

THE SARASOTA

December 7, 2012

# News Leader

*The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida*

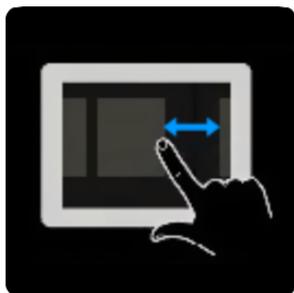


**A TORTUOUS PATH  
'DISTURBED' AND 'DISCOURAGED'  
RECOVERED MILLIONS**

*Inside*

**Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.**

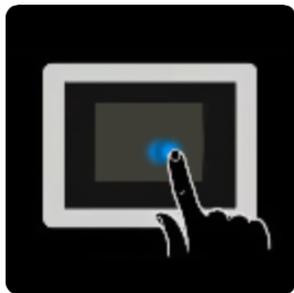
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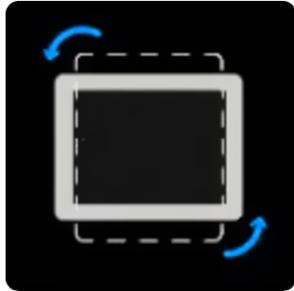
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# A.K.A. HELP

# SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

*The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida*

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# Welcome

With the Sarasota City Commission, the Sarasota County Commission and the School Board all meeting this week, you will find we have plenty of news in this latest issue.

Sometimes people wonder why we cover certain topics and forgo others. The factor that gets the most weight in that equation for an editor is figuring which stories will be most engaging for readers. The second most critical factor is the amount of time our reporters have to write their stories — after they have listened to hours of discussion. For example, do we crank out three shorter articles, to give you a wider sampling of what took place, or just one long in-depth story about something we feel you should know?

We hope you will not ever hesitate to tell us if we have overlooked something important you watched or about which you heard. Reader comments are most welcome in guiding what we do.

As for getting those stories into their final versions: I introduced our proofreader, Vicki Chatley, to you when she joined our staff. Copy editors are the true unsung heroes of the news business. If you do not believe that, just think back to the last time you muttered something to yourself about a “stupid mistake” you spotted in print.

I have been fortunate to work with several gifted copy editors through the years, but Vicki is one of the *very best*. Ideally, a copy editor does not just catch grammatical mistakes and misspellings, she also carefully considers the content. Vicki does not hesitate to let me know if something makes no sense, and that is the key to a good publication.

Reporters have lots of information rolling around in their heads. We all need someone to read behind us and “digest” our stories, to make certain we include all the crucial pieces of information.

*Rachel Brown Hackney*

*Editor and Publisher*



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## **A TORTUOUS PATH**

*Analysis: Many questions left unanswered, as Walmart appeal process formally gets under way — Stan Zimmerman*

Call it the “slo-mo appeal.” So far it has come in fragments — an email one day, a payment another day and a written form on a third. The objective is to obtain a rehearing by the Sarasota City Commission of a Nov. 14 split decision by the Planning Board to approve the construction of a Walmart to replace the Ringling Shopping Center in downtown Sarasota.

While the appeal was widely reported last week, the actual appeal itself was not filed until the afternoon of Dec. 4. The required \$1,597 filing fee was paid on Dec. 3. City staff received an email on Nov. 26 suggesting an appeal would be filed. That was the last day, by law, that a notice of appeal could be filed following the Planning Board decision. ([Full story here](#))



## **'DISTURBED' AND 'DISCOURAGED'**

*County Commission takes aim at North Port Commission's backtracking on Warm Mineral Springs agreement — Cooper Levey-Baker*

Upset with how the process to solicit plans to redevelop Warm Mineral Springs has “unraveled” as a result of the North Port City Commission’s abrupt 180-degree turn on the issue, the Sarasota County Commission this week denied a request for a joint meeting with the North Port commissioners. Instead, the County Commission asked the city leaders to outline their objections in writing before considering a get-together.

The North Port Commission last week put the brakes on the Invitation to Negotiate process that both the city and the county approved unanimously back in July. Mayor Linda Yates, joined by two newly elected city commissioners, voted to stall the Invitation process and instead request a meeting with the County Commission to discuss the future of the springs. ([Full story here](#))



## RECOVERED MILLIONS

*Sarasota County settles with Wells Fargo for almost \$24 million — about 70 percent of the investment funds the county lost during the 'world financial crisis' — Rachel Brown Hackney*

Sarasota County has recovered \$23,750,000, or about 70 percent of the \$34 million it lost in investments during what Karen Rushing, clerk of the 12th Judicial Circuit Court, referred to as the “world financial crisis” of 2008-09.

In her routine report to the County Commission on Dec. 4, Rushing said Wells Fargo had agreed to settle a lawsuit the county had filed in June 2010 against Wachovia — which Wells Fargo later acquired — for the loss of those millions through “an asset-backed security issue” involving Lehman Brothers Holdings and the county’s securities lending contract.

Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy on Sept. 15, 2008. The county had bought investment-grade debt securities from the firm. ([Full story here](#))



## GOOD SCHOOL TRENDS

*Sarasota County Schools see an increase in the graduation rate and a decrease in the dropout rate — Scott Proffitt*

The Sarasota County School District saw a 7 percent increase in its graduation rate from the 2010-11 school year to the 2011-12 school year, Steve Cantees, executive director of Sarasota County High Schools, told the School Board members during their final meeting of the year, on Dec. 4.

Since 1999, he said, the district and state rates had climbed almost 20 percent.

“The federal requirements for a standard diploma increase every year,” he pointed out. “We had a significant increase in the last year, both in the county and the state,” Cantees added.

“We were very reassured that we had a significant increase in our graduation rate,” Superintendent Lori White said. ([Full story here](#))



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## REOPENING SHORTLY

*Osprey Avenue soon will see regular traffic flow, but the work on Lift Station 87 might take longer than construction of the Great Pyramid — Stan Zimmerman*

It will take about as long to build Lift Station 87 at Luke Wood Park as it did to build the Great Pyramid of Khufu near Cairo, Egypt.

Work on the city's star-crossed sewage pumping facility began in 2008, after repeated failures at Lift Station 7 led to spills of hundreds of thousands of gallons of untreated sewage into Hudson Bayou and on into Sarasota Bay. The latest estimate for completion — released Monday, Dec. 3 — indicates the work will be complete in 2015. ([Full story here](#))



## 'A HOMELESS CAMP'

*Residents complain about the number of homeless people — and their actions — in Sarasota's Gillespie Park — Stan Zimmerman*

Sarasota's focus on homelessness shifted to Gillespie Park this week. At the Monday, Dec. 3, City Commission meeting, a parade of neighborhood residents delivered a long litany of complaints during the evening's open-to-the-public session. Speakers had only two minutes to make their points.

"I won't walk in the park. It's becoming a homeless camp," said Louise Tracy.

"There is an influx of homeless spending days in the park. They bring immense amounts of trash; we're just inundated with it," said Dale Orlando. He produced pictures of the trash to emphasize his statement.

"The problem is not geographic and the solution isn't musical benches. You need long-term solutions," he added. ([Full story here](#))



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A close-up photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black top, holding a large sandwich. The sandwich is made with a crusty, golden-brown roll and is filled with lettuce, tomato, onion, and a dark meat patty. The woman's hands are visible on either side of the sandwich, holding it steady. The background is a plain, light color.

# This may take a while.

Some things are just hard to resist. Like *The Sarasota News Leader*. It's a feast of in-depth local news, delightful and entertaining features, and — thanks to its partnership with *This Week In Sarasota* — access to the best community calendar available.

The first impulse is just to gobble it all up.

But it's better to take it slow and relish every news "morsel." There's no rush.

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## A TORTUOUS PATH

*A Walmart Neighborhood store opened in September on North Tamiami Trail. Some opponents of a Walmart on Ringling Boulevard say the second new store is not needed. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **ANALYSIS: MANY QUESTIONS LEFT UNANSWERED, AS WALMART APPEAL PROCESS FORMALLY GETS UNDER WAY**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

Call it the “slo-mo appeal.” So far it has come in fragments — an email one day, a payment another day and a written form on a third. The objective is to obtain a rehearing by the Sarasota City Commission of a Nov. 14 split decision by the Planning Board to approve the construction of a Walmart to replace the Ringling Shopping Center in downtown Sarasota.

While the appeal was widely reported last week, the actual appeal itself was not filed until the afternoon of Dec. 4. The required \$1,597 filing fee was paid on Dec. 3. City staff received an email on Nov. 26 suggesting an appeal would be filed. That was the last day,

by law, that a notice of appeal could be filed following the Planning Board decision. So far, seven people’s names are on the appeal: Kelly Kirschner, Ron Burks, Candy Spaulding, Pat Kolodgy, Juanita Rawlinson, Jerry Sparkman and Marian Maxson. Spaulding is the president of the Alta Vista Neighborhood Association, which abuts the property where the Walmart would be built.

City Attorney Bob Fournier said Walmart representatives verbally challenged the legitimacy of the appeal, saying the actual appeal was not filed on time, nor was the fee paid on time, nor was the appeal filed on a proper form.

Fournier responded by citing a 1970s Florida Supreme Court case saying failure to pay the filing fee on time did not derail an appeal as long as the fee was paid before the hearing.

“The city has the right to request they fill out the proper form,” he said.

The City Auditor and Clerk’s Office furnished the appeal form to *The Sarasota News Leader*. The form contains little information beyond Spaulding’s name, address and telephone number. It does confirm payment of a \$1,097 fee to appeal and a \$500 escrow fund for advertising and city legal costs.

“*There is nothing about this plan that is small-scale. They haven’t met the criteria in my opinion or the standards for site plan approval. I won’t support it.*”

Susan Chapman  
Planning Board member  
City of Sarasota

## PUBLIC MUZZLED?

The City Commission will decide on Jan. 7 whether to accept the appeal to rehear the case. At that time, the commissioners must vote 4-1 or 5-0 (a “supermajority”) to accept the appeal. If the appeal does not receive a supermajority vote, then it must go to 12th Judicial Circuit Court if the filers want to pursue the matter.

The issue will come up under “New Business” at the first commission meeting of 2012. It is unclear at this time who will be able to address the City Commission before it decides to accept or reject the appeal process.

City Auditor and Clerk Pam Nadalini sent an email Nov. 30 to the participants saying, “no citizen input will be permitted” when the com-

mission discusses the matter on Jan. 7. Nadalini acts as the commission’s parliamentarian and advises on rules of order.

The City Commission’s normal rules of procedure allow any member of the public to sign up and address any item on the agenda (except items on the consent agenda the commissioners have not pulled for discussion). The mayor, as chairman of the commission, has the power to set special rules for a meeting but can be overridden by a simple majority or the parliamentarian if the special rules violate fundamental rights and guarantees.

Assuming the commissioners take the “super-vote” to accept the appeal, Fournier said the earliest date to reconsider the Walmart decision would be the Feb. 4 City Commission meeting. Nadalini’s email says that at the February meeting “the parties to the appeal as well as the applicant (Walmart) will be entitled to speak. No general citizen input will be permitted.”

The appeal to the City commission would be a *de novo* hearing, meaning new evidence and testimony would be allowed. A court appeal is based only on the record of the case from the lower court level.

The city code is mute on the need for a supermajority vote on the appeal decision itself, so it appears a simple majority would prevail.

## THE 3-2 VOTE

The petitioners say the majority of the Planning Board members did not follow the zoning code and instead were swayed by the promise of 350 retail jobs, 500 construction jobs and the lure of an improved tax base. The final vote of that board was 3-2.

A minority on the Planning Board said the store did not fit the definition of neighborhood commercial zoning. "For me it's a department store, and that is not allowed," said Planning Board Member Jennifer Ahearn-Koch. "I cannot support this."

Planning Board Member Susan Chapman, who later announced her candidacy for City Commission said, "There is nothing about this plan that is small-scale. They haven't met the crite-

ria in my opinion or the standards for site plan approval. I won't support it."

Planning Board Member Vlad Svekis supported Walmart's site plan. He said, "It's 350 jobs versus a derelict shopping center."

His colleague, Morton Siegel, said, "The bottom line is, we need Walmart in this community. I think you'll be very pleased with what they'll do in this community."

When neighbors walked out that night, there was no fire in their eyes to challenge America's largest retailer. But two weeks later at a regular monthly meeting, the Alta Vista Neighborhood Association voted 26-1 to dip into its treasury and contribute \$400 to appeal the Planning Board vote.



*The newest Sarasota Walmart would be constructed on the site of the Ringling Shopping Center downtown. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## PERCOLATING FOR TRUTH

What happened between the 3-2 vote and the 26-1 vote was more thinking about Ahearn-Koch's statement: "For me it's a department store, and that is not allowed." People pored over the zoning code. Was not a 98,000-square-foot Walmart bigger than the 15,000-square-foot department store allowed in the CSC-N zoning? Hmmm.

Was Walmart "grandfathered" in the property? Current rules say a new use allows the demolition of 75 percent of the old property to qualify under the existing zoning of a site. But Walmart wants to demolish 100 percent of the old Ringling Shopping Center. Hmmm.

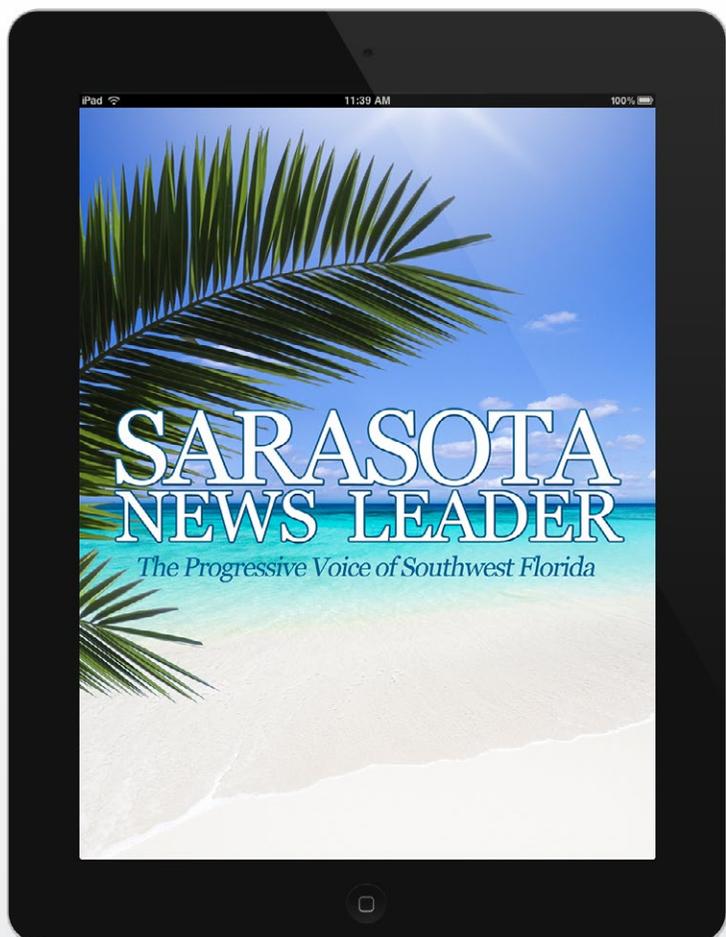
Even more troublesome was the ease with which Walmart breezed through the development review process. Twice its application was reviewed by senior representatives of all the city's departments at the Development Re-

view Committee level. Trees were evaluated; drainage plumbed; traffic considered. But no one cited the zoning code text about department stores not being allowed in the CSC-N zone.

With the appeal, the city's zoning staff is now legally muzzled and cannot explain why or how its decisions were reached. To further complicate matters, the Planning Department's action officer on the Walmart case — Courtney Mendez — will be on maternity leave in January.

In the meantime, the neighborhood is raising money through a website: <https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/1OkX8>

*Full disclosure: Stan Zimmerman is a member of the Alta Vista Neighborhood Association and a past president of it. He cast the sole vote against the appeal.* 



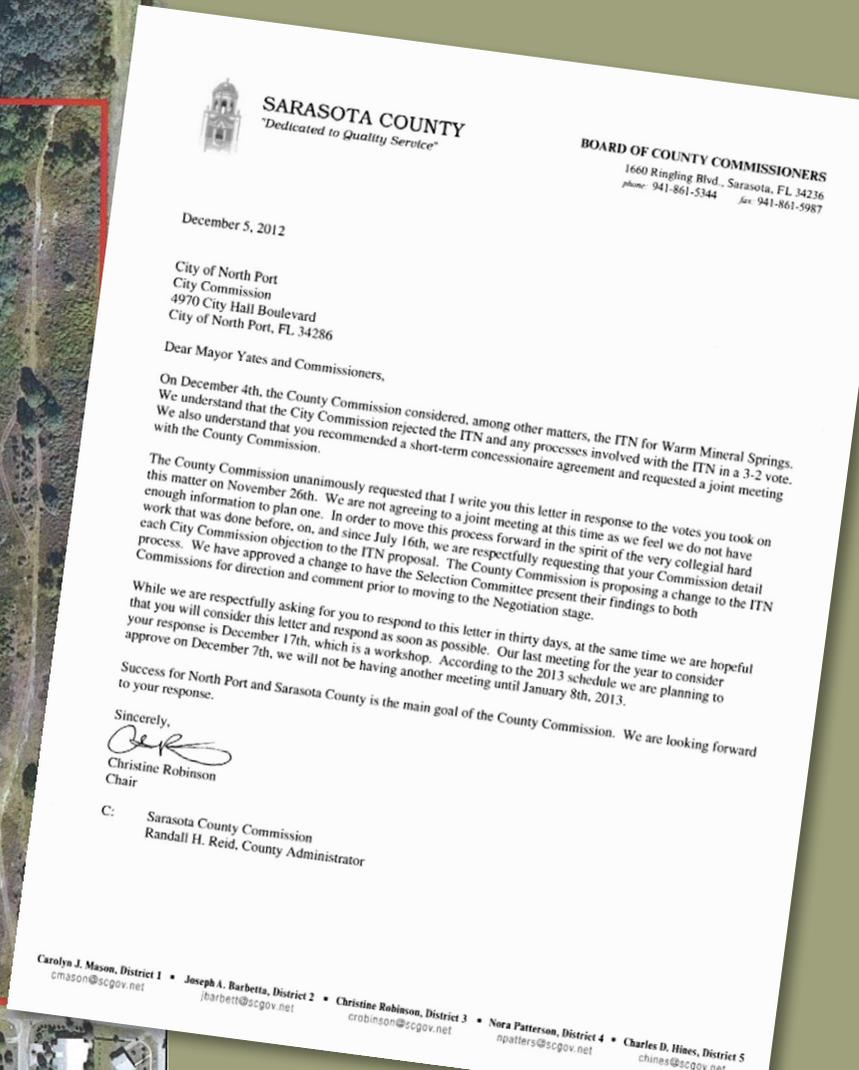
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**'DISTURBED' AND  
'DISCOURAGED'**



*A Sarasota County map shows the location of the Warm Mineral Springs in South County. Image courtesy of Sarasota County; Inset: The Sarasota County Commission voted unanimously Dec. 5 on the wording of a letter it is sending to the North Port City Commission. Letter courtesy of Sarasota County*

## **COUNTY COMMISSION TAKES AIM AT NORTH PORT COMMISSION'S BACKTRACKING ON WARM MINERAL SPRINGS AGREEMENT**

**By Cooper Levey-Baker**  
*Associate Editor*

Upset with how the process to solicit plans to redevelop Warm Mineral Springs has “unraveled” as a result of the North Port City Commission’s abrupt 180-degree turn on the issue, the Sarasota County Commission this week denied a request for a joint meeting with the North Port commissioners. Instead, the County Commission asked the city leaders to outline their objections in writing before considering a get-together.

