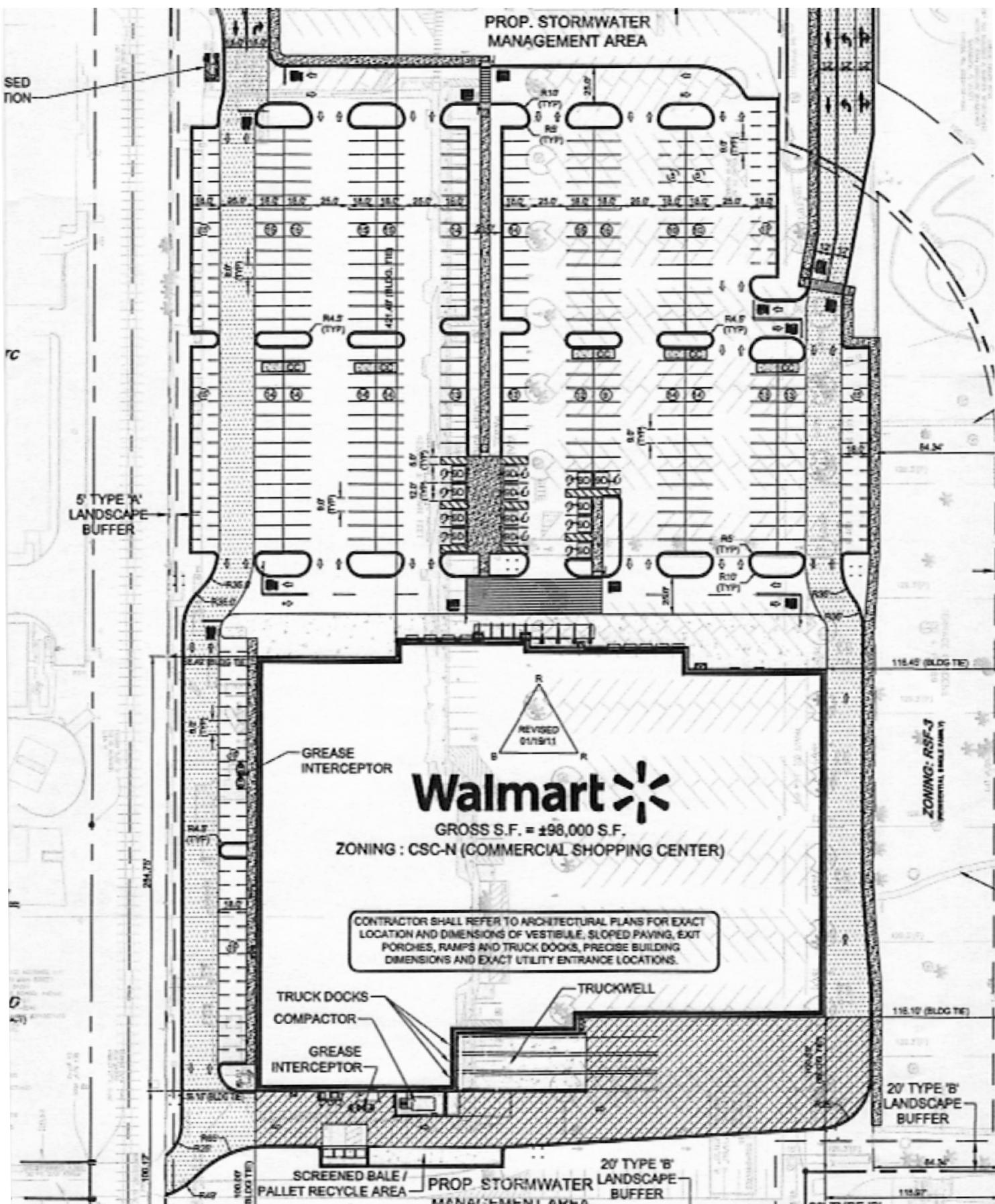
Jennifer Ahearn-Koch  
Member  
Sarasota Planning Board

Even the associations for the two adjacent neighborhoods were not opposed to the project. Those same two neighborhoods — Alta Vista and the Gardens of Ringling Park —fought Ron Burks' high-rise School Avenue project to a stand-

still several years ago, but this time they were muted.

"I think the project would be a great thing," said Alta Vista President Candy Spaulding of the new Ringling Shopping Center plan. "It could be a little more urban, look a little better."

“I don’t want to see this project killed. We have a ghost town at this site,” said Myron Nichol, president of the Gardens of Ringling Park. “Something within reason is better than nothing.”



*An early rendition of Walmart's plans for the new store at Ringling Boulevard and Lime Avenue does not include a dry retention pond that will be located in the southeast corner. Image courtesy City of Sarasota Planning Department*

## CUT-THROUGH PEDESTRIANS

One refrain heard over and over during public testimony was the lack of planning for pedestrian traffic to the south of the building, to enable neighbors to access Payne Park easily.

The site plan calls for that area to be the site of a loading zone and truck turn-around. Adding in dog-walkers, baby strollers and semi-tractor trailers struck Walmart representatives and the Sarasota Police Department as a bad mix.

The official plans call for neighbors to walk out to Ringling and turn left, head to School Avenue and then go south to the park, covering three sides of a long triangle.

“People are going to cross through the back. It’s a reality of human nature,” said Planning Board member Jennifer Ahearn-Koch. “Anything you can do to make it better for the neighborhood, it would be appreciated,” she told the Walmart representatives present. “It’s excruciatingly important.”

Current plans call for 24-hour-a-day operation of the store, a point that concerned the neighbors, too. Worry about light pollution plaguing nearby homes was mentioned, as was the potential for sound pollution.

Facing all the criticism, Walmart representatives came back with two points. First, they said they have not ignored the neighbors, and they do not plan on ignoring the neighbors once the store is open. Second, their plan checks off every box, meets every requirement and is ready to go.

“Your expert planner says this is allowed,” said Walmart representative Jim Porter.

## THE VOTE

“Whether Walmart has been nice to the neighbors is not the issue,” said Planning Board member Susan Chapman. “The City Commission did not opt to put this [area] into downtown zoning, so this requires small-scale development. There is nothing about this plan that is small-scale. I will not support it.”

Member Vlad Svekis boiled down the plan to an irreducible minimum: “Three hundred fifty jobs versus a derelict shopping center.” It was clear where his vote lay.

“The bottom line is, we need Walmart in this community,” said Planning Board Chairman Mort Siegel. “I think you’ll be very pleased with what they’ll do in this community.”

Ahearn-Koch noted the existing shopping center was an assembly of small businesses, while Walmart is what she described as “a department store.” She said that is not allowed in the current zoning for the site, and she would not support the petition for the facility.

Member Chris Gallagher made the motion to find the petition consistent with city rules, saying it should be approved. Svekis seconded the motion, and the vote was 3-2, with Ahearn-Koch and Chapman in the minority.

After close and contentious votes over land-use issues, it is common to find people on the losing side in the parking lot, talking strategy. Not this time, though. It was more of an “OK, let’s see how it works out” attitude.

The store is scheduled to open in early 2014. The existing building and parking lot will be razed before construction begins next year. **SNL**



## CLEAR ON PRIORITIES

*(From left) Sherry Reynolds of the Sarasota County Schools, state Rep. Doug Holder of Sarasota and Kathryn Shea, Florida Center president and CEO, were among the participants at the Legislative Breakfast Nov. 13. Photo by Cooper Levey-Baker*

### **COMMUNITY ALLIANCE CALLS ON STATE LAWMAKERS TO STOP FIGHTING THE FEDS**

**By Cooper Levey-Baker**

*Associate Editor*

The Community Alliance of Sarasota County presented its 2012 legislative priorities to one incumbent state representative and staffers for other Florida lawmakers Tuesday morning, Nov. 13, and one message stood out: Stop fighting Obamacare.

(Side note to interested readers: We can call the Affordable Care Act “Obamacare” now that President Obama himself is cool with it, right? Good. Carry on.)

The Alliance, a coalition of nonprofit health and human services organizations, held its Second Annual Legislative Breakfast to directly communicate its legislative goals to

the Sarasota County delegation. Representatives from organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers, First Step of Sarasota and the Early Learning Coalition lined up to lay out their hopes for the Florida Legislature’s spring session, which convenes March 5.

“We urge the Florida Legislature and our governor to stop rejecting federal funding and/or to not allow the pursuit of federal funds through competitive grants,” said Florida Center President and CEO Kathryn Shea, the chairwoman of the Alliance’s Legislative Advocacy Committee, winning wide applause from the 120 or so attendees. “Millions and

millions of our taxpayer dollars ... have now gone to other states for critical services that we need here. We simply cannot continue to do this."

Over the past two years, the Legislature, dominated by a GOP supermajority, has rejected tens of millions of federal healthcare funds because of ideological opposition to the law that allocated the money: Obamacare. Lawmakers and Gov. Rick Scott have also declined to set up a public healthcare exchange and have so far refused to expand Medicaid to cover Floridians who are at 133 percent of the federal poverty level or below — both important components of the federal law.

But now that Obama has won a second term, and the survival of his signature legislation is assured, are Florida policy-makers perhaps weakening their absolutist stance? Scott, whose career in politics began with a blistering campaign against Obamacare, told the Associated Press this week that he is willing to negotiate implementation of the law, a marked change from past public comments.

State Rep. Doug Holder, R-Sarasota, was the only state lawmaker who attended Tuesday's breakfast. Outgoing state Sen. Mike Bennett was on hand to receive an award for his service (he called Shea a "wonderful lobbyist," joking, "She will flat wear your ass out."), while staffers for state Sen. Nancy Detert and Reps. Greg Steube and Ray Pilon also attended.

No one representing state Reps. Jim Boyd or Darryl Rouson showed up.

Holder tells *The Sarasota New Leader* he thinks the Legislature will perform "a more comprehensive review" of Obamacare, to see

how it might implement specific programs, a shift from the capital's past "absolute rejection."

"That review will probably result in perhaps cherry-picking some of the ideas that are in the healthcare act that will be beneficial to Floridians," Holder says, "and perhaps some of those ideas will be implemented."

Ruth Brandwein, representing the local chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, specifically called on the Legislature to follow through on the Medicaid expansion. She argued the move would save money in the long run by providing preventive care to uninsured patients who today rely on hospital emergency rooms.

"If they had regular coverage," she said, "their chronic diseases such as asthma, heart conditions, diabetes would be controlled. They wouldn't need hospital care."

As she pointed out, taxpayers already foot the bill for hospital patients who cannot pay — our system is already socialized. "We are all paying," she said, "either through our taxes or through our private insurance."

The "blue book" of Alliance recommendations handed out Tuesday cites a study showing that "the cost of Medicaid Expansion would be more than offset by savings from reductions in uncompensated hospital care as well as the financial input of billions of Federal dollars pumped into the health care economy. This does not include the savings in lower absentee rates and lost hours of work and productivity due to untreated chronic illnesses."

Holder says it is way too early to know how certain policy recommendations will shake

out — he does not even know which committees he will be assigned to (something he hopes to learn “any day now”). But with the state budget looking relatively stable, the picture is “certainly a little bit more favorable towards programs,” he says.

“There is a better opportunity this year than there has been the past six years to receive some state funding,” Holder says.

Given the mic Tuesday, Holder — who is entering his final term in the state House —

praised the Alliance for organizing its goals into a clear plan of action: “This is what makes our job much easier, and our job is certainly to serve you and the people you serve.” He said that after a year of “very contentious campaigns,” lawmakers now will have to find common ground.

“Campaign season is very, very different than consensus-building time,” he said, “which is exactly what we’re in right now.” **SNL**

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## EMPHASIS ON CTE

*Construction continues at the Sarasota County Technical Institute campus at the intersection of Benева and Proctor roads in Sarasota. The renovation project is one of three principal capital initiatives in the district, with rebuilds of Booker and Venice high schools also under way. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

### **SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT TO PROPOSE CONSOLIDATION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN SARASOTA COUNTY**

**By Scott Proffitt**

*Staff Writer*

On Nov. 20, Sarasota County Schools Superintendent Lori White will present to the School Board a plan to consolidate the array of district programs relating to career and technical education under the management of one person, school officials have announced.

That person — Todd Bowden — would report directly to White, a district news release says.

Bowden is the director of the Sarasota County Technical Institute (SCTI), the Suncoast Polytechnical High School (SPHS) and the Adult and Community Education program (ACE) in the district.

The CTE, or career and technical programs, are offered at all of the public middle schools and high schools in Sarasota County, according to the CTE website.

“Bowden taught math and business technology at the middle school and high school levels before beginning his career as an administrator,” the district news release says. He served as a high school assistant principal from 2000-2004 and was principal of an adult technical center and an adult high school in Hillsborough County from 2004-2007.

He holds a master’s degree and a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of

South Florida. Additionally, according to the news release, Bowden is an adjunct instructor in the University of South Florida Manatee Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Development.

Bowden was appointed director of SCTI in 2007.

*The Sarasota News Leader* contacted Bowden via email and asked whether he plans any changes to the programs, if the School Board concurs, as expected, with White's recommendation.

"I do not anticipate any immediate changes to the curricula offerings but I do expect that CTE programs will be coordinated more efficiently," Bowden wrote. "This could result in changes to what we teach and how we teach it."

He continued, "This is an administrative consolidation of SCTI, SPHS, ACE and CTE into one organization under one administrator."

Because SCTI and SPHS have worked closely with the district CTE department for years, he continued, "This is an opportunity to take that relationship to a new level."

The news release quoted White as saying, "Dr. Bowden has the perfect combination of instructional leadership experience, business acumen and passion for career education that we need to take our CTE programs to the next level."

Although White will discuss the plan with the School Board next week, the news release says Bowden's appointment is scheduled to be on the board's Dec. 4 agenda. **SNL**



*Suncoast Polytechnical High School, adjacent to the Sarasota County Technical Institute, is a magnet school for students interested in careers in science and technology. The school consistently has won plaudits since its opening several years ago. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

# DOWNTOWN DO'S AND DON'TS



*Downtown Sarasota business groups are set for a discussion later this month on marketing that part of the city. Photo by Norm Schimmel*

## CITY BUSINESS GROUPS FIGHTING FOR 'FREE' MONEY

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

An off-the-agenda “food fight” broke out Tuesday morning, Nov. 13, as two downtown merchants associations squared off for rights to \$20,000 in marketing money.

Downtown property owners tax themselves two extra mills per year to fund the Downtown Improvement District. One of the DID’s functions is to market downtown, and last year it gave \$20,000 to the Downtown Sarasota Alliance (DSA) for advertising in newspapers and magazines.

However, the DID decided, during budget deliberations, not to include marketing in this year’s spending plan; it told the DSA to look elsewhere for such funding.

On Nov. 5, the DSA almost secured the money from the Sarasota City Commission, while the commission was acting as the Community Redevelopment Agency.

DSA President John Harshman pleaded for government money to advertise the downtown district. “It’s been very effective for the first year,” he told the mayor and city commissioners. “Even Bradenton funds their downtown marketing.”

Downtown restaurateur and Commissioner Paul Caragiulo made a motion to give Harshman and the DSA the \$20,000, and Mayor Suzanne Atwell seconded it. “This is amazing for this kind of money,” she said.

"I think the DID should be funding this," said Commissioner Terry Turner. "We created it for this."

Harshman watched his best-laid plans collapse when Caragiulo's motion failed 2-3 with Commissioners Turner, Willie Shaw and Shannon Snyder voting against it.

Turner then made a motion to refer the question to the DID, and that passed unanimously.

## GETTING HEARD

Undeterred, the DSA tried to get a place on the Nov. 13 DID agenda, but it was told the agenda was full and it would have to wait. With advertising deadlines looming, DSA Marketing Coordinator Sharon Kaplan decided to crash the meeting.

However, despite several solicitations from DID Chairman Ernie Ritz to speak, she remained quiet until the meeting was about to adjourn. She then went down to the front of the room, but City Planner Steve Stancel, who is the city liaison with the DID, called for a point of order. "This expenditure is not on the agenda," he said.

With that, DID Member Tom Mannausa made a motion to put a marketing budget on the agenda for the next meeting, set for Nov. 27. "There is no line item now," he reminded the group. DID member Dr. Mark Kauffman further reminded the group the DSA covers a far larger geographic area than the one for which the DID is responsible.

