

March 29, 2013

# THE SARASOTA News Leader

*The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida*

**A GENUINE THREAT**

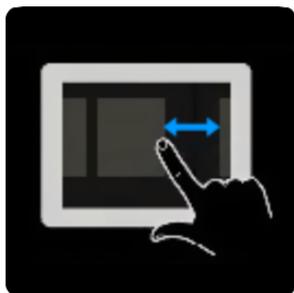
**A NEW CODE**

**FORMING THE 'ABC CLUB'**

*Inside*

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

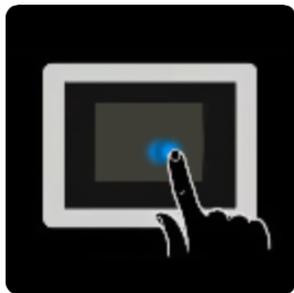
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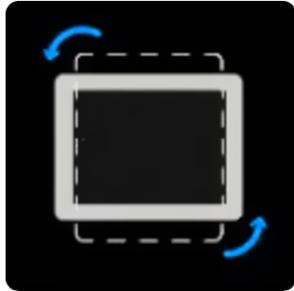
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# A.K.A. HELP

# SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

*The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida*

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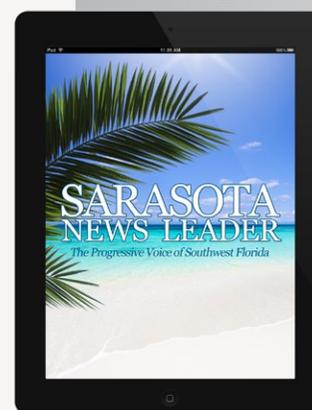
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# Welcome

Some weeks the news stories just seem to multiply like, well, Easter bunnies. And it seems it is all our staff can do to get them written in time to meet deadline.

When the pace does slow down just a tad, I consider that a good time to review matters that might have been overlooked or relegated to a lower level of importance. You will see some of those kinds of stories this week.

One example is the 2012 annual crime report Sheriff Tom Knight's office released in January. It contains very positive information, but it was not until after a couple of comments were aired about it publicly last week that we managed to "corral" it for coverage.

Another example regards the overhaul of the county's Procurement Code. It has been a long process, and even though it came to fruition last week, more pressing news relegated this last chapter — I hope — to our March 29 issue.

Do not worry, though, that this edition of the *News Leader* is focused on "old" news. Thanks to Cooper Levey-Baker and Stan Zimmerman, we have plenty of timely topics for you to peruse.

I also want to take this opportunity to apologize for my recent negligence in touting our features. This week you will find not only two wonderful articles with different takes on the upcoming Sarasota Film Festival, but a lovely feature from contributor Fran Palmeri.

I highly encourage you to read Otus' column this week, too — if it is not already on your "must see" list. He has provided us with one of the most fascinating tales I have read in a long time.

And on that note, I will wish all of you a pleasant Passover, a Happy Easter and a fun April Fool's Day.

*Rachel Brown Hackney*

Editor and Publisher



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## A GENUINE THREAT

*Much of Bayfront Park could be inundated by the rising sea level, Nobel laureates told a Sarasota audience this week. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **NOBEL LAUREATES WARN SARASOTA ABOUT RISING SEAS**

**By Cooper Levey-Baker**

*Associate Editor*

At one point in the Wednesday, March 27, New Topics New College lecture, climate change professor Pier Vellinga showed a green map of the globe, with all the regions most at risk from rising sea levels marked in red. And there was the Gulf Coast — bright crimson.

The talk, which Vellinga delivered in conjunction with the University of Michigan's Henry Pollack, was titled, *Sea Level Rise in Florida: Is it Time to Start Building the Ark?* Wednesday's answer to that question: Perhaps not yet. But we do need to take action, because one thing is certain: The Gulf is rising.

Pollack spoke first, laying out the science behind sea level rise. Throughout the 20th

century, he showed, oceans climbed up our shorelines, but that rise is accelerating and is expected to accelerate more in the years to come. The cause of that acceleration is climate change, which is fundamentally altering our atmosphere and warming our oceans.

The sea level rises in three major ways, Pollack said. The first is simple thermal expansion: As water gets warmer it expands. On top of that, "We're adding new water to the ocean basins by the melting of mountain glaciers." Pollack showed photographs of Switzerland's Rhône Glacier taken across the decades. Each of them showed a major retreat in glacial ice, ice that is now water in our oceans.

The third factor causing water to rise is the “delivery of ice directly into the ocean,” Pollack said. Large chunks of Greenland and Antarctica breaking away bring the ocean level up like ice cubes in a glass of water.

Pollack showed a map of the Eastern Seaboard, with two lines drawn. One, way out in the Atlantic, showed where the coast would be if a new ice age occurred. Another, which cut off New York City, half of New Jersey and all of Delaware, showed where the coast might be in “a world without ice,” the title of [a 2010 Pollack book](#). Scary stuff.

But how much will the oceans rise? Pollack showed a variety of projections, with what he called the “most probable” estimates ranging

between 20 and 48 inches by the year 2100. He called the numbers put out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (for which both Pollack and Vellinga have written) a “lowest-common-denominator assessment” because of the bureaucracy involved, but even that organization’s conservative estimates range upward to almost 1 meter.

Pollack brought the discussion home with a series of slides prepared by Sarasota’s Shafer Consulting, one of the two major sponsors of the talk. They showed how sea level rise might affect Sarasota. At 1 meter, St. Armands would be inundated, and the bay would reach all the way to the very lip of the fountain at Island Park. The 150 or so attendees gasped.



*The City of Venice, Italy, is building expensive panels that could be raised to keep the water in its canals from rising too high. Image courtesy Nino Barbieri via Wikimedia Commons*

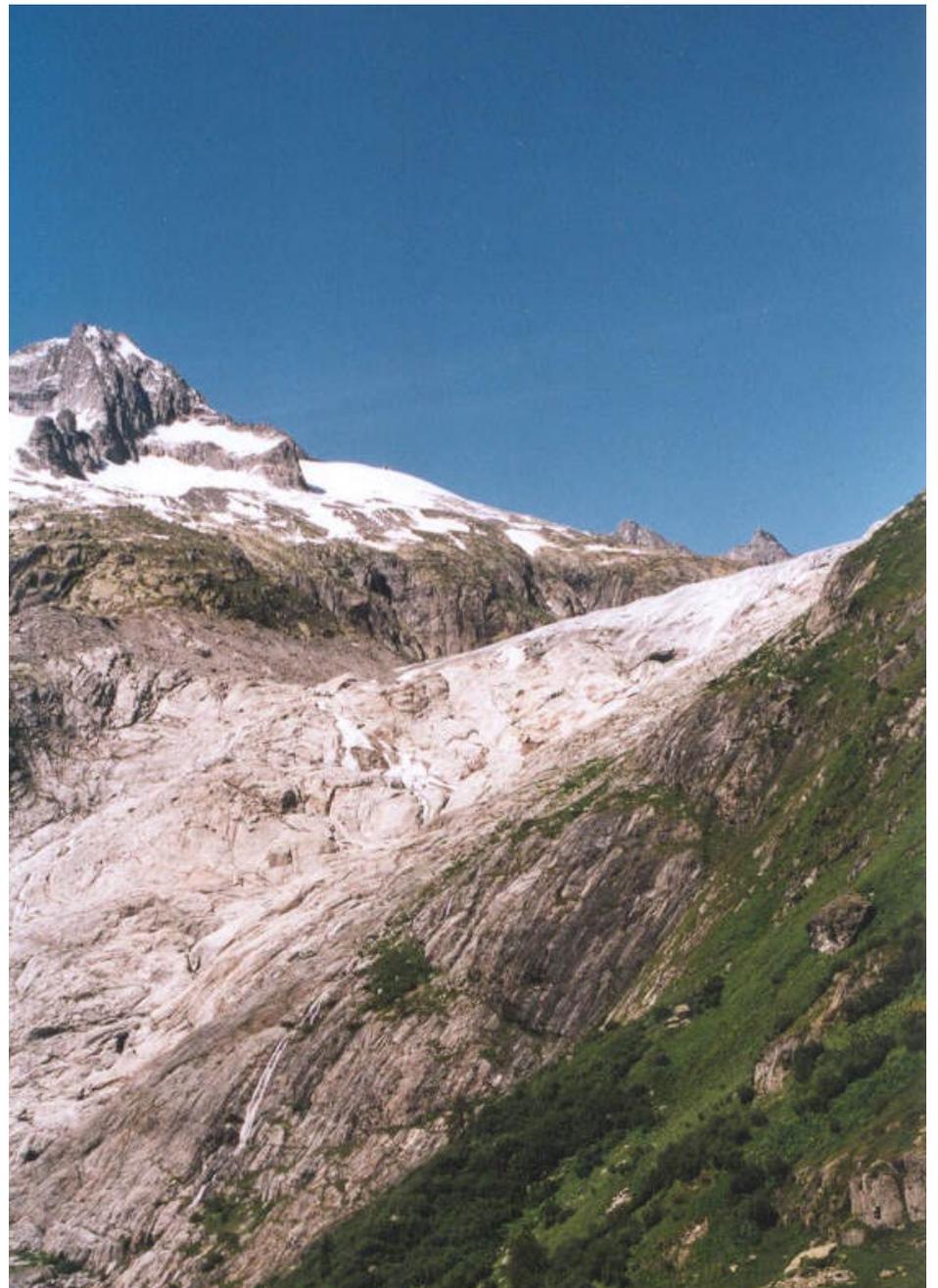
Vellinga then took the stage, discussing the wide variety of ways in which cities and countries around the globe have tried to deal with rising oceans. One example of an aggressive approach comes from Vellinga's home country, The Netherlands. There, the government has launched an aggressive program that includes beach nourishment, the construction of broad "super dikes" and even, in one area, new key islands built up with sediment.

They've taken a different approach in Venice, Italy, a city that regularly rings out with sirens signaling the arrival of *aqua alta* (high water). Because Venice is located in a lagoon, the residents are in the process of building a series of expensive panels sunk into the bottom of the channels that connect the city to the Adriatic. Invisible most of the time, they will rise as flexible gates when the water level gets too high, keeping the lagoon level manageable.

Vellinga, who shared in a Nobel Peace Prize with Pollack because of their work with the IPCC, has consulted with the city in its approach.

We're not close to a robust solution like those here in Sarasota. That's something event M.C. Julie Morris, assistant vice president for academic affairs at New College, hopes will change. Many different local groups are examining the issue and reaching out to city and county governments, she says, but the problem is so big it demands a broader approach. She wants the conversation begun by Vellinga and Pollack to continue, and to grow louder, and she thinks New College can play a major role by bringing in experts and hosting events.

Vellinga half-jokingly addressed the New College students in the audience Wednesday, say-



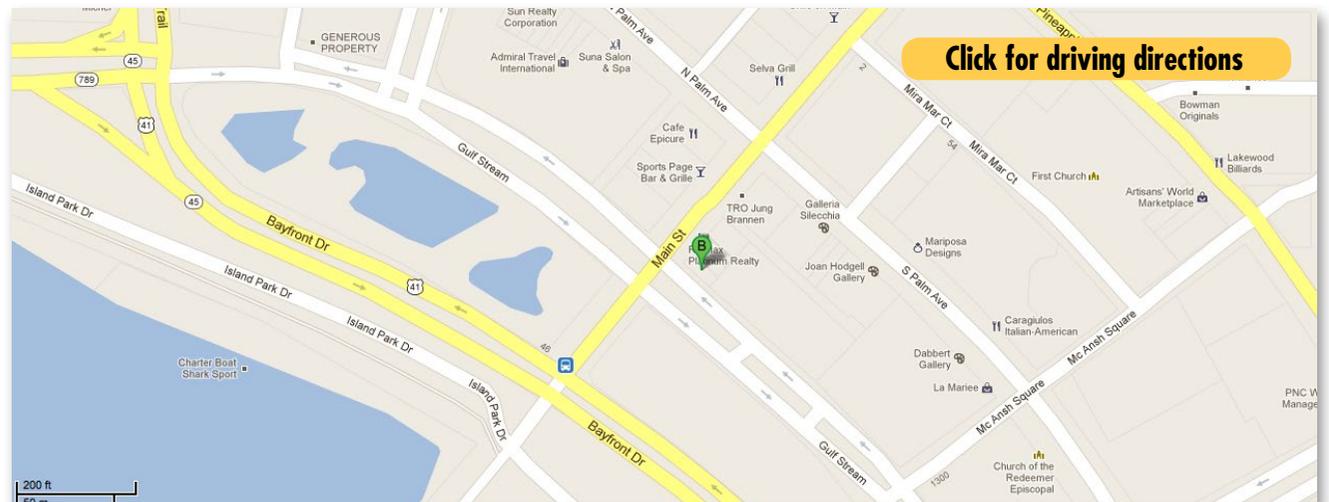
*The Rhône Glacier/Photo by Celesta via Wikimedia Commons*

ing that as bad as things look, "the problems of today are the employment opportunities of the future." He pointed out that Europe's No. 1 economy (Germany) is also its biggest user of renewable energy, and he suggested that following The Netherlands' model wouldn't cost affected Floridians much more than they're already paying for flood insurance.

But does Sarasota, or Florida, or the United States, have the political will to address uncomfortable political realities and find solutions? Vellinga's final slide asked, "Sarasota after a 3 ft rise in sea level, will it still be 'the place to be'?" The inevitable answer: "Depends." 

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Proposed Code	pg	Proposed Code Topic	Key changes from existing code to proposed code	Existing Code	pg	Existing Code Topic	Board Direction	ABA Article Ref	ABA Topic	pg
2-215	5-6	Local Preference	All local preference criteria combined into one, new section; added one year physical business residency requirement; in addition to business tax added Sunbiz and other documents for verifying location; changed requirement of 1 full time employee at business location with 50% employees residing in Counties to 5 full time employees or 1 principal officer at business location.	2-219, 2-220	5-7	Topic in: 219 (o)(p) Competitive sealed bids; and 220 (i) (j) Competitive sealed proposals	9/26/12 - Noted consensus by Robinson to direct the County Administrator to obtain input from the local Vendors, to provide a report including additional information from the Florida Counties identified on page 19 of Staff's report regarding their local preference policies, and to bring the report back for Board consideration; 11/13/12 Directed the County Administrator to meet with the Area Professional Building Groups for their review and feedback of the Board's votes and tentative directions on issues discussed this date, including proposed requirements relating to the use of Subcontractors, and to bring back a report for Board consideration. Moved by Patterson, seconded by Mason, carried by a 5-0 vote; Requested that the County Administrator notify the Participants of the date/time scheduled for the Board's consideration of the proposed revisions to the Procurement Code relating to Local Vendor Preference and Procurement exemptions. Requested by Robinson, without objection; Additional Local Preference options presented to the BCC on 2/12/13 and relevant board action is detailed in 2/26/13 Board packet memo.	ABA provides no detail on this topic but Article 11 does make reference to the acceptance of Other Socioeconomic Procurement Programs		88

**A NEW CODE**

*A matrix provided to the County Commission notes changes in the guidelines for vendors to receive local preference in bidding on contracts. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

## THE COUNTY COMMISSION APPROVES A REVISED PROCUREMENT CODE ALMOST TWO YEARS AFTER A SCANDAL SULLIED THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S REPUTATION

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

When Sarasota County Procurement Official Ted Coyman stood before the County Commission on March 19, he was seeking final approval for a revised Procurement Code — a process that began in June 2011 after the county's purchasing department was wracked by scandal.

Coyman briefly ran down a list of some of the recommended changes in the county's Procurement Code, but the County Commission had been working with him since January 2012 to modify the document. There were no surprises at this point.

Chairwoman Carolyn Mason then opened a public hearing, but after months of county staff discussions with vendors and representatives of building firms as well, no one had signed up to speak.

Commissioner Christine Robinson referred to the text on the board's agenda in moving approval of the repeal of the existing ordinances and putting the new one into effect.

Commissioner Charles Hines seconded the motion.

The action also established new thresholds for expenses County

**“ I want to raise your confidence level that this document has really been scrubbed and vetted. ”**

Ted Coyman  
Procurement Official  
Sarasota County

Administrator Randall Reid or his designees can authorize.

“Mr. Coyman, it’s been a long time in the making,” Robinson told him. “Thank you for your work on this. ... We’ve put you through a lot.”

She added, “We took our time with [revising the code] to try to get it right. ... Thank you for your diligence.”

“Thank you,” Coyman responded.

With no other comments, Mason called for the vote, which was unanimous.

Later that day, during the board’s evaluation of Reid’s first year on the job, Robinson said, “I am really relieved to see that Procurement has made the leaps and bounds [in] improvements ... It’s been a good chapter to close.”

During the commission’s Feb. 26 regular meeting — when the board approved holding the public hearing on the revised code — Coyman pointed out that after he was named the new procurement official in August 2012, he undertook a comparison of the Sarasota County code with those of 11 peer counties, and he sought legal review of recommended changes through the County Attorney’s Office. He noted that the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing had audited new county practices in November, and he utilized a number of “subject matter experts” to revise the ordinance.

“Their input was vital,” he added. “I want to raise your confidence level that this document has really been scrubbed and vetted,” Coyman told the commission.

The new code also encompasses a number of best practices recommended by the American Bar Association.



*Procurement Official Ted Coyman addresses the County Commission on March 19. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

“We’ve thoroughly embraced all the elements of this that can be applied,” Coyman told the commission on Feb. 26, referring to the ABA standards.

Among the proposed changes the commission already had reviewed, he pointed out, was the inclusion of an Ethical Standards section — something the existing code lacked.

## **THRESHOLDS**

Regarding the new levels of purchasing authority, Coyman noted that anything less than \$5,000 can be bought by an employee with a county purchase card if the price is generally the same at any place the item or service could be bought.

Anything costing between \$5,000 and \$24,999.99 would require three verbal quotes.

An item or service valued between \$25,000 and \$99,999.99 would necessitate three written quotes.

Anything at the \$100,000 level or higher would require a bid or proposal process.

Additionally, the county administrator and county attorney can approve the purchase of something costing up to \$100,000, Coyman said.

“I’m assuming that we’re going to know about it,” Commissioner Nora Patterson said of the latter types of purchases when the board addressed the matter on Feb. 26.

Coyman told her that the NIGP audit in November had pointed out that the delegation of purchasing authority and threshold levels in the current code were not clear. “So this structure clarifies that greatly.”

Reid pointed out that he had worked under similar guidelines in Alachua County, where he was county manager before taking the Sarasota County job. In a monthly report to his commission there, he added, he provided details about any purchases he had authorized. He also emphasized to Patterson that three written quotes would be needed before he could spend any funds.