The North Port Commission last week put the brakes on the Invitation to Negotiate process that both the city and the county approved unanimously back in July. Mayor Linda Yates, joined by two newly elected city commis-

sioners, voted to stall the Invitation process and instead request a meeting with the County Commission to discuss the future of the springs.

The city and the county jointly purchased the property — whose waters are known internationally for their alleged healing prowess — in 2010, so any decisions about the springs’ future must be approved by both boards. The current agreement to manage the springs runs out next June; the county hoped to have a long-term plan in place by that point.

But the North Port Commission heard public testimony questioning the hydrological health

of the springs, and Mayor Yates pointed out several licensing and tax concerns she had with the original agreement to buy the land — factors that led the city to slow down the redevelopment process. Yates is insistent that the boards should outline their desires for the property before involving the private sector.

The County Commission was, shall we say, displeased.

At their Tuesday, Dec. 4, regular meeting, Commissioners Christine Robinson, Joe Barbetta and Carolyn Mason all criticized how North Port handled the process. Robinson asked whether any city commissioners had expressed “heartburn” about the Invitation to Negotiate process between the July vote and this week. The answer: Nope. She said she was “troubled” by that.

Robinson also criticized the city for shooting down the process altogether, rather than suggesting improvements to the document that the county could then consider. The County Commission itself modified some of the language to make sure both the city and county will be able to review all the proposals, rather than just those deemed OK by the selection committee.

“We’re kind of in a circle that keeps repeating itself, and it will keep repeating itself,” Robinson said. “We lost five months, four and a half months, on this. ... It’s a lot of taxpayer money that was wasted.”

Robinson “hit the exact crux of the problem,” Barbetta said. “I don’t want to go to a

joint meeting ... until I know why I’m there,” he said. “I want to know in advance what the North Port Commission finds wrong with this process.”

“We get an election and all of a sudden it’s thrown out,” he added. “It’s really, really unfortunate that all this time has gone by.”

Mason, less vocal a participant in meetings than Barbetta and Robinson, said she was “disturbed” by the North Port decision.

“Both commissions, eyes wide open, made the decision we made and now it’s become unraveled,” she said. “I, too, was disturbed at some of the comments made in watching the meeting.”

“Our commissioners, our elected officials, need to mean what they say and stick to their word,” she added. That barb seemed directed at Yates, who voted for the Invitation to Negotiate process in July, and now opposes it.

The County Commission eventually voted to send a letter to the North Port City Commission, asking the board to put its specific objections in writing within 30 days. If the city complies, the county will consider a joint meeting. The North Port assistant city manager said if the boards stick to that

timeline, the Invitation to Negotiate process could still be completed by the June deadline.

“We are not agreeing to a joint meeting at this time as we feel we do not have enough information to plan one,” Robinson wrote in the

“Our commissioners, our elected officials, need to mean what they say and stick to their word.”

Carolyn Mason  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

letter approved by the county Wednesday. “In order to move this process forward in the spirit of the very collegial hard work that was done before, on, and since July 16th, we are respectfully requesting that your Commission detail each City Commission objection to the ITN proposal.”

Yates tells *The Sarasota News Leader* she was “disappointed and discouraged” by the meeting. “To me, it seemed uncooperative,” she says.

Having already voted against the Invitation to Negotiate, Yates says she is unlikely to support revisiting the idea. “How would I be amenable to continuing this process, and even shortening the time?” Yates asked. “That doesn’t even make logical sense.”

When asked why the North Port Commission chose to reject the Invitation to Negotiate process altogether rather than suggest modifications, Yates said those decisions should be made when the two boards are across the table from one another. “Together, addressing the same issues, perhaps we could have come up with something,” she says.

Yates was also unimpressed with a new Sarasota County report that showed no trace of phthalates in the springs water — one serious concern the North Port Commission heard testimony on last week. Yates says the researchers did not go deep enough to get a definitive answer on the presence of phthalates.

“What they did, in my opinion, says nothing,” Yates says. “That didn’t satisfy my concerns. ... I can’t go by that report.” 



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# RECOVERED MILLIONS

*Wells Fargo bought Wachovia Bank after the Great Recession began in 2008. File photo*

## **SARASOTA COUNTY SETTLES WITH WELLS FARGO FOR ALMOST \$24 MILLION – ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF THE INVESTMENT FUNDS THE COUNTY LOST DURING THE ‘WORLD FINANCIAL CRISIS’**

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

Sarasota County has recovered \$23,750,000, or about 70 percent of the \$34 million it lost in investments during what Karen Rushing, clerk of the 12th Judicial Circuit Court, referred to as the “world financial crisis” of 2008-09.

In her routine report to the County Commission on Dec. 4, Rushing said Wells Fargo had agreed to settle a lawsuit the county had filed in June 2010 against Wachovia — which Wells Fargo lat-

er acquired — for the loss of those millions through “an asset-backed security issue” involving Lehman Brothers Holdings and the county’s securities lending contract.

Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy on Sept. 15, 2008. The county had bought investment-grade debt securities from the firm.

Rushing worked with the County Attorney’s Office on the lawsuit, she pointed out.

“*In my opinion, there aren’t many other jurisdictions that are so fortunate as to recover monies that were lost in the financial meltdown of 2008.*”

Stephen DeMarsh  
County Attorney  
Sarasota County



“I think this represents a very good settlement and resolves the litigation that I brought,” Rushing added.

The county’s general fund was made whole from other county accounts after the losses were recorded in 2009, she said. As a result, the settlement money was being returned to those other county funds according to the appropriate percentages, Rushing noted.

Deputy County Attorney Frederick “Rick” Elbrecht told *The Sarasota News Leader* the settlement agreement was signed on Nov. 9; the payment was received by the county on Nov. 19.

Rushing said her staff was preparing proposed amendments and an ordinance regarding the county’s investment policy; she will bring those before the County Commission when they are completed.

Rushing commended both County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh and Elbrecht, as well as lead counsel Andrew “Drew” Clayton Jr. of the Clayton Law Firm in Sarasota, for their work with her on the lawsuit. “It takes a very talented team to achieve the results that we did, and I wanted to thank them publicly for their support and their guidance,” Rushing said.

“Thank you for your work on this,” Chairwoman Christine Robinson told DeMarsh.

DeMarsh took the opportunity to point out that Clayton “was instrumental in getting the recovery that was achieved.” Although Elbrecht and the staff of the County Attorney’s Office “did a lot of in-house discovery,” Clayton was the principal attorney in the case, DeMarsh said.



*Karen Rushing/Contributed*

“In my opinion, there aren’t many other jurisdictions that are so fortunate as to recover monies that were lost in the financial meltdown of 2008,” DeMarsh added.

The commissioners later asked Clayton to step to the podium in their chambers in the R.L. Anderson Administration Center in Venice so they could thank him publicly.

DeMarsh pointed to the significance of a local attorney having the expertise to work with the County Attorney’s Office on the case.

He further noted Clayton’s dedication to whatever project Clayton undertakes, adding that the attorney did not allow a flat tire on his drive to Venice to keep him from making it to the meeting.

The commissioners also thanked Clayton for his efforts.

During the discussion, Commissioner Nora Patterson said she did not recall all the investment money having come from the general fund, though she deferred to Rushing’s account of the circumstances.

Rushing agreed to meet later with Patterson to explain the “methodology accounting for the funds.” Rushing added, “The general fund was made whole completely and then some.”

On one other related note: Rushing told the commissioners the county’s portfolio from 2008 through Dec. 4 had earned \$161 million.

*Editor’s note: City Editor Stan Zimmerman contributed to this story.* 



# GOOD SCHOOL TRENDS

*The School Board members consider business during their last meeting of the year. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

## **SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS SEE AN INCREASE IN THE GRADUATION RATE AND A DECREASE IN THE DROPOUT RATE**

**By Scott Proffitt**

*Staff Writer*

The Sarasota County School District saw a 7 percent increase in its graduation rate from the 2010-11 school year to the 2011-12 school year, Steve Cantees, executive director of Sarasota County High Schools, told the School Board members during their final meeting of the year, on Dec. 4.

Since 1999, he said, the district and state rates had climbed almost 20 percent.

“The federal requirements for a standard diploma increase every year,” he pointed

out. “We had a significant increase in the last year, both in the county and the state,” Cantees added.

“We were very reassured that we had a significant increase in our graduation rate,” Superintendent Lori White said. “We are looking at this data. We are concerned that we will continue to have a safety net for our students, with constant, ever-increasing federal standards for proficiency requirements to get a diploma.”

“*We’re still using \$12 million in reserves each year, and we have no plan for how we’re going to quit using those reserves.*”

Frank Kovach  
Member  
School Board



She added, "This is a challenge, to meet this high bar."

School board member Dr. Carol Todd asked White whether a federal graduation level had been set. "I know under the No Child Left Behind program, the bar was set at 100 percent, and, of course, when the graduation level was not met, the state changed the bar," Todd pointed out. "Is there an expectation [from the state for a graduation rate]?"

White indicated there was no bar. With diploma requirements continuing to change, White added, a graduation rate goal was not expected from the Florida Department of Education.

School Board member Frank Kovach pointed out that the state graduation rate and the county's rate were converging.

State data showed a 74.5 percent high school graduation rate for students across the state

in 2011-12, compared to the 77.96 percent rate in Sarasota County.

"Is that the state improving or are we going down?" he asked.

Cantees replied that with both the state and the district, further increases would be difficult to achieve.

White interjected, "You do see the gap narrowing. In some ways, everybody is improving."

Cantees also pointed out that the district drop-out rate had fallen from almost 8 percent to about 2 percent between 1999 and 2011.

Regarding other data Cantees said a minor increase had been recorded in the district's average daily attendance level, though it was less than 1 percent.

Further, he said, no trends had been seen in student disciplinary action involving drugs and weapons.



*Members of the Class 7A state championship Venice High School Girls Volleyball Team and their coaches gather after being recognized during the Dec. 4 regular School Board meeting. The team also won a national Top 20 ranking. Senior Danika Yoder will be playing for Stetson University next year on scholarship, Holly Mattmuller will be playing for the Coast Guard Academy and Taylor Jais will be playing at Harvard. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

During the board's monthly workshop, Cantees also pointed out that the teen parent program, Cyesis, had seen a 60 percent decrease in student enrollment over the past three years.

This program allows pregnant students and new parents who are still in high school to continue attending classes; childcare facilities and parental training are an integral part of the program. Cyesis was established in 1978; it became a part of the Riverview High campus in 2010, after the new high school was constructed.

Moving the program to Riverview has resulted in several benefits for the district, staff said, including economic ones by establishing it on a regular high school campus.

Board Member Shirley Brown pointed to another benefit: "I think one of the most important things you offer [the students] is something that they get after they leave ... And that is when they go off to a job interview ... they can put down they went to Riverview High School, and people will say, 'Yeah, I understand that.'"

In the past, with students having to put on applications that they had graduated from

2009-10 to 2011-12 Federal Uniform Graduation Rates, Sarasota County High Schools

School	Graduation rate* 2009-2010 (percentage)	Graduation rate* 2010-2011 (percentage)	Graduation rate* 2011-2012 (percentage)
Booker High	64.5%	60.1%	68.1%
North Port High	78.0%	73.4%	78.6%
Pine View School	97.3%	99.4%	98.8%
Riverview High	73.6%	71.0%	78.4%
Sarasota High	70.8%	70.5%	79.9%
Sarasota Military Academy	92.2%	91.1%	95.6%
Suncoast Polytechnical High	NA	NA	(first graduating class) 90.1%
Venice High	80.8%	73%	74.8%
<b>Sarasota County School District</b>	71.4%	70.71%	77.96%
<b>State of Florida</b>	69.0%	70.6%	74.5%

\* Graduation rates reported are based on the Federal Uniform Rate formula now used by the Florida Department of Education. Rates reported by the state in previous years used a different formula, but for comparison purposes the Federal Uniform Rate is used here for three consecutive school years.

*A chart shows the graduation rates for Sarasota County public high schools from the 2009-10 school year through the 2011-12 school year. Chart courtesy Sarasota County Schools*

Cyesis, Brown said, that opened up "a whole can of worms that won't help them get a job."

Brown added, "So I think [the Riverview factor] gets them a much better footing. The value of that diploma is so much more than we can put a price on."

When *The Sarasota News Leader* asked whether any reasons for the decrease in the 35-year-old program's enrollment had been pinpoint-

ed, no one could offer an explanation. Administrative staff said they speculated part of the decrease was linked to a greater acceptance of pregnant students in all schools, access to online classes and charter school options.

All pregnant students have the option of remaining at their current schools.

## THE BUDGET

Once again during their monthly workshop, the School Board members addressed budget concerns.

Federal funding decreases, state budget shortages, a decline in local property tax rates and a falling student enrollment in the regular public schools continue to exert pressures on

the budget, Deputy Chief Financial Officer Al Weidner has pointed out.

“I’m really concerned about where we’re heading,” said board member Frank Kovach. “We’re using 3 percent of our unrestricted fund balance this year [to supplement the budget]; we’re projected to use 3 percent of our balance next year.”

He added, “I keep hearing people say things are going to get better. I don’t think things are going to get better. I’m just really concerned about where we’re going.”

Kovach continued, “I give the county credit for one thing: At least they have projected when their reserves are going to run out. We don’t talk about when our reserves are going to run out. They are going to run out if we keep doing what we’re doing. ... We need to come up with a plan. We’re still using \$12 million in reserves each year, and we have no plan for how we’re going to quit using those reserves.”

Kovach added, “I think if I personally knew I was going to be broke in two years I

wouldn’t wait. And that’s it for my soapbox for this week.”

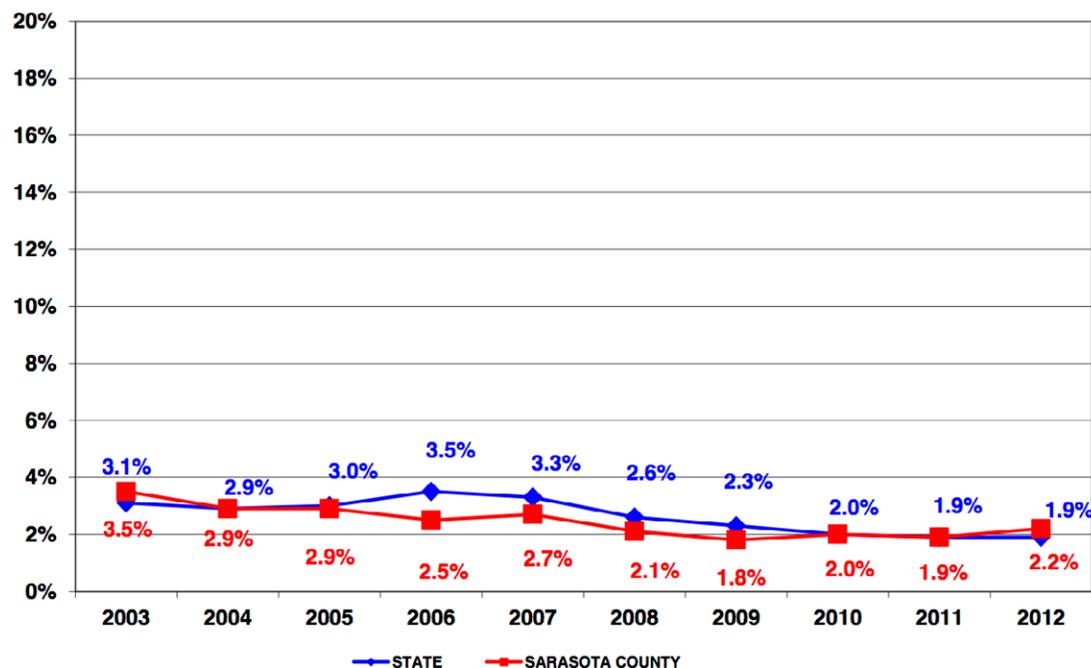
While Chairwoman Jane Goodwin agreed with him, Todd said she felt the issue was one of “philosophical disagreement” between the board and the superintendent. The board, according to Todd, would like to receive a budget from staff in which the tough choices have been made by the administrative staff.

White responded that she felt the board members were elected to make the tough choices. “In my discussions with [high-ranking administrative staff] so far, in terms of where we find additional reductions, it becomes a very painful process for any of us,” White said. “Ultimately, whoever brings to you the budget, the results or consequences — the outcomes — we all share. It is your budget. It’s not easy after so many years of pretty significant budget reductions.”

“I just don’t think we can continue to kick the can down the road,” Kovach responded.

Budget matters will be on the agenda again in the New Year, starting with the Tuesday, Jan 22, School Board workshop. 