At that point, Ron Soto with the new Sarasota Downtown Merchants Association reminded the DID members, "We pay an extra two mills [in property taxes] so people from Burns Court and Towles Court can advertise their businesses."

Soto and Kaplan were invited to return to the next meeting with marketing proposals to share with the DID. Additionally, Mannausa suggested the DID members do some thinking before then about their organization's role in marketing.

## DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS

In other business, Clean & Safe Committee Chairman Michael Rafoni, who was a bona-fide speaker listed on the DID agenda, proposed the DID study a proposal to establish an "ambassador service" for downtown. It would consist of a group of identifiable people who would meet and greet visitors, answer their questions, make recommendations and suggestions and offer directions. He introduced Blair McBride, who is an executive with a company that offers such a service.

"We do this in Cocoanut Grove and Hollywood, FL, and even downtown Minneapolis. We work with improvement districts to provide a quick response to visitors' needs," said McBride.

Some of the ambassadors would work an early shift, cleaning up the downtown ("portering," Rafoni called it). The weekday shift would begin its ambassadorial duties around 11 a.m. "to counteract any negatives, to be a friendly face for downtown," McBride said, adding that the service would use about six people and operate on a \$250,000 annual budget.

"I see a huge upside to doing this," said DID member Pat Westerhouse.

"This rings our chimes," said Goodwill's Tom Pfaff, chairman of the Sarasota Ministerial Alliance. "A clean and safe downtown." The DID agreed to keep the idea alive for future consideration. **SNL**



## BUSINESS BUY-IN DESIRED

Sarasota County Procurement Official Ted Coyman addresses the County Commission. File photo

### COUNTY COMMISSION SEEKS MORE INDUSTRY RESPONSE BEFORE MAKING FINAL DECISIONS ON HOW TO DETERMINE CRITERIA FOR AWARDING LOCAL PREFERENCE STATUS TO VENDORS

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

The Sarasota County commissioners took six unanimous votes Nov. 13 on guidelines for the county's revised Procurement Code to determine how vendors can earn local preference status in seeking bid awards. Then uncertainty about how to proceed on the issue of subcontractors led them ultimately to put those votes on hold while they awaited more comments from area building and professional groups.

The first sticking point on the subcontractor matter was Procurement Official Ted Coyman's recommendation that a county employee be responsible for making sure that any general contractor given local preference

consideration in a winning bid on the basis of plans to use local subcontractors followed through on those plans after beginning work.

"The idea of hiring people and training and staffing to police this is kind of not something I'm happy to get into," Commissioner Nora Patterson said, "unless we find it necessary."

Commissioner Joe Barbetta reiterated a point he has made in the past: Without teeth in the revised code to ensure local subcontractors are used as vendors stipulate in contracts with the county, problems are going to arise. "And

I've gotten the calls," he said, about general contractors reneging on promises.

"We'd have to have some kind of enforcement to say [violations have occurred] and all payments to the general [contractor] cease" if local subcontractors are not used as the vendor indicated in the contract, he added.

"The county needs effective contract administration," Coyman told the commissioners. "I want to believe that if [use of local subcontractors is] in the contract ... that the administrator responsible will make that happen."

During an Oct. 19 forum with more than 50 attendees representing area vendors, Coyman added, the consensus was that companies were comfortable with the proposal for local preference being accorded to outside firms as long as "the bulk of the revenue stays in the area with subcontractors."

At that point in the discussion, Chairwoman Christine Robinson asked Coyman whether he had notified all the vendors who had participated in a county survey, as well as those who attended the forum, that the Procurement Code matter was going to be on the board's Nov. 13 agenda.

"I don't believe so," he replied, though he added the date was announced during the forum.

Robinson then pointed out that Mary Dougherty-Slapp, executive director of the Gulf Coast Builders Exchange, had just walked into the Commission Chambers at the Administration Center in downtown Sarasota,

where the board was meeting. She indicated that Dougherty-Slapp had hurried over after learning the discussion was taking place.

Robinson told Coyman she would prefer to continue the discussion when representatives of area building firms and vendors could be present.

Barbetta agreed: "I don't want to finalize anything until we get [their] buy-in."

When County Administrator Randall Reid proposed Coyman and his staff consult with representatives of the major area vendors, although not necessarily all 1,200 to whom the survey had been sent, before bringing the matter back to the board, Vice Chairwoman Carolyn Mason concurred.

*"I don't want to do something that would shut out the local subcontractors,"* Mason added.

If the board was going to hold off on a decision on that part of the local preference guidelines, Patterson said, then Coyman and his staff also should let the vendors know about the board's votes that afternoon.

Robinson agreed, but she asked for a motion on that point, so the decision would be a matter of public record.

Patterson made the motion that the tentative votes of the board on all the local preference issues covered earlier on Nov. 13, plus the requirement on employment of subcontractors, be reviewed by industry and professional

***I don't want to do something that would shut out the local subcontractors.***

Carolyn Mason  
Vice Chairwoman  
Sarasota County

groups, with their comments reported to the commission at a later meeting.

She told Coyman to make certain the vendors knew none of the earlier decisions were “cast in stone. We really want their opinions back.”

The motion passed unanimously.

Robinson suggested Coyman and his staff at least send an email to all the participants to let them know when the date and time were set for the next discussion.

## THE PROCESS

At the outset of his Nov. 13 presentation, Coyman reminded the commissioners he had appeared before them on Sept. 26 to talk about proposals to improve the Procurement Code. At that time, he said, the board had directed staff to research local vendor preference by asking representatives of the county’s business community for their comments and by talking with officials in other counties to learn what practices they followed.

# Vendor Survey and Forum Results and Peer County Comparison

Category	High	Mid	Low
<b>Location/ Residency</b>	Home and Abutting Counties <i>(5 Counties)</i>	Home County Only <i>(3 Counties)</i>	Other
<b>Residency Duration</b>	Multiple years <i>(1 County)</i>	1 year <i>(6 Counties)</i>	6 months <i>(1 County)</i>
<b>Validation</b>	Tax receipt <i>(6 Counties)</i>	Occupational license <i>(6 Counties)</i>	Utility Bill <i>(0 Counties)</i>
<b>Bids</b>	Matching within 5- 10% <i>(5 Counties)</i>	Pay additional for local vendor <i>(2 Counties)</i>	Split cost difference <i>(0 Counties)</i>
<b>Proposals</b>	10% point allocation <i>(1 County)</i>	3-5% point allocation <i>(2 Counties)</i>	Sliding scale <i>(3 Counties)</i>

A slide shown to the County Commission on Nov. 13 ranks methods of determining how to confer local preference for vendors, with the “High” category showing the answers most common in a survey of vendors and discussions with officials in other counties. Image courtesy Sarasota County

On Oct. 9, Coyman said, the local preference survey was emailed to the 1,200 vendors.

His office received 110 responses, he said.

Additionally, his staff had talked by phone with procurement officials in eight other counties, including Polk, Brevard, Marion, Collier and Alachua.

Following Coyman's review, the commissioners began moving through the recommendations and approving measures for conferring local preference status. For example, they agreed to allow Sarasota County firms to get an extra 10 points for their proposals in bid rankings calculated by procurement officials.

The commissioners also voted to exclude DeSoto from the list of adjoining counties in which firms are allowed to be considered for local preference.

After Coyman noted that DeSoto had eliminated Sarasota County in its list of adjoining counties for local preference purposes, Robinson said she thought the Sarasota board had removed DeSoto from its local preference list "a long time ago."

Barbetta said he also recalled making that decision.

Nonetheless, Coyman said DeSoto still was listed among the local preference counties, along with Manatee and Charlotte counties.

Additionally, the commissioners voted unanimously to require a firm to have had a physical presence in Sarasota, Manatee or Charlotte counties for at least one year to qualify for local preference.

They further voted to approve allowing a firm to provide a copy of its business tax receipt as proof of residency.

## ONE MORE STICKING POINT

As the final part of his presentation on Nov. 13, Coyman noted that he and his staff wanted direction regarding Procurement Code revisions involving purchases that should be exempt from the competitive bid process. Dues and memberships in trade or professional organizations were one of 21 items on the proposed list.

"I have a problem with a lot of these exemptions," Barbetta said, citing lobbying services as one example.

"Based on our history, we've got to walk carefully," he added, referring to the 2011 scandal in the Procurement Department that led to Coyman's discussions with the board about improving the code.

"We can certainly bring these back with examples and detailed explanations on each," Coyman told the commissioners.

"Perhaps a one- or two-sentence explanation," Patterson suggested.

"That would work," Mason agreed.

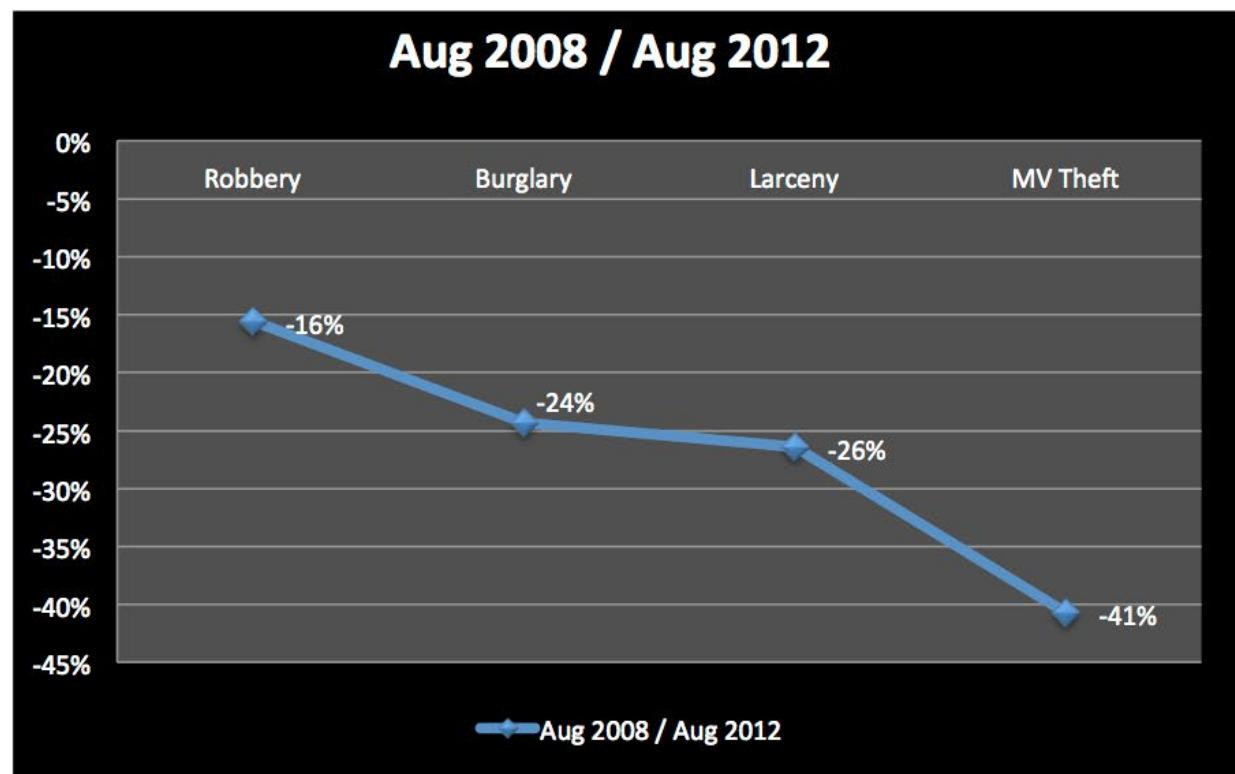
At the end of the discussion, Patterson told Coyman, "I just kind of want to apologize, because it seems like we're giving you a hard time."

She added that many of the commissioners lacked sufficient knowledge about the proposed exemptions to feel comfortable proceeding on them.

"I welcome the comments," Coyman said. "No hard time at all." **SNL**

# Moving From Detection to Prevention

- Target the biggest problem
- Merge analysis and information
- Strategic tasking
- Think about the reward
- Break tradition



## THE BEST KIND OF DECLINE

A Sarasota County Sheriff's Office chart shows the drop in crime rates from August 2008 to August 2012. Graphic illustration courtesy of the Sheriff's Office

### THE COUNTY'S METAL THEFTS RATE IS DOWN 92 PERCENT AND THE OVERALL CRIME RATE IS DOWN 18 PERCENT OVER THREE YEARS

By Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor

Through a combination of crime analysis and passage of new Sarasota County ordinances, the county's crime rate is down 18 percent over four years and the theft of metals is down 92 percent over three years, Sheriff Tom Knight told the County Commission on Nov. 14.

Regarding the overall crime rate, he pointed out, "We're way ahead of the statewide average."

He presented the commissioners a graph showing the following decreases: robbery reports are down 16 percent; burglary, 24 per-

cent; larceny cases, 26 percent; and motor vehicle thefts, 41 percent.

Using a methodology called "intelligence-led policing," Knight said, he has been able to maintain a smaller workforce in comparison to the state average but with demonstrable results in fighting crime.

Statewide, Knight said, the average for sheriff's offices is 1.7 deputies per 1,000 people. For his office, he pointed out, the figure is 1.3 deputies per 1,000 people.

Knight noted he also has been able to return to the county \$4 million in savings from his department over his past four years in office,

whereas when he won his first term in 2008, he was afraid he did not have sufficient personnel to fight crime.

"We use a lot of analysts now — civilians — to control and direct where our resources are going," Knight said.

Jerry Ratcliffe, a professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Temple University in Philadelphia had done research to show that 6 percent of the population commits 60 percent of the crime, Knight added. Ratcliffe had helped him and his staff make the changes necessary to focus on how best to address that factor in Sarasota County, Knight said.

Working also with the State Attorney's Office, Knight said, his department and about eight analysts had determined that approximately 70 prolific offenders in Sarasota County were responsible for most of the crime. Those individuals are referred to as "blue dots," he added.

The list was compiled on the basis of such factors as age, records of prior violence, records of pawnshop transactions, history of narcotics charges and past incarcerations.

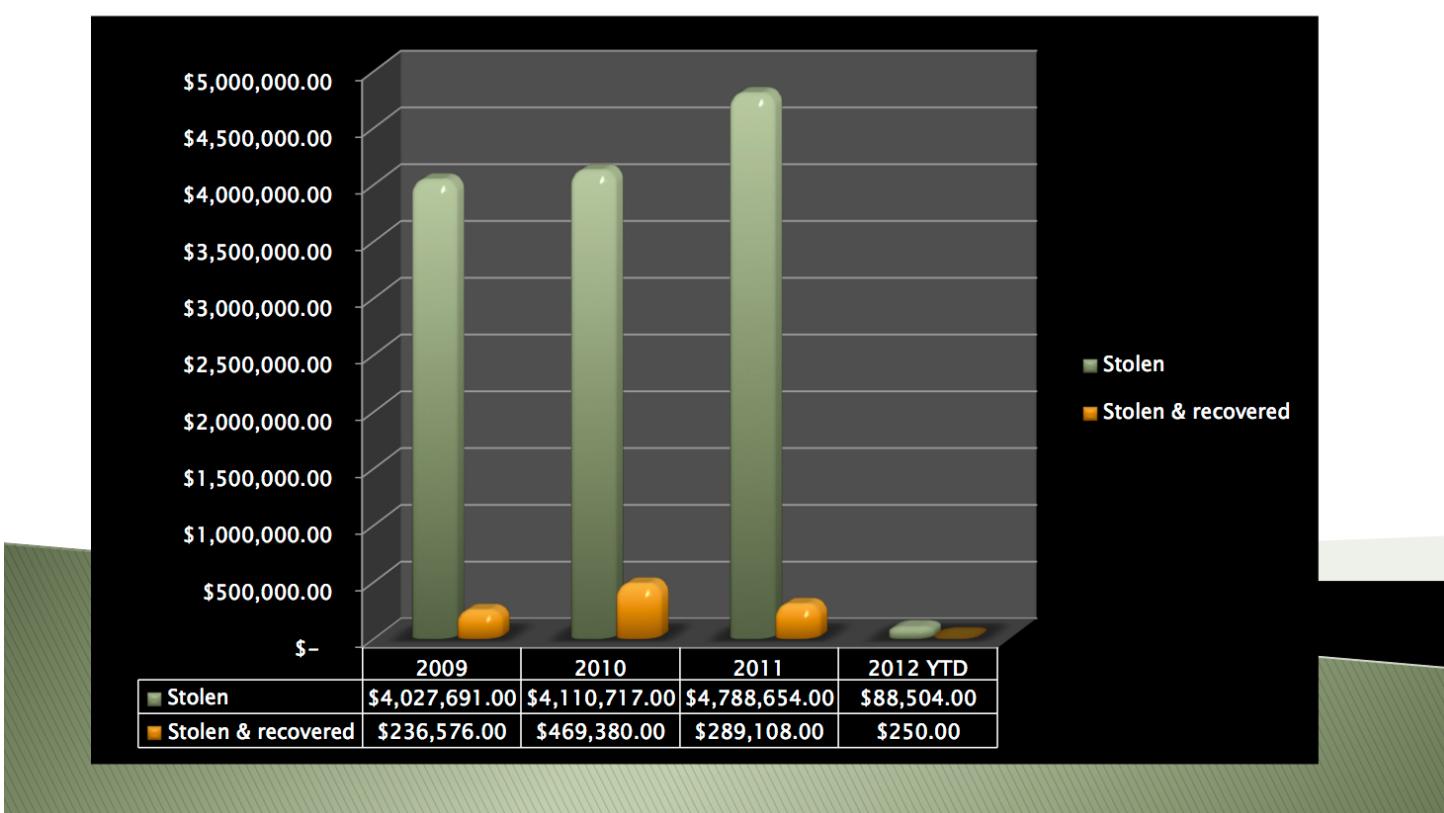
When Commissioner Joe Barbetta asked about the effect of lower crime rates on the jail population, Knight said the current inmate count is 933, with more than 80 percent awaiting trial.