“I just want to make sure the board finds out about it,” Patterson reiterated.

As the current code was written, Coyman pointed out, the procurement official could obtain “many millions of dollars of commodities without anyone’s permission.

Any purchase above \$100,000 will come to the commission for approval under the new code, he said.

However, if the commissioners want details about any purchases made by the county administrator under \$100,000, that information could be provided to them, Coyman added.

In response to another question from Patterson, Reid told her the purchase authority would apply only to funds already allocated in the county budget. Referencing a comment she had made earlier about how it seemed he would be able to fill up rooms with flowers, for example, as a result of the new authority, Reid said,

“You’ll see no ... \$100,000 flowers.”

Reid suggested that the after-the-fact reporting could be generated without a stipulation for it in the new code.

Coyman concurred. 



## Background

- June 2011 – NIGP report recommended updating the Procurement Code
- July 2011 – Joint BCC and Clerk improvement teams assembled to research and address 263 procurement recommendations including Code revisions
- January 2012 – Procurement Official discussed Code with BCC to obtain direction
- September 26, 2012 – Board approved key components to be incorporated into the future Procurement Code; Board requested additional information on Local Vendor Preference and Waivers from Competition
- February 12, 2013 – Staff presented a report on Local Vendor Preference and Waivers from Competition for Board direction
- February 26, 2013 – Staff presented the draft Procurement Code and received authorization to advertise

*A slide in a March 19 presentation to the County Commission shows the timeline for revising the Procurement Code. Image courtesy Sarasota County*



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## FORMING THE 'ABC CLUB'

*Linda Holland/Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **ANALYSIS: UNUSUAL ENDORSEMENTS ADD SPICE TO CITY RACE**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

While most people can follow the elaborate schemes used in sports to reveal the champion team, the City of Sarasota's rather simple election cycle seems to defy the understanding of newcomers. And that is not helped when the players start using novel tactics.

On March 12 city voters narrowed a field of six candidates to three. Those three are now running towards a May 14 election to decide

the next two at-large city commissioners. Think of it as the "heat" and then the "finals."

But in politics — unlike sports — the losers can boost the chances of winners by endorsing them. The losers urge their supporters to switch allegiance to one of the winners.

On Tuesday, March 26, two of the three candidates who did not prevail in the March 12 primary endorsed two of the three candidates

who did. At a hastily convened press conference, Democrat Linda Holland and Republican Kelvin Lumpkin endorsed Democrat Suzanne Atwell and Republican Richard Dorfman.

Keep in mind the city's elections are nonpartisan; candidates do not run on a party platform, and they are supposed to stay aloof from party politics. And while there are breaches in the nonpartisan firewall, the spirit remains intact.

This was not the city's first across-party-lines endorsement. But it was the first crisscross party lines endorsement, which will confuse partisan voters. Why would a Democrat endorse a Republican *and* a Democrat? Ditto with the Republican endorsement.

Were the endorsees trying to create a slate of common interests? In response to a question,



*Kelvin Lumpkin/Photo by Robert Hackney*



*Richard Dorfman and Suzanne Atwell flank Linda Holland and Kelvin Lumpkin at a press conference where the latter two endorsed the former two. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*

it appeared Lumpkin and Holland were saying they supported the same goals and objectives as Dorfman and Atwell. “We are in harmony on how the city should grow,” said Lumpkin at the outset of the press conference. “We’re here to offer our support to do whatever we can to help get them elected.”

## ELECTORAL MATH

It did not take long for the word of the unique crisscross endorsement to get out. The arrangement was cooked up over the weekend, but the media did not get official wind of the 12:30 p.m. press conference until an 11 a.m. email arrived.

By late afternoon the rumor mill was in full swing. “People were calling me,” said Atwell after a 6 p.m. ceremony. “Are we running as a slate or a bloc? Well, of course not. We received a couple of endorsements, that’s all.”

One political insider said it looked like a replay of the District One race of 2011. Only one seat was at stake, so the four-person primary boiled down to a two-person final election. The two non-prevailing candidates — Republican Richard Dorfman and Democrat Frederick Douglas Williams — both endorsed Democrat Linda Holland against Willie Shaw, another Democrat.



*Prior to the March 12 primary, the six candidates address a neighborhood organization: (from left) Susan Chapman, Linda Holland, Pete Theisen, Richard Dorfman, Suzanne Atwell and Kelvin Lumpkin. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*

Only 996 votes were cast in the four-person race on March 8, 2011. Shaw received 414; Holland, 218. Dorfman was a close third with 202, and Williams trailed with 162. Thus, the two losers got 364 votes between them. Where did these Dorfman and Williams votes go in the final election?

In the May 10, 2011 runoff, more votes were cast than in the primary — 1,234 compared to 996, because 238 new voters showed up. Add them to the 364 votes for Dorfman and Williams, and there were 601 “new” votes up for grabs between Holland and Shaw.

Of them, Shaw captured 321 (for a total of 735 votes) while Holland got 281 more (for a total of 499). Therefore, Shaw’s margin of victory in the second election was 236 votes; in the first election, it was 196 over Holland.

In other words, the Dorfman and Williams supporters plus the new voters split almost evenly despite the endorsements. If anything, the vote tilted further toward Shaw.

There is no evidence the 2011 endorsements did any harm, but it is clear they were in no way decisive. At best the endorsements were neutral; at worst, they gave Shaw an extra margin of victory. The crisscross endorsements of 2013 may work differently, but recent city electoral history argues otherwise.

## **‘THE ABC CLUB’**

One overtone in the room concerned the third victorious candidate in the race, Susan Chapman.

“What is the motivation?” was a question from the local press corps. “Is it to keep Susan Chapman off the [City] Commission?” It was not my question, but it was in my mind. Was this the formation of an “Anybody But Chapman Club”?

Lumpkin was ready for the question. “Some may see this as a move against somebody else. We can’t worry about that when it comes to our loyalty to the city. We both knew the risk of doing it this way,” he said.

Looking at his new allies, Lumpkin added, “Susan Chapman went to every church [in Newtown]. I encourage you to do the same.”

Atwell was uncharacteristically quiet at the event. In a post-conference chat, Dorfman tried to pull her a little closer. “Kelvin and I were very much on the same page, and Linda and I were equally close. The four of us [including Atwell] were pretty close,” he said.

Dorfman, Holland and Lumpkin all live north of Fruitville Road. Dorfman added, “I need to take advantage of these endorsements — knocking on doors; talking to church groups; engaging the neighborhoods. I need to spend time where Kelvin was strong, north Sarasota and Newtown.”

He continued, “We have to engage harder, north of Fruitville, to maximize these endorsements, and also maintain our support in other areas.”

Chapman said the endorsements “defined everybody a lot better. It makes it clear Suzanne Atwell is not a middle-of-the-road candidate.” 

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.

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## A DESIRABLE DECLINE

*The historic Sarasota County Courthouse. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

### **SARASOTA COUNTY HAS SEEN THE HIGHEST DECREASE IN CRIME OF ALL FLORIDA COUNTIES WITH POPULATIONS ABOVE 100,000 SINCE TOM KNIGHT BECAME SHERIFF**

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

The focus was on future facilities for the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office last week as Sheriff Tom Knight and members of his staff met with the Sarasota County Commission for a planning workshop.

However, Bill Spitler, director of research and planning for the Sheriff's Office, made the point

during his presentation that since Knight took office in January 2009, the county has seen the largest reduction in crime of any Florida county with a population higher than 100,000.

According to 2010 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 34 of Florida's 67 counties have populations exceeding 100,000.

The Sheriff's Office's annual report for 2012 showed crime dropped more than 16 percent that year compared to 2011. Major crimes, known as Part 1 Offenses in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Index, decreased nearly 18 percent.

The number of violent crimes such as murder, robbery and aggravated assault, which account for part of the Total Index Offenses, was down nearly 16 percent. Burglary incidents were down more than 26 percent, and fraud cases dropped nearly 28 percent.

Calls for service declined nearly 5 percent, and total arrests were down almost 4 percent. The number of traffic citations issued remained the same.



*Sheriff Tom Knight/Contributed photo*

## Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) Concept

An underlying philosophy of how intelligence fits into the operations of a law enforcement organization.

- **A *forward-looking*** philosophy; a strategy for planning
- ILP is not reactive in the traditional sense
- ILP focuses on threats posed to the community
- ILP uses all available data and information to develop ***actionable intelligence***

“Proactive policing driven by our agency-wide ‘Intelligence 2 Action’ program is having a major impact on crime,” said Knight in a news release. “Consistent information sharing helps us develop quality intelligence, which allows us to target the biggest problems in our community and focus our energy on those who repeatedly commit these crimes.”

Since Knight took office in January 2009, overall crime is down 21 percent, Part 1 crime is down 26 percent and DUI arrests are up 32 percent, according to Sheriff’s Office statistics.

During his presentation to the County Commission on March 20, Spitler noted that the intelligence-led policing staff has an office away from the main campus the Sheriff’s Office occupies on Ringling Boulevard in downtown Sarasota. He added that while he could not reveal its location, he could say that seven sworn employees and six crime analysts are on that staff.

When Knight addressed the County Commission about facilities needs on Jan. 8, he pointed out that the jail in downtown Sarasota is designed for 2,000 people, but the population had been hovering around 900 in recent weeks.

He attributed that at least in part to the intelligence-led policing efforts.

Knight was re-elected last year to his second term.

Among other statistics in the 2012 report are the following:

- Aggravated assaults were down 15.4 percent, from 448 in 2011 to 379 in 2012.
- Simple assaults were down 5.97 percent, from 1,925 to 1,810.
- Motor vehicle thefts declined 8.96 percent, from 279 to 254.

Among the specific types of crime that did rise year-over-year was murder. The Sheriff’s Office recorded nine cases in 2012, compared to seven in 2011.

The overall lower trends are continuing so far this year. The Sheriff’s Office’s February report shows Total Violent Crimes (including murder, robbery and aggravated assault) down 15.84 percent, while Total Nonviolent Crimes (burglary, larceny and motor vehicle thefts) are down 12.86 percent. Total arrests so far have declined 12.32 percent compared to the same period in 2012.

Burglary cases have decreased 21.09 percent and larceny reports are down 7.53 percent compared to the figures for the first two months of 2012.

However, the number of fraud cases is up 4.23 percent — from a total of 71 in January and February 2012 to 74 thus far this year.

To see the full 2012 report, visit [www.SarasotaSheriff.org](http://www.SarasotaSheriff.org). Under the “Public Interest” heading at the top of the page, click on “Crime & Accident Statistics,” then “Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, December 2012.” 



# DRAWING THE BEST FROM DISASTER

*The cover of the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Plan. Contributed image*

## SARASOTA COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECTS FARE 'QUITE WELL' IN REGIONAL RANKING

By Cooper Levey-Baker  
*Associate Editor*

“Quite well.”

That’s the phrase Sarasota County Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford uses to describe how county projects fared in competition with other ecosystem restoration plans submitted to a coalition of area estuary programs. The competition was created to determine funding priorities for future money paid out by BP in compensation for the 2010 Deepwater Hori-

zon oil spill, the worst environmental disaster in American history.

Late last year, the county commissioners tweaked and approved a list of 28 projects they would like to see funded through the RE-

“ *It was interesting to see that what came out of the governor’s office was very similar to what the [estuary programs] had already moved forward with.* ”

Laird Wreford  
Coastal Resources Manager  
Sarasota County

STORE Act, the federal legislation dictating how penalties paid by BP and other companies will be distributed. The county’s wish list had an estimated price tag of \$145 million, with individual project costs ranging

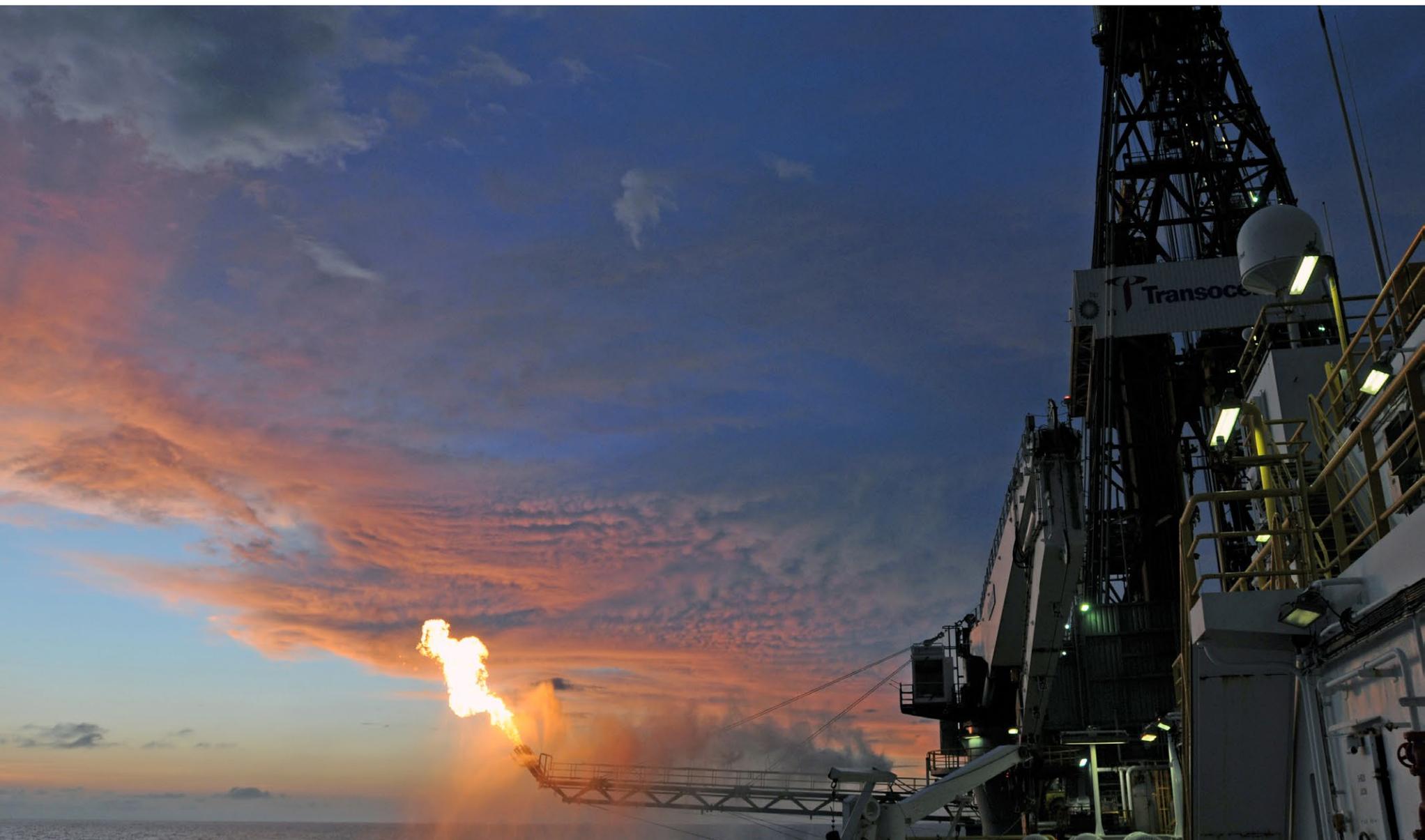
from \$20,000 to \$60 million. Wreford tells *The Sarasota News Leader* the projects had been on “the drawing board” for some time; they included everything from beach restoration to the county’s Phillippi Creek Septic System Replacement Program.

That list was then submitted to the Joint Florida Gulf National Estuary Programs — made up of organizations that oversee Sarasota Bay, Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor — for a rigorous evaluation and ranking process. Out of the county’s 28 projects, 15 “ended up in total in the highest-ranked group,” Wreford says proudly.

The idea was to then submit that list of projects to the U.S. government to win money from the RESTORE Act’s so-called “pot” of federal money, but Gov. Rick Scott’s office has



*Sarasota County Commissioner Charles Hines. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*The Deepwater Horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico. Photo by Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Patrick Kelly, via Flickr*

now indicated it wants a “unified compilation” of statewide projects to submit for a chance at those dollars.

“It was interesting to see that what came out of the governor’s office was very similar to what the [estuary programs] had already moved forward with,” Wreford says, adding that the programs “have been in solid communication with the governor’s office” about how to move forward.

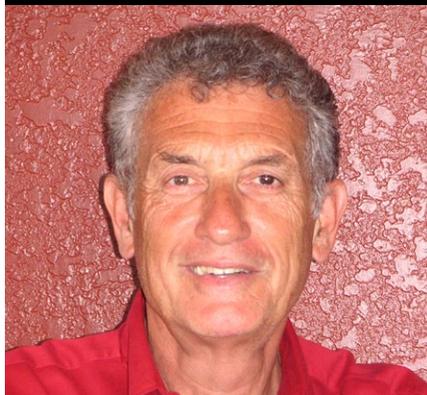
Of course, no one knows how much money may eventually come our way. Estimates for BP’s total liability have ranged from \$5 billion to \$20 billion, but those numbers were predicated on BP settling a lawsuit brought by the federal government. Instead, the company chose to go to trial, a process that began one month ago.

When asked for his thoughts on what’s next for the county and the RESTORE Act, Commissioner Charles Hines jokes, “What’s the status of the trial?” He says “everyone believed that BP was going to settle,” but instead, the company is rolling the dice. “All of a sudden, you might get more, you might get less,” Hines adds.

Hines, who represents the county on the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program policy board, participated in the estuary coalition’s ranking process. He thinks the groups’ organized, disciplined approach will increase the odds of county projects winning funding, whenever BP pays up and however much it is forced to dole out.

“We kind of bonded together,” he says. “I think it will make a big difference. It wasn’t just a free-for-all.” 

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# MORE PROMOTION

*Jim Shirley, executive director of the Sarasota County Arts and Cultural Alliance (far right) addresses a joint Tourism Development Council/County Commission meeting last fall. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## A VISIT SARASOTA COUNTY CONSULTANT RECOMMENDS A BIGGER INVESTMENT FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO DRAW TOURISTS TO THE COUNTY

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

While he stressed he was not making a pitch for more public money, Bill Geist, president of Zeitgeist Inc. and a consultant to Visit Sarasota County, urged members of the Sarasota County Tourism Development Council (TDC) to work with other county officials to increase private investment in promotion of the county to tourists.

“Sarasota County — it’s not at the complete shallow end of the pool when it comes to marketing itself,”

“Sarasota County — it’s not at the complete shallow end of the pool when it comes to marketing itself, but you’re getting outgunned by a lot of destinations in this state and the Southeast.”