The State of Florida and Sarasota County's Dropout Rate  
2003-04 through 2011-12



*A chart compares the dropout rates for the state of Florida and the Sarasota County Schools from the 2003-04 school year through the 2011-12 school year. Chart courtesy Sarasota County Schools*



## REOPENING SHORTLY

*Work on Lift Station 87, which has disrupted traffic in the Osprey Avenue/Mound Street area near downtown Sarasota, remains on hold. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## OSPREY AVENUE SOON WILL SEE REGULAR TRAFFIC FLOW, BUT THE WORK ON LIFT STATION 87 MIGHT TAKE LONGER THAN CONSTRUCTION OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

It will take about as long to build Lift Station 87 at Luke Wood Park as it did to build the Great Pyramid of Khufu near Cairo, Egypt.

Work on the city's star-crossed sewage pumping facility began in 2008, after repeated failures at Lift Station 7 led to spills of hundreds of thousands of gallons of untreated sewage into Hudson Bayou and on into Sarasota Bay. The latest estimate for completion — released Monday, Dec. 3 — indicates the work will be complete in 2015.

Craig Smith in his 2004 book *How the Great Pyramid Was Built* wrote, “[T]he schedule

goal for pyramid construction (exclusive of site preparation, construction of the mortuary temple and valley temple, and other major auxiliary works) would have been within the range of five to eight years.” The chief engineer’s name 4,500 years ago was Hemiunu.

### **AN EXTRA \$750,000**

Of course Hemiunu did not have to deal with lawyers — or Fortune 500 corporations. Sarasota does, in particular with a company called AECOM. The original design of the connections to Lift Station 87 was the focus of a contract won by Boyle Engineering in 2008.

Boyle was soon acquired by AECOM, a Fortune 500 firm specializing in engineering design. In Sarasota, the problem was drilling a hole under Hudson Bayou for a 36-inch pipe large enough to convey millions of gallons of sewage per day to the Luke Wood Park Lift Station 87. The facility would use pumps to propel the sewage to the city's treatment plant more than a mile away on 12th Street.

Using what the city staff calls "outdated and inaccurate survey data," the Boyle/AECOM crew drilled a lateral hole that was insufficiently deep under the waterway. The city lost confidence in the company and declared it in default. A lawsuit and countersuit followed.

Meanwhile, Westra Construction was hired to build the actual pumping facility underground. That work has been done, but without the pipeline, it is useless. Worse, the micro-tunneling required closure of the northbound lane of Osprey Avenue, causing annoyance in the neighborhoods south of Mound Street, such as Avondale.

Some of the disturbance — halted projects, snarled traffic, defaulted contractors, lawsuits — was remedied Monday, Dec. 3, when the Sarasota City Commission approved a \$750,000 change order to Westra's contract.

For that money Westra will reopen Osprey Avenue within 30 days and mothball its all-but-finished lift station.

Of course, that will not solve the legal problems. Alan Tannenbaum, the city's special counsel for this case, said, "Westra is preparing a significant claim against the city."

And AECOM, of course, believes it is blameless and will claim that in court. Tannenbaum is confident the city's case is strong, so the city should be able to recoup from AECOM all the money to put everything back together.

In the meantime, old Lift Station 7 is still "pushing the freight." Public Works Director Bill Hallisey says the city has mobilized pumper trucks to handle the additional water load caused by rainstorms. "If we do bring in additional trucks, we can put them in different areas so they won't impact the same areas with noise," he said.

For those whose leisure reading includes case studies of project management, Craig B. Smith's is unique. He is a consulting engineer with a global practice. His analysis of the manpower and material requirements to build the Great Pyramid of Khufu is dry (no pun intended) but fascinating reading. One surprise: No slaves were used. And no hieroglyphics indicate a contractor defaulted. 

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on My Smile.*



I am so incredibly pleased, with my beautiful smile  
and my comfortable and natural bite. - Barbara Lee

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Barbara Lee

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A smile is the first thing I notice about someone. However, that was the part of me I wanted to hide from everyone, including myself. In 2007, my family dentist of 30 years told me he could help. He then crowned all of my teeth. They looked better, but they immediately started to crack, one by one. He kept promising me he could correct them by re-making them. He was frustrated, but I was devastated. I then realized that I never received a stable, comfortable position to chew. My bite was totally off.

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## STILL GOING STRONG

Shoppers delight in scoping out the sweet finds at the Atomic Holiday Bazaar in 2011. Photo by Sid Graves

### ATOMIC HOLIDAY BAZAAR MARKS ITS SEVENTH YEAR

By Cooper Levey-Baker  
*Associate Editor*

[Atomic Holiday Bazaar](#) impresario Adrien Lucas is taking the maxim “If ain’t broke, don’t fix it” to heart for the seventh edition of her wildly popular alternative crafting bonanza.

This weekend’s two-day shindig will be much like past Atomics. Hundreds of creative artisans and crafters slinging one-of-a-kind items? Check. Roller derby gals handing out swag-stuffed totes? Check. A voracious crowd of locals packing the Sarasota Mu-

nicipal Auditorium, eager to snap up sweet gear? Check.

“It is Atomic Groundhog Day,” Lucas admits, “only it’s the good kind of Groundhog Day.”

Of course, it is not exactly the same. Lucas is promoting a first-of-its-kind Friday evening

Atomic Holiday Bazaar art show, hosted by Clothesline Gallery & Boutique. Lucas says she has wanted to put on an exhibition for many years, but that it took the help of

“It is Atomic Groundhog Day, only it’s the good kind of Groundhog Day.”

Adrien Lucas  
Founder  
Atomic Holiday Bazaar



Clothesline's Austin Kowal and Van Jazmin to make it happen.

Lucas solicited work from current and past Atomic artists and is proud of the results. "It's a really eclectic mix of artwork, but it's definitely representative of Atomic," she says. "I really had fun going through seven years of reaching out to people."

Consider Friday night's art show an appetizer for the full course that comes over the weekend. One hundred seventy vendors will be setting up shop, offering up everything from hand-stitched clothing to homemade kids' toys and stuffed animals. The general style — with, of course, many, many tangents — is a fun amalgamation of punk rock, mid-century kitsch and the DIY idiosyncrasies of different crafters' styles.

And do not think you can get away with just going just one day; different vendors will be installed on each day, meaning you cannot peruse the full range of goods unless you attend both Saturday and Sunday. (There is a discounted ticket price if you bring your stub back on day two.)

Atomic has become so big it is bursting at the seams of its longtime home. The Bayfront

## ATOMIC ART SHOW

5-9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7; Clothesline Gallery & Boutique, 529 S. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota; free.

## ATOMIC HOLIDAY BAZAAR

10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, and 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9; Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tami-am Trail, Sarasota; \$5 (\$3 on day two with ticket stub from day one); free for kids 12 and under.

Room, which sits on the back side of the Municipal Auditorium, will be filled with vendors who were late to the original application process. It costs \$5 to get into the main room (the same fee charged at the first Atomic, way back in 2006), but that rear section is completely free.

Lucas is already planning ahead for the 2013 edition and wants to incorporate some kind of philanthropic party during the weekend. But even if that goes through, do not expect major changes to the basic Atomic formula. After all, it is a winning one. 

### Someone you know needs Planned Parenthood

- Lifesaving cancer screenings
- Parent & teen education
- Annual GYN exams
- Birth control





*The Sarasota City Commission sits in session. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **RESIDENTS COMPLAIN ABOUT THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE — AND THEIR ACTIONS — IN SARASOTA’S GILLESPIE PARK**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

Sarasota’s focus on homelessness shifted to Gillespie Park this week. At the Monday, Dec. 3, City Commission meeting, a parade of neighborhood residents delivered a long litany of complaints during the evening’s open-to-the-public session. Speakers had only two minutes to make their points.

“I won’t walk in the park. It’s becoming a homeless camp,” said Louise Tracy.

“There is an influx of homeless spending days in the park. They bring immense amounts of trash; we’re just inundated with it,” said Dale Orlando. He produced pictures of the trash to emphasize his statement.

“The problem is not geographic and the solution isn’t musical benches. You need long-term solutions,” he added.

The City Commission removed the benches from Five Points Park last year to discourage homeless people from loitering in that location.

Concern was expressed about people using twigs and leaves in the BBQ grills in Gillespie Park to heat food that is then left on the grills for animals.

“We can’t continue with this level of trash and activity,” said Linda Holland, the neighborhood president and a City Commission can-

didate. “We have asked the Police Department to help us.”

“I live next to Gillespie Park,” said Bill Holland. “Over the past six months, I’ve seen an increase in the number of transients and vagrants occupying the picnic pavilion. It’s caused casual users and families to stop using the park. [The homeless] use the bushes for toilets; they use loud, vulgar language and feel it necessary to yell at each other.”

“On any day until 11 p.m. ,there are 12 to 30 individuals occupying the park, monopolizing the park,” said Charles Morris. “The locked covers over electrical outlets are ripped off. There are drug sales and prostitution.”

Hours later, at the end of the meeting during the “Commissioner Comments” agenda item, the issue came up again.

“Gillespie Park deserves some kind of attention,” said Commissioner Paul Caragiulo.

Commissioner Terry Turner suggested the city might want to install cameras in the park.

“The public has described a lot of violations of the law,” he said.

Sarasota police officers have come under fire for alleged use of force on homeless people, a point raised by Commissioner Willie Shaw.

“I’m glad to see us become more sensitive to our diverse community. The last three men beaten have been Caucasian, and now it’s an issue,” he said.

City Manager Tom Barwin is forming a homeless task force.

“There is an influx of homeless spending days in the park. They bring immense amounts of trash; we’re just inundated with it.

Dale Orlando  
Sarasota resident

“Lots of people want to participate,” said Mayor Suzanne Atwell.

Shaw added that he would like to see higher education institutions involved in the process, including student members.

Barwin said, “This task force will be action-oriented. Our law enforcement folks could use some additional help, especially for substance abuse and mental health. There were 30,000 free meals served last year, and 29,500 were in the city. I’ve spoke with [Sarasota County Administrator Randall] Reid to make this a larger effort. We’ll be reaching out to those folks at Gillespie Park.” 



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Table B-1. Comparison of Adopted and Potential Road Impact Fee Rates

Land Use Code	Category	Land Use	Development Unit	Adopted		Potential A(2013) Rates			Compare Update @100% to A(2007)
				A(2007) Road Impact Fee per Dev. Unit	A(2011) 50% Reduct. Road Impact Fee per Dev. Unit	Update @100% Road Impact Fee per Dev. Unit	Update @75% Road Impact Fee per Dev. Unit	Update @50% Road Impact Fee per Dev. Unit	
210/220	Residential	Single Family or Multi-Family Unit: Less than 500 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$2,552	\$1,276	\$2,670	\$2,002	\$1,335	4.6%
210/220	Residential	500 - 749 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$3,419	\$1,709	\$3,579	\$2,684	\$1,789	4.7%
210/220	Residential	750 - 999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$3,989	\$1,994	\$4,176	\$3,132	\$2,088	4.7%
210/220	Residential	1,000 - 1,249 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$4,417	\$2,208	\$4,626	\$3,469	\$2,313	4.7%
210/220	Residential	1,250 - 1,499 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$4,759	\$2,379	\$4,983	\$3,737	\$2,491	4.7%
210/220	Residential	1,500 - 1,999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$5,171	\$2,585	\$5,414	\$4,060	\$3,023	4.7%
210/220	Residential	2,000 - 2,999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$5,774	\$2,887	\$6,047	\$4,535	\$3,326	4.8%
210/220	Residential	3,000 - 3,999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$6,352	\$3,176	\$6,652	\$4,989	\$3,547	4.4%
210/220	Residential	4,000 sq. ft. or more Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$6,772	\$3,386	\$7,094	\$5,320	\$3,900	4.7%
210/220	Residential	Mobile Home/RV Park	1 space	\$2,854	\$1,427	\$2,981	\$2,235	\$1,490	5.5%
210/220	Residential	Adult Cong. Living Facility	1,000 sq. ft.	\$1,152	\$576	\$1,206	\$904	\$603	7.5%
240	Residential	Industrial Park	1,000 sq. ft.	\$3,973	\$1,986	\$4,191	\$3,143	\$2,095	-22.8%
253	Residential	Manufacturing	1,000 sq. ft.	\$2,181	\$1,090	\$2,345	\$1,758	\$1,172	69.4%
130	Industrial	Light Industrial & Warehousing	1,000 sq. ft.	\$2,832	\$1,416	\$2,185	\$1,638	\$1,092	31.1%
140	Industrial	Mini-Warehouse	1 room	\$1,031	\$515	\$1,747	\$1,310	\$873	69.5%
150	Industrial	Hotel/Motel	1 berth	\$2,052	\$1,026	\$2,691	\$2,018	\$1,345	5.7%
151	Industrial	Marina	1 acre	\$975	\$487	\$1,655	\$1,241	\$827	69.5%
310/320	Commercial (Recreational)	Golf Course (open to public)	1,000 sq. ft.	\$1,661	\$830	\$2,815	\$2,111	\$1,407	5.7%
420	Commercial (Recreational)	Movie Theater	1,000 sq. ft.	\$11,319	\$5,659	\$11,960	\$8,970	\$5,980	-10.2%
430	Commercial (Recreational)	Recreational/Community Center	1,000 sq. ft.	\$3,755	\$1,877	\$6,769	\$5,076	\$3,384	49.7%
443	Commercial (Recreational)	Elementary School	1,000 sq. ft.	\$7,911	\$3,955	\$10,404	\$7,803	\$5,202	40.6%
495	Commercial (Institutional)	High School	1,000 sq. ft.	\$9,631	\$4,815	\$8,625	\$6,468	\$4,312	35.5%
520	Commercial (Institutional)	House of Worship	1,000 sq. ft.	\$3,341	\$1,670	\$4,958	\$3,718	\$2,479	31.5%
530	Commercial (Institutional)	Day Care Center	1,000 sq. ft.	\$6,008	\$3,004	\$6,769	\$5,076	\$3,384	-10.4%
560	Commercial (Institutional)	Hospital	1,000 sq. ft.	\$13,225	\$6,612	\$14,054	\$10,540	\$7,027	6.3%
650	Commercial (Retail)	Shopping Center/General Retail	1,000 sq. ft.	\$1,483	\$741	\$11,960	\$8,970	\$5,980	2.9%
710	Commercial (Retail)	Auto Sales/Repair	1,000 sq. ft.	\$1,133	\$566	\$11,960	\$8,970	\$5,980	6.3%

# CONFUSION AND CONSTERNATION

A chart shows current and proposed road impact fees for Sarasota County, with possible reductions by percentage. Image courtesy Sarasota County

## AFTER CRITICIZING STAFF FOR THE DELAY IN PROVIDING NEW PROPOSED ROAD IMPACT FEES, THE COUNTY COMMISSION MOVES FORWARD ON ADVERTISING RATES FOR A JAN. 16 PUBLIC HEARING

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
Editor

It took about 50 minutes of discussion for them to sort out their confusion and air their frustrations on Dec. 4, but the Sarasota County commissioners finally voted unanimously to advertise proposed new road impact fees for a public hearing on Jan. 16.

During the public comment portion of the board's afternoon meeting in Venice that day, Mary Dougherty-Slapp, executive director of the Gulf Coast Builders Exchange, asked for a two-year extension of the current impact fees developers pay when they construct roads.

That period would "give the market the continuity it needs to pull out of recession," she added.

"I personally don't want to do that," Commissioner Nora Patterson said, adding that she felt a year's extension of the rates would be sufficient.

Commissioner Joe Barbetta opened the discussion by criticizing Clarke Davis, head of the county's Transportation Group, for not having a new impact fee schedule prepared sooner.

"We asked you to do it a couple of years ago after [Commission Chairwoman Christine Robinson] came on board," Barbetta said, "and nothing ever happened. ... And here we

**ATTACHMENT A (2013)**  
**ROAD IMPACT FEE SCHEDULE**

<u>Land Use Code</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Development Unit</u>	<u>Impact Fee per Development Unit</u>
210/220	Residential	Single Family or Multi-Family Unit:		
210/220	Residential	Less than 500 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$2,670
210/220	Residential	500 – 749 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$3,579
210/220	Residential	750 – 999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$4,176
210/220	Residential	1,000 – 1,249 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$4,626
210/220	Residential	1,250 – 1,499 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$4,983
210/220	Residential	1,500 – 1,999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$5,414
210/220	Residential	2,000 – 2,999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$6,047
210/220	Residential	3,000 – 3,999 sq. ft. Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$6,652
210/220	Residential	4,000 sq. ft. or more Living Area	1 Dwelling Unit	\$7,094
240	Residential	Mobile Home/RV Park	1 space	\$2,981
253	Residential	Adult Cong. Living Facility	1 Dwelling Unit	\$1,206
130	Industrial	Industrial Park	1,000 sq. ft.	\$4,191
140	Industrial	Manufacturing	1,000 sq. ft.	\$2,345
150	Industrial	Light Industrial & Warehousing	1,000 sq. ft.	\$2,185
151	Industrial	Mini-Warehouse	1,000 sq. ft.	\$1,747
310/320	Commercial (Lodging)	Hotel/Motel	1 room	\$2,691
420	Commercial (Recreational)	Marina	1 berth	\$1,655
430	Commercial (Recreational)	Golf Course (open to public)	1 acre	\$2,815
443	Commercial (Recreational)	Movie Theater	1,000 sq. ft.	\$11,960
495	Commercial (Recreational)	Recreational/Community Center	1,000 sq. ft.	\$6,769
520	Commercial (Institutional)	Elementary School	1,000 sq. ft.	\$6,864
530	Commercial (Institutional)	High School	1,000 sq. ft.	\$5,733
560	Commercial (Institutional)	House of Worship	1,000 sq. ft.	\$5,089
565	Commercial (Institutional)	Day Care Center	1,000 sq. ft.	\$10,404
610	Commercial (Medical)	Hospital	1,000 sq. ft.	\$8,625
620	Commercial (Medical)	Nursing Home	1,000 sq. ft.	\$4,958
710	Commercial (Office)	Office, General and Medical	1,000 sq. ft.	\$6,769
812	Commercial (Retail)	Building Mat./Hardware/Nursery	1,000 sq. ft.	\$14,054
820	Commercial (Retail)	Shopping Center/General Retail	1,000 sq. ft.	\$11,960
841	Commercial (Retail)	Auto Sales/Repair	1,000 sq. ft.	\$5,527
851	Commercial (Retail)	Convenience Store	1,000 sq. ft.	\$22,965
890	Commercial (Retail)	Furniture Store	1,000 sq. ft.	\$1,574
912	Commercial (Financial)	Bank/Drive-Through	1,000 sq. ft.	\$7,780
931	Commercial (Service)	Restaurant, Sit-Down	1,000 sq. ft.	\$13,297
934	Commercial (Service)	Restaurant, Fast Food	1,000 sq. ft.	\$28,949
946	Commercial (Service)	Gasoline Station	1 fuel position	\$4,162

*Sarasota County staff provided the County Commission a chart showing all the road impact fees derived through use of current data. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

are on Dec. 4 and you still don't have enough information."