The jail is still over capacity, Knight said, "but we seem pretty stable."

Thanks to the Offender Work Program and other initiatives in the county, people who are not a threat can be released until their cases are heard, he pointed out.

If anything could be done to speed up the hearing of cases in the 12th Judicial Circuit Court, Knight said, that would help more than anything else to reduce the jail population.

## A/C Thefts 2009– 2012 Effective Efforts?



*Metal thefts in Sarasota County have dropped 92 percent since the County Commission approved an ordinance last year regarding second-hand sales of metals. Graph courtesy of the Sheriff's Office*

"We've been certified for a while for more judges by the state," Chairwoman Christine Robinson said, "and we haven't been able to get them."

State officials have cited fiscal restraints since the onset of the Recession as the primary cause.

## OPERATION RESULTS

Regarding metal thefts, Knight pointed out that since the County Commission approved an ordinance last year to assist law enforcement officers in arresting individuals trying to sell stolen goods to second-hand dealers, most of the known repeat offenders had disappeared from the county.

Likewise, he said, thefts of copper had declined considerably. He reminded the commissioners of one case in which the county had reported about 17 miles of copper cable stolen, with a value of about \$500,000. That occurred before the ordinance went into effect.

Another effort, Operation Diamondback, had targeted criminals taking stolen goods to pawnshops, Knight pointed out. Again, thanks to a new county ordinance, Sheriff's Office deputies have been working to educate pawnshop owners about what they should be on the lookout for and how to keep the records mandated by the ordinance, to assist in the recovery of stolen goods.

The county's pain clinic ordinance also has been a big help, Knight said, pointing out that deaths from overdoses on Oxycodone and similar drugs are "down significantly."

With illegal prescriptions for those medications harder to obtain, he added, his officers

are seeing some heroin use in the county. "But it's a product we can deal with much easier because it's totally illegal," he pointed out.

Working with the Department of Juvenile Justice, Knight said, his office has been keeping a better check on juvenile offenders, especially in regard to their adhering to curfews.

Operation Bueller, a truancy program that began with the opening of the current school year, has deputies checking on students who miss a lot of classroom days, Knight said.

Maj. Kevin Kenney told the commissioners that within the first 30 days after that program went into effect, more than 80 students had missed at least a third of the time they should have been in school.

"We feel it's important that those kids are in school," Kenney said. "It's something we are focusing on diligently this year."

"It's been very well received at the schools," Knight added.

Yet another operation focused on prolific offenders in north Sarasota County, Knight explained. The Sheriff's Office worked with the Sarasota Police Department on that initiative last year, he noted.

In one month alone, Knight said, 108 people were arrested.

Knight and Kenney both praised the commission for the help it had provided the Sheriff's Office.

"It's not all us," Kenney said, adding that the commissioners deserved most of the credit. "Those ordinances have played a huge part in our [crime] reductions." **SNL**



## AN \$8,200 REHAB

*As a result of multiple problems, Five Points Park has lost its night-light scheme. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, THE DID AGREES TO MAKE SURE THE LIGHTS COME BACK ON IN FIVE POINTS PARK**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

You may have noticed some changes in the fancy color-shifting lights in downtown's Five Points Park — as in they are not working. Blame growth.

The lights were wrapped around the limbs of the trees, and the limbs kept on growing. Snap, pop. And lovely squirrels and rats just could not stay away from that ozone scent of electricity just millimeters below their incisors. Snap, pop.

One of the light strings is not repairable, so it will be replaced at a cost of \$700.

In all, those fancy color-shifting lights need \$8,203 in repairs not covered by warranty. However, city officials would like to see the lights back on ASAP.

"We need this park up and running for the holidays," said Downtown Improvement District Chairman Ernie Ritz on Nov. 13. "We've got a Christmas parade on Dec. 1 and a tree lighting on the 23rd [of November]."

Matt Gregg with Synergy Lighting Supply of Bradenton said it might take a little longer than expected to remedy the situation because — gasp — this is a busy season for his company.

"I have other priorities as well," said Gregg. "It's going to be a week before we have anybody on site."

"This is going to happen next year and the year after and the year after," said Ritz.

But maybe not. The DID group was also asked if its members would approve a \$400-per-

month maintenance program to keep the wires draped loosely around the fast-growing limbs, and maybe reach some agreement with the rats and squirrels.

The DID members agreed to the whole affair — maintenance, repairs and replacement. **SNL**

## CITY OF SARASOTA ANNOUNCES THANKSGIVING SCHEDULE



City of Sarasota trash collection schedules will be modified next week because of the Thanksgiving holiday, the city has announced.

No waste will be collected on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 22, a city news release says.

The schedule for collection will be as follows: Thursday garbage, recycling and yard waste collection will occur one day later, on Friday, Nov. 23. Regularly scheduled Friday garbage, recycling and yard waste collection will occur on Saturday, Nov. 24.

City of Sarasota administrative offices will be closed Thursday and Friday in observance of

Thanksgiving. All offices will reopen on Monday, Nov. 26, the news release says.

The Robert L. Taylor Community Complex, located at 1845 34th St., will be closed Thanksgiving Day only.

Bobby Jones Golf Club will hold its fourth annual Turkey Shoot on Thanksgiving Day starting at 8:45 a.m. The rate for 18 holes, with a riding cart plus a hot breakfast at Bobby's Clubhouse restaurant, will be \$28.50, the release says.

For more information about the Turkey Shoot, contact the golf shop at 954-4163.

Lido Pool, at 400 Benjamin Franklin Drive, will be open Thanksgiving Day from 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. **SNL**



## Enter To Win A New iPad

When our "Likes" on Facebook reach 1,000, we will randomly select one of our subscribers to receive a new iPad.

1

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2

Then Like Us On Facebook

The contest concludes when The Sarasota News Leader achieves 1,000 "Likes" on Facebook. One winner will be selected at random from among subscribers. Only subscribers are eligible to win the iPad, regardless of having "Liked" our page on Facebook. Contest is open only to residents of Sarasota County. Selected winners must provide a valid Sarasota County street address to receive the iPad. Contest is void where prohibited by law.



## TEAMWORK TRIUMPHS

*Commissioners Joe Barbettta (left) and Jon Thaxton deliberate on a matter before the board. File photo*

### COUNTY COMMISSION APPROVES PLANS FOR CONTESTED ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

The Sarasota County Commission on Wednesday, Nov. 14, unanimously approved a rezone petition for a new assisted-living facility to be built on the corner of Proctor Road and Honore Avenue.

The commission first heard debate over the facility on Sept. 25, when residents of the bordering Center Gate neighborhood sharply criticized the proposal. Jack McGarry, whose home sits along the northern line of the property in question, called the facility “inappropriate.”

After two hours of tense testimony, the commissioners moved to ask the developers to

regroup with the neighborhood to modify the plan — which turned out to be a wise move.

The team behind the facility presented a revamped outline of the project Wednesday, with what the neighbors felt was a troublesome driveway and parking lot shifted to the southwest, away from homes.

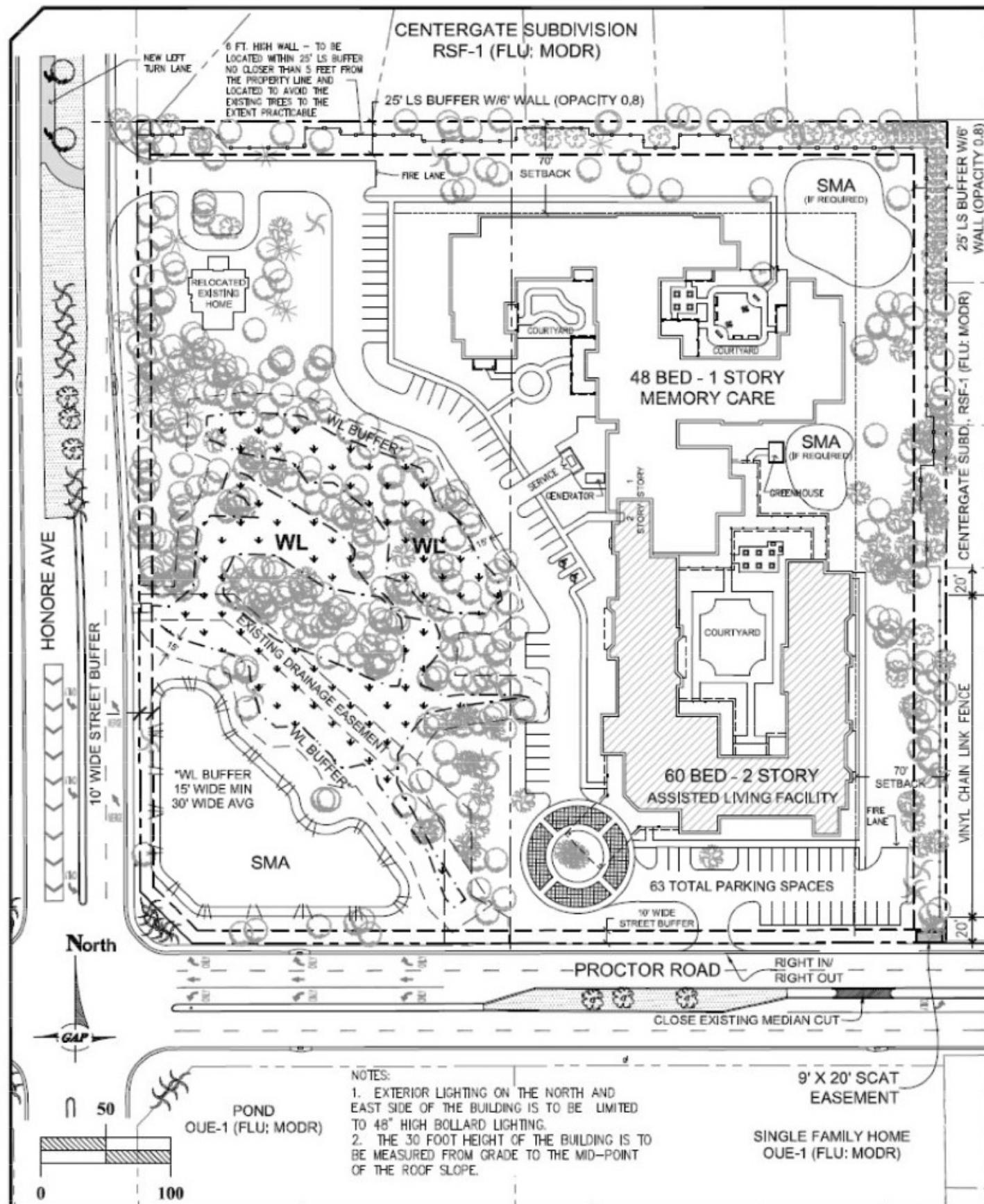
Robert Medred, who has led the effort to have the property rezoned for the facility, praised the Center Gate residents for their willingness to compromise and said meetings held after the September hearing were “very constructive, very cordial.” He complimented McGarry for his open-mindedness.

McGarry also spoke, giving the revamped plan his blessing and thanking each of the commissioners for kicking the project back and allowing for more modifications.

"This has been a real learning experience," he said, "and I sure hope I don't have to go through this again. They have really bent over backwards to listen to our concerns."

In the waning hours of his final meeting as a sitting commissioner, Jon Thaxton made the motion to approve the project.

"This is a great land-use petition to go out on," he said. "It just shows what can happen when people put their heads together and put themselves in another's shoes and be receptive to ideas and change." **SNL**



The County Commission has approved a modified site plan for a new assisted living facility at Proctor Road and Honore Avenue. Image courtesy Sarasota County



## TEMPORARY QUARTERS

*Gulf Gate Library opened on Curtiss Avenue in Sarasota on Dec. 5, 1983. Photo courtesy Sarasota County*

### **GULF GATE LIBRARY IS MOVING TO WESTFIELD SARASOTA SQUARE MALL WHILE A NEW FACILITY IS CONSTRUCTED ON THE CURRENT LIBRARY SITE**

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

With the demolition of Gulf Gate Library planned for January, the Sarasota County Commission this week approved a contract with Westfield Sarasota Square Mall for the library's operations to relocate there while a new facility is built.

The lease calls for the county to pay \$5,441.58 per month, plus \$80 a month for water/sewer and fire detection services, starting Dec. 15 and ending Jan. 31, 2015.

A Nov. 13 memo to the County Commission from Sarabeth Kalajian, general manager of the county's libraries, points out that the ten-

ancy agreement is for a period of to 25 months for the 20,092 square feet of retail space in the mall, located at 8201 S. Tamiami Trail.

"The space will accommodate core library services as well as the Friends of the Library bookstore," Kalajian's memo adds.

"I think it's an excellent choice," Deanie Erb, president of the Friends of the Library for Gulf Gate, told *The Sarasota News Leader* on Nov. 15.

"It's in a good location," Erb added, with plenty of parking — a factor county staff had tak-

en into consideration, she noted, in choosing the mall.

Gulf Gate Library annually is one of the county's busiest libraries, statistics have shown. In 2010, county staff reported it had the highest circulation of all the system's libraries.

It will take an estimated four to six weeks to remove all the materials from the current location to the mall space "and to develop the infrastructure necessary to resume operations," according to a Nov. 13 memo to the County Commission from John S. Herrli, the county's land acquisition manager.

In explaining why staff was recommending the mall location, Herrli's memo notes, "Staff

investigated available rental space within approximately two miles of the present Gulf Gate Library" for temporary quarters. The site had to have a minimum of 8,000 square feet, 75 parking spaces "and telecommunications and other technology infrastructure either existing or easily provided," the memo adds.

The Westfield Sarasota Square Mall offered the county a cost per square foot that was \$7 less than other sites staff investigated, Herrli noted.

The county can terminate the lease agreement as early as Feb. 1, 2014 by providing Westfield written notice 60 days prior to the selected date, Herrli's memo adds.