Geist said during the advisory board’s March 21 meeting, “but you’re getting outgunned by a lot of destinations in this state and the Southeast.”

Palm Beach, for example — which also considers itself an arts and cultural capital, just as Sarasota County does, he noted — has an annual promotion budget of about \$9 million. Fort Lauderdale’s budget is \$18 million, Geist added; Miami’s, \$22 million.

Bill Geist  
President  
Zeitgeist Inc.



Myrtle Beach, SC, which has transformed itself from a beach resort 30 years ago into a major destination, with a wide variety of music and theater venues, spends \$36 million annually on promotions, he pointed out. “And we’re spending about 4 [million dollars].”

His recommendation, Geist continued, is for Visit Sarasota County (VSC) to increase its budget to “something closer to \$10 million” a year.

On the positive side, Geist noted, the state of Florida “has proven its dedication to investing in tourism promotion,” though he added a number of states “have some very, very aggressive destination development marketing.”

Can Florida become just as aggressive in destination development, he asked.

During the TDC meeting, Geist presented a proposal for a new strategic plan for VSC, the county’s tourism office, that would serve it for the next five to seven years. The TDC members voted unanimously to recommend that the County Commission approve the plan.

That recommendation tentatively is scheduled to come before the commission on June 4, Anna Madden, the board’s liaison to the TDC, told *The Sarasota News Leader* this week.

The proposed strategic plan encompasses three other goals along with increasing investment in tourism promotion and development:

- Continue to develop and communicate the destination’s brand essence.

By 2020, Geist said, the anticipated result of that effort is to achieve 1 million visitors per year who pay for overnight lodging.

In response to a question, Stephanie Grosskreutz, the VSC managing director, said the county sees slightly more than 4 million visitors annually, but not all of them stay in paid lodging. Geist told the TDC members that the number paying for room stays is about 900,000 a year.

For an example of what he meant about building the county’s brand, Geist explained that research has shown approximately 60 percent



*A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for May 24 to mark the completion of North Cattlemen Road, a major access to Nathan Benderson Park’s rowing facility. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

of people factor the variety of culinary choices available into their decisions about where to go on vacation. Of those, 17 percent say dining choices are the most important factor in settling on a destination. Therefore, Sarasota County can do a better job of promoting its local restaurants, Geist pointed out. For example, it can build on its [Eat Local Week](#).

- Advocate for destination enhancing development.

“Sports is one of the fastest growing attractions for group travel business in the United

States,” Geist noted. For example, Nathan Benderson Park’s international rowing venue will draw many more visitors to the county, he added.

Additionally, VSC can work with the Sarasota County Arts and Cultural Alliance to be more active in promoting the county’s arts and cultural offerings, which are “one of the primary parts of your brand,” Geist said.

The VSC also will work with area colleges and universities in marketing their facilities and attractions, the plan says. “There are actually



*Students in Sarasota Youth Opera — which premiered Little Nemo in Slumberland last fall — will participate in YouthArts Fest on April 6. Photo by Rod Millington*

a fair number of really unique meeting spaces on these campuses,” Geist pointed out.

Additionally, the plan also calls for the VSC to work with the county and its municipalities on better signage, including a more attractive gateway to the community from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport.

- Elevate the visitor experience through enhanced visitor services.

In almost every meeting conducted with county residents to help develop the strategic plan, Geist said, he and VSC staff heard people say they wanted to be more involved in inviting and welcoming visitors to the area. “We didn’t hear it at all three years ago,” he added, noting “a significant uptick in community pride.”

Geist also told the TDC, “We need one central *monster* of a calendar of events [on the VSC [website](#)] that becomes the go-to for people in this community” as well as tourists.

## THE ARTS

Following Geist’s remarks, Jim Shirley, executive director of the Arts and Cultural Alliance, offered an update on some of his organization’s activities.

Pointing to the variety of international festivals the county has hosted — featuring internationally known performers such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Itzhak Perlman and Jose Carreno, for example — Shirley said, “I can virtually guarantee you that maybe outside New York, no other community in this nation has done that sort of thing and does it every year.”

Those festivals draw performers from all over the world, and their families and members of their communities learn about Sarasota through their participation, Shirley added.

Shirley also reported that his staff had undertaken an informal survey of the county’s arts and cultural organizations to determine the number of tickets sold to visitors so far this year.

Eight groups responded to the survey, he said, with the following results thus far in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1, 2012:

- 119,000 patrons had come from outside Sarasota County but from within the state, about a 4.5 percent increase over the same period in 2012.
- Slightly fewer than 200,000 patrons had come from outside Florida but from another state, compared to about 193,000 for the same period of 2012, a 3.4 percent increase.
- Slightly more than 10,000 patrons had come from other countries, about a 4.7 percent increase.

He also pointed out that he had been at the Florida Legislature the previous day, when members of Sarasota’s delegation had talked of their pride in the arts in the Sarasota County Schools. Shirley noted that the school district plans to seek a renewal in 2014 of its special 1 mill tax that helps fund those programs.

Finally, Shirley invited all the TDC members to the YouthArts Fest on April 6, which the Arts and Cultural Alliance will sponsor in Five Points Park in downtown Sarasota.

Students from almost every district school will be performing, he said, along with youngsters in youth programs associated with arts organizations such as Sarasota Ballet and Sarasota Opera.

About 10,000 people attended the event in 2012, he added. 



# AGENDA PREVIEW

*A proposal coming before the City Commission calls for blue lights to illuminate the Ringling Bridge at night. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## UNCOMMON QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY COMMISSIONERS

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

The Sarasota City Commissioners confront an April Fool's Day agenda with something blue, something hopeful and something far-reaching.

The "blue" is a done deal of city volunteerism; the "hopeful" is bedeviled by details and the "far-reaching" is a stab in the dark. This is not your average City Commission agenda.

### **SOMETHING BLUE**

A Sarasota delight is the Ringling Bridge by night: Arches leaping across the water, subtly lit. Drivers never see it, but for boaters and bayside residents it remains a jewel on the bay.

On Monday, the Sarasota city commissioners will be asked to tinker with that jewel at the request of Katherine Klauber Moulton. She first proposed swapping out the white lights under the bridge for blue ones in the month of April to bring attention to Child Abuse Prevention Month. Blue is the symbolic color for the effort, similar to pink for breast cancer awareness.

Moulton's plan has gone beyond a swap to a permanent change. She has enlisted volunteers from the local LED lighting firm Evoluca and the local lighting contractor Roadrunner to fit 72 new and blue lights as permanent replacements on the bridge.

Moulton wrote in a memo that investigation of the existing 10-year-old fixtures shows “extensive corrosion” and their life is limited. She proposes — at no cost to the city — to install 72 “seaworthy, marine-grade light fixtures” with energy-efficient LED blue bulbs. She estimates the energy savings will be \$7,944 per year and the donation by Roadrunner and Evolucia volunteers would amount to \$86,120.

The Florida Department of Transportation regional manager “has enthusiastically embraced the concept of the changing of the lighting,” Moulton wrote. “What started as a single-purpose project has metamorphosed into something that can make Sarasota and its iconic Ringling Causeway even more symbolic of our community.”

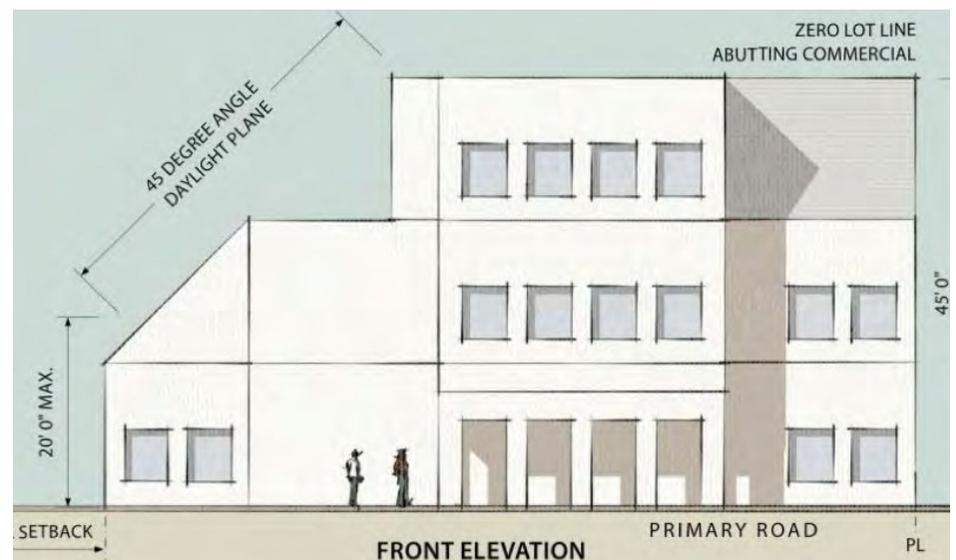
The commission vote on the blue-bulb issue will come late in the evening session under new business.

## SOMETHING HOPEFUL

The sole public hearing in the evening could prove to be lengthy. Regular readers will recognize the topic — NTOD. The North Trail Overlay District goes before the City Commission for approval after two visits to the Planning Board.

The Planning Board approved the NTOD with a 3-2 vote; Vald Svekis and Chris Gallagher were in the minority.

The overlay district is the product of three years of collaboration among business owners in the area, five nearby neighborhoods, property owners, the city and outside interests.



*The North Trail Overlay District, which offers flexibility to developers in regard to a number of design features, will come before the City Commission April 1. Image courtesy City of Sarasota*

The district would eliminate site plan review by the Planning board and City Commission, substituting “administrative review” by city staffers. This is seen as expediting development proposals. A builder, however, would be required to hold a “community workshop” before asking for staff approval.

The overlay would tweak maximum heights in certain areas, set urban frontage standards and provide some flexibility for parking. The eventual compromises were many, and most of the parties walked away believing them workable.

The public debate has been spirited. Not one of the five recognized and organized neighborhoods under the NTOD umbrella has formally endorsed it. And as the split Planning Board vote displays, even after hours of study, questions and deliberation, the five members could not reach a consensus on forwarding it to the City Commission.

Expect more public comment at the public hearing Monday evening.

## THE STAB IN THE DARK

A topic coming up early in the day is appointment of an 11-member panel jointly proposed by Sarasota City Manager Tom Barwin and Sarasota County Administrator Randall Reid. The body would ponder the future of the Community Redevelopment Agency.

The CRA skims county property taxes paid in a defined area and devotes them to fighting “slum and blight.” The amount of money is substantial. This year the CRA has about \$3 million to spend.

The deal was established 27 years ago to preserve a failing downtown corridor. In three years the deal expires. The county is already using the \$3 million in its out-year budget projections, and county commissioners have often eyed the money as a way to balance future budgets.

In a show of magnanimity at a joint city-county meeting on Feb. 5, the two boards agreed to examine the idea of extending the term of the CRA beyond 2016. The 11-member body would report back to Reid and Barwin by September.

Barwin nominated six people for the committee: Andy Dorr, Chris Gallagher, Mark Huey, Katie Leonard, Michael Beaumier and Frank Carol.

Reid nominated seven people: Chris Gallagher, Michael Beaumier, David Merrill, Bill Russell, Joel Freedman, Casey Colburn and Ernie DuBose.

Because two names appear on both lists — Gallagher and Beaumier — the nominations total 11. “Both administrators believe that



*City Manager Tom Barwin (left) and Deputy City Manager Marlon Brown attend the dedication of Complexus by the bayfront on March 27. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

eleven is a manageable number and recommends that they all be appointed to the committee,” Barwin wrote.

The stakes are high. The city now uses \$700,000 in CRA money to defray the cost of downtown policing. Both governments are running on unbalanced budgets, dipping into reserves to match ends and means. Will the county be willing to extend the CRA’s term and relinquish the money? And what would the city do without the funds?

These will be questions in the back of the minds of the 11 committee members, should the City Commission approve their nomination. 



## LET THE RACES GO ON

*The Boat Parade during the Suncoast Grand Prix Festival always draws a crowd to Main Street.  
Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **SUNCOAST CHARITIES FOR CHILDREN MAKES A PUBLIC PLEA FOR SUPPORT SO ITS SUPER BOAT GRAND PRIX FESTIVAL CAN CONTINUE THIS SUMMER**

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

Hard times have caught up with the Suncoast Charities for Children, now reduced to begging to keep its signature fundraiser alive.

On Wednesday, March 27, the organization's vice president, Lucy Nicandri, delivered an ultimatum.

It was a posh setting for an ultimatum, in the ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Sarasota downtown, and it was attended by more than one local world champion boat racer. But an ultimatum it was.

If the organization does not raise \$75,000 by April 11, the Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix is history.

Nicandri has asked, even begged, the City and County commissions for support. The Sarasota City Commission agreed to waive \$36,000 in fees, permits and police help — but offered no cash.

Nicandri went to the Sarasota County Commission last week to seek \$100,000 to make the event happen. She walked away with \$13,500. “We still have a long way to go,” she said.



*Twelve world-class racers line up to urge support to keep the Grand Prix alive. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*

The boat race is actually one of 19 different events over 10 days, but most of them are free and open to the public. In other words, they bring in zero income. That includes the annual Boat Parade down Main Street in Sarasota and the Independence Day fireworks.

And the festival is not all the organization does for the community. The Holiday Boat Parade is another one of its events, as is Thunder by the Bay for bikers. But the money to fund the activities is not what it used to be.

“The construction industry used to support us heavily,” Nicandri said. “But we know what’s happened there. Same with the boat-building industry.”

The race — if it happens — will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> annual running of the super boats. Over those three decades, the Suncoast Charities for Children has built six facilities to help local kids with special needs, using the proceeds from the races and other activities. But the well has run dry.

“We need \$79,200 to pay the race sanction fee,” Nicandri said. “And we’re looking at increased vendor costs, a decline in in-kind services [and] increased helicopter and boat

rental to keep the boats — and marine mammals — safe.”

As money tightened in the Great Recession, the charity’s staff and board stopped dreaming about new facilities and used the proceeds to maintain the six existing buildings.

Nicandri says a number of other communities would be delighted to see Sarasota bow out of the festival. “Other cities want this race on the Fourth of July,” she said. “If they get it, it won’t come back.”

She called up 12 local and out-of-area boat racers to testify. Sarasota’s Steve Kildahl has been in every race since 1985. “To see this race go away would be a shame,” he said.

He is a hands-on mechanic who runs a small marine business in the city.

Kildahl was not the only old-timer to speak out. Bob Long, the former CEO of Wellcraft, said, “This race brought us business all year long. It promoted boating and fun.”

One member of the audience said *sotto voce*, “We can spend millions to help the Bendersons and rowing, but we can’t help this?” 

Suncoast  
Charities  
FOR CHILDREN 



*Residential permit parking could be enforced in the future for a block near the Rivo at Ringling condominiums in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT PLAN INCHES FORWARD**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

Parking on Capitol Hill is impossible, unless you live there. A little sticker on the windshield is proof against all tickets, but only if you live there.

Sarasota is inching its way toward using the same type of system for the same reason. Locals and their visitors need parking spaces even in high-demand areas. One street is now serving as a test model, and if the plan is successful, other streets may be proposed for permit parking.

At the Wednesday, March 27, meeting of the City of Sarasota's Parking Advisory Board, those "next steps" were revealed. But do not worry: The proposal encompasses a miniscule

number of spaces and even those will need approval from highest authority – the Sarasota City Commission.

Unlike the Washington, D.C., version, the Sarasota stickers would require cars to be moved every 24 hours. Right now only 12 spaces in the entire city are affected; they are along Monroe Street near St. Armands Circle. The beneficiaries are the Kingston Arms Apartments, which has only one space per unit. Any visitor would face the vicissitudes of parking enforcement.

Parking Manager Mark Lyons says the reaction has been "very positive." He is making this a pilot project. If it does prove successful,



*Limited parking for some residents in Burns Court could be improved by permits as well, city officials say. Photo by Scott Proffitt*

there are several other areas in the city that could be eligible for privileged parking.

## STREETS YOU NEVER HEARD OF

One situation similar to the needs of Kingstons residents could put the Hotel Ranola in the limelight. Never heard of it? How about Indian Place or Bamboo Lane? They are all downtown and you have cruised by them a thousand times or more.

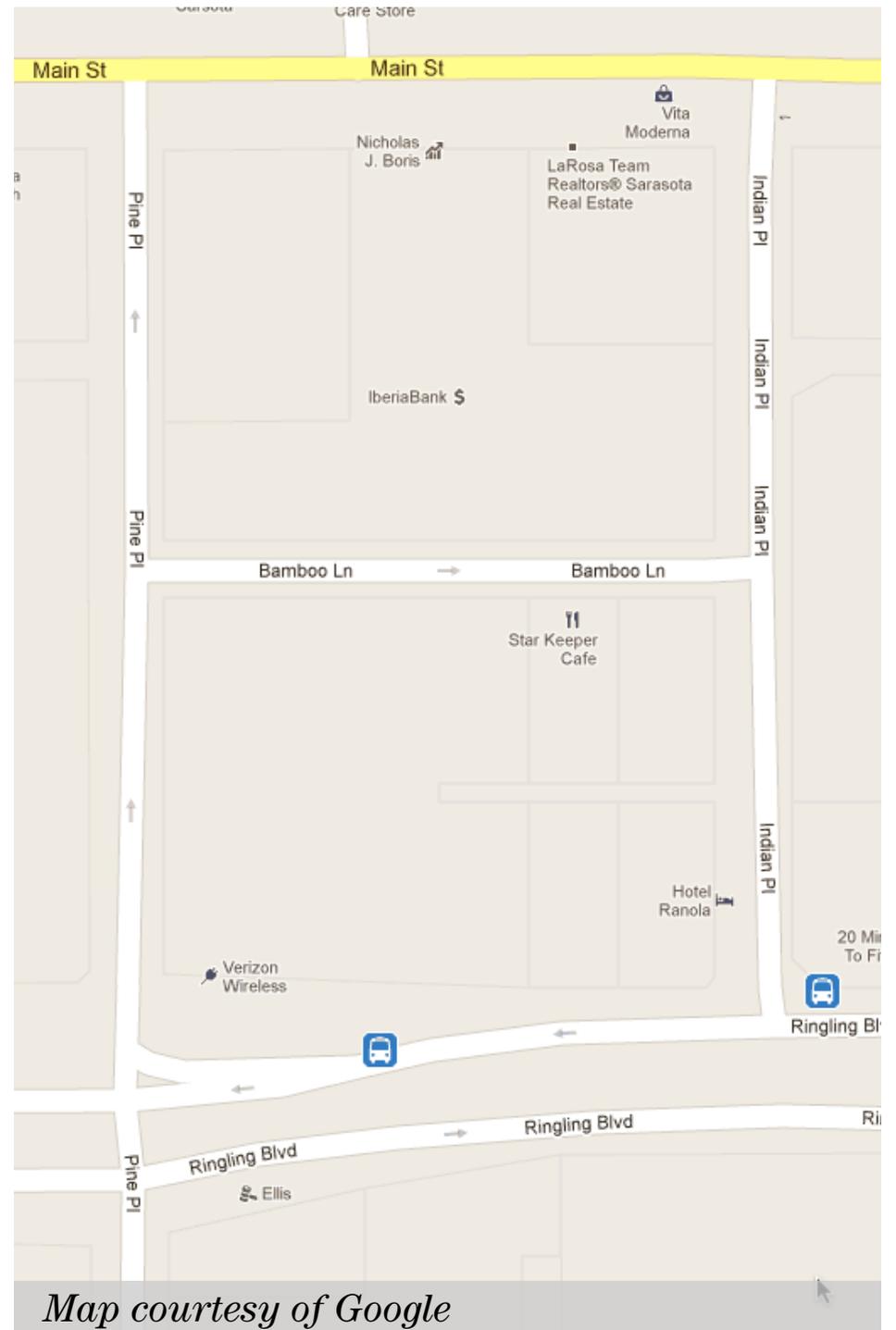
Think of the block between the Rivo at Ringling condominium complex and the U.S. Post Office. The north border is Bamboo Lane, where the Star Keeper Café is located. Indian Place is the north-south street on the eastern side of the block. The streets are narrow but do allow parking on one side.