Referring to another comment Dougherty-Slapp had made, Davis told the commission early in his presentation that she was fair in characterizing her discussions with him on behalf of builders as "limited" before the new impact fee tables were completed.

Both of them wished they had had more time to work on the process, Davis said. "It would be nice to take a look at some of the numbers a little longer, but we believe that the rates are defensible," he added.

## ALL THOSE NUMBERS

In response to questions from Patterson, who said the new table of rates was confusing, Davis explained that, based on staff research and use of methodology the county had first utilized in 2007, it appeared the cost of building a road was 4 percent less today than it was in 2007.

Data used in 2007 came from 2005, Davis pointed out.

Putting it another way, Davis said, today's full road impact fees are roughly 68 percent of the 2007 road impact fees.

Both Barbetta and Commissioner Charles Hines, who was attending his first full meeting

since he was elected on Nov. 6, questioned the new road impact fee for the construction of hotels and motels. Barbetta pointed out that it was up by almost 31 percent.

"That goes against what we seem to think is common sense," Hines said.

Davis explained the numbers in the tables reflected full impact fees as well as reduced fees the county had been requiring of builders the past couple of years. In 2011, the County Commission reduced the impact fees by 50 percent, to help builders cope with the recession.

## MISSING INFORMATION

Robinson asked Davis about the reference in staff memos to a county road impact fee technical report.

"That is being drafted," Davis said.

"So we are authorizing to advertise [the new rate schedule] and it includes this impact fee technical report that we don't have yet?" Robinson asked.

The advertisement for the Jan. 16 public hearing would include a notice that the report would be available for review, he responded. It would be ready in about two weeks, he said later. "There wasn't time to get together a full report" for the Dec. 4 meeting, he added.



The County commissioners listen to a speaker in Sarasota on Nov. 20. Photo by Norman Schimmel

When he pointed out that the municipalities would have an opportunity to see the report as soon as it was available, Robinson questioned why they would see it before the commission did.

“The cities are advisory committees to the County Commission,” Davis replied. However, he said, he could provide a copy of the report to the commissioners before he sent it to the municipalities.

“I didn’t mean to exasperate the County Commission,” Davis added. “This is the way we’ve done it in the past and if we need to think about doing it a different way, then we can.”

“I had understood the municipalities were advisory to us in terms of how to spend the money, not to how to craft the ordinance,” Patterson told him.

The cities by law had to have the opportunity to comment on any proposed changes in the county’s impact fees, Davis said. The City of Sarasota was allowed up to 30 days for comments, while the City of Venice had two weeks, he noted.

“I was unaware of that,” Patterson said.

“We’re only here for an authorization to advertise,” Barbetta pointed out. “Right now we’re utilizing the wrong figures.”

Barbetta added that the commissioners could decide after the Jan. 16 public hearing what percentage of the new figures they wanted to require of builders, “and I submit it’s going to be lower than they are today.”

“So you’re perfectly OK with [the rates] going lower than they are today?” Patterson asked him.

“Current data is going to reflect lower [rates],” he told her.

In response to further questioning, Davis said staff could work with homebuilders as well as other builders to determine whether any different methodologies should be applied to develop the rates.

Asked to weigh in, County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh told the commissioners they could advertise the proposed impact fees at the 100 percent level determined for 2013 or a percentage of those levels. They would not be able to vote on higher rates than those advertised, however, he said.

**“We asked you to do [this] a couple of years ago after [Commission Chairwoman Christine Robinson] came on board ... and nothing ever happened. ... And here we are on Dec. 4 and you still don’t have enough information.”**

Joe Barbetta  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

“I believe we had the opportunity with private industry to get some better numbers,” Robinson said. “We asked for that to happen and that did not happen.”

Barbetta eventually made the motion to advertise the rates at 68 percent of the full 2013 levels staff had provided.

When the board voted after the Jan. 16 public hearing, he continued, it could put into effect rates that were 50 percent of those reduced numbers, similar to the action the commission took in 2011.

“We have to give some kind of certainty to the building industry out there,” he added.

In the meantime, Barbetta said, Davis could consult with representatives of all the building industries.

“It does make sense,” Patterson said of Barbetta’s recommendation; she seconded the motion.

“The industries can provide [comments] directly to us by email,” Robinson added. 



## PARKING WAR ENDED

*Anyone may pay for a parking ticket at the Sarasota Police Department on Adams Lane. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **CITY COMMISSION VOTES TO RETURN ENFORCEMENT RESTRICTIONS TO THEIR PREVIOUS NORMS ALL OVER SARASOTA**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

The timing of the return of the giant sailor statue *Unconditional Surrender* to the bay-front Tuesday, Dec. 4, was perfect. The night before, the Sarasota City commissioners capitulated totally in their “parking war.”

Do not think sailor-kisses-nurse; think parking scofflaw and meter maid.

The commissioners ordered that parking enforcement return to pre-war levels, dropping Saturday enforcement and returning to a 6 p.m. cutoff for tickets.

In other words, forget worrying about your car on Saturdays on St. Armands, downtown

or the Southside Village area around Hillview Street and Osprey Avenue. Park all day if you like. And if you slide into a space at 4:01 p.m. on a weekday, you don’t have to move your car until 9 a.m. the next day.

However, do not rush out to exercise your regained parking rights. City staffers are working out a timeline when the new-but-old regulations will take effect.

The commission’s foray into creating universal regulations for parking citywide — including the purchase and installation of half-a-million dollars’ worth of downtown parking meters —



*A parking meter stump on Main Street in September emphasized the city's losing battle over meters last year. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

founded first on public hostility and then on merchant antipathy. After nearly three years of study, debate, decisions, purchasing, installation, new signage and tougher enforcement, it is back to 2009 before all that began.

“We all acknowledge an error in applying the same standards across the city,” City Commissioner Paul Caragiulo said Monday evening.

The return to old rules means the return of the original cause of the conflict — employee parking.

Keeping employees from using up all the convenient spots and pushing away customers was a prime motivation for city commissioners to embark on tougher parking regulation and enforcement. The old arguments popped right back up on Monday.

“How about permits for employees to use the [Palm Avenue parking] garage? That keeps them off Main Street,” said Caragiulo.

“But that prevents a restaurant worker from coming downtown on his day off,” replied Ron Soto, president of the Sarasota Downtown Merchants Association.

Commissioner Shannon Snyder replied to Soto, “Downtown folks need to solve the employee [parking] problem by themselves.”

City Manager Tom Barwin stuck his neck out and said, “We can put together a downtown employee parking program and bring it back to you.”

## MEET MR. BOOT

While the regulations are relaxing, the fines and fees are tightening. “Late fees” for parking tickets more than two weeks past due will be \$15. Thirty days after that, the city will tack on an additional \$15, and another \$15 after a second month.

Motorists with unpaid tickets face the immobilization of their vehicles. City staffers have “parking boots” — technically called “wheel locks” — and are ready to use them. The cost to get un-booted is jumping to \$75 from \$50 — plus, you will need to pay the outstanding tickets and fines, of course. That will require a trip to the Sarasota Police Department on Adams Lane, and that could ruin your afternoon.

If you pull out your toolbox to take off the boot yourself, the act will cost you \$250 if you are caught — more if you break the lock. And because the boot crew makes a note of which boot goes on which car, it is doubtful you will evade detection.

Like many modern problems, the root of Sarasota’s parking uproar is financial. Snyder repeated himself Monday, saying “We don’t have a parking problem. We have a fiscal problem. Our biggest problem is who pays for parking garage maintenance?”

While the city’s Parking Department should be “revenue-neutral” — bringing in as much as it costs to operate — that has not happened in years.

“We’re going to be in the red again this year,” said Deputy City Manager Marlon Brown. 



# WHO SHOULD PAY?

*The rebuilding of Booker High School on North Orange Avenue is scheduled to be completed in 2013.  
Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **SARASOTA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS QUESTION WHETHER THE SCHOOL BOARD HAS APPLIED FOR STATE FUNDS TO MAKE THE REBUILT BOOKER HIGH SUITABLE AS A HURRICANE SHELTER**

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

After one commissioner questioned whether Sarasota County School officials had applied for state funding for the project, and no answer was available, the County Commission voted unanimously to wait until next week to decide on paying for modifications to make the rebuilt Booker High School suitable as a hurricane shelter.

Scott Lempe, the school district's chief operating officer, told *The Sarasota News Leader* Dec. 6 he understood staff from the county's Emergency Management Department would take the lead in a presentation tentatively

scheduled for the commission's Dec. 11 meeting in Sarasota.

Although the \$1,004,822 hurricane shelter funding item was on the commission's consent agenda for the Dec. 4 regular meeting in Venice, Barbetta pulled the item and referred to a new state statute that went into effect in January.

"Don't get me wrong," Barbetta said. "I applaud the fact we're trying to do hurricane shelters, as many as possible, wherever."

However, he added, "It clearly says [in the new statute] it's the obligation of the schools"

to handle the hurricane hardening of facilities. Moreover, he said, a Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) Fund is available to help districts cover those costs.

Lempe told the *News Leader* the district has had no money in its budget from that PECO fund in the past two years.

He added that the district had applied for no state funding “relative to hurricane hardening.”

Anne M. Miller, the logistics chief in the county’s Emergency Management Office, pointed out to the commission on Dec. 4 that the School Board was required to pay only 50 percent of the cost of the structural enhancements to enable the county to use the school as a shelter.

By law, she said, schools have to be able to withstand wind of 139 mph. However, a shelter has to be able to withstand wind of 170 mph, she noted. “So we’re getting added benefit by putting our funding with their funding,” she added of the school district.

Lempe concurred with Miller. A Florida school district has to build new structures that meet the state building code in terms of their ability to withstand hurricane winds. If a county wishes to use a new school as a shelter, he added, a county “will typically say, ‘Here are the upgrades we will help you fund.’”

**“I just don’t want us spending money we don’t have to spend. ... I want to make sure the Sarasota County school system is applying for those [state] funds.”**

Joe Barbetta  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

The \$58 million Booker rebuild is expected to be completed in 2013, Scott Ferguson, spokesman for the school district, told the *News Leader*.

“I just don’t want us spending money we don’t have to spend,” Barbetta told Miller. “I

want to make sure the Sarasota County school system is applying for those [state] funds. ... Have we looked into the fact that they have exhausted all their funding sources before we volunteer money?”

“I don’t have the answer to that,” Miller replied.

“I don’t mind approving this,” Barbetta said, “but it’s a million dollars. There are other things we could do with that money, [but], obviously, safety is most important.”

“To reassure you,” Miller told Barbetta, “what we’re paying for is way above and beyond what they are required to do.”

Commissioner Nora Patterson pointed out the commission had meetings scheduled on both Dec. 11 and Dec. 12 in Sarasota. Perhaps the decision could be delayed, she added.

Mike Tobias, the county’s chief of emergency services, stepped to the podium and told Barbetta, “We understand your concern, commissioner.”

He pointed out that state law requires all schools be built to certain standards for protection from hurricane damage but not for use

as shelters. “And we use our [school] shelters pretty well across the board here in Sarasota County, because they’re pretty far inland,” Tobias added.

## SURTAX REVENUE

The funding for the Booker project was designated out of the Surtax III revenue, he pointed out, “because we had such a deficit of shelter space.”

During an Aug. 29 joint meeting of the School Board and the County Commission, Ed McCrane, the county’s emergency management chief, told the boards he and his staff were eager to see the Booker High project completed. He added, “... [I]t will serve the citizens of North Sarasota County who need a shelter desperately.”

A Dec. 4 memo from Tobias to the County Commission says the shelter would be able to handle 2,400 people for 24 hours.

Patterson pointed out to Tobias, “There are tens of millions of dollars of projects that were approved for sales tax [revenue funding] that have been cancelled because of insufficient revenue ... and we’re struggling on some other public safety-type issues like the 800MHz and where those dollars are going to come from.”

Tobias has said the total cost of infrastructure and new radio equipment to provide the county with a

modern emergency radio system to replace the outdated 800MHz system will cost about \$30 million.

“We didn’t mean to imply that there is not another avenue to get the funding or to use this funding for something else,” Tobias told the commissioners. However, he said, “These funds have been specifically committed for this project.”

Both Patterson and Barbetta said they did not want to hold up the Booker project, with Patterson noting, “I don’t want to hurt the [hurricane shelter] partnership [with the school district] in any way.” Still, she said, it was reasonable to ask whether school officials had looked into the state funding.

“We can address this next week,” Tobias said.

When Commissioner Charles Hines asked whether county staff was working with the school district to use the rebuilt Venice High

School and Sarasota High School as shelters, too, Miller replied that shelter guidelines probably exempted use of Venice High for that purpose, because of its low elevation.

However, it was possible the rebuilt Sarasota High School could be used as a shelter, she said.

Vice Chairwoman Carolyn Mason made the motion to hold off on the funding decision until next week; Patterson seconded it. 



*Sarasota County Commissioner Joe Barbetta/Photo by Norman Schimmel*



# NO MORE FREE BERTHS

*White hulls stood out against the blue sky and water in city's mooring field in July. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **CITY'S NEW MOORING FIELD OFF BAYFRONT PARK SHOWS A PROFIT FOR ITS FIRST 30 DAYS OF OPERATION**

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

The decades-old practice of free boat moorings along the bayfront is over, gone the way of the Payne Park baseball stadium and the Hover Arcade.

Boaters are now paying \$250 per month to Marina Jack for the right to moor.

Harbormaster Sam Chavers reported to the Sarasota City Commission Monday, Dec. 3, saying, "On Nov. 1, we began charging rates. For the

first 30 days, we exceeded expectations. The city will get a check for the first month's operations."

The city — using its own money and grants — put about \$1 million into the 35-unit mooring field. The first attempt at installing mooring anchors failed stress testing; another company was called in to do the job properly. Marina Jack Inc. manages the area. The contract calls for the city to cover a percentage of any financial losses and to share in any profits.

**“ On Nov. 1, we began charging rates. For the first 30 days, we exceeded expectations. ”**

Sam Chavers  
Harbormaster  
City of Sarasota



Chavers said on Dec. 3, "The future outlook is positive, and we are entering prime boating season as people travel up and down the coast."

Some of the moorings are for transient boaters, while others are for permanent storage. Sailors can live aboard, but only for six months out of the year.

To install the field, the city had to displace a number of boaters who did not want to pay the monthly fee or be "managed" by the marina complex. These

boaters have been pushed further away from shore, or they have moved to other locations.

Chavers said the moored boaters are now enjoying free WiFi service, as well as the use of a shuttle to take them to and from their vessels.

He also invited people down to the bayfront for the annual Christmas Boat Parade. It will form up at about 6:15 p.m. in New Pass along City Island on Saturday, Dec. 8, and travel past downtown Sarasota's Island Park about 7 p.m. 

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## ONE STEP CLOSER

*The Hub Baja Grill (right) and The Cottage on Avenida Messina are two of the Siesta Village properties owned by Chris Brown. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **AFTER CURRENT FISCAL YEAR PARKING ASSESSMENTS ARE COLLECTED FOR THE SIESTA VILLAGE MUNICIPAL LOT, A COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE SCHEDULED TO ABOLISH THE PARKING DISTRICT**

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

Siesta Key property and business owners moved one step closer on Tuesday, Dec. 4, to seeing an end to a special tax designed to pay for the municipal parking lot in Siesta Village.

On a 4-1 vote, the Sarasota County Commission approved a staff recommendation to terminate the collection of the parking assessment after the taxes come in for the current fiscal year.

Once all those funds are in, the next step will be to hold a public hearing, followed by another commission vote to abolish the district altogether, Ryan Montague, a staff member in

the county's Mobility/Traffic Office, told the board during its regular meeting on Dec. 4.

No one spoke during the public hearing held on the matter.

Following an Oct. 10 discussion in which commissioners agreed county staff had applied the parking assessment methodology on an unequal basis, the commissioners voted 4-1 to authorize the advertisement of the Dec. 4 public hearing as the first step in abolishing the parking district.

As she did on Dec. 4, Commissioner Nora Patterson cast the lone "No" vote on Oct. 10. At

the meeting two months ago, she said, “People understood that they would pay for half of the cost” of the parking lot. She added, “What I don’t understand is why [the assessment value] was ever fixed to go up or down, and I think it needs to be nailed in place.”

The Oct. 10 parking district discussion followed the airing of commissioner concerns in August about a third lawsuit Siesta property owner Chris Brown filed against the county, this one in October 2011. That lawsuit provided documentation that Brown had seen the parking assessments for three of his Siesta Village properties rise on his 2011 property tax bill, while the assessments for other properties in the district had gone down. One of his assessments was up about 1,500 percent over the amount on his 2010 tax bill.

Brown’s third lawsuit remains unresolved, with a mediation hearing set for Feb. 1, 2013; that session was delayed from this month, according to court records.

Brown offered to settle the suit with the county for \$315,000 in October — an increase from an earlier offer of \$277,219.

The second settlement figure has not been broached to the County Commission. Brown’s attorney, Morgan Bentley of Bentley & Bruning in Sarasota, told *The Sarasota News Leader*, “If no commissioner brings it up, it’s up to [County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh] to bring it up.”

DeMarsh told the *News Leader* on Nov. 20 that he had not mentioned the second figure to the board because of his staff’s work on the lawsuit.

Brown has claimed damages of \$1.7 million as a result of lost profits at The Hub Baja Grill — the first business in which he encountered parking assessment issues with the county — court costs and attorney’s fees. He filed his original lawsuit against the county in 2007, after The Hub’s opening was halted for three months because of the reversal of a decision made by the county’s zoning administrator at the time. That decision was linked to the parking capacity for The Hub.