*The Sarasota County Commission in late June approved a conceptual design for the exterior of the new library, completed by a design consulting team with Harvard Jolly Inc. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

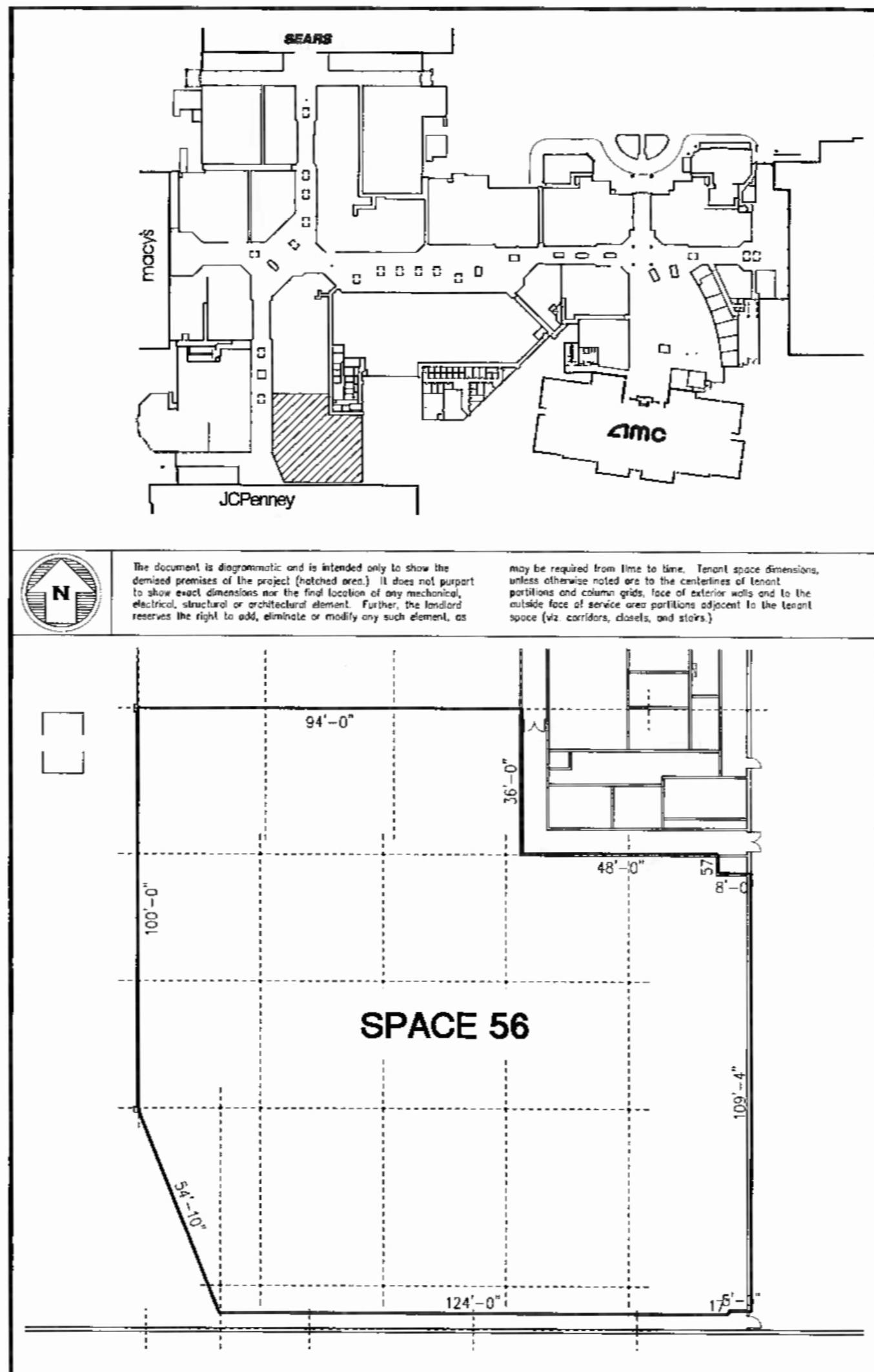
The space is located in the southwest part of the mall, just north of the JCPenney store.

Herrli noted the space "is also large enough to allow the library to continue to offer some youth and adult programs. Other sites investigated would require portions of the collection to be placed in storage and their size would allow limited programming opportunities."

Kalajian's memo points out that the relocation was necessary because a new two-story library will be constructed on the site of the existing facility, at 7112 Curtiss Ave.

The groundbreaking is set for February 2013, with completion expected in May 2014, according to Herrli's memo.

In June, the commission approved the conceptual design for the facility and the hiring of the Willis A. Smith as construction manager. **SNL**



A Sarasota County diagram shows the temporary location chosen for Gulf Gate Library in Westfield Sarasota Square Mall. Image courtesy Sarasota County



## LOOKING FOR LIGHT

*The Downtown Improvement District is preparing to embark on a rehabilitation of Main Street from Gulfstream Avenue to Five Points. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### DID MEMBERS GET A FIRSTHAND LOOK AT THE VARIETIES OF ILLUMINATION AVAILABLE FOR COMING DOWNTOWN ENHANCEMENTS

By Stan Zimmerman

*City Editor*

Members of the Sarasota Downtown Improvement District went out after dark on Tuesday, Nov. 13, to look at a variety of street lamps.

The field trip started at City Hall on First Street, meandered down Main Street and ended up on Gulfstream Avenue.

The tour guide was Matt Gregg. His company, Synergy Lighting Supply, had installed six different combinations of bulbs and globes for the district members to survey.

The first example stands outside City Hall's south entrance, on the right side. It features an Avana light-emitting diode (LED) inside a

prismatic globe that focuses the light down on the sidewalk.

From there the group went to 1464 Main St. (the Jackie Z clothing shop) to look at an existing halogen bulb with a new globe. The tour wrapped up at the dead-end parking lot at Gulfstream, where four more lights were in use.

At the dead end on the side closest to U.S. 41 were two LED lights. As you face U.S. 41, the one on the right features a prismatic globe with a bulb by Beacon. The one on the left features an older style of globe with an LED made by Light Emitting Designs. All the globes

are acrylic plastic. The standard globes cost about \$90; the prismatics run about \$350.

A fifth light is located between the end of the cul-de-sac and Ringling Boulevard, outside the southwest door to the Church of the Redeemer on South Palm Avenue. It features a clear acrylic globe with an LED bulb from Beacon. It was obvious this was the design least favored by the district members.

The sixth and final light was on the north side of Ringling Boulevard adjacent to the Gulfstream cul-de-sac. It features a Sun Valley LED with a clear globe.

While much more expensive, the prismatic globe seemed the model most favored by the district members. Although LED lights are 10 to 20 times more expensive than metal halide or halogen bulbs, they last at least 10 times longer and consume a small fraction of the energy.

In the first segment of its Main Street rehabilitation from Gulfstream to Five Points, the DID plans to replace 19 streetlights, and it is budgeting about \$800 per pole. **SNL**



*Matt Gregg (back to camera) explains some of the differences among the lights and globes on the Downtown Improvement District's field trip to look at different designs for street lighting. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*



Water taxis from Freedom Boat Club will transport people from Marina Jack in downtown Sarasota to the Sarasota Sailing Squadron next to Ken Thompson Park for the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Water Festival. Contributed photo

## SARASOTA BAY WATER FESTIVAL SET FOR NOV. 17

The inaugural Sarasota Bay Water Festival is set for this Saturday, Nov. 17, at Ken Thompson Park in Sarasota.

More than 70 organizations from the public and private sectors will be involved as sponsors and exhibitors, according to a news release. The free festival will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. "Its purpose is to celebrate the importance of Sarasota Bay to the region's environment and economy," the news release says.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) is the host sponsor, while Triple 3 Marketing is managing the event with volunteer support from residents of Sarasota and Manatee counties, the release adds.

SBEP is one of America's 28 national estuary programs.

The first "iceberg" ever seen in Sarasota Bay will be unveiled as part of the activities, thanks to the creativity of New College sculpting professor Richard Herzog, the release points out.

Additionally, the award-winning Ski-A-Rees Water Ski Show Team will perform at 4 p.m.

Event guests also can gain free admission to the Mote Aquarium, which will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission requires getting a stamp at the festival.

Among the other festival highlights will be live music on the main stage, with five local bands on the schedule; a Creative Arts Tent presenting a dozen local wildlife photographers and artists selling art items; the winning submissions to the *I Love Sarasota Bay Photo Contest*, with three age divisions; vintage boat displays; local food trucks; a beer and

wine garden; and exhibits promoting boating, fishing, kayaking, paddle board sports, scuba, birding and more. For details, visit [sarasotabaywaterfestival.com](http://sarasotabaywaterfestival.com).

Festival organizers encourage visitors to carpool and use alternative transportation. A free water taxi will run between Marina Jack in downtown Sarasota and the Sarasota Sailing Squadron. It will depart every 30 to 40 minutes starting at 9 a.m., the release notes.

Other transportation options include hourly stops by Sarasota County Area Transit and the Longboat Key Trolley, a free bike valet and a free kayak valet.



*Local guitarist Ben Hammond will be the guitar-playing MC for the free regional festival. Contributed photo*

## TURNER DECIDES NOT TO SEEK RE-ELECTION

In a press release issued early in the morning of Nov. 15, City Commissioner Terry Turner announced he will not run for re-election as an at-large commissioner.

He cites "family and business obligations" as his reasons.

The release says, "Our city needs strong, qualified candidates! It is my hope that with an early announcement of my intent not to run,

there will be time to encourage qualified candidates to enter the race who might not have wanted to challenge a sitting commissioner."

Turner's withdrawal leaves Mayor Suzanne Atwell, Kevin Lumpkin, Pete Theisen, Linda Holland and Richard Dorfman challenging for the two at-large seats on the board.

*Stan Zimmerman*



*Mayor Suzanne Atwell and Commissioner Terry Turner discuss a matter during a recent City Commission meeting. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## **WALK THROUGH TIME INAUGURATED AT CITY HALL**

A display of historic photographs from Sarasota's municipal history was officially unveiled Tuesday evening, Nov. 13, at City Hall.

A variety of local notables and history buffs attended the ribbon cutting for *Walk Through Time*.

The photographs adorn the walls of the City Commission Chambers.

*Stan Zimmerman*



*Mayor Suzanne Atwell wields the ceremonial scissors outside the City Commission Chambers on Nov. 13. (From left) are Sherry Svekis, chairwoman of the Historic Preservation Board; Ernie Ritz, chairman of the Downtown Improvement District; Atwell; Jeff LaHurd, manager of the Sarasota County History Center; Clifford Smith, senior city planner; and City Manager Tom Barwin. Photos by Stan Zimmerman*

## RIVERVIEW HIGH TO PREMIERE STARS TO STARFISH PLANETARIUM SHOW

Riverview High School will debut a locally produced planetarium show, *Stars to Starfish*, during a free event from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17, in the school's planetarium, the Sarasota County Schools district has announced.

The showings will be part of *An Evening Under the Sea*. The planetarium program will run every 30 minutes, while participants also will have the opportunity to view the stars through telescopes provided by the Deep Sky Observers; tour the AquaDome greenhouse, which is the showcase of the school's Aquascience Program; and see a display of the school's recently donated research vessel.

*Stars to Starfish* took more than a year to complete, according to a district news release. It was produced by Riverview High science teacher and planetarium director Jason Mocherman and created in partnership with Full Dome FX, the release adds. The narrator is ABC7 anchor and RHS graduate Scott Dennis.

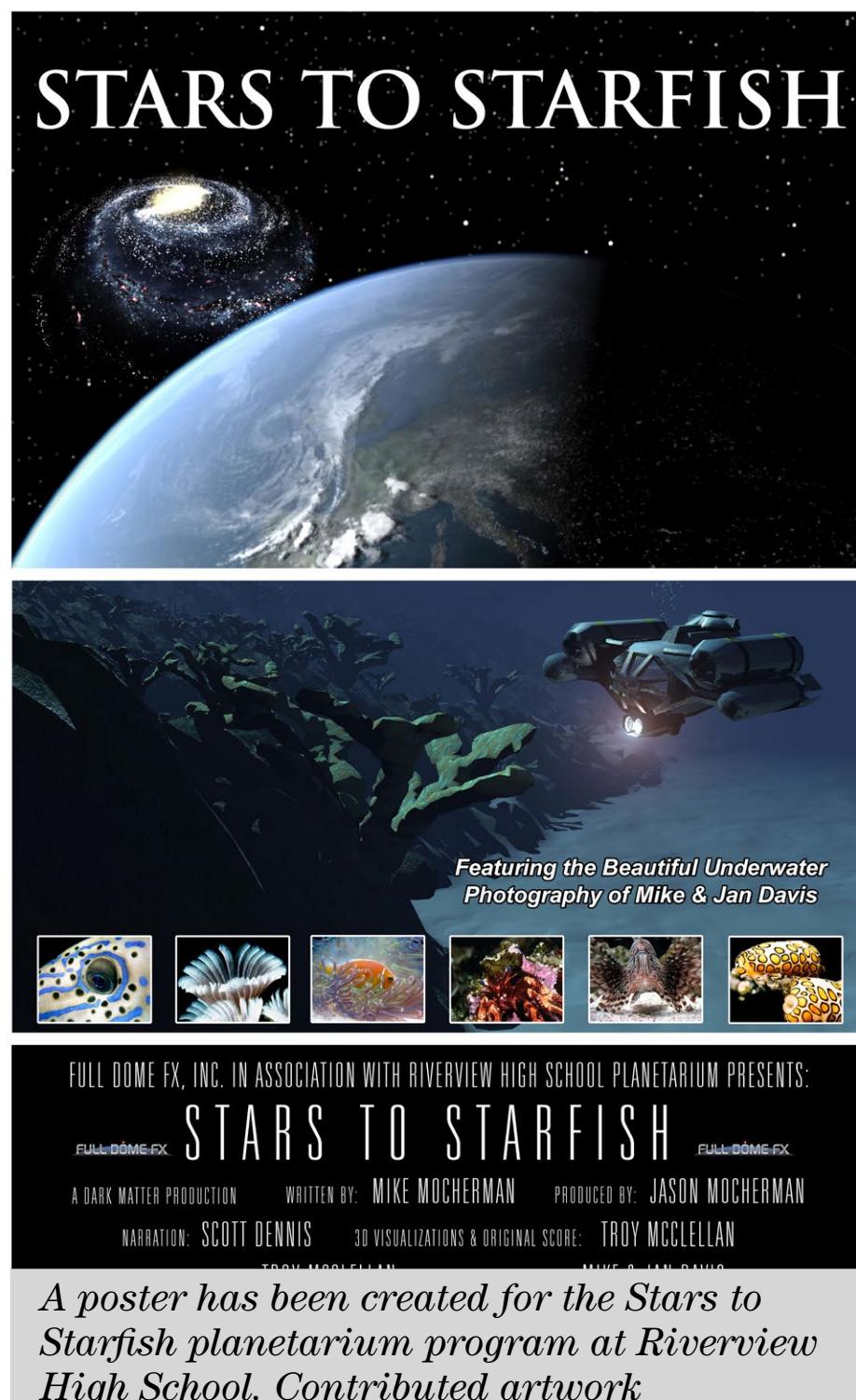
Retired RHS science teacher Mike Mocherman, Jason's father, wrote the script.

The underwater photography and videogra-

phy is by RHS art teacher Jan Davis and her husband, retired professional photographer Mike Davis. Ringling College of Art and Design also contributed to the show through its staff's mentoring of RHS students and the production of a time-lapse segment.

"This achievement is a one-of-a-kind instructional opportunity to impact thousands of students now and for many years to come," said Riverview Principal Linda Nook in the news release.

Jason Mocherman added in the release, "The Riverview High School Planetarium, AquaDome and *Stars to Starfish* are great examples of what can come from partnerships between schools and the community they serve. We have created a uniquely innovative program because everyone shared a vision and worked hard to make it a reality. But this is just a beginning. The visions are turning into dreams and the dreams have no bounds."



Riverview High is located at 1 Ram Way off Proctor Road in Sarasota.

## PUBLIC DENTAL CLINIC RECEIVES \$2,500

The Sarasota County Health Department's Dental Health Program recently received a \$2,500 donation from the Sarasota County Dental Association to help continue its mission of treating the underserved in the community, the county has announced.

"As a major provider of dental services to those with Medicaid, the dental program provides treatment to an average of 80 to 100 clients daily at two clinics, one in Sarasota and one in North Port," a county news release says.

The majority of the clients are children, the release adds. The dental program provided more than 18,000 dental visits last year.

The focus with children is on preventive services (such as sealants, cleanings and fluoride treatment), fillings and other treatment, the release notes.