Residents of the Ranola — actually an apartment building — have less than one parking spot per unit, so enforcement of restricted parking with permits would give them some civic mobility with guaranteed parking on Bamboo Lane and Indian Place.

Burns Court is another area with tight parking. Two small streets in that section of the city are on Lyons's list for possible use of permits. They are Selby Lane, the single-block, east-west strip south of Owen's Fish Camp; and a single-block stretch of Oak Street, which is one block south. Both of these stretches are on Lyons' map.

Two more proposed sites are not so obscure. Both the Palm Avenue parking garage and the parking structure at Whole Foods are in consideration. "They could serve at certain times of the year to meet the needs of visitors," he said.

None of this is happening soon. Lyons and the Parking Advisory Board are simply exploring



ways to satisfy residential and commercial needs for parking. "We are not giving away prime spots," said Lyons. "There is not a standard way to set this up."

The board urged a cautious approach. "You'll have to work with the neighborhoods and the businesses to get a consensus on this," said member Marty Rappaport, chairman of the St. Armands Business Improvement District. Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce President Steve Queior added, "This is a 'go slow' [issue]."

"We will not be making this decision in a vacuum," said Lyons. "This would have to go to the City Commission." 



## CAREFUL PLANNING URGED

(From left) Joyce Kouba, chairwoman of the Nominating Committee, joins the Siesta Key Association directors for 2013-14: Catherine Luckner, Peter van Roekens, Joe Volpe, Beverly Arias, Deet Jonker, Helen Clifford and Michael Shay. Photo by Rachel Hackney

## COUNTY COMMISSIONER TALKS OF THE NEED TO SAFEGUARD THE COUNTY'S NATURAL ASSETS FOR THE FUTURE

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

Sarasota County Commissioner Nora Patterson urged members of the Siesta Key Association on March 23 to strive to make sure their elected officials do not trade the county's valuable natural resources for short-term economic gains.

In her "State of the Key" address during the SKA's annual breakfast meeting, Patterson — who has lived on Siesta since 1970 — told the audi-

ence, "Please make sure that we don't change from a long-term practice in Sarasota [County] of careful land-use planning to planning for tomorrow only because we're bringing jobs in."

**“ To thrive, [Sarasota County is] going to have to stay an attractive place with good jobs but physically well-planned and well-maintained. ... Please make sure as citizens that your elected leaders do not kill the golden goose.**

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County



Pointing out that it was the 14th time she had attended the organization's annual meeting, Patterson also referenced the impact term limits will have on the County Commission in the future.

“Four out of five commissioners are now lame ducks,” she said. In four years, Commissioner Charles Hines — who was elected to his first term during the 2012 General Election — “will be your senior commissioner,” she added.

“He’s great!” Patterson told the audience of about 100 people.

Nonetheless, because of term limits, she continued, “an awful lot of people without experience” will be winning seats on the board.

“You will have to work even harder than you have” to make sure the county maintains a good reputation, she added.

Although the county’s unemployment rate had risen as high as 13.3 percent during the Great Recession, Patterson pointed out, it had de-

creased to 7.8 percent in December before climbing again to 8.2 percent in January. (In releasing its most recent figures, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity revised that December rate to 7.7 percent.)

One impact of the recession, she said, “is something that will have a more permanent effect on this community: The County Commission and, frankly, the community, is now more permissive in land use issues than it used to be.”

While she agreed about the need to build up the county’s tax base and put people back to work, Patterson continued, “we need to watch that we do not destroy neighborhoods or the functionality of the county with these decisions.”



*Russell Matthes (standing), president of the Siesta Key Village Association, talks with Sheriff Tom Knight (right) during the Siesta Key Association Annual Meeting on March 23. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

She pointed out, “The most politically sensitive issue on the table right now is called the 2050 Plan,” which was designed to regulate development east of Interstate 75. “I am very protective of its basic principles,” she said, “because I am the only commissioner who was on the commission at the time that this plan was developed ... and I may not entirely agree with the rest of my commission, at least so far, on these [land-use] issues.”

Sarasota County staff has held meetings with developers who have complained that the plan is too stringent for them to be able to construct developments in the eastern part of the county. Therefore, at the behest of the County Commission, staff has held open house-style meetings and is gathering public

comments about the 2050 Plan. The commission is scheduled to address the plan’s parameters at a meeting later this year.

“To thrive,” Patterson said, “[Sarasota County is] going to have to stay an attractive place with good jobs but physically well-planned and well-maintained. ... Please make sure as citizens that your elected leaders do not kill the golden goose. Let’s see we don’t injure the beauty of Sarasota that brought us here and, most importantly, weaken efforts to plan for the long term and not just what will be good for tomorrow.”

She added, “Let’s be sure we don’t let slip from our hands the very things that cause us to love Sarasota and her islands.”



*Siesta Key Association President Catherine Luckner. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

County Administrator Randall Reid, who also addressed the audience, talked of the many visits he has made to local companies, hearing officers or owners say they had decided to locate their businesses in the county after vacationing in the area since they were children or because their wives loved the area, for examples.

Reid said that as a government official, he feels the need not only to protect the quality of life in the county but to try to make it better.

He urged the SKA members to maintain alliances with other neighborhood organizations to work on initiatives they feel are important to the community.

In 1972, Reid continued, the County Commission adopted the first long-range plan for development of areas east of I-75. He added that the county has received numerous awards through the years for its land-use planning.

Referring to the 2050 Plan, Reid said, "Don't assume development east of I-75 has no impact on you."

In a comment similar to the one Patterson had made, he told the audience, "I urge you to pay attention to who you put in public office and what their values are."

## PROJECT UPDATES

Patterson also offered comments about major projects under way or coming up on Siesta Key.



*Peter van Roekens is trading the duties of vice president for those of secretary. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

The planned improvements to Siesta Public Beach park are still pegged at \$21.5 million, she said, with 130 new parking spaces to be created as part of that work.

“I personally am appalled at the price,” Patterson said. “It’s more than double what we expected it to be.”

She noted that Siesta architect Mark Smith — past chairman of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce — “has been helpful in pointing out issues where he thought things were overpriced” in the beach project. With the support of commissioners, Smith reviewed the plans with representatives of the county’s consulting firm for the design work, Kimley-Horn and Associates, and reported his findings to the commission last year.

Patterson continued, “The worst thing we could possibly do is to [undertake the work] in phases and keep the beach basically in turmoil for numerous years.”

Moreover, Patterson pointed out, the Siesta facilities are the only ones at a county beach park that have not been renovated over the past several years. “[This] just happens to be the most expensive [project],” she added.

Regarding a trolley for the island: Patterson said it is set to go into service within about 18 months, and a federal grant will cover half the cost at the outset. “If it works out well,” she said, “and helps reduce the parking situation, I am sure the county will take it over and run it at full price, about three-quarters of a million dollars a year. But it should be worth it if it’s well used. ... If you like it and want it

to stay, use it,” she admonished the audience, noting that ridership would determine whether it continued.

The county also plans to invest in new facilities for Turtle Beach, Patterson noted, including a gazebo, walkways and a kayak launch.

Additionally, she said, the county is under a state mandate to close the sewer plant on Siesta Key, because storms could cause problems with it that would result in environmental damage.

At the end of this year, Patterson said, a contractor will begin constructing a new sewer force main under much of Lockwood Ridge Road. A directional bore will be used to run a pipeline under the Intracoastal Waterway and Phillippi Estate Park, she added, “and basically service [Siesta residents] through mainland sewer plants, which will make [the sewer system] safer and better and ultimately cheaper as well.”

## NEW DIRECTORS

During the meeting, which was held in the Community Room at St. Boniface Episcopal Church, Joyce Kouba, head of the Nominating Committee, reported that all the directors of the past year would be returning to the SKA board. Additionally, Catherine Luckner will remain as president and Helen Clifford will continue to be the treasurer. However, Kouba said, Michael Shay had been elected vice president, with past Vice President Peter van Roekens taking over as secretary.

The other directors are Beverly Arias, Ron Flynn, Deet Jonker and Joe Volpe. 



## WHEN WILL THERE BE LIGHT?

*For more than a year, Siesta Village residents and business owners have sought improved lighting for seven crosswalks on Ocean Boulevard. File photo*

### COUNTY STAFF REPORTS THE LATEST ESTIMATE ON PROVIDING ILLUMINATION FOR SEVEN SIESTA VILLAGE CROSSWALKS AND ADDRESSES ANOTHER LIGHTING MATTER ON THE KEY

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

Sarasota County staff has determined it can purchase and install bollards to illuminate seven Siesta Key Village crosswalks for about \$55,000, but it was awaiting a second vendor quote this week before making a recommendation to the County Commission about how to proceed.

That was the news in a March 21 memo from

Chief Engineer James K. Harriott Jr. to the County Commission regarding an initiative that began in January 2012 to provide better lighting of pedestrians walking across Ocean Boulevard at night.

“*There’s been some concern about the length of time that’s being taken on this.*”

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County



Harriott reported that staff had found it could buy the bollards for \$12,000 from a manufacturer under an existing county contract.

One vendor had responded to a request for a quote on the installation, he continued; that estimate was \$40,000.

That quote “is consistent with staff’s estimate of the project,” Harriott noted in a March 24 email to county officials with an update on capital asset projects. However, he included in that later email a note that the estimate for the purchase and installation of the bollards is about \$55,000.

“The Board requested staff not proceed with installation until a report of the cost [was] provided and approved,” he added in the second email.

Last year, staff members estimated the cost of the project at \$31,500. However, they had cautioned that dealing with electrical connections in the Village could create a higher total.

A second vendor was scheduled to visit Siesta Village on March 26 in preparation for providing an estimate, Harriott noted in the March 24 report.

In a telephone interview with *The Sarasota News Leader* on March 26, Commissioner Nora Patterson — a Siesta Key resident who has championed the crosswalk lighting proposal on the board — said, “I think we should just do it if we can do it for that,” referring to the original \$52,000 estimate.

During the County Commission’s regular meeting on March 19, Patterson told her fellow commissioners she knew staff was working on a resolution of the matter. “There’s been some concern about the length of time that’s being taken on this,” she said.

Sarasota County  
ATTACHMENT “A”  
SCOPE OF WORK / SPECIFICATIONS

- 1.0 Purpose**  
It is the intent of Sarasota County to solicit quotes to provide and install fourteen (14) LED bollards at seven (7) crosswalks at Siesta Key Village. The quotes shall include all material, equipment, labor and permits necessary to complete this job.
- 2.0 Technical Specifications**
- 2.1 LED Bollards**
- a. Housing**
1. Material: Pre-cast concrete
  2. Shape: Rectangular
  3. Dimensions: 44”x8”x8” to 46”x10”x10”
  4. Color: Match Siesta Blend brick pavers
  5. LED fixture shall be inlaid into housing at a 40 to 80 degree downward angle
- b. LED**
1. 14-18 watt
  2. 5500K-6500K Color Temp
- c. Power source**
1. 240v UNV



- 3.0 Installation**
- 3.1** Bollards must be installed in concrete and/or brick pavers, with concrete footers approximately 8-12” below ground surface.
- 3.2** All locates are the responsibility of the successful Bidder, a call to Sunshine State One-Call before digging shall be done by contractor, Sarasota County will assist with identifying, making aware of known underground piping and circuits.
- 3.3** Any dig-in will be reported immediately to the County Project Manager any repair will be approved and inspected by County Project Manager, no repair cost shall be paid by County.

*Sarasota County staff last year sought vendor quotes for providing bollards at Siesta Village crosswalks. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

Then Siesta Key Association Vice President Peter van Roekens originally broached the need for the crosswalk lighting during the January 2012 meeting of the Siesta Key Village Association.

Contacted on March 25, van Roekens said it appeared the lighting would not go in until after season. Still, he said, “I think it’s going to happen. It’s long overdue.”

In the interview this week with the *News Leader*, Patterson added, “It’s pretty startling that [the project] would cost over \$100,000,” referring to vendor responses when the county sought bids earlier this year.

As Harriott pointed out in the March 21 report, the Procurement Department advertised an Invitation for Quotes (IFQ) for the project on Dec. 7, 2012, with responses due on Jan. 9. “The time period set to receive quotes expired without any results,” he wrote.

About 300 notifications went out, Harriott continued, and approximately 12 additional email notifications were sent to vendors. Companies offered several reasons for their lack of response, he pointed out:

- The quote would exceed the IFQ limit of \$50,000.
- Time constraints.
- The project was not within vendors’ field.
- Lack of licensed electricians on vendors’ staffs. The IFQ had specified that a licensed electrician had to do the work, either as a vendor employee or subcontractor.

On Jan. 18, Harriott reported, an Invitation for Bids (IFB) went out, with quotes due on Feb.



*The Siesta Isles Condominium Association is seeking lights at crosswalks near the public beach similar to those installed at six new crosswalks on Midnight Pass Road between the Beach Road and Stickney Point Road intersections. File photo*

13. That time, the Procurement Department received only one bid; it was for \$118,500.

According to vendors, reasons for their lack of response then were as follows, Harriott continued:

- Confusion about the power source in Siesta Village.
- Lack of minimum qualifications, including an electrical contractor's license, Advanced Maintenance of Traffic Certification and brick paver experience.

Harriott pointed out that electrical plans were provided to prospective bidders and all were encouraged to schedule a site visit. "The only vendor to submit a bid was also the only vendor to schedule a site visit," he wrote.

"It seemed to me like nobody really wanted to do [the project]," Patterson told the *News Leader*.

Mark Smith, past chairman of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, spoke with the *News Leader* on March 26 after reviewing Harriott's March 21 memo. "It still seems high to me," he said of Harriott's \$52,000 estimate. "Quite honestly," Smith added, "I just don't understand."

Given the fact that the county had received several higher estimates than expected for projects in recent months, Smith said, "Again, it must be a sign of a healthy economy."

Nonetheless, he pointed out, as a taxpayer, he found it "outrageous, frankly. ... Private industry would have gotten [the project done] for probably half" of Harriott's estimate, he added. "I'm all for people making a living ... but we need to be reasonable. ... I guess we're fortunate it came down from \$110,000 ...."

## ANOTHER CROSSWALK ISSUE

In his March 21 memo to the County Commission, Harriott also reported staff findings on a more recent lighting issue that had arisen on Siesta Key.

[In response to a request from the Siesta Isles Condominium Association](#), Harriott wrote, staff had investigated replacing or upgrading the flashing crosswalk signs at the main access to Siesta Key Public Beach.

Van Roekens also had broached that topic at a Siesta Key Village Association meeting — this time, in February. He pointed out that drivers have become inured to the constant flashing of those lights and ignore them.

Harriott wrote in his memo that the crossing signs, which have eight flashing LED lights on their outside edges, can be programmed to blink all the time — as they do now — or only when a button on a sign is pressed by a pedestrian wishing to cross Beach Road.

"The Siesta Isles Condominium Association has requested that these be replaced with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon signs, similar to signs installed by [the Florida Department of Transportation] on Midnight Pass [Road]," Harriott added.

The latter solar-powered, pedestrian advisory signs flash when a person presses a button to activate them, he noted.

The cost of replacing the existing signs by the beach entrance with the type used by FDOT is about \$8,000, Harriott continued.

The next opportunity the County Commission would have to discuss Harriott's memo would be April 9, when it holds a regular meeting in Venice. 

# EYE-CATCHER



## NEW CITY ART JOINS THE OUTDOOR GALLERY

By Stan Zimmerman  
*City Editor*

The creative tension across the U.S. 41 intersection with the Ringling Causeway reached almost electric proportions on Tuesday afternoon, March 26. The scarlet modernist

sculpture *Complexus* formally became part of the city's public art program.

Across the highway, the newly rebuilt and reinstalled *Unconditional Surrender* main-

tained its embrace of realistic depiction. On that windy afternoon, the artistic capacitance almost created sparks.

John Henry, the sculptor of the unique *Complexus*, did not mention the derivative piece across the street, but his remarks seemed to embrace both types of art.

“Overlooking the Gulf, this is a sentinel protecting the cultural life of this city,” he said. “It will be here forever.”

And so will the sailor and the nurse and the other myriad of original (and not-so-original) pieces of art the City of Sarasota is collecting. Public art is starting to show up in many different places. Some are as in-your-face as *Complexus*, while others are surprises in unusual places.

There was the usual razzmatazz at the ceremony — thanks to the generous donors who made it possible, words of welcome and praise by the mayor: You get the idea.

Larry Thompson, president of the Ringling College of Art and Design, hit the high note, saying, “This is the physical manifestation of the value of arts to the City of Sarasota. We need to get more and more of it.” 



*Sculptor John Henry addresses the group.  
Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*Larry Thompson, president of the Ringling College of Art and Design, offers remarks.  
Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*Mayor Suzanne Atwell speaks with artist John Henry at the Complexus dedication.  
Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*Warm Mineral Springs will be the topic of a conflict resolution meeting tentatively set for April 17. Photo courtesy State of Florida via Wikipedia Commons*

## **WARM MINERAL SPRINGS MEDIATION DATE SET**

The Sarasota County Commission and the North Port City Commission are tentatively scheduled to meet with a facilitator on April 17 to resolve differences over the ownership of Warm Mineral Springs.