## THE REMAINING BALANCE

Montague told the commissioners on Dec. 4 that when the 2012 fiscal year ended on Sept. 30, the balance remaining to be paid for the municipal parking lot was \$334,680.

A memo to the board dated the same day from Montague’s boss, Chief Engineer James K. Harriott Jr., says anticipated revenues for the 2013 fiscal year are \$47,811, “leaving an anticipated debt of \$286,868.”

The county’s general fund would absorb the remaining amount, the memo notes.

The parking lot was completed in 2000 at a cost of \$863,714.51, according to the same memo. The county paid for the work from its general fund, with the understanding properties within the Siesta Village Parking Improvement District would be assessed annually to repay the money, the memo points out.

Commissioner Carolyn Mason made the motion to accept the staff recommendation for the Dec. 4 vote. Commissioner Joe Barbetta seconded it.

None of the board members offered a comment prior to the vote. 



# BACK WHERE IT BELONGS

## UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER RETURNS TO THE BAYFRONT

*Staff Reports*

After it was struck by a sedan and damaged significantly in late April, the Seward Johnson sculpture *Unconditional Surrender* was transported north for repairs.

Hurricane Sandy's assault on the Northeast slowed its return. However, by Tuesday, Dec. 4, it was back at its highly visible spot in

downtown Sarasota, adjacent to U.S. 41 and Bayfront Park.

Staff photographer Norman Schimmel recorded the progress of the statue's return home this week as a crew worked to make sure it was firmly in place. 

*After being struck by a sedan in late April, the statue lies on the ground, awaiting pickup and transportation for repairs. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*Blues guitarist Eric Culberson and his band were on their way to Sanford on Saturday, Dec. 1, when they spied a very unusual sight on Interstate 95 between Savannah, GA, and Brunswick, GA. Facebook chatter with Sarasota friends gave them the identity of the sculpture on the flatbed truck. Photo courtesy Eric Culberson*



*The kissing couple lies on the ground again, ready to be lifted back into place.*



*The statue fills the flatbed at the bayfront.*



*A crane begins lifting the statue from the flatbed.*



*Slowly but surely, Unconditional Surrender tilts upward.*



*Almost there.*



*The ground crew works with the crane operator for the perfect placement.*



*On the morning of Dec. 5, the ground crew continued to work to get the statue situated.*



*All of the Camp Giving participants and their parents gather with the Southeastern Guide Dogs, handlers and volunteers. Photos by Community Foundation of Sarasota County/Sharon Kunkel*

## **'CAMP GIVING' HELD TO INSPIRE YOUNG PHILANTHROPISTS**

On Saturday, Nov. 17, Community Foundation of Sarasota County hosted "Camp Giving," a program for children ages 8-12 and their parents, to inspire the next generation of philanthropists.

Nearly a dozen children attended; they learned about the value of "giving back," discovered how to use the online nonprofit resource "Giving Partner" to find causes they care about, heard from a high school volunteer and enjoyed a presentation by Southeastern Guide Dogs staff and volunteers, a news release says.

At the conclusion of the program, each of the young participants received a "Moon Jar," which is designed to help children make decisions about saving, spending and sharing. Every young person also received a \$25 "Giving Spirit Card," which can be donated to any charity of his or her choosing.



*Camp Giving participant Max Kunkel with his 'Moon Jar,' which helps children make decisions about saving, spending and sharing.*

## WOMEN'S INTERFAITH NETWORK TO PRESENT FILM, DISCUSSION

The Sarasota Women's Interfaith Network will present the award-winning film *Paper Clips* at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 3975 Fruitville Road.

Admission will be \$2.

The film focuses on a small town in Tennessee where two middle-school teachers saw an opportunity to educate their students not only about the history of European fascism, but to provide more general lessons about diversity, prejudice and tolerance, the news release notes.

Following the presentation, a discussion will be led by Irene Mirkovic, who has combined her lifelong interest in Holocaust studies with her passion for film and literature, a news release says. She teaches at the Lifelong Learning Academy at the University of South Florida.

Mirkovic visited the town in Tennessee where the film was set and spoke with residents, the news release points out.

For more information, call 377-1003.

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## 36TH ANNUAL SANDY CLAWS BEACH RUN SET FOR DEC. 8

Sarasota County Parks and Recreation will host the 36th Annual Sandy Claws Beach Run on Saturday, Dec. 8, at Siesta Beach, 948 Beach Road, Sarasota.

The popular event will begin with registration at 7 a.m. at the south picnic shelter, the county has announced. The 1-mile fun run will begin at 8 a.m., and the timed 5K run will begin at 8:20 a.m.

Registration on race day is \$25; each participant will get a T-shirt as long as supplies last, a county news release says.

The 36th Annual Sandy Claws Beach Run is sanctioned by the Manasota Track Club,

which uses ChronoTrack timing, the news release notes.

Awards will be presented to the winners in first through sixth places in each age group. Those taking first-, second- and third-place honors will receive trophies, and fourth-through sixth-place winners will get ribbons, the news release says.

All registered participants will be entered into a raffle for prizes, the release adds.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 or visit [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).

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## SEAVIEW STREET TO BE CLOSED STARTING DEC. 10

Seaview Street from Brookhaven Drive to Beneva Road in Sarasota will be closed beginning Dec. 10 for replacement of a failing stormwater pipe, Sarasota County has announced.

Only local traffic will be allowed during the closure, a news release says. The road is scheduled to reopen by Dec. 21.

Residents in the area are being notified via door hangers, the release adds.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000.

## COMMUNITY MEETING TO FOCUS ON ROSEMARY DISTRICT

The public is invited to attend a community meeting Monday, Dec. 10, at 6 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at City Hall to discuss redevelopment in the Rosemary District, the City of Sarasota has announced.

“Two significant topics will be discussed,” a city news release says: parking and using a city-owned parcel possibly to create a public-private partnership.

The City Commission indicated last month it would like to pursue a public-private partnership to redevelop city-owned property at 1440 Boulevard of the Arts (the former Community Garden), the release points out. Located near Boulevard of the Arts and Central Avenue, the

parcel could help spur other redevelopment efforts in the district, the release adds.

“We want to be proactive for when we begin to emerge from the recession,” said City Manager Tom Barwin in the release. “There aren’t any preconceived notions on what the redevelopment could be. We want to hear from the community as far as what they would like to see with regard to a catalyst project for economic development.”

The redevelopment discussion makes it logical to focus as well on public parking, the release notes. City staff is seeking comments on parking in the Rosemary District to support future economic development, the release adds.

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## MOTHER ARRESTED FOR LEAVING TODDLER IN LOCKED CAR

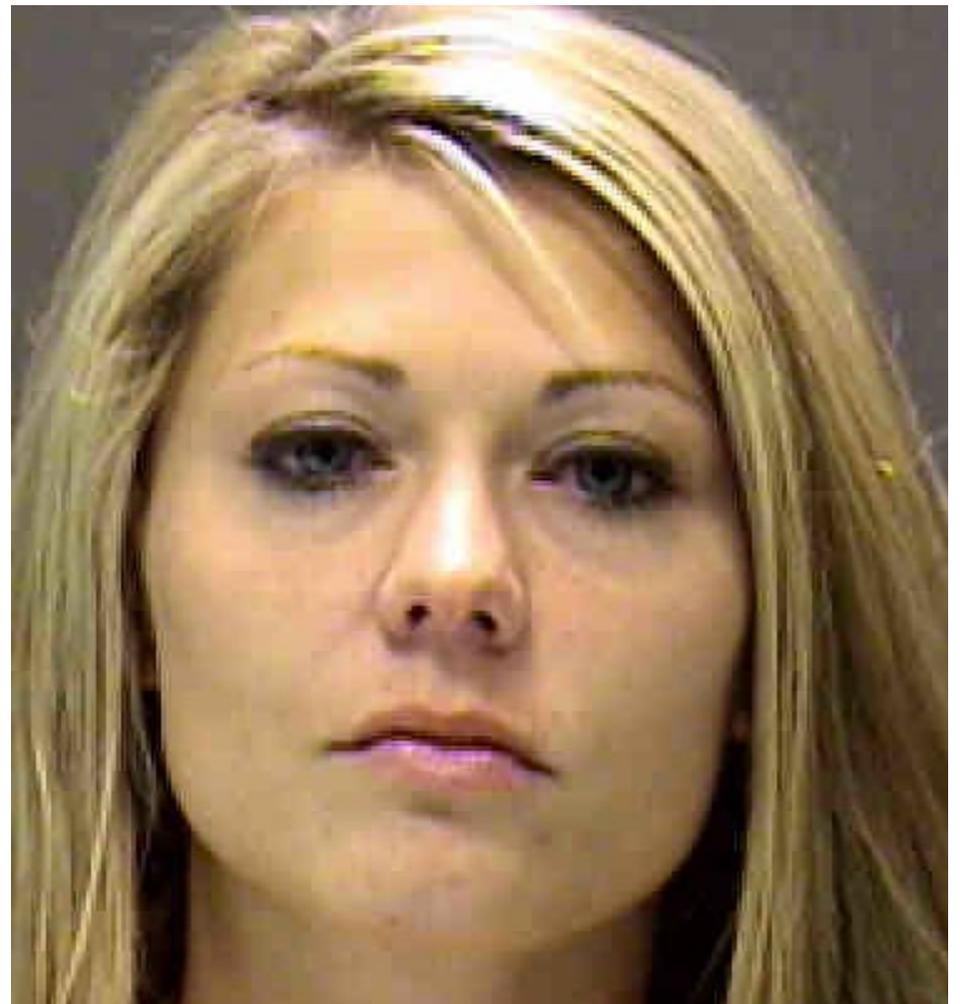
The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office has arrested a woman for leaving her toddler locked in her vehicle while she shopped.

Concerned citizens called deputies around 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 5 when they noticed a little girl sitting alone in a newer Chevrolet Malibu in the parking of Big Lots at 3750 Bee Ridge Road, according to a Sheriff’s Office report.

Store security personnel said the mother, Sunnie Jo Andrepont, 31, of 6030 Medici Court, Sarasota, had a cartload of toys and was shopping for half an hour. Andrepont said she left the 22-month old girl in the car intentionally but that she also had left the vehicle running, the report says.

The child was unharmed; her father responded to take her home, the report adds.

Andrepont was charged with Felony Child Neglect.



*Sunnie Jo Andrepont/Contributed*

## TWO ARRESTED FOR RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested two Bradenton men in connection with two residential burglaries in the past week, but the investigation is continuing, according to a news release.

During a traffic stop on Friday, Nov. 30, deputies found a jewelry box, burglary tools and prescription drugs in a blue 2002 Grand Marquis driven by Jeremy Maxwell, 30, of 5506 16th Street W., Bradenton, and occupied by Michael Mullins, 22, of 5318 Seventh Avenue Drive W., Bradenton, the news release says.

The vehicle matched the description given by a victim whose home on Woodbirch Place had been broken into that day and a victim whose Cedarwood Drive home was burglarized on Nov. 26, the release adds. Both of those incidents were in Sarasota County.

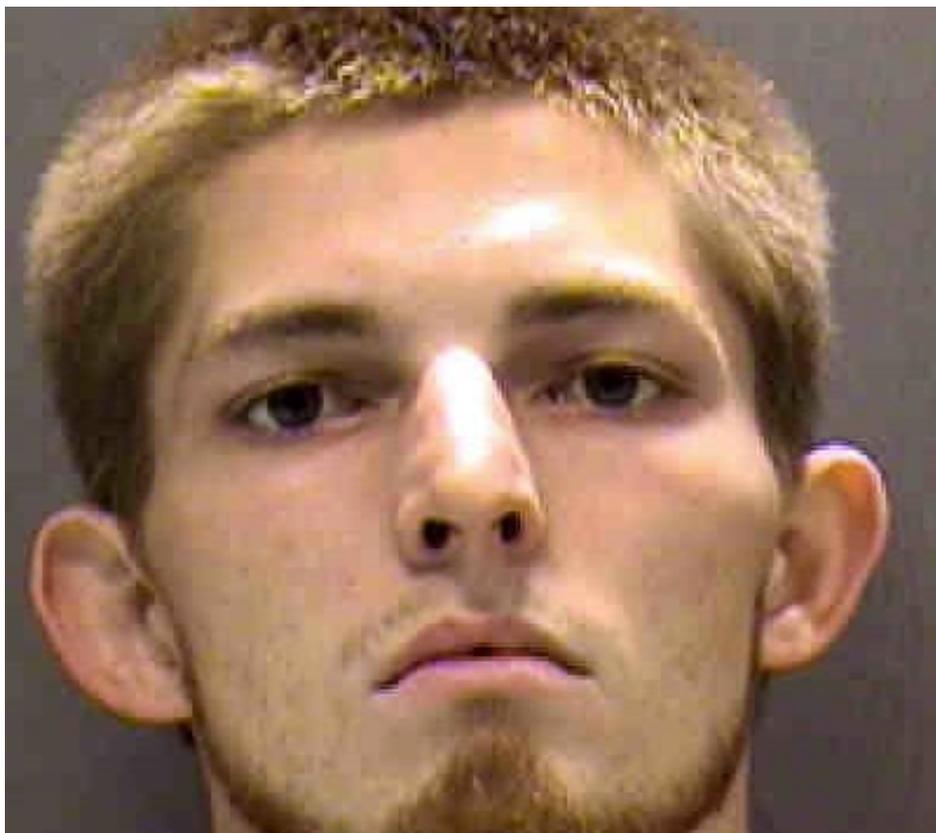
Most of the recovered property was identified by both victims, but the remaining items could

be from other burglaries; therefore, the investigation is continuing, the release notes.

"Maxwell, who has an extensive criminal history in Sarasota County, is charged with two counts of Burglary, Driving with a Suspended License and being a Habitual Traffic Offender," the release says. Mullins, who is already on felony probation for Grand Theft in Manatee County, is charged with two counts of Burglary, two counts of Possession of Burglary Tools and Possession of a Controlled Substance, the release adds.

The suspects reportedly targeted homes with open windows and broke in through the screens, the release points out.

The Sheriff's Office is advising all residents to heed previous warnings to close and lock all windows when they leave homes unoccupied and to be vigilant for people or vehicles that do not belong in their neighborhoods, particularly during the daytime.



*Michael Mullins/Contributed*



*Jeremy Maxwell/Contributed*

## RINGLING MUSEUM CURATORS TO DISCUSS LIFE OF CHARLES RINGLING

Two curators from the Ringling Museums, Ron McCarty (Ca' d'Zan) and Deborah Walk (Circus Museum) will present an interactive talk about the life, times and influence of Charles Ringling on Tuesday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. at the Crocker Memorial Church in Pioneer Park.

The park is located at 1260 12th St., Sarasota. The program is free to members of the Historical Society of Sarasota County and \$10 for the public.

“In 1912, with the Ringling Bros. Circus in its heyday, Charles Ringling came to Sarasota to visit his more famous and flamboyant brother,” John, in Sarasota, a Historical Society news release says. Subsequently, Charles and his wife, Edith, “fell in love with the town, moved into a house” and in 1925 built a Georgian pink marble mansion on 40 bayfront acres just north of John’s home, the

release adds. Eventually, the Charles Ringling mansion became the centerpiece of the New College bayfront campus as the school’s first library. Today it is called College Hall.

While in Sarasota, Charles Ringling purchased land and donated significant parcels to the newly created county, the news release notes. He owned 52 commercial lots and a 33,000-acre ranch, and he developed the 10-story Sarasota Terrace Hotel and 150 Spanish-style homes. Additionally, he founded the Ringling Bank and donated land for a courthouse for the newly created Sarasota County.

Ringling Boulevard, the street between the courthouse and his hotel, was named for him, the news release adds.

When Ringling died in 1926 in Sarasota at the age of 63, he was a working president of the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce.



*Deborah Walk/Contributed*



*Ron McCarty/Contributed*

“We will be focusing on Charles Ringling, of course,” said Ca’ d’Zan curator Ron McCarty in the news release. “But we will also be including lots of information about John and their sister, Ida Ringling North, to provide insight into their family holdings in Sarasota and their investments in Sarasota’s future. Truly, the Ringling family members developed so much of what we enjoy today in Sarasota,” he added.

The Charles Ringling event at Crocker Memorial Church is the third in a series of year-long panel discussions organized by the Historical Society of Sarasota County. Conversations at The Crocker events highlight specific aspects



*Charles Ringling/Contributed*

of Sarasota’s past and examine pivotal events and people who have influenced Sarasota today, the release notes.

Proceeds from this panel discussion series help to maintain the Historical Society’s two heritage properties at Pioneer Park — the Bidwell-Wood House (1882, Sarasota’s oldest private residence) and the Crocker Memorial Church (1901). Docent-led tours of both buildings are available an hour before each of the Conversations at The Crocker events.

For additional information, contact Linda Garcia at 364-9076 or visit [www.HSOSC.com](http://www.HSOSC.com).

## HABITUAL OFFENDER ARRESTED AS HE DRIVES AWAY FROM COURT

On Dec. 4, the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office arrested Lashay Alexander Smith, 45, of 2441 Central Ave., Sarasota, for driving with a suspended or revoked license for the sixth time.

Smith appeared before a judge the same day on contempt charges for Driving With a Suspended License and was admonished not to drive, according to a Sheriff’s Office report.

Plainclothes deputies were conducting an operation at the courthouse, the report says, watching defendants with suspended licenses after they left the courtroom.

The report says Smith walked to a white Mercury sedan he had parked in a lot at 1926 Golf Drive. He was taken into custody after deputies watched him start to exit the lot onto

Adams Lane in downtown Sarasota, the report adds.

In all, this is Smith’s 50th arrest in Sarasota County for a variety of crimes, including False Imprisonment, Battery and the Sale and Possession of Rock Cocaine, the Sheriff’s Office reported. Half of those arrests were for Violation of Probation and Contempt of Court, a news release notes.



*Lashay Smith/Contributed*

## SARASOTA COUNTY BOND RATINGS REAFFIRMED

**Fitch Ratings**, a national bond rating agency, has reaffirmed Sarasota County's AAA implied general obligation debt rating, the county has announced.

"The AAA rating reflects the county's excellent credit profile and healthy financial position," a news release points out.