Dental services are provided through state and county funding sources, as well as through grants from local foundations and other entities, the release adds.

"We appreciate the Sarasota County Dental Association's generous contribution as we work together to protect, promote and improve the oral health of children in our community," said Dr. Chander Malik, the Sarasota County Health Department's dental program director, in the news release. **SNL**



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# OPINION

"JUST SAYING  
**NO**  
IS NOT AN  
**ANSWER!**"



## FLORIDA'S MORTIFICATION

Is there nothing that Gov. Rick Scott will not do to humiliate the people of Florida? Even before he was elected governor, he was opposed to the Affordable Care Act. After his election, he justified his hostility toward the act's requirements on the grounds that it would be struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court as unconstitutional.

Then, in a landmark decision, the Supreme Court upheld almost everything contained in the act (striking down only the penalty against states that did not voluntarily agree to expand their Medicaid programs).

Guess what? Scott thumbed his nose at the highest court in the land as he continued to ignore the law. His reasoning? That Barack Obama would be defeated by Mitt Romney in

the presidential election, and the law would be repealed.

Then, on Nov. 6, voters gave President Obama a 3 million vote margin of victory (and a 61 percent majority in Electoral College votes). Even John Boehner, the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, began to refer to the Affordable Care Act as "the law of the land."

Guess what (again)? Scott thumbed his nose at almost everyone in the legitimate political firmament by declaring that he still would not do anything to implement any part of what he termed Obamacare, including the expansion of Medicaid in Florida and the establishment of federally mandated insurance exchanges to allow citizens to purchase competitively priced insurance.

# OPINION

His reasoning? Who cares? He long ago abandoned any pretense at rationality with his shameless posturing. And, in so doing, he has further embarrassed the state that, according to every poll, regrets electing him governor in the first place.

Fortunately, the blowback from his latest misstep, including legislative leaders in his own party distancing themselves from him as they discussed how the state should proceed with implementing the ACA, has compelled him to backtrack on his earlier, pugnacious obstinacy.

Earlier this week, in an interview with the Associated Press, he stated that he wants "... to negotiate with the federal government" on implementation. Seriously? Negotiate?

That's as ludicrous as Lord Cornwallis stating that he was ready to negotiate with George Washington following his walloping at Yorktown. Or the city of Atlanta stating its intention to negotiate with Gen. Sherman after he had reduced the city to ashes.

From the outset of the debate on healthcare reform, Scott has hitched his figurative wagon not to a lame horse, but to a dead one ... and all Floridians are paying the price.

The state already has lost hundreds of millions of dollars earmarked for early implementation of the ACA, funds gleefully pocketed by other states thrilled by Scott's recalcitrance. And

Scott's stubborn resistance to the expansion of Medicaid will cost the state another \$28 billion over the next several years, while Florida retains its reputation as the stingiest state in the country with its Medicaid program.

***From the outset of the debate on healthcare reform, Scott has hitched his figurative wagon not to a lame horse, but to a dead one ... and all Floridians are paying the price.***

Rick Scott has been, for almost his entire tenure in office, the most unpopular governor in Florida history. (Indeed, he has been one of the most unpopular governors in recent U.S. history.) After using \$75 million

of his own money to leverage the Tea Party dementia of 2010 to secure his election, winning with fewer than 62,000 votes and the support of barely more than 23 percent of registered Florida voters, he had not even the semblance of a mandate to undertake his reckless and oppressive governance.

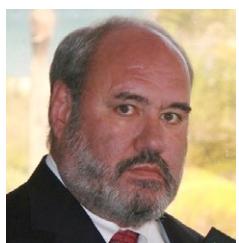
His churlish foot-dragging has put Florida so far behind in the race to comply with the ACA that it likely will never catch up. Unless granted an extension by the federal government, Florida will miss most, if not all, of the deadlines rapidly approaching.

It did not have to be this way. But Scott's well-earned reputation as a feckless dilettante has been the primary cause of our hopeless compliance shortfall.

One can only hope that, in 2014, outraged voters will rise up to right their earlier wrong ... and that Scott's painful, inept turn as governor will be put to a merciful end. **SNL**

# OPINION

## VICKI COLE, WHERE ARE YOU NOW THAT WE NEED YOU?



By David Staats  
*Contributing Writer*

### COMMENTARY

On Tuesday, Oct. 22, 1968, the Nixon-Agnew Campaign train en route to Toledo made a whistle stop in the village of Deshler, OH. The day was chilly by Suncoast standards; the median temperature was only 54 degrees. Among the crowd at the depot was 13-year-old Vicki Cole. She was accompanied by her father, Deshler's Methodist minister, and her mother, who taught third grade.

Vicki carried a hand-painted sign that read, "Bring Us Together." Its simple plea to unify a nation then divided by the seemingly endless war in Vietnam, dissatisfaction with the Great Society's direction and cost, regional opposition to the Civil Rights Movement and voting rights legislation, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the many urban riots that followed in its wake and the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy found resonance with many Americans. It briefly became a Republican campaign slogan.

Nixon won the 1968 election but failed to unite the country. It is still divided. Today, no party has a clear mandate: Democrats keep the White House for another four years and retain control of the Senate; Republicans have control of the House. Not much has changed since Nov. 5, the day before Election Day.

As mentioned, national divisions run deep. In this still tense atmosphere, politicians in the

White House and Executive Branch and on both sides of the aisles in the House and Senate would do well to remember Vicki's words.

As a practical beginning to this process, both political parties should not hesitate to seek compromise and find common ground on the following five issues:

**Pass a Long-term Federal Budget.** The budget assigns spending limits and priorities to federal government programs. Without a clear understanding of, and agreement on, those spending limits and priorities, the government must resort to deficit spending by raising the debt ceiling and selling Treasury bills and bonds. Those sales will be more expensive for the government as the result of recent downgrades of U.S. creditworthiness. Some rating agencies have said downgrades could continue if, as expected, debt levels rise. The debt ceiling has been raised nine times over the past decade. If debt financing is not approved by Congress, the government will have to shut down. These are irresponsible alternatives.

The last "federal budget" was passed in 2009 as an "omnibus spending bill." The two are not the same. Simply put, running the government without a real budget is like driving your car from Sarasota to Tallahassee with no cash or credit cards, a maxed-out debit card and only

# OPINION

enough gas in the tank to get you as far as Gainesville.

**Reform the tax code.** When she became speaker of the House in 2009, Nancy Pelosi named reform of the patently unfair Alternative Minimum Tax affecting millions of middle-income taxpayers as one of her top priorities. Of course, it never happened. Slogans often substitute for policy. Both parties urgently need to address the tax issue with open minds, especially as we are set to tumble off the “Fiscal Cliff” on Jan. 1.

**Undertake entitlements reform.** If we as a nation are to provide benefits to eligible citizens and non-citizens (such as Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, Obamacare, non-funded federal mandates that fall on state governments, etc.), then adequate reserves to cover those costs must be funded and maintained. Further, these reserves cannot be treated as pools of available cash from which the government can “borrow” at will. Remember candidate Al Gore’s promise made during the 2000 presidential campaign to create a Social Security “lockbox”? Nothing happened there either during subsequent administrations.

If the government promises to deliver a benefit, it is reasonable to expect that the government will have the money on hand to pay it. Otherwise, the recipient of the promised benefit gets nothing if the money designated to pay that benefit is spent elsewhere or the cash simply runs out. It is like buying on the installment plan without hope of ever recovering your “investment” if things go “wrong.” In 2013, out the \$3.73 trillion to be spent by the federal government, 62 percent will be spent on entitlements.

**Reduce federal debt.** Related to budget, tax and entitlements reforms, it should be noted that in September, the federal debt reached \$16 trillion (about 70 percent of gross domestic product, or GDP), an increase of \$6 trillion since the end of 2008. The Congressional Budget Office projects that if “taxation and spending policies that the nation has become accustomed to” continue, the federal debt will jump to 90 percent of GDP by 2022. If so, much of these added costs will be driven by increased demand by aging Baby Boomers for more and better subsidized health care.

In human terms, and according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the true median American family in 2011 earned \$50,054. With a comparable debt obligation of 70 percent (taxes, mortgage or rent, car payments, credit card payments, health costs, etc.) the family would have just \$15,016.20 a year to spend on groceries, utilities, gasoline, clothing, etc. Unlike the federal government, the family cannot legally print cash to make up the shortfall.

**Prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.** Should Iran develop the capability to produce nuclear weapons, a capability it is actively pursuing, Iran will use those weapons to “wipe Israel off the map.”

In addition to the above five, the president and Congress have other important issues to resolve in short order. It is hoped that Vicki’s appeal will bring them and the public together to break the gridlock, set aside the acrimony and get on with the very serious business of ensuring good national governance. 

# OPINION

## IMAGINE AN AFTERNOON BRIEFING AT THE SARASOTA PD ....



By Stan Zimmerman  
*City Editor*

### COMMENTARY

"Hey sergeant, I forgot to fill up my car before coming on shift, can I —?"

"No you can't, Worthheimer. Just sit down. OK, everybody, listen up. This is the regular Wednesday brief on the homeless. City Commission asked us to do something because Madame Mayor didn't feel safe downtown. We've been all over it. For weeks now, it's been getting hard to find any homeless downtown."

"Sarge, I found one sleeping inside a dumpster two nights ago. That's how hard they're hiding."

"Yeah, yeah, good work, Delfin. Keep your eyes open. Now Officer Snodgassed has the tip of the week. Randy...."

"This'll be my last time up, boys. Internal Affairs rousted me for some bogus thing about lying to lawyers and fraudulent claims for disability. So I'm taking my pension and moving on. But before I do, I got the best trick yet."

"Damn, Randy, we're gonna miss you. Your sneaky tricks are the best."

"Well, thanks, Worthheimer. Listen up: This one'll drive 'em crazy. You know those picnic shelters we have in parks across the city? Well, some of 'em have lights and some of 'em have power receptacles." Snodgassed

paused. "You catch some street trash pluggin' into that receptacle with a boom box or cell phone charger or anything, and POW, it's theft! Stealin' city power. Easy \$500 bond, so this guy's going overnight to the jail. And ... this is the best part ... you get to put the device into evidence, so he'll play hell getting it back anytime soon. Maybe never!"

"Oh, sweet!" said Delfin. "The guy's cut off. No friends; no family; no nobody. The ultimate 'Get lost, chump.'"

"And now that we have those infrared viewers thanks to Homeland Security, we can stake these places out," said the sergeant. "Guy's not gonna get too far from his phone, ya know."

"So how many of these public receptacles are out there, Sarge?" asked Delfin.

"We got maps from Public Works for you. Here, pass 'em down."

"Say, Sarge, what are we gonna do when that guy Stephen King shows up again with his Chevy Volt? Don't he plug into public power?"

"Yeah," said Worthheimer. "Maybe we should roust him, too?"

"Back off, dummies. He ain't no homeless. He's drivin' a \$50,000 car, livin' on Casey Key. You see him, you say, 'Sir.' No business of yours where he gets his power."

"See you guys," said Snodgassed. "Good hunting!" **SNL**



*The Progressive Voice  
of Southwest Florida*



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**FIGHTING THEN AND  
FIGHTING NOW**

**ASK OTUS: TURKEY TIME**

**Inside**

# FIGHTING THEN AND FIGHTING NOW



*Sonia Pressman Fuentes is the author of the memoir, "Eat First — You Don't Know What They'll Give You, The Adventures of an Immigrant Family and Their Feminist Daughter," along with many essays and articles about women's rights issues and other topics featured in publications throughout the world. Photos by Tyler Whitson and Arielle Scherr*

## **WOMEN'S RIGHTS PIONEERS STRIVE TO INFLUENCE AND INSPIRE A NEW GENERATION**

**By Tyler Whitson**  
*Contributing Writer*

When Sarasota resident Sonia Pressman Fuentes awoke on Nov. 7, she was ecstatic at the news from the night before.

The renowned women's rights activist, author, lawyer and accomplished feminist pioneer who helped found the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 — and the first female attorney in the Office of the General Counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission — found the 2012 election had proven to be an historic one for women and women's equality activists.

The 113th Congress will include an unprecedented number of women, breaking records

for both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate will boast 20 female members, while the House will welcome at least 81.

Additionally, New Hampshire will be the first state ever with an all-female congressional delegation and governor.

Women's issues such as equal pay, reproductive rights, preventative healthcare and medical privacy rights had been brought to the forefront of the political debate. By defeating numerous candidates with extreme views on abortion and rape, such as U.S. Rep. Todd Akin, R-Mo., and Indiana State Treasurer Rich-

ard Mourdock, the majority of voters across the United States demonstrated they do not want legislators to limit women's rights to make decisions about their bodies.

In Florida, voters rejected proposed constitutional Amendment 6, which would have banned the use of public funds to pay for abortions or health insurance that covers abortions within the state — although this is already federal policy — and it would have removed the procedure from the privacy protections guaranteed in the Florida Constitution.

"I feel as I did when the U.S. Supreme Court issued *Brown v. Board of Education*," Fuentes wrote to her friends and supporters the morning after the election, referring to the landmark 1954 decision that declared it unconstitutional for states to impose laws mandating separate public schools for black and white students.

The mood was a bit different a few hours earlier, though, when *The Sarasota News Leader* sat down with Fuentes before the polls closed to discuss the present day's most important women's issues and how they relate to strides made in the past. Although there was an air of uncertainty about the election outcomes, it was clear to Fuentes that, regardless of who would be leading the country and what ballot amendments would be enforced in the near future, very much still would need to be done before equality for women could be viewed as a reality.

It seems to many, in fact, that women's rights have been facing visceral attacks from conservative candidates and groups over at least the past two years. There have been attempts, for example, to defund Planned Parenthood, to require women seeking abortions to undergo invasive transvaginal ultrasound procedures and —through the Sanctity of Human



(From left) The "Countdown to Election 2012" official panelists included Dr. Bonnie Greenball Silvestri, Dr. Scott Perry, Sonia Pressman Fuentes and Dr. Frank Alcock. They later were joined by attorney Adam Tebrugge, who at the time was running to represent District 71 in the Florida House of Representatives. Tebrugge took Alcock's place after Alcock had to leave for another engagement.

Life Act — to reclassify the fertilized egg as a living person by establishing that life begins at conception, which would make it possible for states to criminalize abortion and in vitro fertilization. Many activists have interpreted these endeavors and their varied levels of success as part of a concerted effort to roll back women's rights. The actions often are referred to in the news media as a "war on women."

Asked her thoughts on that viewpoint, Fuentes replied sharply. "You'd have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to know that there's a war on women by the Republican Party. I think it has made feminists angry, doing all they can to see that Barack Obama is re-elected."

## A FEMINIST ICON

Not quite three weeks before the election, a personal friend of Fuentes and another feminist pioneer came to St. Petersburg to address some of the same issues Fuentes discussed with the *News Leader*.

Author and journalist Gloria Steinem spoke on Oct. 20 during a pro-choice rally organized by the "I Am Choice" campaign in opposition to Florida's proposed constitutional Amendment 6.

The many attendees were enthusiastic and vocal in their support, cheering loudly when Steinem proclaimed a sentiment they shared. The crowd comprised women and men of diverse ages and races.

Steinem voiced her concerns about ultra social conservatives' efforts to use the Republican Party as a vehicle to enact legislation that already has impacted or would infringe on the rights of women.

"It is so dangerous to have one of our two great parties controlled by extremists ... because, when we naturally are not 100 percent happy with one group, we just vote for the other one without understanding that we are voting against ourselves," she said. "The great centrist Republican Party needs to come back," she added, reminding audience members of a few of the more progressive, pro-equality views that Republican presidents of the past have expressed.

Of the many issues Steinem discussed at the rally, comparable pay for women was at the forefront. "It happens that equal pay for women of all races is the greatest economic stimulus that this country could ever have," she said to enthusiastic applause. "I have never ever seen, even in the Eisenhower era, anybody who refused to say they were for equal pay! Even if they didn't do anything about it, they at least said they were for equal pay," she continued, referring to former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's evasive responses to questions about his stance on equal pay for women and the Lilly Ledbetter Act of 2009, which helps women who have lost wages as a result of pay discrimination in the past to legally recuperate their losses.