County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh reported to the County Commission on March 19 that both he and County Administrator Randall Reid had had conflict assessment meetings with their North Port counterparts, as required by state statute, to try to reach an agreement over the future of the springs.

“We did not reach a resolution we could bring to you,” DeMarsh reported.

After the City of North Port rebuffed an offer from the County Commission to purchase Warm Mineral Springs, the County Commission sent a letter on Feb. 27 to Jonathan R. Lewis, the North Port city manager, saying the county board had adopted a Feb. 26 resolution “initiating the procedures of the Florida Governmental Conflict Resolution Act.”

The letter points out that the city and county purchased the resort property together in De-

cember 2010. It also noted the two local government bodies had exchanged “several pieces of correspondence since November 2012” with respect to “an Invitation to Negotiate for proposals to operate, develop, or utilize the ... property, and the City’s desire to sell its interest” in Warm Mineral Springs.

The letter adds, “It is clear that Sarasota County and the City of North Port have a conflict over the future use of the jointly-owned ... property as well as the City’s expressed desire to sell its interest in the property.”

DeMarsh pointed out on March 19 that the county had 50 days from the date it sent that letter to hold a meeting of the two boards, since his and Reid’s discussions were not fruitful, “and we will meet that timeline.”

He also had tentatively engaged a facilitator for the April meeting, he said, adding that Reid and he would coordinate with the facilitator to make sure the person had all the necessary background material and facts “that will lead to a more clear discussion.”

*Rachel Brown Hackney*

## VENICE CITY COUNCIL APPROVES DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP REGISTRY

During its regular meeting on March 26, the Venice City Council voted unanimously to approve, on final reading, an ordinance creating a domestic partnership registry for that city.

Interested persons probably will be able to register with the City Clerk's Office as early as next week, Assistant City Clerk Lydia Magnotti told *The Sarasota News Leader* on March 27. City Clerk Lori Stelzer said she felt potential registrants would be able to pick up packets of information, including registration forms, at Venice City Hall by the end of this week, former Sarasota City Commissioner Ken Shelin reported to the *News Leader*.

Shelin had advocated for establishment of the Venice registry, just as he had for the City of Sarasota registry.

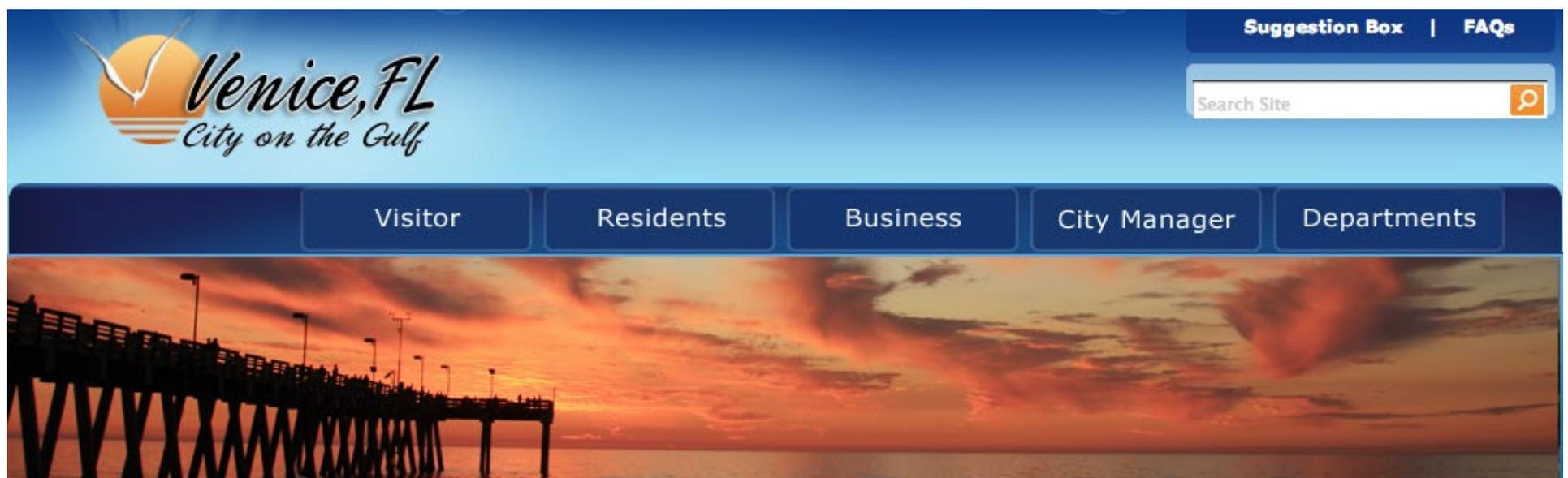
"The packets are just about ready," Magnotti told the *News Leader* on March 27.

Magnotti was also working with the city's IT Department on a hyperlink that would allow interested persons to download the registration form from the city [website](#), she added.

"I'm pretty confident that next week will be a go," Magnotti said.

In the meantime, Florida Senate Bill 196, which would create a domestic partnership registry for the state, remains stalled. No action has taken place since the sponsor, Sen. Eleanor Sobel, chose to postpone a vote on that bill on March 18, according to the Florida Legislature's website.

*Rachel Brown Hackney*



### Featured Events

[Advisory Boards](#)

[Charter/Code](#)

[Budget](#)

[City Council Email](#)

[Latest News](#)

[Mayor and Council](#)

[Meetings](#)



**What:** Eggstravaganza

**When:** Saturday, March 30, 9:30 a.m.

**Where:** Centennial Park, 200 block of W. Tampa Ave.

**What else:** Children should bring their own baskets. Egg hunt for children sponsored by Venice Lions

## PARKS AND RECREATION SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION TO BEGIN

Registration for Sarasota County Parks and Recreation summer camps begins Monday, April 1, the county has announced. Summer camp programs are offered over 11 weeks for children entering grades 1 through 10, a county news release says. Program and registration information is available online at [www.scgov.net/parksandrecreation](http://www.scgov.net/parksandrecreation) or in the 2013 Summer Camp Guide available online or at any Sarasota County recreation center, library or county building.

Traditional Day Camp will be held June 10 to July 5 and July 8 to Aug. 2, the release says. Children entering grades 1 through 5 will enjoy three field trips every week and on-site activities. Children may attend from as early as 7:30 a.m. to as late as 5:45 p.m.

Adventure Camp will be held June 10 to July 5 and July 8 to Aug. 2. "Youth entering grades 6 through 8 will enjoy four weekly field trips and activities at Colonial Oaks Park and Suncoast School for Innovative Studies in Sarasota," the release notes.

Leadership/C.I.T. Camp will be held June 10 to July 5 and July 8 to Aug. 2 at Suncoast School for Innovative Studies in Sarasota. Youths entering grades 9 and 10 will get instruction in job and life skills and resume-building, engage in volunteer opportunities and enjoy two weekly field trips, the release says.

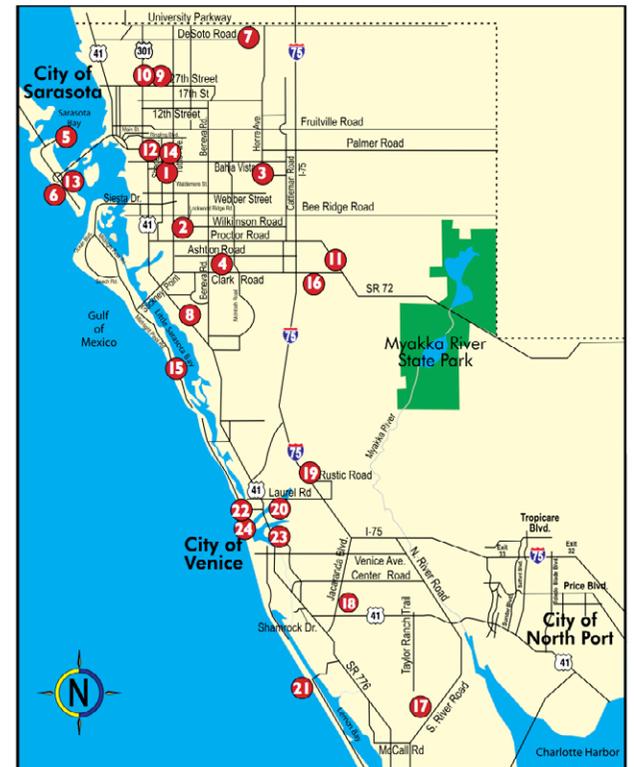
Therapeutic Camp for children with special needs will be held June 10 to Aug. 2 in conjunction with the summer school schedule at Oak Park School.

More than 35 specialty camps are scheduled throughout the summer, allowing youth the opportunity to focus on a favorite activity or to try something different, the release points

### 2013 SUMMER CAMP LOCATIONS

#### NORTH COUNTY SITES

- 1 Arlington Park  
2650 Waldmere St., Sarasota
- 2 Bee Ridge Park  
4430 S. Lockwood Ridge Rd., Sarasota
- 3 Colonial Oaks Park  
5300 Colonial Oaks Blvd., Sarasota
- 4 Compound Boardshop  
4063 Clark Road, Sarasota
- 5 Ken Thompson Park  
1700 Ken Thompson Pky., Lido Key
- 6 Lido Beach  
400 Ben Franklin Dr., Lido Key
- 7 Longwood Park  
6050 Longwood Blvd., Sarasota
- 8 Mattison's Forty One  
7275 S. Tamiami Trl., Sarasota
- 9 Newtown Estates Park  
2800 Newtown Estates Blvd., Sarasota
- 10 North Sarasota Library  
2801 Newtown Blvd., Sarasota
- 11 Oak Park School  
7285 Proctor Rd., Sarasota
- 12 Payne Park Skatepark  
2050 Adams Ct., Sarasota
- 13 South Lido Nature Center  
190 Taft Dr., Lido Key
- 14 Suncoast School for Innovative Studies  
1300 S. Tuttle Ave., Sarasota
- 15 Turtle Beach Park  
8918 Midnight Pass Rd., Siesta Key
- 16 Twin Lakes Park  
6700 Clark Road, Sarasota



Register online at [parksonline.scgov.net](http://parksonline.scgov.net) beginning April 1, 2013.

#### SOUTH COUNTY SITES

- 17 Englewood Sports Complex  
1300 S. River Road, Englewood
- 18 Jacaranda Library  
4143 Woodmere Park Blvd., Venice
- 19 Knight Trail Park  
3445 Rustic Road, Nokomis
- 20 Laurel Park  
509 Collins Rd., Laurel
- 21 Manasota Beach Park  
8570 Manasota Key Rd., Manasota Key
- 22 Nokomis Beach  
901 Casey Key Rd., Casey Key
- 23 Nokomis Community Park  
234 Nippino Trail, Nokomis
- 24 North Jetty Park  
100 Casey Key Rd. Casey Key

out. New specialty camps offered this year are Archery Camp, Beach Soccer i9 Sports Camp, Bricks 4 Kidz Camps, Indoor Sports Net Camp, SUP Snorkel Beach Adventure Camp, Skim Surf Paddle Camp, Superstars Mini Sports Camp, Water Sports Camp-Englewood and Water Sports Extreme-ly Fun Variety Camp.

Additionally, volunteer opportunities are available for youths entering grade 10 or higher, so they can complete service hours needed for school while assisting counselors and enjoying camp activities, the release says.

Financial assistance is available to qualifying Sarasota County residents. All summer camp staff members are fully screened, including an FBI fingerprint and background check.

For more information, call the camp office at 861-9870 or visit [www.scgov.net/parksandrecreation](http://www.scgov.net/parksandrecreation).

*Sarasota County Parks and Recreation*  
**SUMMER CAMP GUIDE**  
*Summer 2013*

**Registration begins  
April 1**

*“I have fun  
everyday!”*

**Click to view the Summer  
Camp Guide online**



## LIBRARIES SHARE TREASURES FROM RINGLING MUSEUM OF ART

The Sarasota County Library System, through a partnership with The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, will offer several cultural and education programs in April.

“The partnership enables the library system to expand its community education and outreach efforts while providing the museum with a series of venues to promote one of Sarasota County’s most treasured historic attractions,” a county news release says.

“We began focusing on an increased presence for art and culture a couple of years ago and we are thrilled to collaborate with the Ringling Museum in hosting their presentations,” says Sarabeth Kalajian, director of the Sarasota County Library System, in the release. “In addition to providing programming to the libraries, Ringling will also make their publications and calendars of events available to library patrons,” she adds.

April programs follow:

- Tuesday, April 2, 3 p.m., Selby Library, 1331 First St., Sarasota: *Art of Our Time* — Dr. Matthew McLendon, curator of modern and contemporary art, will talk about the museum’s ongoing presentation of its permanent contemporary art collection, a rotation of special exhibitions and the largest skyspace created by internationally renowned artist James Turrell.

- Friday, April 12, 2 p.m., Venice Library, 300 S. Nokomis Ave., Venice: Museum Assistant Librarians Megan Oliver and Arwen Spinosa will talk about the museum’s library, one of the largest public art museum libraries in the Southeast. This state-of-the-art research center also offers a variety of free programs, a lecture series, book club and a children’s summer reading program.
- Friday, April 19, 2 p.m., Selby Library, 1331 First St., Sarasota: Head Librarian Linda McKee will talk about the museum’s library, one of the largest public art museum libraries in the Southeast.
- Monday, April 22, 10:30 a.m., Venice Library, 300 S. Nokomis Ave., Venice; and Tuesday, April 23, 10:30 a.m., Selby Library, 1331 First St.: *Sarasota’s Cultural Treasure: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art* will be offered by Karen Kopp, a museum docent. Patrons will learn about Ringling’s vast art collection and the museum’s recent acquisitions. Kopp will also share highlights of the current and upcoming special exhibition schedule.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 (TTY: 711) or visit the county website at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).

# Take Your Time You Have All Week

Enjoy The News Leader Anytime - Day or Night

## FISCAL EXPERTS TO DISCUSS IMPACTS OF SEQUESTRATION

Federal sequestration will handicap state and local governments still fighting for stability after years of recession, some economics experts say. Headlines warn of pension problems, bankruptcies and defaults. What impact will the cutbacks have, and what is the financial state of affairs, for state and local governments?

Renowned experts from national financial firms, academia and local governments will discuss those points at New College of Florida on April 2.

New College and the Global Interdependence Center are sponsoring *The Condition of State and Local Governments: Municipal Bonds, New Taxes and Pension Obligations* from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, at the Suda-koff Conference Center, 5845 General Dougher Place on the College's Pei Campus.

Among the panelists will be John Mousseau, executive vice president and director of fixed

income for Cumberland Advisors Inc.; Natalie Cohen, managing director and head of municipal research for Wells Fargo; Robert Kurtter, managing director for U.S., state and regional ratings for Moody's Investors Service; Daniel Bergstresser, associate professor of finance at the Brandeis International Business School; Karen Rushing, Sarasota County clerk of the circuit court and county comptroller; and Rick Piccolo, president of Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport.

A wine and cheese reception will follow the event. Tickets are \$50 per person and are available by visiting [donate.ncf.edu/events](http://donate.ncf.edu/events) or by calling 487-4888.

"The Global Interdependence Center ([interdependence.org](http://interdependence.org)) encourages the expansion of global dialogue and free trade to improve cooperation and understanding among nations, with the goal of reducing international conflicts and improving worldwide living standards," the news release says.

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## MARCH HAS BEEN FLORIDA SEAGRASS AWARENESS MONTH

In recognition of the importance of seagrass habitats to Florida's environment and economy, Gov. Rick Scott proclaimed March Florida Seagrass Awareness Month, state officials announced.

"Seagrass habitat provides a variety of functions that contribute to a healthy and viable marine ecosystem," said Kevin Claridge, the coastal and aquatic managed areas director for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, in a news release. "These valuable underwater grasses are one of the many natural resources that Floridians and visitors can

work together to protect and preserve now and for future generations," he added in the release.

"Most of the commercially and recreationally important estuarine and marine animals depend on seagrass beds as refuge or habitat for some part of their life," said Amanda Dominguez, environmental specialist for Sarasota County Environmental Utilities, in the release. "That makes them directly responsible for bringing in millions of dollars annually from out-of-state and resident recreational and commercial fishermen," she noted.

The beds serve as nurseries for juvenile fish, scallops, crabs and shrimp, Dominguez pointed out.

“Manatees, turtles, sharks and rays feed on the plants themselves or on the smaller creatures that live there,” the release noted. “Many birds also feed in the grass flats. Seagrass helps maintain water quality by filtering and anchoring sediments. Without it, most of the regions they inhabit would be a seascape of unstable shifting sand and mud,” it says.

Twice a year, Sarasota County staff and volunteers have been surveying seagrass in every bay in Sarasota County to better understand local habitats and identify trends that can help manage these systems, the release continues. “During this winter’s seagrass survey, they have seen an unusual amount of flowering *Syringodium filiforme*, also known as Manatee grass, along the east side of Sarasota Bay. County scientists have reached out to several

leading state experts to share these observations,” the release adds.

Existing research indicates that time of year, water temperature, salinity and tides, as well as the age of seagrass, can all influence the flowering of Manatee grass, the release points out. Generally, healthier bays equal healthier seagrass habitats, it adds.

“In Sarasota County, there have been substantial efforts to reduce pollutants in water bodies,” the release says. “As a result, water quality has improved and the abundance of seagrass has increased through the years.”

The current amount of seagrass in Sarasota County is close to historic levels of acreages, the release points out.

To learn more about Sarasota County’s seagrass mapping program or for information about how to volunteer, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 (TTY: 711) or visit the Sarasota County website at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).



*Research has shown that health of seagrass in area waters has improved significantly over the past several years. Photo courtesy of NOAA*

## ENVIRONMENTAL LAW EXPERT TO DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE

The Nation Magazine discussion group of Sarasota will host environmental law expert Joel Fedder of Longboat Key in a program on Thursday, April 4, at 10 a.m. in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune auditorium.

Fedder's topic will be *Climate Change: Hell & High-Water, Solutions & Choices*.

Fedder is known both nationally and internationally for his work with the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, a news release says. He also established the Fedder Environmental Fund at the University of Maryland Law School, which encourages young lawyers to enter the environmental field, according to the law school's website.

Fedder will bring "great insights into the destruction of the globe" and of the fast-approaching "tipping point," including what that will mean for Florida, "with its relatively low elevation above sea level," the news release says.

All members of the community are welcome to participate in this free interactive presentation.

Refreshments will be served after the program.