"This rating is a testament to the commitment and focus we've maintained for several years on sound operating and financial principles," said Chief Financial Officer Steve Botelho in the news release.

Fitch said the county's healthy financial position is a result of conservative budgeting practices, strong management and economic recovery efforts, the release adds. "These characteristics, including sizable reserves and a low debt burden, are part of the rationale behind the AAA for the implied general obligation debt rating," the release says.

Additionally, Fitch reaffirmed the AA+ rating on Sarasota County's communications services tax, infrastructure surtax (1-cent sales tax) and 5-cent local fuel tax bonds. The stormwater utility revenue bond's AA- rating also was reaffirmed, the news release points out.

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## FOUNDATION BREAKS GROUND ON CEMETERY'S PATRIOT PLAZA

**The Patterson Foundation** and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – National Cemetery Administration broke ground Dec. 3 on Patriot Plaza, a ceremonial amphitheater at Sarasota National Cemetery.

The project, which is estimated to cost \$8 million, is fully funded by The Patterson Foundation; it represents the first time a private philanthropic entity has partnered with the National Cemetery Administration on a ceremonial enhancement of this scope to a national cemetery, a news release points out.

"Patriot Plaza will feature a combination of shade, seats and commissioned art that will honor veterans, inspire patriotism in the com-

munity and embrace freedom," the release says.

"The name, Patriot Plaza, reflects the courage, dedication and values of those who served in our nation's armed forces," said Debra Jacobs, president and CEO of The Patterson Foundation, in the release. "The plaza is intended to honor the service of veterans and our partnership with the National Cemetery Administration will serve as a model for other communities with national cemeteries."

The Patterson Foundation will endow a fund for the maintenance of the plaza.

Construction is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2014, the release notes. 

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# OPINION

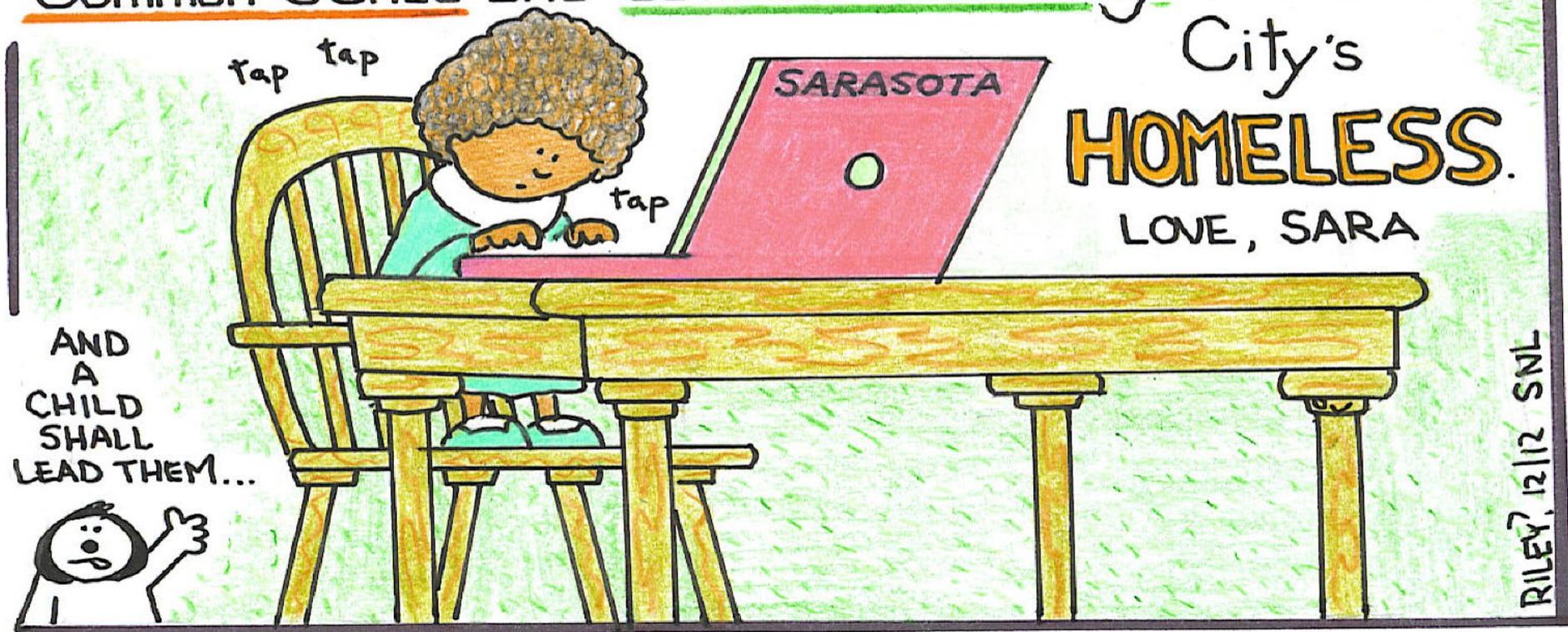
Dear Santa,

May I Please Have A Dose Of  
Common Sense and Common Courtesy For Our

City's

**HOMELESS.**

LOVE, SARA



## WITH NEW EPA RULES COMES HOPE FOR FLORIDA'S WATERWAYS

### EDITORIAL

Florida often is said to resemble a block of

Swiss cheese, resting on a bed of ancient limestone shot through with sinkholes, spring basins and subterranean caves and caverns. Over eons, rain falling on the surface percolated through the limestone bedrock, filtered until it was absolutely pure. It is no wonder early Spanish explorers were said to have been convinced the “fountain of youth” could be found among these pristine waters.

As population and development increased dramatically over the past 100 years — especially the last 50 — these unspoiled waters have become the unfortunate victim of “progress.” Nutrient loading from agricultural and residential lawn fertilizer runoff, livestock waste, leaking septic tanks and improperly treated sewage has produced a dramatic increase in

algal blooms and other signs of pollution in our once-pure waters.

Documentaries such as “Florida Springs — The Unexplored Florida” have detailed exploration of the state’s labyrinthine subterranean caves and caverns. The filmmakers revealed the bones of mastodons and other ancient creatures in waters that were untouched by humans over the millennia. Sadly, the researchers also found evidence the waters were changing, that even in the deep recesses of these springs, pollution could be found.

In recent years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has sought to have Florida’s regulatory agencies do more to protect both surface and subterranean waters. As has been the case in so many other cases of developers versus the environment, the state has dragged

# OPINION

its feet. Finally, the EPA's continued tolerance for this was more than the environmental community could bear.

Several organizations, including the Sierra Club, sued the EPA in federal court four years ago to force it to better protect the waterways in Florida. In a negotiated settlement, the EPA promised the court it would demand stricter oversight by Florida's environmental regulators or take over the job at the federal level. Now that time has arrived. This week the EPA released proposed nutrient guidelines for the state's roughly 100,000 miles of waterways, emphasizing the state's own proposed regulations were adequate to protect not more than about 15 percent of those waters. The rest would be governed by federal rules enforced by the EPA.

Predictably, the reaction from Gov. Rick Scott and the business and development communities was one of outrage. In their best Louis Renault impersonation, they were collectively "Shocked! Shocked!" that the state was not an adequate custodian of Florida's waterways. They made dark predictions of economic collapse and industrial flight if the EPA was allowed to foist its oversight on the state.

The people of Florida, however, should have none of it. This is our proverbial backyard that has become a dumping ground. All of us can suffer the ill effects of exposure to toxic

substances in our drinking water. It is our offspring who will have to bear the burdens of congenital defects and disease as a proximal result of the state's laxity.

We, the people of the state, should welcome the EPA's rules with a collective sigh of relief and hope the damages of the last few decades can be reversed.

*The people of the state should embrace the EPA's rules with a collective sigh of relief, and hope that the damages of the last few decades might now be reversed.*

The EPA has left open the door for state regulators to play a greater role in protecting Florida's waterways. Rather than opposing the new rules, the state should embrace them

and commit to improving its stewardship of a treasure that belongs to its employer — the people of Florida. 



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*The Sarasota News Leader* welcomes letters to the editor from its readers. Letters should be no more than 300 words in length, and include the name, street address and telephone number of the writer. Letters should be emailed to [Letters@SarasotaNewsLeader.com](mailto:Letters@SarasotaNewsLeader.com), with "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line. Letters actually printed will be selected based on space available, subject matter and other factors. We reserve the right to edit any letters submitted for length, grammar, spelling, etc. All letters submitted become the property of *The Sarasota News Leader*.

# OPINION

## TAKE A LOOK AT RELIGIOUS POLITICS: LEFT AND RIGHT, PAST AND PRESENT



By David Staats  
*Contributing Writer*

**COMMENTARY** Over the past several weeks, political pundits have autopsied the results of the Nov. 6 national elections and published their findings. Some findings perpetuate the myth that the failure of the GOP to win the White House was principally due to its surrender to the so-called “Religious Right,” an amorphous group thought by detractors to be anti-scientific (“Creationist”) and misogynic, among other things.

Religion today exercises little influence over Western politics because church and state are firmly independent of one another. This was not always the case, of course. Until the late 18th century, church and state were closely allied.

Religion was never the willing handmaiden of science. Early Christian cartographers dutifully drew maps depicting Jerusalem at the center of the world because God Himself had placed it there: “Thus saith the Lord GOD: This is Jerusalem that I have set in the midst of nations and countries that are round about her” (Ezekiel 5:5).

Later, and under the Inquisition’s threat of torture and life imprisonment, Galileo recanted his “heresy” of a heliocentric universe.

The Protestant world was not different. England and her colonies in the New World refused to adopt the superior Gregorian calendar when it was introduced in 1582, believing it to be a Papist plot. They stuck with the less accurate Julian calendar until 1752.

The role, controversial at times, played by religion in politics was no stranger to the Founding Fathers. All believed Christianity to be the best religion, now and forever, and adherence to it was desirable in order to maintain public morality as the primary social pillar on which good governance rested. They also believed in religious tolerance and the separation of church and state. Beyond that, however, their individual views on the subject diverged markedly from mainstream theology. Small wonder: They were revolutionaries. The “Religious Left”?

George Washington was vague about his religious beliefs. Thomas Jefferson was not. He refused inclusion in any Christian denomination. Writing in 1819, he penned, “I am in a sect by myself, as far as I know.” Jefferson disbelieved the Trinity, denied the Immaculate Conception, doubted Christ’s divinity and was skeptical of miracles.

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# OPINION

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Jefferson's extreme heterodox beliefs caused the *New England Palladium* to write in 1800, "Should the infidel Jefferson be elected to the Presidency, the seal of death is that moment set on our holy religion, our churches will be prostrated, and some infamous 'prostitute,' under the title of goddess of reason, will preside in the sanctuaries now devoted to the worship of the most High."

Still, Jefferson was twice elected president. Religion and the Republic survived together harmoniously, thanks to Jefferson's having built into the First Amendment a "wall of separation between church and State," as he explained in an 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptist Association.

John Adams was a Congregationalist who sought to rationalize Christian teachings with common sense and observable nature. Benjamin Franklin's religious progression was perhaps the most extensive of all those of the Founding Fathers. He was a sinner turned prodigal. Franklin's core belief is perhaps best expressed by the last of his *13 Virtues* (1726): "Imitate Jesus and Socrates."

Today's "Religious Right" is said by some to promote a vision of society that exemplifies the best of American values and traditions: love of God and reverence for life. Others, including former Sarasota Democratic congressional candidate Keith Fitzgerald, have claimed that it wages war on women.

Intelligent Americans know that the "war on women" is being fought elsewhere. In Afghanistan — after more than a decade of U.S.-led "nation building" costing billions of dollars — family planning services are still outlawed. Sex outside marriage is punished by beheading. [An adulteress and her lover will die by public stoning.](#)

An Afghan victim of rape later may also become the victim of "honor killing," a form of ritual murder committed by her close male relatives to expunge the family's shame of having a rape victim living under their roof. Afghan women also face severe punishments for lesser "crimes," such as deserting an abusive husband. In such cases, suicide is often a woman's only exit from the marriage since access to divorce is most often denied her.

That is the real war on women.

To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, American voters are sometimes gullible but not stupid. The GOP lost the White House in 2012 because too few voters supported its candidate and the entire spectrum of policies and positions he championed. The serious issues contested included reform of the tax code, the federal budget, the national debt, immigration, healthcare, Social Security, Iran, etc.

Pinning the blame for the loss primarily on the GOP's presumed surrender to the "Religious Right" demands an enormous leap of faith. 

# OPINION

## NEWS FROM THE FRONT: COMMUNITY DATA

By Allison Pinto and Tim Dutton

*Guest Columnists*

### GUEST COLUMN

There are times when it is especially helpful to reconnect with a broader network of thought leaders to “see beyond the horizon” on issues we are focusing on here in our home community.

Such was the case this month when we participated in the 2012 Summit of the Community Indicators Consortium, an international conference held at the University of Maryland. We presented local efforts and also listened to a diverse group of colleagues who are at the forefront of what is now being referred to as the “data revolution.”

This article is a way of “looping back” with our home community — a sharing of information from the frontlines.

Here are some of the messages we found most compelling:

- *Focus on change.* It is not sufficient to focus on increasing community awareness of the value of data or on making data available. This is time for everybody to use data on a regular basis to bring about change. Becoming a robustly data-informed community is possible, but it requires an active commitment to use local data each time we face decisions. As Michael McAfee (director of the PolicyLink Promise Neighborhoods Initiative) said, “We make the aspiration real when we begin to do the work.” In Sarasota County, we are not there yet. It is time to start using community data.
- *Challenge the status quo.* Are we using data in creative and provocative ways for the sake of positive community change? As Bryan Sivak (chief technology officer of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) said, “Innovation means challenging the status quo wherever it exists.” This means addressing power dynamics, both locally and beyond. It means experts acknowledging the tyranny of experts. It means spotting and rallying around positive deviance. It means focusing on issues of equity and equality. Who here is ready and willing to challenge the status quo?
- *Generate data for neighborhoods.* The amount and variety of data we generate as a society have increased profoundly in recent years. As Robert Groves (former director of the U.S. Census Bureau) said, “We have a data ecosystem now.” These data offer tremendous potential for generating knowledge and informing decisions; however, there still is not much available at the neighborhood level. Within-city or within-county data are still typically organized by the boundary systems of policymakers

# OPINION

and other professionals — for example, by census tract or block group, zip code, precinct or attendance zone. Recognizing citizens as the primary change agents of our community means organizing data by resident-defined neighborhoods and ensuring the data are flexible enough to be re-organized as residents continue to clarify and redefine boundaries. Over the past two decades, the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership has been advancing neighborhood data efforts in dozens of cities across the U.S. Here in Sarasota County, such efforts started over a decade ago. They have grown significantly over the past two years, but we still have a long way to go.

- *Keep inventing.* To become a community that continuously improves through the use of data, we will need to create new approaches to data. As Lisbeth Schorr (senior fellow, Center for the Study of Social Policy) said, “Breakthrough impacts depend on making [established practices] the start of our knowledge base, not the final destination.” There is still much room for invention when it comes to community data, especially with regard to organizing data and data processes around the actions and perspectives of residents.

Focusing on change, challenging the status quo, generating data for neighborhoods and inventing new approaches — we experience these messages as more than challenges. We see them as imperatives for community well-being. Over the past year, it became ev-

ident to us that the time has come for a new organization committed to keeping these imperatives central to its mission — hence the establishment of the Sarasota Community Studio. The messages are just as relevant to other resident groups and organizations grappling with the ever-changing nature of community.

One network through which this community can “grapple together” locally is the Community Data Collaborative. This Collaborative is not a “project” of any particular organization; instead, it comprises individuals from diverse associations and institutions throughout the county.

Formed in 2011, it works to clarify community indicators, develop community data sets, establish a resident-centric online data platform and promote the use of community data throughout Sarasota County. Everyone who recognizes the power of residents to effect community change is encouraged to get involved — especially neighborhood groups.

Materials generated by the Collaborative and partner organizations are available online at [SCcommunitydatacollaborative.weebly.com](http://SCcommunitydatacollaborative.weebly.com).

The resounding message of the 2012 CIC Summit was this: The data revolution is upon us. How do we choose to be a part of it?

*Editor’s note: Allison Pinto and Tim Dutton are co-executive directors of Sarasota Community Studio and founding members of the Community Data Collaborative of Sarasota County.* 

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE HOMELESS DO NOT DESERVE A PASS ON UNCIVIL BEHAVIOR

On Thursday, Nov. 29, my husband and I were walking on the beautiful bayfront sidewalk from Selby Gardens to Bayfront Park. We were enjoying the sunny sparkle on the water, the breezes and brilliant blue sky.

A bearded man, in disarray, sped by us on his bike without warning, barely missing us and scowling. In a loud voice, he spat out at us, "Stupid people!" He rode on, scowling back at us and mumbling something angrily. He had bags of possessions in his basket; he looked dirty; and one would assume, he was living on the street.

His anger was palpable, and scary.

We stopped on the spot, watching him ride on. I was mad and felt insulted. My first instinct was to shout back, "Use your bell!" or "We have a right to walk here!" I didn't say a thing. We kept walking toward Marina Jack.

Five minutes later, we were enjoying looking at the boats laying at anchor and the dinghies, having fun identifying the different types of mangroves and looking out to Bird Key and behind us to the tall condos facing the water. I had just finished telling my husband, "How lucky we are to be living here. This is such a beautiful spot. We should do this more often," when before us, blocking the entire sidewalk with their bags, shopping bags and clothing

were two shirtless men, their possession-laden bikes leaning against the bench.

One man, walking to the bench from the tiki bar, had dumped out a huge trash bag full of empty crushed beer cans and was shouting at the other to get off his f ..... a .. and help him count them.

These men were also rude, loud and smelly, and they glared at us as we walked by. They staked out their claim on the bench and were going to live there all day long. Their looks said, "This is our sidewalk. Don't come here."

I turned to my husband and said, "Let's go home. This is ruined for me now." I smiled at the man counting the beer cans as I turned around.