Steinem also focused considerable attention on attempts by conservatives to enact legislation to reclassify the fertilized egg as a person and the major consequences this would have for women. It would "effectively nationalize women's bodies throughout our childbearing years" and "give the government the right to legally search our wombs to see if we were pregnant or not," she said. "If you think that's impossible, think about the transvaginal probe that is legalized rape!"

Steinem received a fervent ovation when she summed up her overall views on personhood with a pithy statement targeting two issues: "Neither the corporation nor the fertilized egg is a person," she declared.

## NO LETTING UP

Fuentes also was publicly vocal in her concerns about women's issues during the 2012 election. Soon after returning from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, where she was invited to speak about the women's rights movement and the problems that remain, she took off to the Half Shell Oyster House on Main Street in Sarasota to participate in a "Countdown to Election 2012" panel discussion for

college students about the election, voting rights and issues of equality. The event was organized and moderated by Bonnie Greenball Silvestri, senior fellow for arts, culture and civic engagement at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee.

Fuentes explained to the audience both the victories and the shortcomings of the past four years in terms of women's rights, clearing up misconceptions.

In an interview following the panel's discussions, Fuentes went into deeper detail about those issues. She prefaced her remarks with the point that, although she considers herself to be a lifelong liberal Democrat, a supporter



*Many at the "I Am Choice" rally were volunteers and interns helping to raise funds for local and national campaigns.*

of President Obama and an outspoken critic of the Republican Party's current policies regarding women's issues — describing the difference between the views of the 2012 election's presidential candidates as a "chasm" — she refuses to let partisanship anesthetize her passion for women's equality.

"As a feminist activist since 1963, I have also been disappointed in [President] Barack Obama, in his wife, Michelle, and in [Vice President] Joe Biden and his wife, Jill," Fuentes said.

One of the greatest disappointments she has had in the president and those close to him has been their failure to advocate for the

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution. Originally written and introduced in Congress in 1923, it would guarantee equal rights for women.

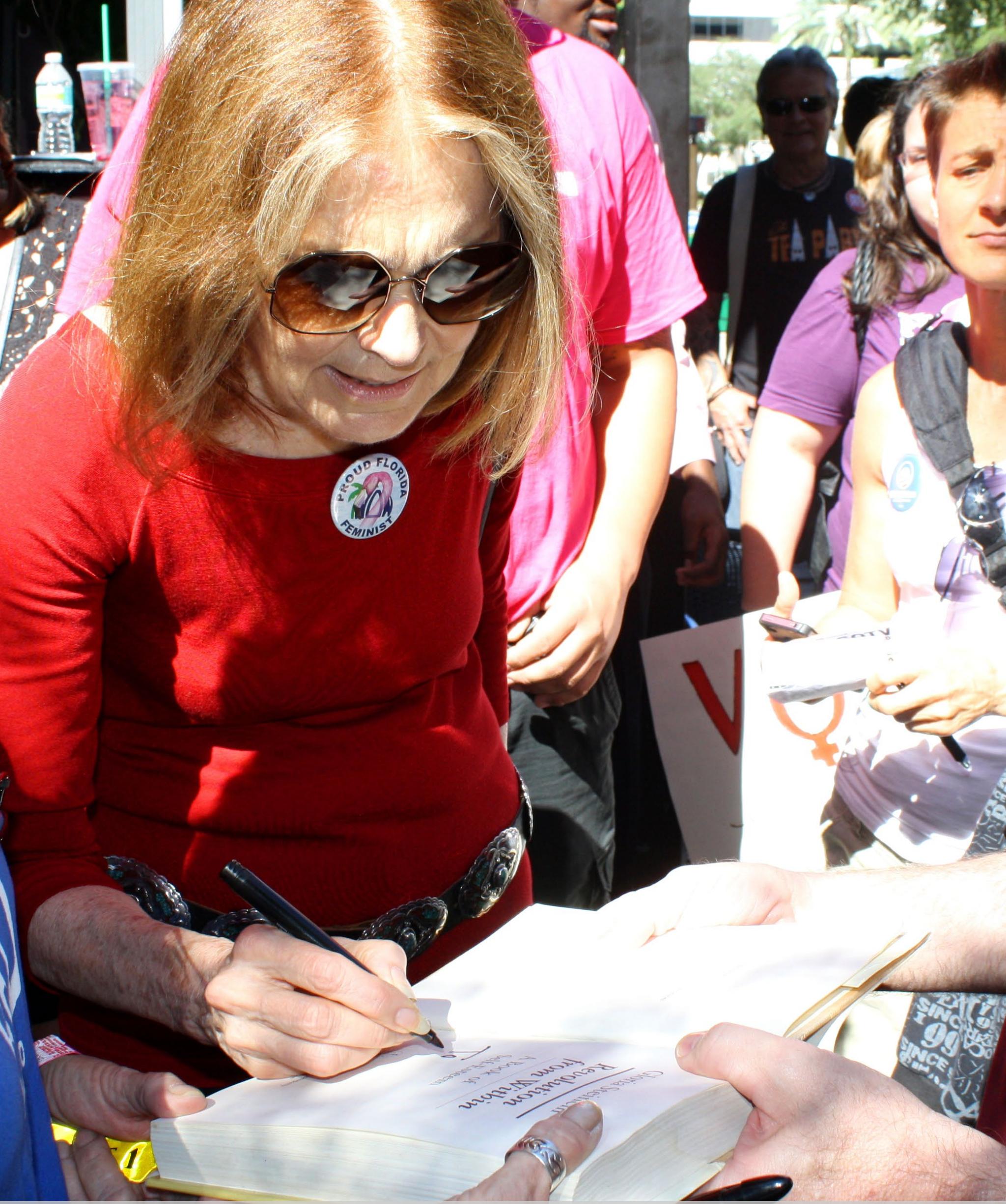
"Since Alice Paul drafted the Equal Rights Amendment, women have been fighting to get it ratified," Fuentes continued.

She expressed frustration that although the Democratic Party has included it in its national platform, none of the individuals she mentioned earlier has "said the first word" about the ERA since Obama was inaugurated.

Another critical issue Fuentes pointed to is the lack of federal legislation that would guar-



*Before meeting with fans following her speech, Gloria Steinem posed for a photo with Planned Parenthood volunteers who helped organize the "I Am Choice" rally.*



Gloria Steinem was happy to set aside time to meet with excited fans, sign books and pose for photos outside the location of the "I Am Choice" rally.

antee women are paid the same salaries as men for completing equivalent work.

"[President] Obama keeps trumpeting the fact that the first bill he signed was the Lilly Ledbetter Act," she said. "I'm delighted that that's the case, but it only involves a wrinkle in the interpretation of the way Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is interpreted. It corrected a loophole ... but women still only make 77 cents on every dollar that men make. This affects not only their current salary and wages, but their pensions. Over a lifetime they lose hundreds of thousands of dollars," she continued. "At the rate we're going, to make it the same, it's going to take forever ... More needs to be done to make equal pay a reality."

Among the additional issues Fuentes mentioned — though she said there were many others — were the lack of a mandate to guarantee paid maternity leave and the failure of the United States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly as an international bill of rights for women and ratified by every industrialized country in the world except the United States.

Asked what people can do to help forward the cause of women's rights, Fuentes offered a number of suggestions.

"If they are parents, they need to raise their male and female children equally and teach those children that they both have the same opportunities, they both have the same potential," she said. For those who are not parents, the most important first step is to collaborate with other advocates. "I always urge people

to join organizations that are fighting for what they believe in," she said. "It is very hard to do something to change the society alone. You can write, which I do; you can speak, which I do; but you also need to join with like-minded people."

Some of the organizations she suggested people join are NOW and UN Women, which has a large chapter in Sarasota, as well as women's chapters of professional groups and unions.

Regardless of how one goes about doing it, Fuentes wants to remind people that fighting for women's rights is as important today as it ever has been, although it may not be quite as obvious.

"The battle is more difficult now, because it's dealing in some cases with subtleties and nuances. In the early days, in the 1960s, everybody could see the discrimination against women in employment, in getting into colleges and universities, in not being allowed to serve on juries — everything," she said. "Now, a lot of people think, 'What are you still carrying on about? Haven't you accomplished everything?'"

There is still much to be accomplished in the fight for equal rights and equality for women, of course, Fuentes explained, so helping others to be vigilant in fighting present-day discrimination and inequality is of ever-increasing importance.

That is why, even after decades on the front lines, Fuentes and Steinem continue to push forward. Fuentes says she is excited about seeing individuals of all backgrounds do the same. **SNL**



## ASK OTUS

### OTUS OFFERS ALL THE ANSWERS YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT TURKEYS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

We have a magnificent bird to admire as a symbol of our bounteous Thanksgivings: *Meleagris gallopavo*, the Wild Turkey, as well as its two direct descendants, *M. farmraisedo*, the Domesticated, and *M. permafrosti*, the Frozen Turkey.

As most people know, in a 1784 letter to his daughter, Founding Father Benjamin Franklin protested the official recognition of the American Bald Eagle, and not the Wild Turkey, as the U.S. national bird. Franklin deemed the Bald Eagle "... a Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly." Further, he is a cowardly and lazy thief (for stealing Ospreys' fish). By contrast, the Wild Turkey is a respectable original and courageous native of America.

Franklin did concede that it could be a little vain and silly at times.



*This Wild Turkey is a magnificent example of the breed. Photo courtesy of Rick Greenspun*

The Wild Turkey has good reasons to be vain. The adult male has some 5,500 feathers, whose beautiful rich hues and iridescent tips recall a forest during an autumn sunset — vibrant ochre and deep mahogany mingled with silvers and burnished gold. When he is courting, the turkey's thick lustrous fan feathers, shimmering in the sunlight, are the envy of strutting dancers at the Folies Bergère. His bald head, snood and wattle change color according to his emotions, turning red, white and blue — how much more patriotic can one be?

A tom (or gobbler), as the adult male is called, can attain running speeds of 25 mph and bursts of flight up to 55 mph. His gobble can be heard a mile away and he is fiercely protective of his territory. He has a laissez-faire attitude toward his offspring, called poult, and lets the hens raise them. Poult are born precocial and unlike the "mama's chick," the Limpkin, are on their own within a few days of birth.

John James Audubon admired the Wild Turkey as much as Franklin did. He demonstrated his affection and great admiration for this symbol of the epic American wilderness by making it his first bird subject in *Birds of America*. Audubon even embossed his letters with a gold and carnelian signet ring depicting a turkey cock and the phrase, "America My Country." He was that proud of his naturalized American citizenship and that impressed by this native wild bird.

Audubon also enjoyed the rich flavor of a cooked Wild Turkey. Many turkey hunters will cook and eat only the turkey breast, the rest being too tough; however, if the turkey is injected with wine and allowed to marinate for

a day or two, all of its flesh becomes an [edible treat](#).

The Wild Turkey's silly characteristics are often inspired by its contact with humans. Highly territorial, standing 4 feet tall and with superb daytime vision, a Wild Turkey marching into town will fearlessly attack parking meters and his reflection in shop windows or in a car's side mirror, causing people to panic, stampede out of his path and then write letters to editors of local newspapers and place calls to mayors and local police authorities. After all, he is taller than their children and attacks not only with his beak but with his 1 1/2 inch spurs, which he uses to repel other toms from his harem.

According to Wikipedia, the Aztecs associated the turkey with their mischievous god Tezcatlipoca "perhaps because of its perceived humorous behavior." The Aztecs must have experienced something similar to the following story.

On Cape Cod, which has a comparatively large population of Wild Turkeys roaming about, a tom began relentlessly pursuing a mail truck and throwing himself against the vehicle. The letter carrier was afraid to leave his truck, and residents stayed in their homes or cars when this rogue turkey was sighted. Speculation was that the turkey was living up to Ben Franklin's high opinion of him by attacking the Bald Eagle symbol on the truck. Even knowing the turkey's daily routine, authorities were unable to capture him, as he ran and flew faster than they.

This wily turkey gained greater notoriety and prestige when Ethel Kennedy, phoning from Florida, told the *Cape Cod Times*, "It's our

bird. He's aggressive and knows how to escape."

She reported the Kennedy grandkids had a swell time chasing after it for three days around her Hyannis Port property during their Thanksgiving sojourn. She also gave a detailed description to claim ownership: "Black with a red head." This caused some local residents to advertise: "Missing pet squirrel, gray with black whiskers."

So much for the silly side of the Wild Turkey ...

The Wild Turkey is widespread and endemic to all U.S. states except Alaska. One exception is when former Gov. Sarah Palin who, during a 2008 press conference, "pardoned" a Thanksgiving Domesticated Turkey against the backdrop of a turkey slaughterhouse while turkeys were actually in the process of being executed. Warning: **necessary gore**.

## THE OTHER TURKEYS

Now to its subspecies, *M. farmraisedo*: Domesticated Turkeys are as beautiful as wild ones and can have a varied spectrum of colors. Mesoamericans of central Mexico domesticated these birds some 2,000 years ago, using their eggs and meat as a staple protein source and their feathers to decorate garments and headdresses. European explorers and settlers in the early 16th century brought these turkeys to Europe and then reintroduced their newly bred stock back into the Americas when they colonized those lands.

Now bred exclusively for weight and human consumption, these turkeys cannot fly, but they certainly can hop and are a lively, gregarious lot.

Although bronzed-feathered varieties are raised, the great majority of Domesticated Turkeys are bred white to make their pin feathers less visible after their carcasses are plucked and dressed. The Broad Breasted White variety is the most famous breed and the one frequently chosen for the Thanksgiving presentation to the First Family.

The concept of a National Turkey Pardon Day is a delightful one. Truman is credited with the first turkey "pardon" in 1947, but facts do not support this. Ceremonially, the tradition began in 1989 when President George H. W. Bush granted the first official presidential pardon. This light-hearted occasion, usually taking place in the Rose Garden, always brings a smile to everyone, regardless of party affiliation.

The presentation Thanksgiving turkey is selected when he is a poult (only a couple of hens have ever been selected), and he is raised to handle the noisy crowds and paparazzi with great aplomb. Unfortunately, he is also raised to be the *ne plus ultra* model of turkey breeding; meaning he is huge and grossly obese, and he suffers from heart disease and all its related illnesses. These turkeys do not live much longer than a year after their pardon. But their last months are pleasantly comfortable ones.

In the past, pardoned turkeys were sent to Frying Pan Park, VA, (I checked it out and it actually is a park, not a fast-food chain as the name suggests!) and even to our own Florida Disney World, where they once performed as grand marshals in Disney's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Currently, President Obama's pardoned turkeys are sent to Mount Vernon, George Washington's home.

Although Wild and Domesticated turkeys abound in Sarasota County, I have never had the pleasure of seeing one. It is *M. permafrosto*, the Frozen Turkey subspecies, that rules on Siesta Key.

The Frozen Turkey is a headless, tailless, apodal breed whose pimpled pale flesh is covered with an inscribed plastic wrap in lieu of feathers. Its innards, cryogenically preserved in its cavity, include a long wrinkly neck, a hefty over-sized liver, a tiny heart and gizzard.

Take a look at the accompanying photo of a turkey at 7:30 a.m. Thanksgiving Day. It more resembles a prop on a "Mission Impossible" set than a delectable dinner. But in just a few hours it will be served stuffed, golden-brown and aromatic. How does that happen? Well, from what I have observed, on Thanksgiving

Day, more than on other holidays, people extend their warm hospitality not only to beloved family and friends but also to those who might have been left all alone that day. And I see families and children, old and now new friends, all laughing while chipping at the ice in the turkey cavity, yelling encouragements to their favorite football team while setting the microwave's defrost function and helping out in every way while having a grand old time. Many guests even stay long enough to help with the cleanup!

The Thanksgiving spirit of sharing is amazing, and it makes me proud to be a Native American owl — but determined to keep my freshly caught vole all to myself.

**Otus**

## ABOUT OTUS

Otus Rufous, an Eastern Screech-Owl, was born on Siesta Key and is a full-time resident there. An avid hunter, accomplished vocalist and genuine night owl, Otus is a keen observer of our local wildlife and knows many of nature's secrets. Otus will answer your questions about our amazing wildlife, but only if you Ask Otus. So please send your questions and photos to [askotus@sarasotanews-leader.com](mailto:askotus@sarasotanews-leader.com). Thank you.