The Herald-Tribune auditorium is located on the first floor of the newspaper's offices, 1741 Main St., Sarasota.



NATION MAGAZINE  
DISCUSSION GROUP  
**Climate Change:  
"Hell & High-Water,  
Solutions & Choices"**  
April 4, 2013

JOEL D. FEDDER, ESQ  
NATIONAL SUMMIT COUNCIL  
THE SIERRA CLUB  
THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
"THE ANWR" COASTAL PLAIN

## BUCHANAN TO HOST TAX REFORM PANEL DISCUSSION AT NEW COLLEGE

Experts with differing views on tax reform will take part in a March 29 panel discussion at New College hosted by U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, a Republican, of Longboat Key.

The event will begin at 11 a.m. in Sainer Pavilion on the Caples Campus, 5313 Bay Shore Road, the college has announced.

The panelists follow:

- Neal Boortz is the former host of a nationally syndicated radio talk show and co-author (with former U.S. Rep. John Linder, R-GA) of *The FairTax Book*, which calls for replacing income tax with a consumption tax on purchases.
- Dan Mitchell is an economist and senior fellow with the libertarian Cato Institute and an advocate of a flat tax and international tax competition.

- Susan Nilon is the owner and general manager of Sarasota talk radio station WSRQ 106.9 FM and 1220 AM and an advocate of a progressive tax that assesses a higher rate on wealthy individuals.
- Jerry Pierce is chairman of the Leadership Council of the Florida chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, which advocates for tax relief and clarity in tax policies for small businesses. He owns Restaurant Equipment World in Orlando.

Buchanan will provide the opening remarks, a news release says. The forum's moderator will be John McQuiston, news anchor for Sarasota's WWSB ABC 7.

The event is free and open to the public. Call 951-6643 for reservations.

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## BOBBY JONES GOLF CLUB TO HOST SENIOR CITY CHAMPIONSHIP

The Bobby Jones Golf Club, Sarasota's municipal golf course, will host the 18th Annual Senior City Championship Saturday, April 6, and Sunday, April 7, the club has announced.

The tournament is open to any amateur male golfer who will be at least 50 years of age by April 6. Just the first 200 paid entries will be accepted into the tournament, a news release says. The deadline to register is Monday, April 1, at 5 p.m.

The registration fee is \$135; it includes a golf cart, green fees, prizes, an awards dinner and

refreshments, the release notes. To download a registration form [click here](#).

Completed forms should be dropped off or mailed to Bobby Jones Golf Club, 1000 Circus Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34232.

The Senior City Championship will be played on the British course with tee times starting at 9 a.m. each day, the release says.

The golf club is owned and operated by the City of Sarasota. For more information, visit [www.BobbyJonesGolfClub.com](http://www.BobbyJonesGolfClub.com) or contact Christian Martin, assistant course manager, at 365-2000, Ext. 5803.

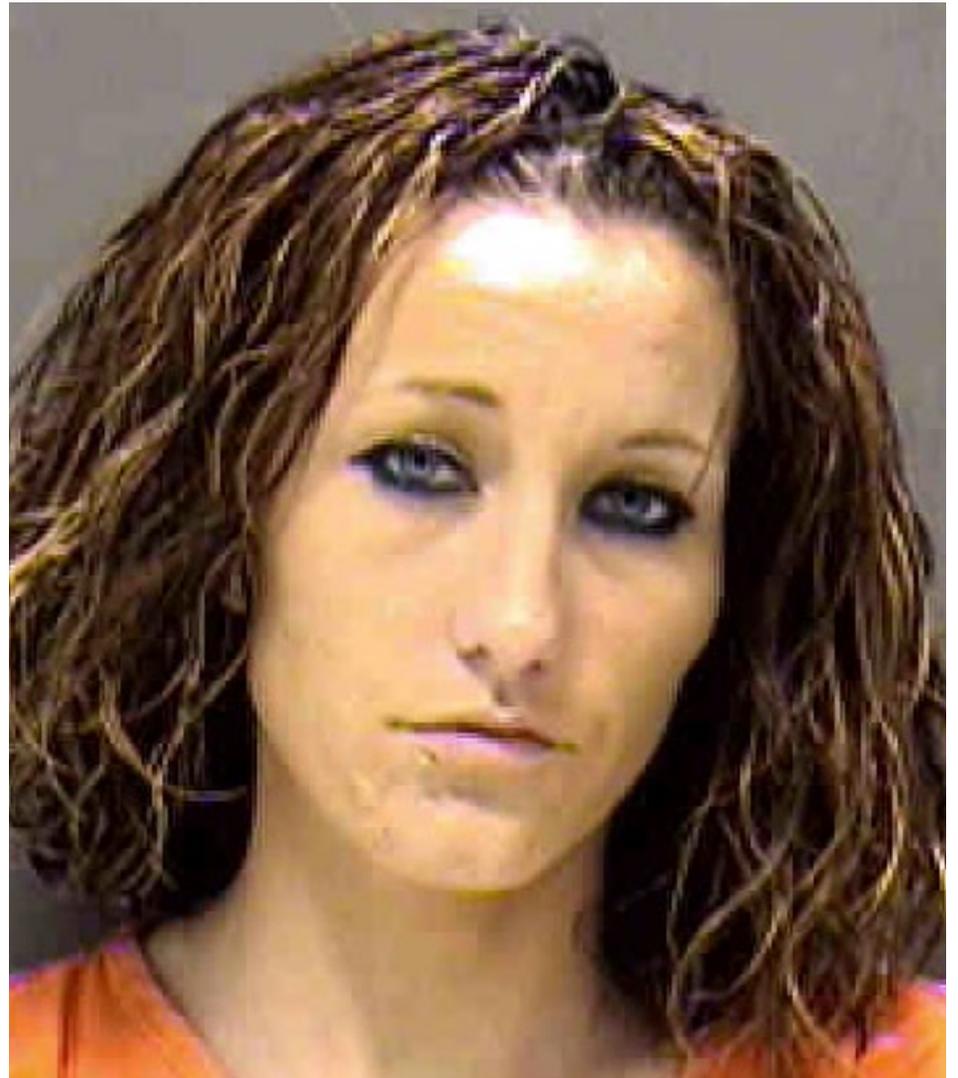
## MOTHER ARRESTED AND CHARGED IN CHILD NEGLECT CASE`

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a 27-year-old woman after discovering numerous incidents of child abuse and neglect — with additional charges for other crimes still pending, the office has announced.

Investigators with the Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit first became concerned while listening to calls between Jacqueline Moore and her boyfriend, who is in the Sarasota County Jail, a Sheriff's Office report says. "It was evident that her 7- and 3-year-old boys were constantly exposed to verbal and physical abuse," it adds. "Moore also admits in conversation to leaving the children alone in the car on several occasions," the report continues.

Further investigation by the Special Victims Unit revealed neighbors had reported constant screaming and crying and that Moore had threatened to punch one of the boys in the face, the report said.

"A separate case under investigation shows Moore using the children as a distraction while she takes stolen items to a store service counter to receive cash for the fraudulent returns," the report continues. In addition, school officials say the older child has been late for school 34 times this year, absent more than 11 days and often goes without his medication, the report adds.



*Jacqueline Moore/Contributed photo*

Moore is charged with two counts each of Child Neglect and Contributing to the Delinquency or Dependency of a Child.

This is her ninth arrest for crimes, including petit theft, DUI and prescription fraud, the report notes. "Additional charges are pending in relation to the fraud case, as well as a scam in which she obtained money from an adoption agency with whom she claimed she would place her unborn child, even though she was not pregnant," the report says. 

**The Sarasota News Leader**  
**No-Nonsense Reporting**

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# OPINION



## WILL THE COUNTY SINK THE SUNCOAST SUPER BOAT GRAND PRIX FESTIVAL?

### EDITORIAL

After 28 years, the Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix Festival is, according to organizers, “one of the longest continuously running race venues in the country.” It brings thousands of fans to the area and millions of dollars into the local economy, at one of the slower times of the year.

It raises money for Suncoast Charities for Children, which provides facilities and funding for organizations serving special needs children and their families.

It all sounds wonderful, right?

Not according to all the Sarasota County commissioners. Channeling their inner Simon Legree, the commissioners voted to provide only about 10 percent of the amount requested by the charity hosting the festival. Their parsimony threatens the event, the charity that

benefits from it and, by extension, the special needs children who depend on Suncoast Charities.

Not every commissioner was so sanguine about blowing off a long-standing event that brought more than 100,000 visitors to the waterfront last year and pumped more than \$14 million into the local economy. Commissioner Joe Barbetta argued valiantly for increasing the funding for the festival this year, and he and Chairwoman Carolyn Mason tried in vain to gain at least a compromise appropriation that would cover the organization’s entry fee to the sanctioning body. But the other commissioners — Nora Patterson, Charles Hines and Christine Robinson — were having none of it.

The final appropriation granted only \$10,000 to Suncoast Charities, with another \$3,500 of “in-kind services” for the actual event. The

# OPINION

cash grant barely covers 6 percent of the festival's total expenses.

It was distressing to hear Patterson justify denying the request because the event was "making a profit." That an elected official, who deals regularly with government agencies and nonprofits, would use such an inappropriate term to describe the proceeds — every cent of which goes to the children's charities — boggles the mind.

Equally fatuous was Patterson's argument that the county already had committed funds for the hoped-for World Rowing Championships at Nathan Benderson Park in 2017. That is like a farmer electing not to buy his normal supply of seed corn in the spring because the Legislature *might* legalize hemp growing four years hence. The county's expenditures for the rowing event will be negligible, unless the organizers are successful in landing the World Championships. And if they *were* successful, it would be such a huge boon for the region that it should be quite easy to justify additional expenditures at that time.

But to figuratively toss out all of our eggs because the county *might* have a much bigger chicken in four years beggars belief.

Suncoast Charities officials have since appealed to the community for help in picking up the slack created by the shortsightedness of the County Commission. But, as they pointed out to the commissioners, Sarasota does not have the large corporate base to help fund this sort of event. The only realistic hope to save the festival in Sarasota County is for the commissioners to reconsider their ill-advised scrimping and make a larger grant to the organization.

The county commissioners have paid a great deal of lip service to the need to create jobs and grow the local economy. When that growth comes at the behest of rich land developers who would plunder our fragile environment, apparently that is something seriously to be considered. But when it comes time for commissioners to nurture an existing event that generously benefits the local economy *and* a charity for special needs children, their words ring hollow.

The Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix Festival has been a significant event for Sarasota County for almost three decades. The charity that hosts it provides invaluable services for children in need in our midst. That the County Commission would turn its back on both tradition and the needs of those children is deplorable — and a stain on every citizen of Sarasota County.

May the commissioners see the error of their ways ... and soon. 



## 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*.

# Sarasota Leisure

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**15 YEARS OF FILM**

**THE A-LIST**

**DRIVING NORTH WITH SPRING**

*Inside*



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SARASOTA MAGAZINE





*Attendees at the Sarasota Film Festival (SFF) Sponsor and Press Kick Off Party on the bayfront grounds of Selby Botanical Gardens on March 13 pose with SFF 2013 sunglasses at the request of festival board President Mark Famiglio. All photos by Arielle Scherr*

## **THE SARASOTA FILM FESTIVAL WILL CELEBRATE ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY WITH LOCAL SHOWCASES, FILMS AND ARTISTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

**By Tyler Whitson**

*Staff Writer*

On Wednesday, March 13, the Sarasota Film Festival (SFF) staff and board of directors announced the official lineup for the 15th annual program to an enthusiastic crowd of sponsors and members of the press at the SFF Sponsor and Press Kick Off Party, a special sunset reception held on the bayfront grounds of the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.

As attendees sipped glasses of Francis Ford Coppola wine and other classy beverages, SFF Board President Mark Famiglio proudly took to the mic to declare his excitement for what he referred to as the “1.5 decade anniversary” of the program. He also thanked those involved in making that happen.

Next, Director Tom Hall made the much-anticipated statements. “This year, we are proud to announce that we’ll be showing 223 films at the Sarasota Film Festival over the course of our 10 days,” he said. “We’re going to be bringing in at least 100 artists to the festival this year, flying them in from all over to present their films to our community.”

Of those films — which come from more than 30 different countries — Hall explained that 102 are features, with their numbers split closely between fictional stories and documentaries. The remainder, he noted, are shorts divided into 15 programs for screening throughout the festival.

As is usually the case, the SFF films and events will take place at various locations throughout Sarasota, though the majority of the feature films will be screened at Regal Cinemas Hollywood 20 on Main Street in downtown Sarasota, where the SFF box office will be located.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

In an interview with *The Sarasota News Leader*, Hall commented on what he thinks will attract audiences most this year. "I think it's the diversity of films," he said. "We have something for everyone's interests, and our job is really to provide a program that's diverse enough that it helps people feel they can connect with and have ownership over the festival," he continued. "We do this not for ourselves, but for people to come and enjoy the films, connect with filmmakers and films



*(From left) Brad Bryan, KT Curran and Chris Curran gather at the Sarasota Film Festival Sponsor and Press Kick Off Party. Bryan produced and KT Curran directed and wrote the short film Boost, which will be showcased as part of the SRQ Shorts program.*



*Sarasota Film Festival board President Mark Famiglio addresses the crowd at the SFF Sponsor and Press Kick Off. He told attendees that the SFF plans to show some controversial films this year.*

and have a conversation about the art of cinema, which I think is important.”

Asked about his favorite aspect of organizing the festival, Hall explained it is the connection the SFF helps to nurture among audiences, films and filmmakers. “It’s when you go into the theater and walk a filmmaker in and there’s an audience there that is engaged in the film and wants to talk about it and have a dialogue — a real conversation about what the movie’s about — and really get into the meat and potatoes of the story and the process,” Hall replied.

“Every time filmmakers come here they leave with an appreciation for the audience, and I think that’s what keeps us able to bring back the films that we want to bring,” Hall continued. “We’ve built a reputation over the years that our festival is an audience-driven festival and that filmmakers have a real home here.”

## THE FILMS

This year’s opening night film, *Blackfish*, directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite and filmed partially in Florida, is an American documentary about orcas, or “killer whales,” that live in captivity in parks such as Sea World in the United States and other countries. The film examines the dissonance between the lives of the captive whales and those they are meant to live as social, intelligent beings at the top of the food chain in their natural habitats. It investigates the problems that can arise from this incompatibility.

The film will be screened on Friday, April 5, at 7 p.m. at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, with a “red carpet” ceremony preceding the film at 6 p.m. and a party following the film at 9 p.m. at the same location.

The festival’s closing night film, *Frances Ha*, directed by Noah Baumbach, is an American



Attendees indulge in catered hors d'oeuvre and beverages at the Sarasota Film Festival Sponsor and Press Kick Off Party on the bayfront grounds of Selby Botanical Gardens on March 13.

comedy, filmed in black and white, about an aspiring dancer living in a small apartment in Brooklyn with her best friend, struggling with her professional identity and romantic frustrations, yet remaining hopeful about what the future has in store. It will be screened following this year's Filmmaker Tribute Awards ceremony, which will take place at 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 13, at the Sarasota Opera House.

In addition to these bookend movies, the SFF is paying special attention to a set of films dubbed the "centerpiece" and "spotlight," which are shown toward the end of the festival as a lead-up to the closing ceremony and screening. This year's centerpiece selections are *Running from Crazy*, directed by Barbara Kopple, and *The Spectacular Now*, directed by James Ponsoldt. The 2013 spotlight films are *Burma*, directed by Carlos Puga; *The Discoverers*, directed by Justin Schwarz; and *Pasadena*, directed by Will Slocombe.

All of this year's selections were produced in the United States.

The shorts programs reflect universal categories — "Narrative," "Documentary," "World" and "Animated" — as well as more specific categories, such as "SRQ Shorts," which are productions by area filmmakers; "Through Women's Eyes," films directed by women that tell stories about women; and "Youthfest Shorts," which are movies that follow the ups and downs of the lives of their young protagonists.

Present at the event on March 13 was KT Curran, the director and writer of the short film *Boost*. Included in the "SRQ Shorts" program, it will be aired on Saturday, April 6, at 11:30 a.m. as well as on Wednesday, April 10, at 9 p.m. at the Hollywood 20.

Curran told the *News Leader* in an interview at the event how very excited she is about the



*Sarasota Film Festival Director Tom Hall has the sunset as his backdrop at the Sponsor and Press Kick Off Party.*

premiere of the film, which was made to raise awareness about sexual assault on college campuses; it follows the life of a young man named Jake Peterson.

“His feeling is that you can just get a little boost in life, whether it be in the gym or with the ladies, either through steroids or maybe slipping something into a girl’s drink,” Curran explained. “He has the idea that there are no consequences for his actions.”

Curran — who is also the director of Source Productions, a live theater company associated with Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida — went on to explain what she would like to see audiences take away from the film. “First of all, we hope that they’ll be compelled by this story and also how real this is, how prevalent this is,” she said. “Some statistics say one in eight young women on American college campuses are sexually assaulted and so we really wanted to look at one particular story and how that’s affected both by the male and the female and the repercussions of that.”

## COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS

In addition to film screenings, the SFF will hold its usual Narrative Feature, Documentary Feature and Independent Visions film competitions, though this year the number of films competing in each category has increased from seven to eight because of the large volume of submissions. The prize for the popular Independent Visions competition this year is a coveted distribution deal through a company called Factory 25, which includes theatrical releases in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and other major cities around the coun-

try, as well as a DVD release and distribution through certain online streaming platforms.

The SFF also engages with the community in ways not directly related to film screenings. For example, all of the proceeds from the “Through Women’s Eyes” program at the SFF will go to support the work of the U.S. National Committee for UN Women. UN Women, which will be holding a reception on Saturday, April 6, at Art Center Sarasota, is an organization established by the United Nations in 1976 that works to support gender equality throughout the world, at all hierarchical levels.

Additionally, the SFF encourages young people to be filmmakers with its SFF Education program, which connects with more than 5,000 students of various ages through 12 free filmmaking, film review, screenwriting and movie screening programs. The festival also includes screenings of films made by young people from across Florida between the ages of 10 and 18 and a reading of screenplays written by high school students in the area.

Of course, the SFF will feature a number of parties as well — including the signature “Cinema Tropicale” event at the Sarasota Yacht Club — along with ceremonies for and lectures by filmmakers, actors and actresses. Among the members of the filmmaking community who will be present to receive awards or give lectures will be Mariel Hemingway, Lili Taylor, Griffin Dune, Barbara Kopple, Suzanne Clément and Peter Bogdanovich.