Ironically, your editorial Friday, Nov. 30, described Sarasota's chronic problem of homelessness as a tug of war with a hardening of positions on both sides. You describe a gentrified downtown angry at vagrants and civil rights leaders angry at public treatment of vagrants. I am not gentrified, nor am I a merchant. Yesterday, my rights as a citizen of Sarasota were infringed upon by uncivil behavior toward me in a public place that I pay taxes to have access to. I could have kept walking to the park, but I had seen ahead of

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me more homeless men sitting on the benches and walking on the point.

I chose to not put myself there anymore. It was not worth it. Arguing with these people or insulting them or glaring back would have done nothing except anger them and would have demeaned me and them as human beings.

I denied myself and my husband a nature walk in Sarasota's most beautiful city bayfront area because I didn't feel safe or happy. I also didn't have the tools to fix the scenarios I found myself in. These guys were not look-

ing for a handout. They just didn't want us in their space.

The "dialogue" in this tug of war must address the rights of all citizens to have access to public areas with civil dress and behavior and a sharing of the beauty that is Sarasota. The bayfront is a magnificent space. Governments can enforce dress codes but cannot force civil behavior.

Each of us is responsible for our actions toward others, whether we are homeless or not.

*Nancy R. Wilson  
Siesta Key*



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# Sarasota Leisure

Featuring



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SARASOTA'S MASTER CALENDAR



**WHAT I DID FOR LIFE**

**ASK OTUS**

**WARM WELCOME TO THE HOLIDAYS**

*Inside*



**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.***

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## WHAT I DID FOR LIFE

*Sarasota Memorial Hospital exercise physiologist Seth Stinson (in scrubs) works with Marilyn Bowker and Peter Farrell as part of the hospital's Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Program. Photo courtesy Sarasota Memorial Hospital*

### **A HEART-HEALTHY DIET IS EASIER TO ADHERE TO THAN IT MAY SEEM, ESPECIALLY WITH PLENTY OF GROCERY AND RESTAURANT CHOICES IN SARASOTA**

**By Sonia Fuentes**  
*Contributing Writer*

On Sunday, July 24, 2011, I went to the Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, NY, for a week to give a talk titled, “The Second Wave of the Women’s Movement: Where It’s Been, Where It’s At” to the Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) attendees at the historic Athenaeum Hotel (where I was staying) and to attend a week’s programs on women’s rights issues around the world.

(I am a founder of the National Organization for Women — NOW — and a feminist activist and frequently write and speak about the women’s movement.)

I had an exhilarating week; and on Friday, July 29, the day before I was to fly home to Sara-

sota, I left my hotel to walk the few blocks to the Hall of Philosophy to hear what appeared to be a most interesting panel discussion. I had just walked a few feet and was standing at Chautauqua’s 5,000-seat amphitheater when suddenly I could not catch my breath and my legs would not move. I raised my hands and cupped them to bring air into my mouth and lungs, but that did not work. I looked down at my legs to see why they would not move but saw nothing different.

(Friends subsequently asked me why I did not call 911 when this started happening, since I had a cell phone. I am sorry to admit that it never occurred to me, perhaps because I did

*Sonia Fuentes/Photo by  
Arielle Scherr*

not realize the seriousness of what was happening.)

Somehow, I was able to turn around and return to my room at the hotel. I realized I had three options:

- I could lie down and rest.
- I could begin packing for my trip home the next day.
- I could try to get a ride to the hall and attend the panel discussion.

Naturally, I chose the third option. I asked one of the hotel's bellmen if he could give me a ride to the hall in one of the hotel's golf carts since I was not physically up to walking. He said he was not supposed to, but (perhaps moved by my woeful state) said he would.

After he drove me to the Hall of Philosophy, I found a seat and thoroughly enjoyed the 1¼-hour panel discussion. But, when it was over and I got up to return to my hotel, I again could not breathe and I could not walk. By

holding on to the tops of the seats, I somehow made my way out of the hall.

However, as I started to walk back to the hotel, I realized I could not do so. I looked for a bench

or a stoop on which to sit down, and found a bench. I sat down and thought: *If there were only some way in which I could get to the hotel and reach Laurie Paterniti, the director of the Road Scholar program, or Kay Hutton, her assistant, they would help me.* But I was blocks away from the hotel and throngs of people were marching in front of me, leaving the Hall of Philosophy. I looked up and there, in the midst of all those people, I saw Kay.

"Kay," I called to her. "I need help."

She came right over and I told her what had happened. She told me the Chautauqua Institution had a medical clinic only steps away. She wanted to run to it for help before it closed for the afternoon and asked me if I would be OK while she did so. I said I would.

Kay was back in a few minutes and said an ambulance was on the way. The ambulance came in short order, and Kay and I got inside. As soon as I was seated, the technician placed an oxygen mask over my face. Immediately,

I felt better and that shortness of breath and inability to walk never returned.

The ambulance took me to a nearby hospital, where the staff members gave me several tests but



*Jill Edwards checks on Peter Morrison as he uses the treadmill.  
Photo courtesy Sarasota Memorial Hospital*

said they were not equipped to deal with my condition. They suggested I go to a second hospital, and Kay strongly recommended the Hamot Medical Center in Erie, PA, which I later learned was one of the top 50 hospitals in the U.S. By this time, Kay had been with me for 2½ hours and I insisted she go home for dinner; I told her I would be fine. Reluctantly, she left, and a second ambulance took me to Hamot.

I arrived there at 6:30 p.m. and at 8:30 p.m. Dr. Richard Petrella, a world-class cardiologist, was in my room. I asked him whether I could go home to Sarasota the next day as I had planned. Petrella said I could not do that: I had been diagnosed with acute coronary syndrome, but I had not had a heart attack.

However, the next morning when he came to my room again, Petrella said that if I wanted to, I could return to Sarasota that day. I do not know what changed his mind; perhaps he had seen some positive test results. He went on to say that I could also stay and he would run some tests on me beginning Monday, Aug. 1. The choice was up to me.

I did not know what to do. I was 83 years old; my clothes, computer and everything I had packed for a week's stay in Chautauqua were in Chautauqua; I was in Erie, PA, where I knew no one; and I had commitments back home in Sarasota.

I had had a cardiologist in Sarasota since I had been diagnosed with a mild heart murmur, so I telephoned her.

She said, "Sonia, you look decades younger than you are, and I've been treating you that way. I haven't given you lots of tests. Stay at Hamot and have the tests."

Kay kindly offered to pack my things and ship them to Sarasota, and Petrella said he would perform a catheterization on me on Aug. 1.

On Monday morning, I awoke with strong feelings of guilt. I had felt absolutely fine since the oxygen mask had been placed on my face in the first ambulance. I had Kay packing and shipping my things, I had others set to handle my commitments at home and I was about to have a catheterization — all for nothing. I shared my thoughts with Petrella, who paid no attention to me.

After the procedure, Petrella told me the catheterization had revealed two blockages in the arteries of my heart and he was glad he had also done an ultrasound, which showed two more blockages where he had not expected them. He had implanted four stents in three arteries of my heart that were 75 percent to 85 percent blocked.

Petrella put me on daily doses of a blood thinner, which he said he wanted me to stay on for the rest of my life (as it keeps the stents open), as well as a statin (to keep my cholesterol level down) and on baby aspirin. I had already been on blood pressure medication for several years.

(Subsequently, I had to stop taking the statin because it caused muscle pain, as well as the blood pressure medication. Fortunately, my blood pressure and cholesterol level stabilized without them.)

Ordinarily, I would have been able to go home the next day, but I had a reaction to the anesthesia. Because of that and the difficulties of making travel arrangements from my hospital bed, I was not able to leave until two days later.

Before I left Hamot, I asked Petrella whether I could go on a long-planned 10-day tour of Germany and Belgium one month after the implantation of the stents. He said, “On one condition.”

When I asked him what that was, he said, “You must send me a postcard from Berlin.”

On Sept. 4, I left for my trip.

## REHAB

On my return, when I was casually looking at my discharge instructions for the first time, I saw I was supposed to take a cardiac rehab course. Petrella’s nurse confirmed this when I called. No one at Hamot had mentioned this to me.

I then signed up for the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at the Sarasota Memorial Health Care

System at 5880 Rand Boulevard (off Clark Road). The program is designed to help those who have experienced a cardiac event return to the highest level of functioning possible. It consists of 36 one-hour sessions, which one can attend either two or three times a week.

The program includes individualized exercises (with monitoring of blood pressure, heart rate and heart rhythms) and lifestyle education lectures designed to keep participants informed of important strategies to protect heart health. I am covered by Medicare and a secondary insurer; Medicare picked up 80 percent of the cost, and my secondary insurer picked up the remainder.

One of those lectures, by Jill Edwards, a clinical exercise physiologist with a master’s degree in science, was about nutrition — and it changed my life.



*(From left): Exercise physiologist Meredith Cleveland (left) talks with Marilyn Bowker as Bowker and Peter Farrell work on bikes. Exercise physiologist Seth Stinson keeps an eye on Jill Edwards (in blue scrubs at the top of the photo) as she works with patients. Photo courtesy Sarasota Memorial Hospital*

I did not think I would have much to learn at the lecture because I felt I was pretty savvy about the subject already. I was 4 feet 10½ inches tall and weighed 124 pounds, a little overweight but nothing horrendous. I had been educating myself for years on healthful eating: I watched calories, cholesterol, fat and salt and had eschewed red meat for years, eating chicken and fish instead.

At the Hamot Medical Center, Petrella had given me a pamphlet titled, “Low Cholesterol or Low Animal Fat, Low Sodium Diet,” dated January 2006, which was pretty much what I had been eating all along. In fact, I had wondered why I had had the blockages in my arteries since I had paid such close attention to my diet.

At her lecture, Jill distributed a seven-page handout she had prepared. The principal points in her lecture and the handout follow:

1. Eighty percent of our diet has to consist of vegetables, fruit, legumes and nuts.
2. Dairy products and processed foods are to be avoided. (It took me considerable time thereafter to determine what processed foods were. The definition can vary slightly, but the term usually refers to foods that are packaged in boxes, cans or bags. These foods include bacon, sausage, hot dogs, pepperoni, ham and packaged luncheon meat, including low-fat deli meat.)
3. Whole grain bread, cereals and other products are recommended.
4. One does not need to eat foods from animals to get enough protein.
5. Oils, including olive oil, are to be limited.

6. One’s intake of added sugar, sugar substitutes and salt are to be limited. (Conventional wisdom has always been that one should avoid salt except when it is needed after physical activity. A June 2012 [New York Times article](#), however, stated that evidence supporting this advice is very weak.)

7. The handout recommended several books and websites. Among the books were Dr. Joel Fuhrman’s *Eat to Live* and Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn’s *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*. (You can read about [Esselstyn](#).)

Among the websites was [www.pcrm.org](http://www.pcrm.org).

In addition, a friend recommended a superb DVD on the subject, [Forks Over Knives](#).

I came away from Jill’s lecture totally bewildered and with endless questions buzzing in my brain. How could I give up so many foods I enjoyed? Since I rarely cook, what grocery stores could I shop at that would have such foods already prepared? Since I frequently eat out, what restaurants could I go to? No dairy foods? What would I do for milk?

I learned that Jill’s lecture and handout were only the beginning of an educational project on which I needed to embark. I concluded that the project was worth the time, effort, and money it would entail *because I wanted to keep on living*. The questions I had just kept coming, but I wrote them down and asked Jill if she could meet with me one-on-one to answer them. She agreed, and we met on three occasions for about 45 minutes each.

## NEW DIETARY HABITS

I learned a great many things — for example, to seek out organic foods. I learned that many

kinds of non-dairy milks are in the supermarket and that local gourmet grocery stores carry a good many prepared vegetarian items. I learned balsamic vinegar and olive oil make a good salad dressing.

I also learned to avoid processed egg substitutes and to eat whole eggs instead.

Additionally, I learned it was all right to go off my diet at the occasional reception and cocktail party as long as I went right back on afterwards.

I found a good many local restaurants have vegetarian and vegan options.

When I am going to a function given by an organization at a local restaurant or country club, I request a vegetarian meal and fresh fruit cup for dessert in advance.

As a vegetarian, I am in good company. President Clinton, who had quadruple bypass sur-

gery and the implantation of two stents, now considers himself a vegan.

Vegetarians and vegans, however, are still a tiny proportion of the U.S. population. The latest update on vegetarianism is contained in a [Gallup poll of July 2012](#).

Jill told me to stop worrying about calories and fat and to focus instead on eating properly. She turned out to be right. In short order, I lost about seven pounds and have kept them off, and my cholesterol dropped from 201 to 174.

Jill's handout included the following quote from Hippocrates, the iconic Greek philosopher who was born around 460 B.C., died around 370 B.C., and is considered to have been the first physician in human history: "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

It was true then and it is true today. 



*Jill Edwards works with Peter Morrison (left) and Robert Lew. Photo courtesy Sarasota Memorial Hospital*



## ASK OTUS

### **NO WILD TURKEYS ON SIESTA, BUT THE BUTTERFLIES ARE PLENTIFUL AND PARTICULARLY PRETTY AT SEVERAL SITES IN SARASOTA**

Dear Otus,

I enjoyed your article on [wild turkeys](#), especially the part about Siesta Key not having any. We can't wait to get back down there in January. Yesterday, I shot this photo of a flock in our yard. They get bigger and bolder each year. Drives the neighborhood dogs crazy. And the grass seeds we all put down for the lawns are gobbled up in minutes.

The *Boston Globe* recently reported on a woman in Newton who has a flock of “nui-

sance turkeys” roosting in the trees around her house. They poop all over her car, house and garden. At night she goes out with tennis racquet and balls and smashes the balls into the trees in an attempt to drive them off. Thus far, the turkeys have refused to budge.

*Tom  
Plymouth, MA*

Dear Tom,

Thank you for the great photo and stories! They truly illustrate the problems wild turkeys are creating “up North.” Wishing you a safe trip down to Siesta Key, and don't forget to pack a few turkey sandwiches for the flight. No wild turkeys here, so you need not pack your tennis racquet, but do bring your golf clubs in case you run across one of our key's tegus!

*Otus*



*These wild turkeys have become bolder about making themselves at home in the yard of a Massachusetts reader. Photo courtesy Tom in Plymouth, MA.*

Dear Otus,

My granddaughter is coming here for the Christmas holidays. She is 8½ years old and lives with my son in Sutton Place, NYC. She wants to see butterflies. Where do I take her around here and what can I promise her that she'll see there?

Thank you.

*Sandy  
Longboat Key*

Dear Sandy,

How lovely! I am recommending four places specifically created as butterfly gardens that not only will your granddaughter enjoy but you will, too.

- The Secret Garden at the John and Mabel Ringling Museum, 5401 Bay Shore Road, with paid admission to the museum.
- The small but exquisite Catherine and Richard LaBrie Butterfly Garden at the Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Boulevard of the Arts,

south of the Ringling Museum and on the same road as The GWIZ Museum. Free admission.

- The Butterfly Garden at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 South Palm Ave., with paid admission to the Gardens.
- The Butterfly Garden at Historic Spanish Point, 337 N. Tamiami Trail (Osprey), with paid admission.

What butterflies will you see in those locations? Who knows?

I am including this week photos of commonly seen butterflies at all four gardens. Do keep in mind that butterflies do not like to flutter about until the temperature is close to 75 degrees. The early bird may get the worm and an early riser may be healthy, wealthy and wise; but if you want to catch a butterfly, sleep in and plan on a warm late morning or early afternoon visit!

*Otus*





*A Monarch Butterfly/File photo*



*A Giant Swallowtail/File Photo*



### **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@sarasotanewsleader.com](mailto:askotus@sarasotanewsleader.com). Thank you.*

# WARM WELCOME TO THE HOLIDAYS

## SARASOTA'S HOLIDAY PARADE 2012 TAKES TO THE STREETS ON DEC. 1

*Staff Reports*

With balmy temperatures underscoring a tropical holiday atmosphere, floats, marching band units, circus acts, the Orioles' Bird, city and county officials and even Big Cat Habitat's reigning cats combined for a creative Holiday Parade on Sarasota's Main Street Saturday, Dec. 1.

Crowd members from wee tots to wise elders welcomed the variety and creativity that went into producing the annual event.

*All photos by Norman Schimmel.* 



*Santa Claus waves to the crowd.*



*The Garbage Men band performs in front of Toy Lab on Main Street as part of the festivities Saturday night, Dec. 1.*



*People line Main Street, waiting for the parade to get under way.*



*'Here Comes Santa Claus ...'*



*'Snow' falls on the Mighty Sailor Band of Sarasota High School.*



*Who says you need a real train?*



Happy Holidays from Circus Sarasota  
www.CircusSarasota.org

Sailor Circus  
www.SailorCircus.org

*Circus Sarasota and Sailor Circus performers team up to delight the crowd.*



*Sarasota Police Department motorcyclists show off their skills on Main Street.*



*Members of the Sarasota Military Academy's Music Battalion march along the parade route.*



*Sarasota Mayor Suzanne Atwell waves to the crowd.*



*The U.S. Marine Corps reminds everyone to think of Toys for Tots for disadvantaged children.*



*Balloons that Bloom presents its own special crew of holiday revelers.*



*The Sahib Shrine Temple's Hillbilly Clan takes its place amid the floats and other entries of the parade.*



*Students from the Sarasota School of Arts and Sciences ride a 'boat float.'*



*The Sarasota County Fire Department color guard makes its way down the street.*

# CATCH ME

## IF YOU CAN

A NEW MUSICAL

ARTS BRIEFS



**IF YOU WANNA MAKE IT, MAKE IT UP.**

*Catch the stage version of Catch Me If You Can on Dec. 7 at the Van Wezel. Contributed photo*

### **CATCH ME IF YOU CAN CAN CAPTIVATE STAGE AUDIENCES, TOO**

Many moviegoers are aware of the action and drama portrayed in the 2002 cinematic release of *Catch Me If You Can*. However, at 8 p.m. on Dec. 7 at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Sarasota, audience members will see that the movie merely hinted at the extravagant life Frank Abagnale Jr. was able to live as a result of his incredible ability to con his way into and out of just about any situation.

His talents enabled him “to become quite the ‘ladies’ man’ and to experience the illustrious lifestyles associated with portraying, falsely, a doctor, pilot, lawyer and a number of other professions,” a Van Wezel news release

notes. Building upon this aspect of his criminal career, the *Catch Me If You Can* musical brandishes the excitement and glamour he experienced over his five years on the lam, the release adds.