*Its wild cousins may not be common on Siesta Key, but the Frozen Turkey is an ordinary sight near the latter part of each November. File photo*



## OF TIME AND TRANSFORMATION

*Fine Print took second-place honors during the 2012 Crystal Classic. Photo by Peter Acker/courtesy the Crystal Classic*

### SAND SCULPTING COMPETITION HAS BECOME A CLASSIC IN ITS OWN RIGHT ON SIESTA KEY

By Harriet Cuthbert

Contributing Writer

*Editor's note: Harriet Cuthbert volunteered again this year to assist with the Siesta Key Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Competition. This is her report on a week at the beach with world-renowned artists.*

It is four days before the Siesta Key Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Competition begins, and the sand piles are already rising up.

Untouched by human hands that will transform them into masterworks of fine art, these innocuous little hills sit there calmly, awaiting their new identities. And we are eagerly

awaiting the third annual competition, which is sponsored jointly by Mote Marine Laboratory and the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, with the proceeds going to the very important sea turtle research and conservation programs at Mote.

Master sculptors have come from all over the world to compete for a first prize of \$5,000. In the space of four days, they will take their assigned spots, along with their sand allotments, and make magic.

Using only sand, water and various tools, they are truly amazing to watch, these artists who craft something out of nothing.

Twelve pairs are competing, from as far away as Singapore. Our own local master sculptor, Brian Wigelsworth, is working with partner Andy Daily to add some fun, non-competitive art for holiday photos.

Brian is the one who had the imagination and foresight to put this whole event together.

## DAY ONE

It is Thursday afternoon, Nov. 8, Day One of the Classic. I have ambled over to the beach to get in the mood for a fun-filled long weekend of sand sculpting. The sun could not be brighter, without a cloud nearby.

Vendors are setting up their wares and selling a few items to the attendees. The first day is very important to the sculptors but doesn't offer too much to the visitors. It is a day of orga-

nizing and planning for the artists — building up their wooden "walls," or platforms, shoveling the sand into those protective barriers and thinking about creating their masterworks. I can't wait for Friday.

## DAY TWO

It is Friday morning, the beginning of another beautiful day at the beach — an easy 11 out of 10. The artists have gathered at their spots and begun to put their thoughts into form. The vendors are also thrilled to have such wonderful weather. Everything from MoJo Jerky and pizza, to beer and wine, to jewelry and car washes, to my favorite kettle corn, is available.

A huge sand sculpture has been created to recognize the many generous sponsors of the



*Fossil Fuel picked up the first-place trophy this year. Photo by Peter Acker/courtesy the Crystal Classic*

event. It is designed to greet all the visitors. The friendly, smiling dolphins are especially welcoming, and the enthusiasm of the crowd is contagious.

We see smart phones with built-in cameras clicking away, children watching in amazement and artists patiently answering many questions from their admirers.

As I stroll around the area and watch the artists at work, I see the beginnings of a face, some small animals that could be cats, a large disc-like sculpture whose final form will be anybody's guess and many more shapes in their infancy. Observing the changes in these creations from start to finish is very exciting.

The visitors are entranced, especially the first-timers who insist on posing in front of the sponsors' logos in that big structure. Even though the sand sculptures are ephemeral, the photos and memories will be treasured for a very long time.

## DAY THREE

Saturday's continuing perfect weather has definitely brought in the crowds. The buses from Philippi Estate have begun running, bringing in the visitors who left their vehicles at the park. More families have arrived, with multiple generations of people excited about watching the sand sculptors at work and eager to see their creations.



*Love is a Battlefield* won third-place recognition. Photo by Peter Acker/courtesy the Crystal Classic

The addition of a fantastic band and a great singer also helps to make this event so memorable.

I have started walking around the area and am entranced by a piece that seems to be a head split in half with a full-size baby, smiling peacefully, squeezed between the two halves of the head. I cannot imagine the final sculpture or its title.

A few feet away is a piece with an old car; in front of it is a gas tank emblazoned with a Texaco star and the number "10,000."

Moving on, I see a hand surrounding a beautifully rendered old-fashioned clock, which I have named, *The Hand of Time*.

Everyone wants to have his or her picture taken next to the Happy Holidays Snowman

— wishful thinking, guys, if you want to see the real thing in Southwest Florida. We're on Siesta Key!

Some of the sculptures are still a mystery, and it is fun to listen to the visitors trying to guess the themes.

Two artists from The Netherlands are creating a very emotional piece, whose title will also not be revealed until Sunday.

I notice that today the two-sided disc has become two sides of a coin — the male and the female versions. Quotes from each sex about the other are etched into the sculpture, which the audience is really enjoying. But the most commonly heard remark is, "The detail is amazing."



Dolphins 'swim' across the top of logos for a number of the sponsors of the 2012 Crystal Classic.  
Photo by Norman Schimmel

What is truly amazing to me is how well-organized and beautifully run this whole event has been. We are all looking forward to Sunday, with the finished masterworks and the announcement of the prizes.

## DAY FOUR

As I approach the beach parking lot on foot on Sunday afternoon, I am overwhelmed by the number of cars driving around and lining up

on Beach Road to, hopefully, secure a space and allow the occupants to see the sculptures.

The competition has ended and the winners will be announced soon. I can now walk around and see the completed master works.

Peter Vogelaar of Canada has created a stunner. The disc I mentioned earlier has become a magnifying glass, and the man and woman are looking at each other through this *Fine Print*.



Andy Daily (left) and Brian Wigelsworth, the founder of the Crystal Classic, work on a snowman made of sand by which visitors could pose for photos to put in their holiday cards. Photo by Norman Schimmel



On Nov. 9, details of man's face already were clear in *Fine Print*. Among that 'fine print': 'Blows money on toys'; 'Loves his car'; and 'Procrastinator.' Sculptors Peter Vogelaar and Abe Waterman of Canada actively were seeking more comments to add to both the man's and woman's faces. Photo by Norman Schimmel

*Fossil Fuel*, another marvel, by Craig Mutch and Delayne Corbett, begins with a huge snake-like creature wrapping itself around and around until it almost gives birth to an automobile. Alongside the car is the gas tank with the number “10,000” on it, marking the number of years mankind has been using fossil fuels. Many people are staring at this creation with wonder. Its concept and execution are incredible.

The smiling baby is still smiling and enjoying his spot between the two halves of the one

head. And the cats have emerged, climbing all over their king. Their faces are uniquely expressive, but the king is not looking pleased at all.

I have to say I have been trying hard to be neutral and not pick a favorite, but I truly am overwhelmed by *Fine Print*.

The Siesta Key Crystal Classic has now become a classic in its own right. Congratulations to all the brilliant sand sculptors. We will see you next year. **SNL**



Rusty Croft and Chris Guinto of the United States intrigued visitors as their sculpture took its final form over the days of the event. Photo by Peter van Roekens



Sculptors Matt Long and Andy Gertler of the United States created Under Pressure. Photo by Peter van Roekens



*Jooheng Tan of Singapore and Benjamin Probanza of Mexico sculpted the baby between the two halves of its parents' heads. Photo by Peter van Roekens*



Sculptors Karen Fralich and Sue McGrew work on their eye-grabbing depiction of a cat-covered Viking. Photo by Norman Schimmel



A sea goddess, perhaps, keeps watch over some of the sponsor logos during the event. Co-Chairwoman Maria Bankemper praised all the people and companies that collaborated to make the Classic run smoothly. Photo by Norman Schimmel



*Imagination seemed to know no bounds in the design of the artwork. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## WE SALUTE YOU

*The Sarasota County Fire Department and Emergency Services personnel troop down Main Street.  
Photos by Norman Schimmel*

## THANKS OFFERED TO ALL THE FIGHTING MEN AND WOMEN

*Staff Reports*

Area residents of many ages turned out on Sunday, Nov. 11, to pay tribute to military personnel past and present during the annual Veterans Day Parade on Main Street in downtown Sarasota.

Although the Treaty of Versailles that officially ended World War I was not signed until June 28, 1919,

the cessation of hostilities between Germany and the Allied nations went into effect at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. That is why Veterans Day is celebrated on Nov. 11, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. **SNL**



*One decorated hero wins applause from the crowd lining Main Street.*



Sarasota County School Board Chairwoman Caroline Zucker (fourth from left, in red) joins the Sailors of Sarasota High School as they march down Main Street.



Sarasota Police Chief Mikel Hollaway joins Sheriff Tom Knight in the parade.



*What would a Veterans Day parade be without military vehicles?*



Sarasota Mayor Suzanne Atwell joins City Commissioner Willie Shaw for the events on Veterans Day in downtown Sarasota.



*The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office offers its salute to the veterans.*



*In accord with the celebration, veterans groups join in the parade in downtown Sarasota.*



*(From left) Sarasota County Commissioner Carolyn Mason, Sarasota City Commissioner Shannon Snyder and Supervisor of Elections Kathy Dent enjoy the celebration on Nov. 11.*

## ARTS BRIEFS



### BOOKER HIGH SCHOOL DANCE STUDENTS TO PERFORM NOV. 15-17

The Booker High School Visual and Performing Arts Dance Program will showcase an eclectic mix of dance styles during its Fall Dance Performance, Thursday through Saturday, Nov. 15-17, at 7 p.m.

The shows will be in the school's VPA Theatre at 3201 N. Orange Ave.

"Dance Department Chairwoman Melissa Lodhi has moved the de-

partment in a direction that focuses on making connections between what students learn about the movement of their bodies and several core academic classes, including English, science and mathematics," a Sarasota County Schools news release says. "The approach has prompted students to strengthen their critical thinking skills as much as they strengthen their bodies as dancers."

*Booker High School dancers from the Visual and Performing Arts program prepare for their fall performance. Contributed photo*

The blending of academia with dance performance will be on display in a number of dance pieces, the news release adds. VPA dance instructor Courtney Smith-Inzalaco choreographed her piece based on mathematical principles. She says she drew inspiration from the work of mathematician Vi Hart, whose popular blog takes a quirky, pop-culture approach to math.

Lodhi's piece was originally created for October's diversity event, *We Are Sarasota*. The dance dramatized tension between racial groups in the history of civil rights, the release points out.

"I've since developed the piece into a broader work that takes a more abstract approach

to the theme of separation," Lodhi said in the news release. "Now it explores societal and political issues as they relate to the experiences of individuals."

The performance also will feature styles of dance ranging from ballet, choreographed by Deborah Vinton, to Afro-Cuban dance, choreographed by Leymis Bolaños-Wilmott.

Tickets are \$15 for regular admission; \$5 for students (kindergarten through college); and \$10 for seniors (ages 55 and up). They may be purchased online at [www.vpabooker.com](http://www.vpabooker.com) or by calling Judy Piercy at the VPA box office: 355-2967.

Tickets also will be available at the door.

## MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER TO TAKE VAN WEZEL STAGE NOV. 16

"Few musical groups can say that they were pioneers of their genre, but Mannheim Steamroller is without a doubt one of them," says a news release from the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. Even the group's name has become synonymous with the Christmas season, the release points out.

The Van Wezel will welcome Mannheim Steamroller to its stage on Nov. 16, just before the holiday season begins in earnest.

Led by Chip Davis, the group's first Christmas album, released in 1984, "was a smash hit which hurtled the already Platinum selling group to mega-stardom," the new release says.

Twelve albums later, "Mannheim Steamroller has become the quintessential source for a music style which has now become an American Christmas tradition," the release adds.

Mannheim Steamroller also created a 12-hour, nationally syndicated radio program titled, "An American Christmas," which features music and narrated stories; it is broadcast by more than 250 radio stations, the release notes.

Tickets for the Sarasota show are priced from \$30 to \$85. For more information, call the box office at 953-3368 or visit [www.VanWezel.org](http://www.VanWezel.org).

**Take Your Time  
You Have All Week**

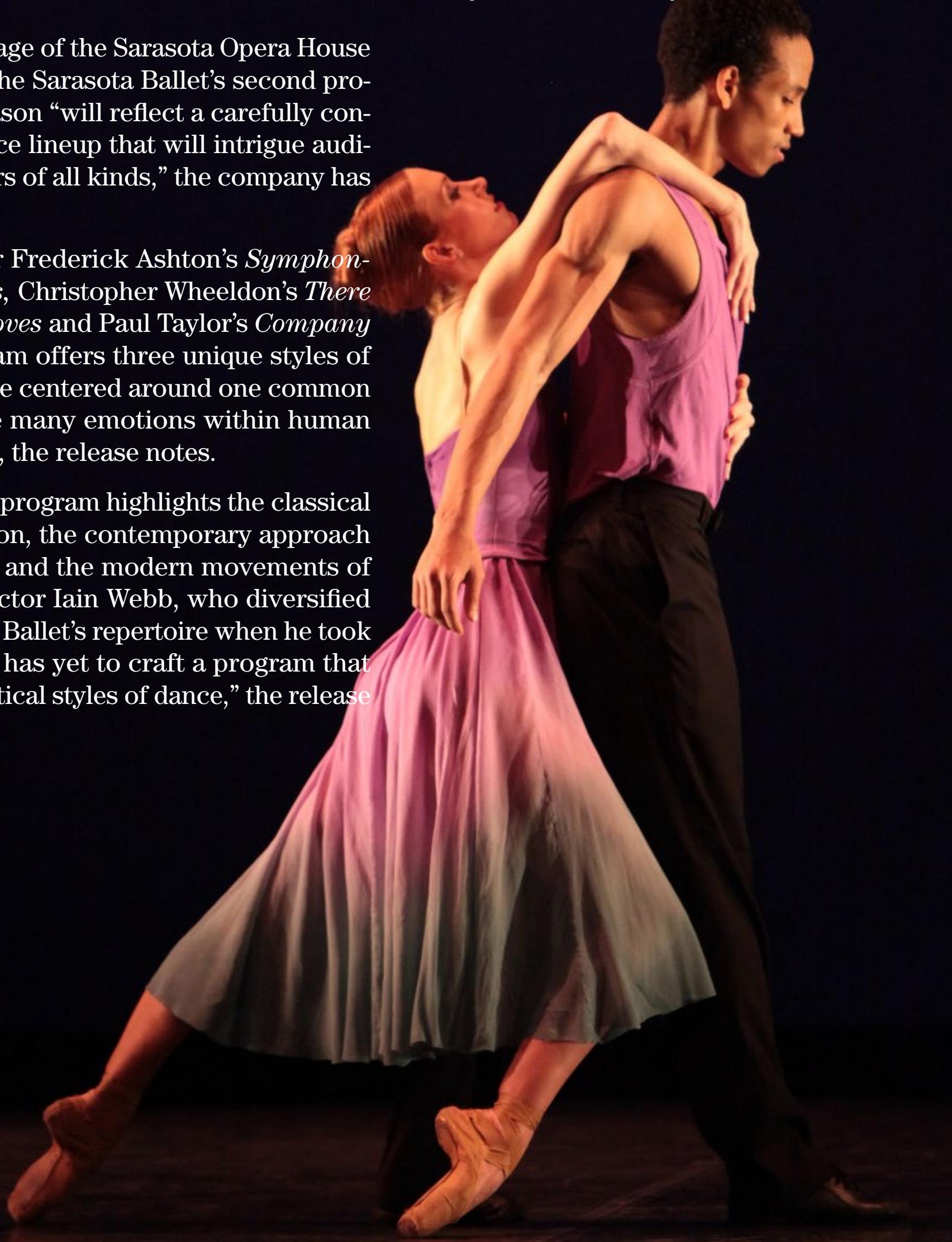
Enjoy The News Leader Anytime - Day or Night

## SARASOTA BALLET TO PRESENT ASHTON, WHEELDON, TAYLOR

Taking the stage of the Sarasota Opera House Nov. 16-17, The Sarasota Ballet's second program this season "will reflect a carefully constructed dance lineup that will intrigue audience members of all kinds," the company has announced.

Featuring Sir Frederick Ashton's *Symphonic Variations*, Christopher Wheeldon's *There Where She Loves* and Paul Taylor's *Company B*, the program offers three unique styles of dance that are centered around one common theme — the many emotions within human relationships, the release notes.