*Ticket prices for films and events, schedules and additional information about the SFF can be found at [www.sarasotafilmfestival.com](http://www.sarasotafilmfestival.com).* 



## THE A-LIST

*A still from Noah Baumbach's Frances Ha, this year's Sarasota Film Festival Closing Night Film. Image courtesy Kathryn Kennedy*

### HOW THE SARASOTA FILM FESTIVAL IS MAKING A NAME FOR ITSELF IN THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT FILM COMMUNITY

**By Cooper Levey-Baker**

*Associate Editor*

Alicia Van Couvering compares watching a film she's produced with an audience for the first time to dropping off your kid at daycare. "I love him," she says. "I think he's wonderful. He's a little weird. I hope people like him. I hope he doesn't get beat up."

That thrill, of finally sharing a labor of love with a smart audience, is one reason Van Couvering keeps coming back to the [Sarasota Film Festival](#), now in its 15th season. Van Couvering calls Sarasota audiences "so ready to see good films." She first came to Sarasota in 2008, when a shoot in St. Pete went bust and she was looking for investors. Instead, she found a community.

"I could see that this was a really fun world," she says. "It's profound. All these other people like the same stuff I do and we're all here at 11 a.m. after partying the night before to see the same movie."

Van Couvering's story is a common one — one you hear again and again during conversations with indie film professionals, most of them based in New York. Van Couvering mentions [a recent Hollywood Reporter story](#) documenting "The Rise of New York's Next Big Filmmakers." Nearly all of the names named have appeared in Sarasota at some point: from newly crowned *Girls* star Lena Dunham (whose

*Tiny Furniture* Van Couvering produced) to Alex Karpovsky (with 2005's *The Hole Story*) and Alex Ross Perry (whose debut, *The Color Wheel*, had a world premiere here in 2011).

Festival Director Tom Hall says that community building is very much on purpose. When he came on board nine years ago, the festival was already supporting indie filmmakers, but

it launched the annual Independent Visions Competition to do even more. Today, the eight films screened as part of the Independent Visions series are one of the festival's core attractions.

But a calendar switch also helped build the festival's rep. Early on, the festival occurred in January, right around another festival you



March 28, 2013  
**MICKEY SUMNER, WWE SUPERSTAR BRODUS CLAY and DAVID CALL Coming to Sarasota Film Festival**

*in Breaking News by The Insider*

This year's BREAKTHROUGH AWARD goes to Mickey Sumner for her work in IFC Films' *FRANCE HA*, our Closing Night Film. She will receive the award at our Tribute Luncheon April 12th at the Sarasota Yacht Club

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*The Sarasota Film Festival website is sure to be busy over the next several weeks. Image courtesy of the Film Festival*

may have heard of: Sundance. Establishing the Sarasota fest in late spring gives film professionals a breather after the marathon of Sundance and South By Southwest.

Hall also credits the Sarasota crowds for the attention the festival has gotten. “We have an audience that is willing to take chances and give people their feedback,” Hall says. The theater isn’t full of fellow film pros. “It’s a real film audience. They’re smart. They’re savvy.”

Those audiences certainly impressed Josh Braun, who runs Submarine Entertainment, a sales and production company, with his brother. “I was surprised by how robust the audiences were and how much they engage with the films,” he says. “There’s a very solid tradition of respect and appreciation for the arts in that region that just doesn’t exist everywhere.” Braun first came to the festival in 2005; he’s come back almost every year since. The film *Page One: Inside the New York Times*, which he produced, served as the 2011 opening night feature.

Of course, there’s another reason Braun comes almost every year, and his name is Tom Hall.

“He’s incredibly open to new, challenging work,” says Van Covering, “so he identifies a lot of filmmakers early that other people don’t latch onto.”

“Whatever project he’s spearheading is something that I jump on board,” says Maureen Masters, the director of regional publicity and film festival bookings for Magnolia Pictures, a film distributor. “He’s a fantastic programmer. He goes after really ambitious titles.”

She says the programming here is on par with “some of the best regional film festivals in the U.S.”

That word “regional” doesn’t bother Hall. There are maybe four or five genuine national event festivals, he says. To be near the top of that next tier is still awfully damn impressive. “The industry doesn’t invade Sarasota and turn it into a press frenzy,” Hall says. “We’re not going to be that.”

Masters only came to the Sarasota festival for the first time last year, but she was “floored.” The detailed organization, the ease of navigating the festival, the feedback from crowds — all of it impressed her. “Filmmakers on the whole really look forward to Sarasota,” she says.

But that doesn’t mean Hall is satisfied. He wants the festival to develop a fuller year-round presence, keeping audiences engaged in filmmaking outside of the confines of April. Another imperative: how to “connect to the transition from theatrical distribution to on-demand and online screenings” and help filmmakers navigate that new world. Hall says there are no real models for a festival doing that successfully, but that doesn’t bother him. He wants Sarasota to lead the way.

“I don’t know how people like Tom stay passionate about new work forever,” says Van Covering. “At a certain point you think you’d get burnt out. He seems so terminally open.”

*The Sarasota Film Festival runs April 5-14. Visit [sarasotafilmfestival.com](http://sarasotafilmfestival.com) for a comprehensive guide to everything going on.* 

# DRIVING NORTH WITH SPRING



## THE MANY-HUED SIGNS OF THE SEASON DELIGHTED THIS DRIVER ON A LONG JOURNEY

Story and Photos

By Fran Palmeri

*Contributing Writer*

When friends heard I was going north, they offered words of condolence. Why would anyone trade Florida on the brink of spring for the northern winter?

I had reservations. I could almost hear the bellowing of alligators that means spring up and down the peninsula. Iris was starting to bloom. That alone was enough to keep me at home. I found a dozen reasons to delay departure: urgent emails; cameras out of juice; lunch to make. Finally worn down by minu-

tia, I was out the door and into the van before something else tugged at me.

Usually on long trips I count the rivers — Braden, Manatee, Alafia ... Crossing the Altamaha on I-95 in Georgia, I think of William and John Bartram discovering the *Franklinia* along its banks, a tree which disappeared from the wild soon after. The one they planted at their Philadelphia nursery and named after their friend, Benjamin Franklin, spawned all future *Franklinias*, including the one in my yard in Annapolis.



On this trip it was red maples. Ranging from crimson to burgundy, like torches they lit the way.

Yellow jessamine in long streamers from the tops of trees added a colorful accent against blue sky crisscrossed with contrails. I could almost track the airports I was passing.

At rest stops there was a lot to see and hear: a red mist of maples just beginning to bloom in a swamp; tiny wildflowers in the grasses; red-winged blackbirds; the plaintive call of a meadowlark. A chorus of spring peepers greeted me from a swamp in South Carolina.

All along the route robins also on their way north took a time out much like their human counterparts. I was bringing spring along with me.

In North Carolina, there were fewer maples in bloom, but I was compensated by beautiful trees laid bare by winter with balls of mistletoe nesting in their branches. Dogwoods clinging to last year's leaves floated in the woods, a foil to the pines.

In a thrift shop in Chapel Hill, I picked up a book by the naturalist John Burroughs, who wrote in the 1800s: "He who marvels at the







beauty of the world in summer will find equal cause for wonder and admiration in winter.”

On the way home I got to experience spring all over again, this time in fast forward: an occasional red maple in North Carolina, then dozens further south; rambunctious yellow jessamine everywhere; in South Carolina the pale green of sweet gum, oaks and willows.

Florida’s spring was well along. The maples had leafed out and stepped back into the canopy, but in my yard the iris had waited for my return. 





## ASK 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.*

### RARE BIRD LAYS ITS EGG ON NORTH SIESTA KEY BRIDGE

Dear Readers,

I am shelving my epoch-making dissertation on the dire consequences of humans celebrating their Easter holiday by hiding eggs all over their properties because my editor has just rushed me the following reader question. I was just about to call it a day, but this letter was marked with enough red flags to make me believe this was 1968 and I was back in the USSR with the Beatles. So, here goes ...

Dear Otus,

We watched with great interest this morning's 6 a.m. all-too-brief news segment on the closing of Siesta Key's north bridge this weekend because of some rare and highly endangered bird found nesting in the bridge's grid work. They showed a photo of its beautiful green egg but not of the bird. Can you tell us about this unusual bird and do you think we might ever see one in Bradenton, or are they only in zoos?

And how did it happen to come to nest on a drawbridge here and when will the egg hatch? And how is the chick able to fledge within minutes of hatching? I thought it took several days for a bird to fledge.

We were hoping to drive down to Siesta Key and catch a glimpse of it but are also con-

cerned about the miles-long traffic backup on the south bridge due to the north one being closed. We used to live on Siesta Key and know what traffic congestion can be like. Can we get onto the island to see the bird and could you please tell us more about it? The egg is so beautiful.

I hope this gets to you in time, as we would really appreciate your answers to our questions before we miss out on this great birding opportunity. Thank you!

*April Narr and family in Bradenton*

Dear April,

My feathers all fluffed up when I received your last-minute questions because nothing makes me happier and prouder than to know there are people like you out there who have a passion for nature and the curiosity to accompany it. I hope to encourage the former and satisfy the latter for you by answering your jumbled, garbled questions in some semblance of order.

### THE EGG

First, let me start with the egg, from which birds often begin. The egg is an amazing shade of deep jadeite green mingled with nephrite shadings, varying from pale sea green to shadow-gray. The best-preserved example of this egg is in the Musée des Faux

Arts in Paris. It was a gift from the last African emperor of Xianduuto to Desirée, Napoleon Bonaparte's fiancée. When Napoleon unceremoniously dumped her to wed Josephine, the egg left France with Desirée, who married Crown Prince and Regent Bernadotte and thus became queen of Sweden.

During the brief but bloody Twelfth Hour War between France and Sweden on 31 March 1816, (we are just three years and two days shy of its bicentennial commemoration!), the egg was stolen by the occupying Ottoman troops, led by Nisan Eşek Pasha, and it ended up in the Nisan Eşegin Oğlu Sen Museum in Constantinople, unseen and forgotten for some 150 years.

In 1966, during the Cypress Conflict, the museum was burned down. In 1968, two truant schoolboys, sneaking cigarettes, uncovered

the egg in the rubble. The government of France paid Turkey the phenomenal sum of 4.1 Turkish kuruş for its return.

At first, the Faux Arts museum displayed it on a white satin pillow, but when naturalism and an understanding of our natural world became more *au courant*, curators placed it on a humble nest of pine needles. That display is totally incorrect because, as you will soon learn, this bird does not construct a nest. A correct display of it is in the Yúrénjié Museum in Beijing, China.

Now, let's meet Mama bird!

## THE BIRD

The contrast between this exquisite egg, one fit to be on display at Tiffany's at Easter, and its soon-to-be extirpated parents is so vast that one would think Mother Nature was playing some kind of a joke. I would like to



The egg in the Musée des Faux Arts. Photo courtesy APRF Wire Services



*No ugly ducklings here. File photo*

**HAPPY EASTER !**



*The Easter Ducklings*

*An Easter greeting to Otus. File photo*

write that it is a reverse of the ugly duckling into swan story, but I find baby ducklings simply adorable and almost as cute as owlets, so that is not an appropriate analogy.

The Twig-Nosed (or Stick-Nosed) Fisherking (*Rhinencephalus alcyon rasmus nasus regalus*), is a species of insect larvae-devouring, dry-river bed birds that makes its home in Africa's Sahel, a transitional coastline area delimiting the sands of the Saharan deserts. This arid belt stretches from Chad to Goa. The birds' diet consists solely of mosquito and sand flea larvae, making them a valuable natural pest controller.

The few ornithologists who have been able to study it or preserved specimens of it have declared Twig-Nosed Fisherking the closest living relative to the extinct Velociraptor. As

a result of climate change — i.e., global warming, civil wars and man's predation — this bird is on the verge of being extirpated. According to the last National Autobahn Easter Bird Count (AEBC), held in China in 1897, only 4,113 Twig-Nosed Fisherking eggs were documented. The Chinese consider them a rare culinary delicacy, which might explain why China closed its doors to the AEBC. Or, on a less sinister note, closed-door policy could have nothing to do with cuisine but relate to the protection of ancient Buddhist manuscripts and relics that fill the [caves along Turpan's historical Silk Road](#). Many of these caves' treasures have been looted.

Note also the photo of a Buddhist thangka depicting the months of the year with a celebration animal, which I have included this week. I have marked the months from



On a Manichean thangka, the Fisherking represents April. File photo

January through April. The April animal depiction is of the Fisherking. This bird was sacred to the Manicheans as its arrival in April signified the end of winter and the beginning of spring, much like our Capistrano swallows. But it also fit into the Manichean gnostic elaborate cosmology beliefs describing a material world of evil, i.e., darkness (the Fisherking's egg) and light (the Fisherking).

This valuable piece of historical art was looted from the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas during the Russo-China War, and it now hangs in the Dyen Durakov Muzey in Moscow (Russia, not Texas!)

Again, thanks to Rick Greenspun, I am able to show readers a photo of a female Fisherking, which was taken during his last birding expedition to Xianduu. The really cool thing

about his photo, other than the fact that it is incredibly difficult to get a photo of this shy bird, is that she (yes, this bird species displays sexual dimorphism) is perched on a twig, and when you compare her bifurcated, bumpy "twig" beak to her rather smooth perch twig, you will appreciate her highly specialized olfactory senses. One nostril is for smelling out the sand flea larvae and the other for mosquito larvae. It is unbelievable!

## BACK TO THE EGG

In spring, during the Sahel's rainy season, the female Fisherking abandons her mate for a period of two months and migrates to the Turpan Oasis, an area edging the Taklamakan Desert in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China. There, she lovingly and carefully



*This egg is on display in the Yú rén jié Museum in Beijing. Photo courtesy APRF Wire Services*

deposits her single fertilized egg of exquisite jadeite and nephrite colors in a rocky crevasse or within the shadowed recesses of a yurt roof's metal eaves. After a day's rest, she makes the daunting and exhausting return trip home. She does not incubate her egg.

In the shady crevice of the rocky cliff or deep pocket of the yurt's metal roof eaves, the egg is protected from the day's blistering heat. At night, it is kept warm by the heat absorbed by the rock or metal during the day. Essentially, Mother Nature (along with humans' modern engineering) incubates the egg. This is what we are witnessing on Siesta Key's north bridge metal grid.

Within 76 hours, the chick emerges at a Level 1 –a precocial – and is able to fly away minutes after hatching. This species is similar to the Australian Malleefowl or our own native American Turkey, who are also born precocial but cannot fly until a few days after hatching. It is also important to note that this chick is not related to the genus *Megapode*: It is genus *Megaceryle*.

Yes! It is absolutely incredible!

**Now, to answer your questions:**

1. No. You will not see a Mama Fisherking bird here or in Bradenton because she is already migrating back to the Sahel in Africa. But, if you subscribe to *The Sarasota News Leader*, you will see a gorgeous photo of this *rara avis*!



*A Fisherking. Photo courtesy of Rick Greenspun*

2. No. You will not see a Fisherking in zoos. The specialized dietary restrictions of this bird are such that no zoo can afford to maintain one.
3. Yes! You can see the beautiful egg if you subscribe to the *News Leader* with its links to the APRF Wire Services photos.
4. No! You will not see the fledgling because it hatches during the night and immediately flies away.
5. Yes and No! to your Siesta Key north bridge question. This is where it gets a bit squirrely and terribly confusing and completely unbelievable. You see, Siesta Key's

north bridge is actually closed, i.e., “open,” (and will be this weekend), but “closed” really means “open to traffic.” Kindly see the file photo of the open, yet “closed to traffic,” Siesta Key north bridge with the location of the fabulous egg. When the bridge is closed (i.e., lowered), it will then be “open to traffic.”

According to the Sarasota Autobahn Society, the bridge will be “open to traffic,” i.e., “closed” or “lowered” at 00:00 (zero hundred hours) on April 1 or at 12:00 a.m. April Fool's Day – whichever comes first.

**Otus** SNL



*The X marks the egg's location on the north Siesta Key bridge. File photo*



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

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# *Siesta Seen*

## **OLD STICKNEY POINT ROAD BUSINESSES SEEKING A BRIGHTER FUTURE — LITERALLY; COUNTY ORDINANCE CHANGE WOULD SEE PEOPLE FINED FOR TRYING TO HOLD PARKING SPACES**



**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

While Commissioner Nora Patterson has been stymied so far in her effort to get the crosswalks illuminated in Siesta Village (see the related story in this issue), she also is making slow progress in an attempt to improve the lighting situation along Old Stickney Point Road.

For the second time in recent months, she brought up the issue on March 19, during her

report at the commission's regular meeting in Sarasota. And, for the second time, her fellow board members had no objections to her desire for staff to continue working on the matter. She is hoping, she said, for staff to report back to the people who had raised the lighting concerns with her.

Patterson exchanged email in early February with James K. Harriott Jr., the county's chief



*In between the recent cold spells, beach-goers have managed to enjoy warm days at Siesta Public Beach — and the Gulf of Mexico has not been too brisk for some of them. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

# Siesta Seen

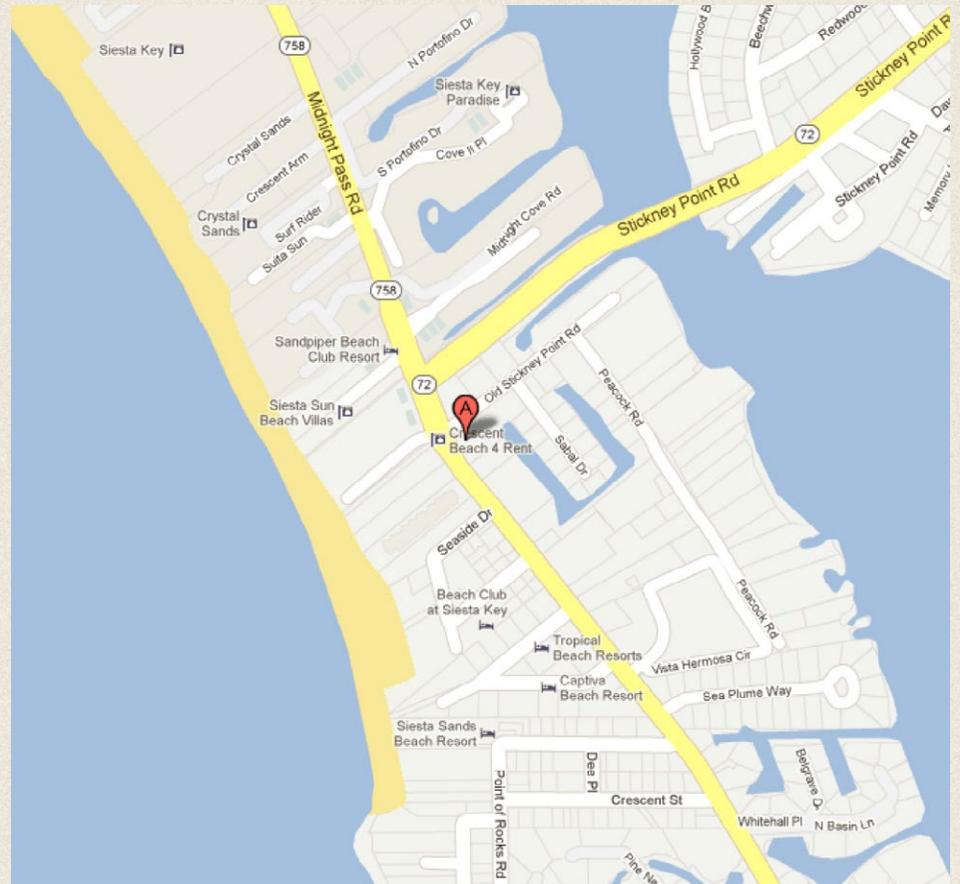
engineer, and other staff members about the lack of illumination on Old Stickney Point Road. Dave Stewart, one of the owners of Captain Curt's Crab & Oyster Bar, and Aledia Tush, co-owner of CB's Saltwater Outfitters, had approached Patterson for help.