The production is a family-friendly show, though, with plenty of laughs and a catchy tune, the release notes.

Tickets are priced from \$30 to \$80. For more information, call the box office at 953-3368 or visit [www.VanWezel.org](http://www.VanWezel.org).

The Van Wezel is located at 777 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota.

## HERMITAGE RECEIVES NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS GRANT

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Rocco Landesman has announced that the Hermitage Artist Retreat is one of 832 nonprofit organizations nationwide to receive an NEA Art Works Grant.

The Hermitage has been recommended for a \$15,000 grant to support its artist residencies, a news release says.

“This is our fourth consecutive year to receive NEA funding and the fourth year since artist communities have been given [their] own funding category through the NEA,” said Bruce E. Rodgers, executive director of the Hermitage, in the news release. “We still compete for the same Arts Works money as all arts organizations, but being recognized as an arts category reinforces the vital role artist communities play in our national cultural

landscape. We are honored to be chosen as a recipient of this important national funding.”

Landesman reinforced the importance of the Hermitage’s selection for one of the highly competitive awards: “These projects offer extraordinary examples of creativity in our country, including the creation of new work, innovative ways of engaging audiences and exemplary education programs.”

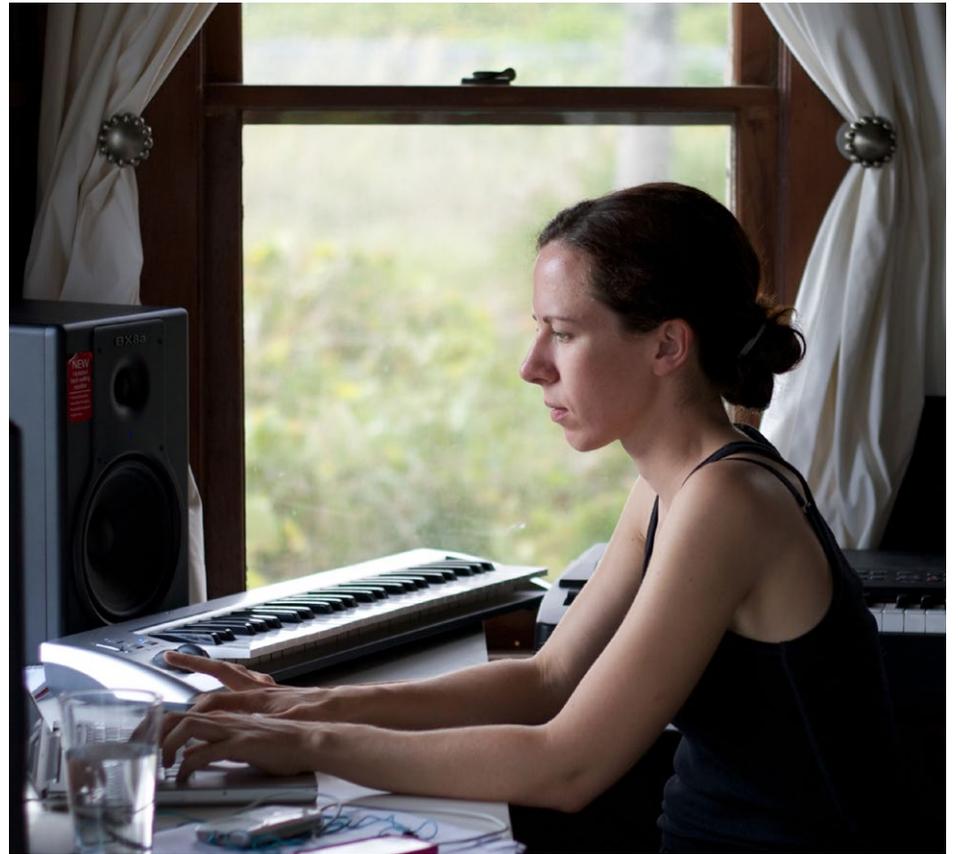
In March, the NEA received 1,509 eligible applications for Art Works, requesting more than \$74 million in funding, the release adds. The 832 recommended NEA grants total \$23.3 million, span 13 artistic disciplines and fields and focus primarily on the creation of work and presentation of both new and existing works for the benefit of American audiences, the news release points out.



*Artist Michael Eade is inspired by the setting of the Hermitage. Contributed photo*

Applications were reviewed by panels of outside experts convened by NEA staff, and each project was judged on its artistic excellence and artistic merit, the release notes. For a complete listing of projects recommended for Art Works grant support, please visit the NEA website at [arts.gov](http://arts.gov).

The Hermitage is a not-for-profit artist retreat located at 6660 Manasota Key Road in Englewood. It brings accomplished painters, sculptors, writers, playwrights, poets, composers and other artists from all over the world for extended stays on its 8.5-acre campus. Each artist is asked to contribute two services to the community during his or her residency. For more information, call 475-2098 or visit [www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org).



*Composer Missy Mazzoli works on a piece during her residency at the Hermitage. Contributed photo*



*Artist Bradley Castellano works on a painting. Contributed photo*

## SARASOTA BALLET DANCE PROGRAM EXPANDS SPACE, OFFERINGS

Known for inspiring and transforming at-risk students from Sarasota County Title I schools, The Sarasota Ballet's educational program, Dance — The Next Generation (DNG), is making some internal transformations of its own, the ballet company has announced.

Having moved to a larger rehearsal space earlier this month, this one-of-a-kind program — funded by community donors and foundations and free of charge for the students — will have room to stretch out and extend its impact to more local children, a news release says.

Previously housed inside the FSU Center for the Performing Arts, the program had long outgrown the cramped and crowded quarters that it shared with The Sarasota Ballet Company and School, the release points out. The new space, a 6,000-square-foot building located at

500 Tallevast Road in Sarasota, will feature three large dance studios along with multiple classrooms and administration offices.

Thanks in large part to Mark Famiglio, a board member of The Sarasota Ballet who is making the space available, "this exceptional program will now comfortably accommodate the 116 students who participate," the release adds.

"This program helps students realize their full potential both in the world of dance and in education. Having the additional room will allow us to support the kids in the program more effectively," said Lisa Townsend, director of DNG.

In conjunction with that additional legroom, DNG, which traditionally has catered to students in grades three through nine, will be of-



*Dance — The Next Generation students work at the barre. Contributed photo*

ferred all the way through high school graduation.

The extended curriculum, made possible through a multi-year donation from a private contributor, will help Sarasota Ballet bring DNG closer to its long-term goal of being honored with the *Coming Up Taller Award* once again, the release notes. Now known as the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, this honor recognizes exemplary arts and humanities programs that foster

young people's intellectual and creative development, the release says. "Having accepted the award once before, DNG's administration has since made thoughtful strides in order to be eligible again," the release notes.



*Dance — The Next Generation program participants practice the first position. Contributed photo*

"The generosity of individuals and of our foundations has just been outstanding," said Iain Webb, director of The Sarasota Ballet. "It has propelled us to the level we are at today and will allow us to augment the program and support the children of Sarasota County for years to come. We're so thankful."

## SUN CIRCLE ART SHOW TO HIGHLIGHT NEIGHBORHOOD TALENT

The Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores Neighborhood Association has announced it will sponsor the Sun Circle Art Show in Sapphire Shores Park on Saturday, March 2, 2013.

The show will feature works of local artists, craftspeople, musicians and writers and will include a silent auction. Any Indian Beach Sapphire Shores resident, any student or faculty member of Ringling College and any student or faculty member of New college who

wishes to participate should contact Jane Johnson at 351-1920 or [suncirclefest@gmail.com](mailto:suncirclefest@gmail.com) by Dec. 15.

Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores Association is a voluntary neighborhood organization whose members have worked together for more than 50 years to enhance the quality of life and Old Florida environment of their historic bayfront neighborhood, a news release notes.

**Take Your Time**  
**You Have All Week**

Enjoy The News Leader Anytime - Day or Night

## NEW COLLEGE PROFESSOR PUBLISHES BOOK ON HOLCROFT

New College of Florida professor Miriam Wallace has co-edited a collection of essays titled, *Re-Viewing Thomas Holcroft, 1745-1809: Essays on Thomas Holcroft's Works and Life*, published by Ashgate.

The book focuses on Holcroft, the self-educated son of a cobbler who became a popular 18th-century playwright, influential reformist novelist and controversial political radical, a New College news release says.

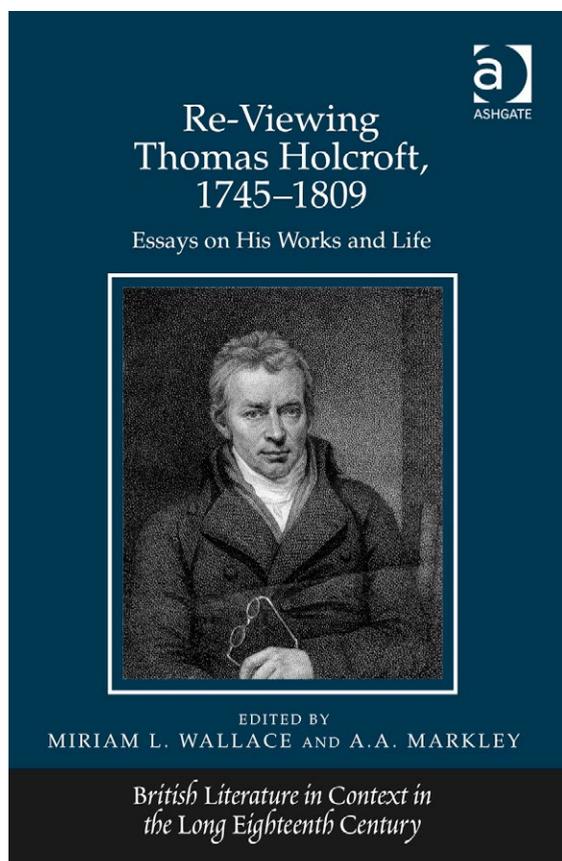
*Re-Viewing Thomas Holcroft* is the first essay collection devoted to Holcroft's life and literary work, the release points out. "Wallace and her co-editor, A.A. Markley, have compiled essays that illustrate Holcroft's central role among London's radical reformers and intelligentsia as well as his theatrical innovations within ongoing explorations of the late 18th-century public sphere of letters and debate," the release adds. Holcroft introduced

"melodrama" to Britain and was known as the playwright who brought Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro* to the English stage as *The Follies of a Day*.

He was also a victim of the 1794 London Treason Trials.

Wallace is professor of English at New College, where she teaches courses on the British novel and literary theory with a particular interest in feminist and gender theories. As a 2012 Lewis Walpole Library Fellow, she conducted research in Yale University's Walpole library collection for her project, *Illustrating Speech: Depicting Professional, Popular, and Illicit Speaking*.

In 2002, she was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities College Teacher Fellowship for her book, *Revolutionary Subjects in the English "Jacobin" Novel, 1790-1805*.



The cover of New College professor Miriam Wallace's book on Thomas Holcroft. Contributed photo



Miriam Wallace/Contributed

## JAZZ ARTISTS NAJAR AND PEPOWSKI TO PERFORM ON DEC. 14

The Jazz Club of Sarasota will present renowned jazz guitarist Nate Najar and the celebrated clarinetist and saxophonist Ken Peplowski in concert, Friday, Dec. 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the Beatrice Friedman Symphony Center, 709 N. Tamiami Trail, in Sarasota.

Accompanying the duo will be John Lamb on bass and Steven Bucholtz on drums, a Jazz Club news release says.

Najar is a composer and producer as well as a guitarist. "Grounded in classical music, with a distinct affinity for jazz, Latin, blues and gospel, Najar considers himself a product of his many passions, including Antonio Carlos Jobim's Brazilian rhythms and the stylistic genius of guitar and piano innovators Barney Kessel, Django Reinhardt, Oscar Peterson and Bill Evans," the news release adds. "He uses the acoustic guitar like a piano, eliciting rich and unique sounds that are the result of his ongoing mastery of the finger-style nylon string technique," the release notes. For more information, visit [www.natenajar.com](http://www.natenajar.com).



*Nate Najar/Contributed*

One of the nation's top clarinetists and a very talented tenor player, Peplowski "has helped keep the tradition of small-group swing (and, occasionally, Dixieland) alive," the release points out. After spending two years in the late 1970s touring with the Tommy Dorsey ghost orchestra (directed by Buddy Morrow), Peplowski settled in New York, freelanced in a variety of settings and played with Benny Goodman, the release says.

He has performed with such greats as Mel Torme, Leon Redbone, Charlie Byrd, Peggy Lee, Madonna, Hank Jones, Dave Frishberg, Rosemary Clooney, James Moody, Houston Person, Steve Allen and Woody Allen, the release adds. In 2007, Peplowski was named jazz advisor of Oregon Festival of American Music and music director of Jazz Party at The Shedd, both in Eugene, OR.

Tickets are \$30 at the door; \$10 for students.

For tickets or for more information about the Jazz Club of Sarasota, call 366-1552 or visit [www.jazzclubsarasota.com](http://www.jazzclubsarasota.com).



*Ken Peplowski/Contribued photo by Carol LoRicco*

## VAN WEZEL STAGE SPORTING A NEW GRAND DRAPE

The Van Wezel Foundation has donated a new grand drape to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Sarasota, the hall has announced.

The \$15,000 grand drape has been installed and is in use, a news release notes. Its first show was *Dave Koz & Friends* in November.

The drape itself, manufactured by Rose Brand, is composed of two panels, each 34 feet high and 40 feet wide, for a total width of 80 feet. The fabric of the drape is sewn from 25-ounce synthetic velour, which is considered a heavy weight suitable for professional theaters, a news release says.

“This type of fabric is inherently fire retardant and will not need to be re-treated for fire resistance,” the release adds.

The curtain (including the chain in the bottom hem) weighs about 900 pounds; with its other hardware, the total weight is 1,020 pounds, the release notes.

Because of the counterweight fly system, it can be raised and lowered by one man.

The previous grand drape had suffered from more than six years of usage in damaged condition, the news release points out. 



*The Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Sarasota has a new grand drape, thanks to its foundation. Contributed photo*



*Sam Silverberg will portray Judah Maccabee at Temple Emanu-El's Hanukkah Happening on Dec. 14. Contributed photo*

## TEMPLE EMANU-EL TO HOST HANUKKAH HAPPENING

Members of the community are warmly invited to a Hanukkah celebration as Temple Emanu-El, 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota, hosts the annual *Hanukkah Happening* on Friday evening, Dec. 14, at 6 p.m.

“An exuberant and spirited evening for all ages, the *Hanukkah Happening* features a delicious dinner of homemade brisket and chicken with all the trimmings as well as the traditional *latkes* (fried potato pancakes); crafts and children’s activities; a menorah-making contest with prizes for all entrants; and a visit from Hanukkah hero Judah Maccabee, who will retell the story of Hanukkah and distrib-

ute dreidels and chocolate gelt,” a Temple news release says.

The annual Hanukkah Family Service, which includes candle-lighting, songs and a Hanukkah play, will follow at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations are required for the *Hanukkah Happening*. The cost is \$25 per adult and \$15 for children under 13. All proceeds benefit educational and scholarship programs at Temple Emanu-El Religious School.

Checks made out to “Temple Emanu-El Religious School” and the names of attendees may be mailed to Temple Emanu-El, 151 McIntosh Road, Sarasota, FL 34232. For more information, call 371-2788.

## PUBLIC INVITED TO ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS

*Advent Lessons and Carols*, a festive celebration in preparation for the birth of Christ, will be offered at The Church of the Redeemer, 222 S. Palm Ave., in downtown Sarasota, on Sunday, Dec. 16, at 5:15 p.m.

*“Lessons and Carols* is a joyous, interactive recounting of history from the Fall of Man, through the prophets, to the Annunciation of the Savior’s birth to Mary,” a Redeemer news release says. The congregation will join in the reading of Scripture and the singing of well-loved Advent carols.

The Canterbury, Westminster and Adult choirs will lead the congregation in song, under the direction of organist-choirmaster Ann Stephenson-Moe. A light reception will follow in Gillespie Hall.

*“Lessons and Carols* is a free event, a gift to the community in the season of Advent,” the news release adds. Complimentary parking



*The Church of the Redeemer is located in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

will be available at the BMO Harris Bank parking garage on McAnsh Square between 3:30 and 9 p.m.

For more information call the parish office at 955-4263 or visit [www.redeemersarasota.org](http://www.redeemersarasota.org). 

## HANUKKAH COMES EARLY THIS YEAR



*Members of Congregation Kol HaNeshama recently delivered gifts to Jewish Family and Children’s Services in Sarasota for two families struggling to get back on their feet. (From left) Jan Alston of the JFCS thanks the K-H Social Action Committee members: Elle Pack, Leny Cohen and Judy Barde. Hanukkah will be celebrated Dec. 8-16. Contributed photo*



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## THE BEST OF THE UPCOMING WEEK

**07**  
DEC

### **WSLR presents Mark Stuart and Stacey Earle**

Friday, Dec. 7, 8 p.m., Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota. Tickets: \$12 at the door. For information, call 587-6588 or visit [WSLR.org](http://WSLR.org)

**07**  
DEC

### **1776 the Musical**

Through Dec. 22 at the Asolo Repertory Theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. For ticket information, call 351-8000 or visit [asolorep.org](http://asolorep.org).

**07**  
DEC

### **Annie**

Dec. 7-16 at The Players Theatre, 838 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. For ticket information, call 365-2494 or visit [theplayers.org](http://theplayers.org).

**08**  
DEC

### **26th Annual Boat Parade of Lights**

Saturday, Dec. 8, 6 p.m., with viewing from City Island, Centennial Park and Island Park. Free to the public.

**09**  
DEC

### **Book signing: Carolina Cositore**

Sunday, Dec. 9, 1 p.m., Bookstore1, 1359 Main St., Sarasota. Admission free; purchase book for signing. Information: 365-7900 or [bookstore1sarasota.com](http://bookstore1sarasota.com).

**14**  
DEC

### **Ken Peplowski and Nate Najjar Quartet**

Friday, Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., Beatrice Friedman Symphony Center, 709 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Admission: \$30; call 366-1552 for tickets.

*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:*



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**PRESS**



**Norman Schimmel**  
Photographer

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# SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS

## SAILORS' DELIGHT

*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.*