This eclectic program highlights the classical style of Ashton, the contemporary approach of Wheeldon and the modern movements of Taylor. "Director Iain Webb, who diversified The Sarasota Ballet's repertoire when he took lead in 2007, has yet to craft a program that features identical styles of dance," the release adds.



Ricardo Rhodes and Danielle Brown perform a scene in *There Where She Loves*. Photo by Frank Atura



*“Ashton, Wheeldon, Taylor* is a program that any dance enthusiast can attend and enjoy,” said Webb in the release. “There is something for everyone; I’ve made sure of it.”

The performances will be at 8 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 16, and Saturday, Nov. 17, and at 2 p.m. on Nov. 17.

The Opera House is located at 61 N. Pineapple Ave.

Tickets may be purchased online 24 hours a day, seven days a week with Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover. The box office may be contacted by calling 359-0099, ext. 101.

***Logan Learned takes one of his mighty leaps in Paul Taylor’s Company B. Contributed photo***

## JACK QUARTET TO PERFORM ON NOV. 17 AT NEW COLLEGE

During the Nov. 17 New Music New College program, titled, "Then and Now," the JACK Quartet will perform recent works by distinguished New College graduates Taylor Briggs, Alejandro Castaño, Jason Rosenberg and Sara Moone, each of whom has gone on to win major prizes and commissions, juxtaposed with some of their notable student compositions, a New College news release notes.

This will mark the fourth appearance of the JACK Quartet on the New Music New College series. "Musicians Christopher Otto (violin), Ari Streisfeld (violin), John Pickford Richards (viola) and Kevin McFarland (cello) have quickly established a reputation for giving high-energy performances of today's most demanding works for string quartet," the release adds.

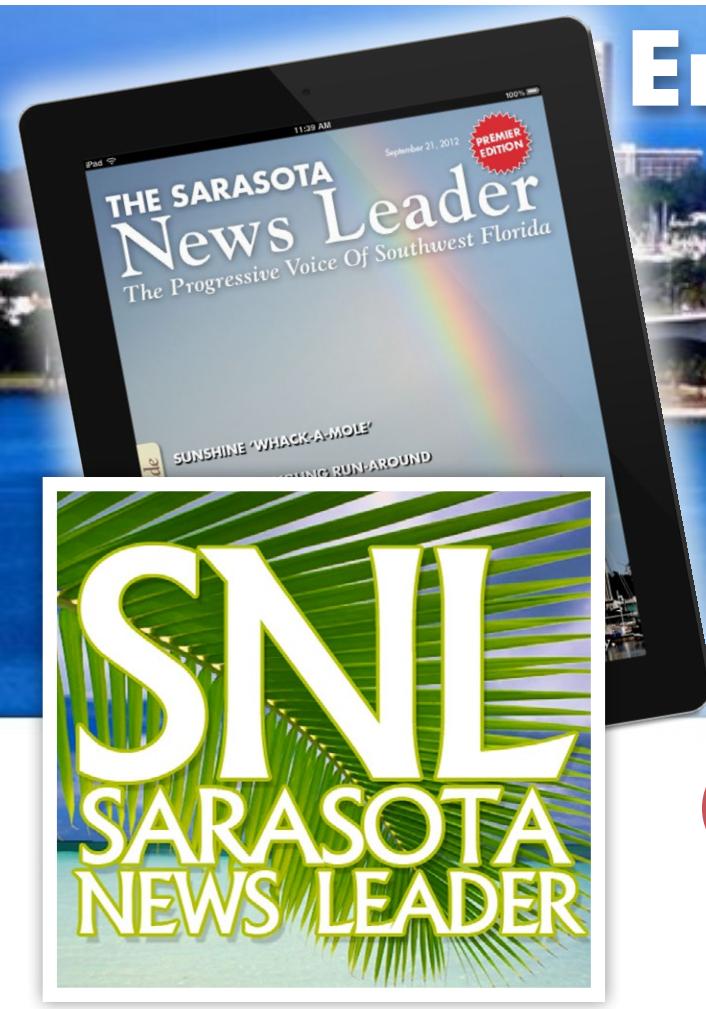
The JACK Quartet is focused on the commissioning and performance of new works, leading its members to work closely with composers Helmut Lachenmann, György Kurtág, Matthias Pintscher, Georg Friedrich Haas, James Dillon, Toshio Hosokawa, Wolfgang Rihm, Elliott Sharp, Beat Furrer, Caleb Burhans, and Aaron Cassidy, the news release notes.

The performance will be at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Nov 17, in the Mildred Sainer Music and Arts Pavilion, 5313 Bay Shore Road.

Tickets are \$15 for general admission; \$5 for non-New College students. The concert is free for members of the New College community

For more information, call 487-4888 or visit [newmusicnewcollege.org](http://newmusicnewcollege.org). For online reservations, visit [donate.ncf.edu/events](http://donate.ncf.edu/events).

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## PLANS ANNOUNCED FOR 6TH ANNUAL FORKS & CORKS

Tickets are on sale for the sixth annual Forks & Corks Food & Wine Festival, which will be held Jan. 25-28. Presented by The Sarasota-Manatee Originals (SMO), the four-day culinary festival brings together regional chefs and world-renowned vintners and brewmasters.

The anchor event, the Grand Tasting, will be held Jan. 27 in the courtyard of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. Forks & Corks University's seminars on food and wine will be held Jan. 26 in Michael's Wine Cellar and Ballroom, and various winemaker events will be featured at area restaurants Jan. 25-26.

"As Southwest Florida's premier wine and food festival, Forks & Corks is attracting people from around the country," says Kate Atkin,

executive director of SMO, in a news release. "We recommend that people buy their tickets early because we sold out a week after tickets went on sale last year. We predict we'll sell even faster this year — in the first three days."

The Grand Tasting features signature dishes from the area's top chefs, along with a vast array of wines and beers presented by guest vintners and breweries. "More than 100 wineries — and about 75 individual winemakers — are participating this year," says Michael Klauber, chairman of the event, in the news release. "We're thrilled with the response from the international and national winemaking industry. This has become a major showcase event for them."



*Forks and Corks University is a popular event during the annual food and wine festival. Photo by Peter Acker*

Klauber says this year's winemakers will come from France, Italy, Spain, South America, South Africa, New Zealand, California, Oregon and Washington.

The Grand Tasting tickets are \$85 (plus service charge) for general admission; and \$150 (plus service charge) for VIP admission. Tickets include free admission to the museum's art galleries on the day of the event.

Forks & Corks University tickets are \$125 (plus service charge) for the full-day session; and \$75 (plus service charge) for the half-day session.

A four-course gourmet lunch prepared by top Originals member restaurants is included with Forks & Corks University ticket price.

Tickets for the Grand Tasting and Forks & Corks University can be purchased online only.

For a complete listing of special events and for more information about the sixth annual Forks & Corks food and wine festival, visit [www.freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks](http://www.freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks) or call 955-3663.



*Participants in the 2011 Forks & Corks festival mingle among the statuary at the Ringling Museum complex. Photo by Rod Millington*

## VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT FOR SARASOTA MUSEUM OF ART PROJECT

Internationally acclaimed sculptor Patrick Dougherty will spend three weeks in January creating one of his unique sculptures on the grounds of the historic Sarasota High School, which is being transformed into the Sarasota Museum of Art/SMOA, the president of the museum has announced.

More than 100 volunteers are needed to assist Dougherty in gathering materials for and constructing his installation, a news release says.

Wendy G. Surkis, president of the Sarasota Museum of Art, a division of Ringling College of Art and Design, has announced that Dougherty will be at SMOA Jan. 7-26 to create a site-specific installation as part of SMOA's 2013 "ARTmuse" program.

Surkis explains in the news release that the artist often works with more than 100 volunteers during his installation process to gather and weave the truckloads of sticks and other natural materials that are needed to craft his



*Patrick Dougherty with his sculpture Ruaille Buaille (Highjinx) in County Offaly, Ireland. Photo by James Fraher*

signature sculptures. Volunteers work in four-hour sessions, the news release points out.

SMOA also is seeking volunteers to serve as docents during the program. Those volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. For more information and details on volunteer requirements, send an email to [smoa@ringling.edu](mailto:smoa@ringling.edu).

SMOA will offer docent training to inform volunteers about the artist, his work and his mission in Sarasota, the release says. "The educational aspect to this project is very vital," she adds in the release. "We want to offer everyone who comes to the site the opportunity to have a deeper understanding and appreciation of Patrick's work. We're looking for energetic

people who are passionate about art and who enjoy engaging and inspiring others."

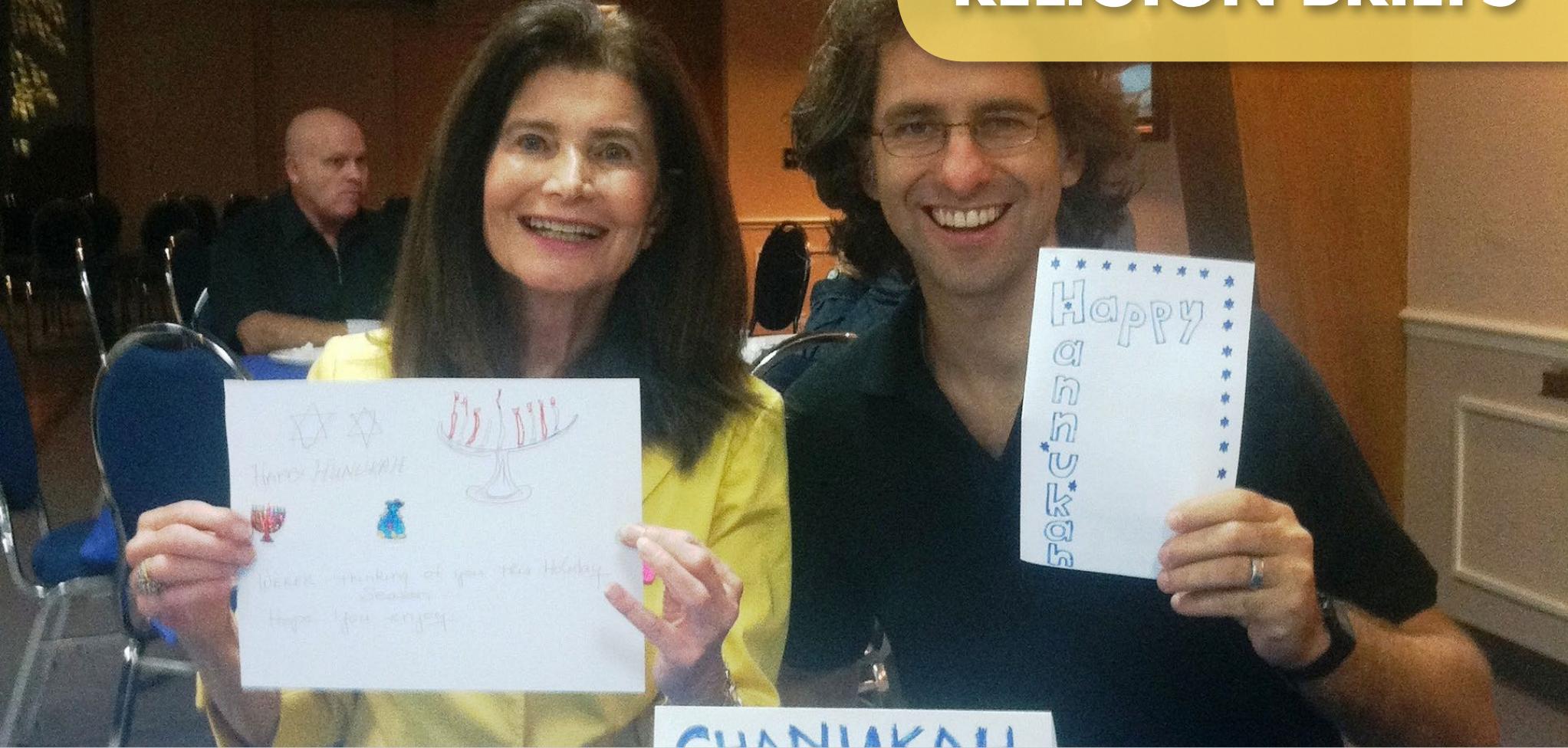
Surkis points out in the news release that Dougherty's designs involve weaving and binding sapling branches together to form flowing patterns and maze-like structures through which visitors can walk. "Patrick's wonderfully imaginative installations are temporal works made from trees, twigs, vines and other natural materials from the area," she adds.

Surkis says the public will have many opportunities to view the artist at work as his creation evolves during the three weeks he is on-site.

For more information about the Sarasota Museum of Art, visit [www.sarasotamuseumofart.org](http://www.sarasotamuseumofart.org) or call Surkis at 309-7662.



*River Vessels* by Patrick Dougherty at the Waco Cultural Arts Center, Waco, TX. Photo by Mark Randolph



Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood President Linda Weiss joins Rabbi Brenner Glickman in creating Chanukah cards for American Jewish soldiers serving overseas. Contributed photo

### TEMPLE EMANU-EL TO BRING CHANUKAH CHEER TO U.S. SOLDIERS

Although Chanukah does not begin until Dec. 8, Temple Emanu-El members have already been instrumental in ensuring a happy holiday for American Jewish soldiers serving overseas.

In conjunction with the Los Angeles-based military support organization Project M.O.T., Temple Emanu-El recently oversaw the creation and donation of handmade and hand-

written Chanukah cards, a news release says. These cards were collected at Temple Emanu-El, then mailed to Project M.O.T. for inclusion in its Chanukah care packages for Jewish soldiers.

For more information about Temple Emanu-El's outreach efforts to American Jewish soldiers, call 379-1997.

### SPECIAL CHORAL MASS SET FOR THANKSGIVING DAY

The clergy and parish family of the Church of the Redeemer, 222 S. Palm Ave., in downtown Sarasota, invite all members of the community to celebrate Thanksgiving Day with a special choral Mass at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 22.

A collection of non-perishable food will be made to help feed the hungry in the community through the Mayor's Feed the Hungry program and Caritas.



Joanne Maguire participates in Temple Emanu-El's Chanukah card-making project for American Jewish servicemen and women. Contributed photo



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## THE BEST OF THE UPCOMING WEEK

**16**  
NOV

### **Mannheim Steamroller Christmas**

Nov. 16, 8 p.m., Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. Admission: \$30 to 85; 953-3368 or [VanWezel.org](http://VanWezel.org)

**17**  
NOV

### **Sarasota Bay Water Festival**

Nov. 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 1700 Ken Thompson Parkway, Sarasota. Live music, food vendors, arts contest, children's activities, water sports and more. Free admission. For information: 321-1353 or [sarasotabaywaterfestival.com](http://sarasotabaywaterfestival.com)

**17**  
NOV

### **Then and Now: Music of New College Graduates with the JACK String Quartet,**

Nov. 17, 8 to 9:30 p.m., Mildred Sainer Pavilion, 5313 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota. Admission: \$15. Information: 487-4888 or [donate.ncf.edu/events](http://donate.ncf.edu/events)

**17**  
NOV

### **Sarasota Medieval Fair**

Nov. 17-18, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sarasota Fairgrounds, 3000 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota. Admission: adults, \$16.95 daily; children, \$8.95. Information: [sarasotamedievalfair.com](http://sarasotamedievalfair.com)

**17**  
NOV

### **Sarasota Silver Stars Play Reading Festival**

Nov. 17 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 18 at 2 p.m., 838 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Admission: \$12. Information: 365-2494 or [socialmedia@theplayers.org](mailto:socialmedia@theplayers.org)

**18**  
NOV

### **Jeff Parker: reading and book signing**

Nov. 18, 1 to 2 p.m., Bookstore1Sarasota, 1359 Main St., Sarasota. Free admission; purchase book for signing; 365-7900 or [Bookstore1Sarasota.com](http://Bookstore1Sarasota.com)

To get all the details on these and other great activities — food, nightlife, music, art, theater, children's events, learning opportunities and more — go to Sarasota's No. 1 source for local events, hot spots, fun activities and hidden gems:



thisweekin  
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SARASOTA'S MASTER CALENDAR

# PASSION FOR ART IN A PASTORAL SETTING



PRESS



Norman Schimmel  
Photographer

The Sarasota News Leader

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## SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS

Each week, Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel searches Sarasota County for iconic shots that underscore why the community is a favorite with residents and tourists alike.