"They feel [Old Stickney Point Road] is very dark and dangerous at night and a deterrent to the folks visiting businesses and restaurants," Patterson wrote Harriott in a Feb. 1 email. "Their preference would be decorative lighting as was originally planned when the area was improved with sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks [about 10 years ago]. They believe the little park at the end would benefit as well and apparently the condo down at that end is supportive of that also."

She added that Stewart and Tush thought wiring already was in place. However, she pointed out that Harriott had told her on the phone the previous day that conduits and electrical boxes had been installed, but not the wiring itself. "[Florida Power & Light] has looked at this in response to [business owners'] inquiry a few years back," Patterson continued, "and they were told that the equipment [present] was not compatible with [FPL's] equipment."

"If it is impossible to work out a mechanism to put in decorative lighting they would at least like the type that goes on the existing telephone poles to light the area," Patterson added.

The lighting was not pursued at the time of the other improvements, she noted, "because there was no identified mechanism to pay for the cost of the electricity and maintenance of



*A Google Map shows the location of Captain Curt's Crab & Oyster Bar, CB's Saltwater Outfitters and condominium complexes in the vicinity of Old Stickney Point Road on Siesta Key. Image courtesy Google Maps*

the fixtures. ... In order to draw the necessary support from business owners to pay for an assessment these folks need some estimate of costs per member of the district," she wrote Harriott.

Harriott responded on Feb. 2, saying he had been unable to reach Stewart, but he had spoken with Tush. He had explained to Tush, he added, that Old Stickney Point Road is within the Siesta Key Lighting District, and several poles on the street are available for overhead lights, which FPL can provide at no upfront cost "and a negligible increase in annual energy costs (less than 2% impact to the district's annual budget). Ms. Tush is amenable to having that type of lighting installed."

# Siesta Seen

During the March 19 County Commission meeting, Patterson summarized the situation again, saying she just wanted to make sure staff was still working with Tush and Stewart. Additionally, she said, business owners would like for staff to consider a way to better illuminate the crosswalks on Midnight Pass Road in that vicinity.

When Patterson asked for commission concurrence, Commissioner Christine Robinson replied, "Didn't we give that once already?"

"Yeah, but I'm just not hearing anything," Patterson replied.

When Robinson asked for clarification, Patterson said she had been told staff still was working on the matter, "but I'm not hearing that from residents."

Patterson added, "It's a question of putting some rough numbers together even though we don't have a great history right now of accurate numbers. But let's try."

## HOLD THAT HOLD!

With no comment, the county commissioners on March 19 unanimously approved holding a public hearing on the morning of April 24 regarding a proposed ordinance that would prohibit "The blocking of or obstructing access to or from vacant designated parking spaces except when moving a motor vehicle into and out of such designated parking space or when conducted by or with the permission of County officials."

A memo in the March 19 agenda material from Carolyn Brown, general manager of parks and recreation for the county, and Wayne Apple-



*A proposed new county ordinance would prohibit people from saving parking spaces in county parks. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

# Siesta Seen

bee, the county's criminal justice policy coordinator, spells out the reasoning for the proposed change:

"The Sheriff's Office reports they have experienced numerous calls for service over individuals blocking parking spaces in order to prohibit another motorist from utilizing the parking space. These incidents in some cases have escalated into physical altercations. While the Sheriff's office reports the location of most concern is Siesta Beach, additional incidents have been reported at other county parks."

During his report to the Siesta Key Association on March 7, Sgt. Scott Osborne, leader of the Sheriff's Community Policing Station on Siesta Key, talked about exactly what Brown and Applebee had referenced.

Osborne has told me many times over the years about deputies having to break up nasty altercations when parking spaces are at a premium at the beach.

Brown and Applebee's memo adds that they consulted with the County Attorney's Office after receiving the Sheriff's Office request.

The memo also notes, "Passage of the proposed ordinance would subject a violator to a civil fine in the amount of \$97.00.

"If [the ordinance is] passed, the Sheriff's Office would be provided an additional tool and authority to curtail the behavior by monitoring the parking lots and granted the authority to order individuals blocking the space to cease.



*Commissioner Nora Patterson/Photo by Norman Schimmel*

In these situations, the potential for further escalation of violence can be avoided."

## TIME FOR GOLF

The Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce will hold its 14<sup>th</sup> annual golf tournament at The Founders Club on Monday, May 6.

Registration will begin at 11:30 a.m.; a shotgun start is set for 1 p.m.

A Chamber news release says, "we are able to offer members and guests a hugely discounted rate to play on the private course, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., and enjoy dinner after the event."

A silent auction will accompany the awards presentation.

The cost for single players is \$150; for a team of four, \$600; and for the dinner only, \$35.

# Siesta Seen

The **Founders Club** is located at 3800 Golf Hall Drive in the eastern part of the county.

The Chamber hosts a number of events throughout the year to raise funds for its July Fourth fireworks.

For more information, call 349-3800; email [info@SiestaKeyChamber.com](mailto:info@SiestaKeyChamber.com) or visit [www.SiestaKeyChamber.com](http://www.SiestaKeyChamber.com).

## EASTER BUNNY TIME

Saturday, March 30, is the day the Easter Bunny will visit Siesta Village for the Siesta Key Village Association's annual Egg Hunt.

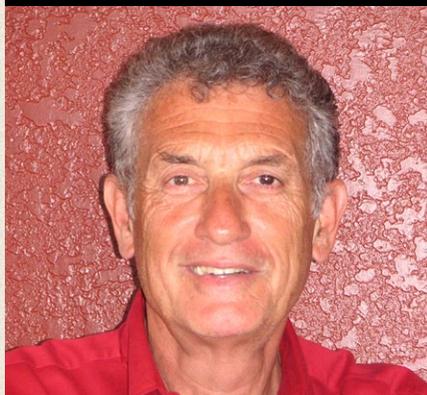
All associated events will take place in the vicinity of Beach Access 5, near the Terrace condominium complex.

The egg hunt is just part of the fun. Youngsters ages 1 to 6 — accompanied by siblings, parents and/or grandparents — will be able to enjoy games and face painting, and they will get to explore a county fire truck and rescue unit as well as meet members of the Sheriff's Mounted Patrol.

The event runs from 9 a.m. to noon.

Children must be pre-registered. The cost is \$10 per child. Forms may be downloaded from [www.siestakeyvillage.org](http://www.siestakeyvillage.org) and dropped off at the Siesta Key Chamber in Davidson Plaza, Beach Bazaar, The UPS Store, Village Café or SunTrust Bank. 

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*Libya Pugh and Farah Bala star in *In the Book Of* at Florida Studio Theatre. Photo by Brian Braun.*

## **IN THE BOOK OF BRINGS IMMIGRATION DEBATE TO THE STAGE AT FST**

Florida Studio Theatre (FST) has announced that a new play, *In the Book Of* by John Walch, will open on Friday, March 29, at 8 p.m. in the Gompertz Theatre.

*“In the Book Of* presents the story of an immigration debate which forces a community to examine the true meaning of family, friendship and the American way,” a news release notes.

Two women — Naomi, an army lieutenant, and Anisah, her Afghan translator — lose their husbands in the war, the release says. “Once discharged, Naomi brings Anisah home with her to Mississippi, where things begin to unravel,” it adds. “Using the Old Testament’s Book of Ruth as a loose framework for his

story, Walch weaves together both women’s stories in a humorous and captivating manner,” the release continues. “Friendships are thrown into turmoil, families are fractured and a city-wide political debate ensues. With the threat of deportation looming, everyone must examine the personal and political costs of their beliefs.”

FST’s production will be the Florida premiere, the release points out; it is only the second production of Walch’s comedic drama, which appeared at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in January 2012.

*In the Book Of* was previously presented at FST during the 2012 Burdick Reading Series, the release adds.

FST Associate Director Kate Alexander, who directs the production, says, “I love this play. It is funny, charming and meaningful. It has been called an ‘immigrant play,’ but I believe that is far too narrow in scope for all that it encompasses,” she says in the release. “This play reflects America and all that this country promises. It explores the resilience of the nation — the ability of our national psyche to confront ourselves and the changing ‘face’ of America.”

FST’s production features returning company members Rita Rehn, Graham Stewart Al-

len and David Perez-Ribada, along with new company members Farah Bala, Libya Pugh and Andy Prosky, the release notes. Rehn appeared in FST’s production of *Sylvia*, Allen returns to the Gompertz after last summer’s *Perfect Wedding* and Perez-Ribada previously performed in *The Miamians* and *Boleros for the Disenchanted*.

Tickets for *In the Book Of* will be on sale through May 19. They may be purchased by phone at 366-9000, online at [FloridaStudioTheatre.org](http://FloridaStudioTheatre.org) or by visiting the box office at 1241 N. Palm Ave. in downtown Sarasota.

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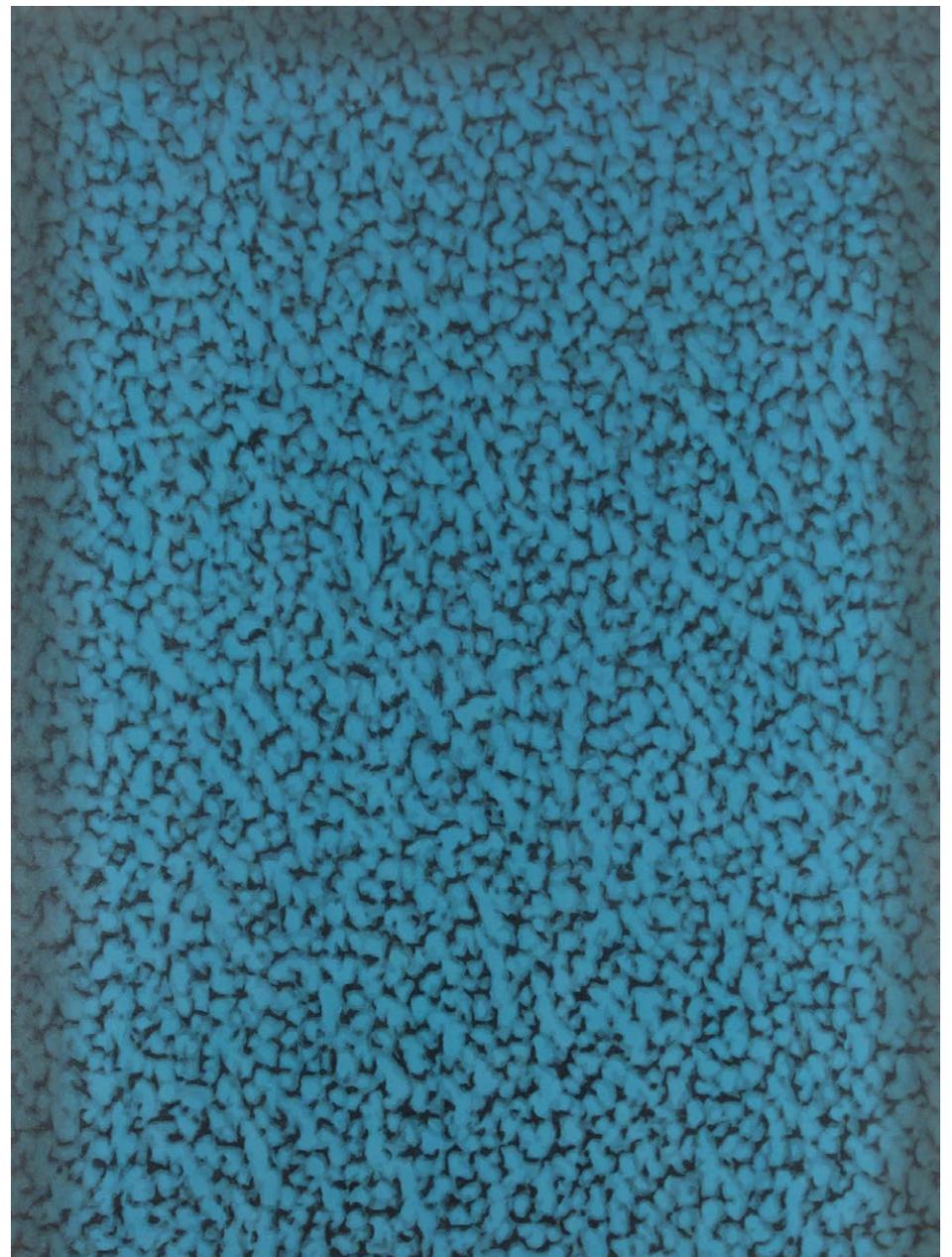
## PETER STEPHENS’ PAINTINGS FEATURED IN GALLUP SHOW

Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art gallery will present *More Things in Heaven and Earth: Paintings by Peter Stephens* through May 4.

The exhibit, which opened March 28, features 10 paintings from Stephens’ *The Standard Model* series, a news release says.

“Peter Stephens’ abstract paintings in this show ... are precise, otherworldly and fascinating,” says Allyn Gallup, director of the gallery, in the release. “Peter’s imagination accepts no boundaries. His work invites the viewer through an amazing itinerary of many possible worlds, and, so far, he hasn’t hit the outer limits yet.”

“*The Standard Model* refers to the theory of the fundamental interactions in particle physics — an experimentally validated model that most contemporary physicists share,” the release notes. According to Stephens, this theory’s implications are both microcosmic and macrocosmic. “It affects both our understanding of



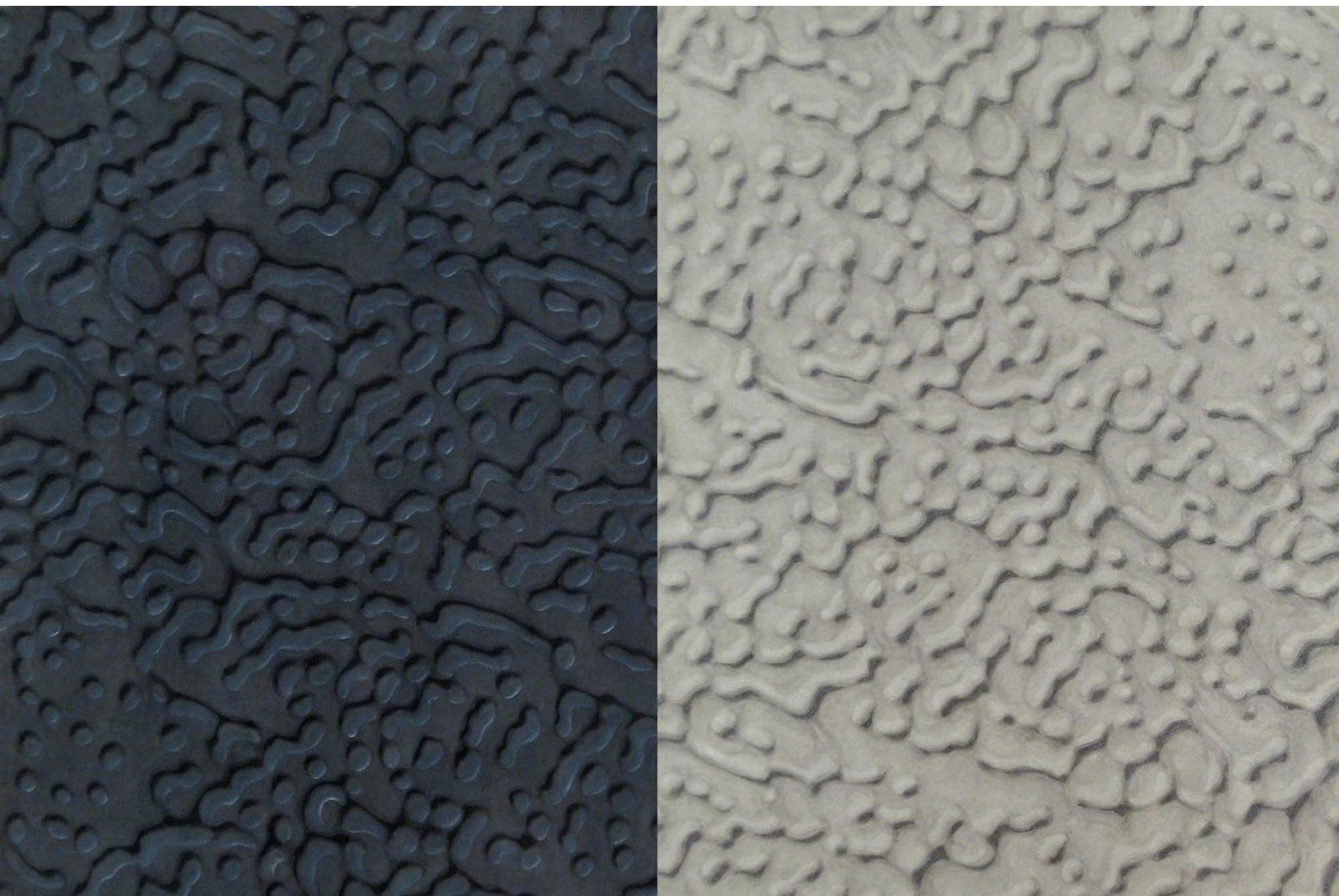
*More Things in Heaven and Earth by Peter Stephens/Contributed photo*

subatomic particles and the cosmos as a whole system,” he says in the release. “I find nature to be most sublime at these extremities of scale. To paraphrase J.B. Haldane, ‘The universe is not only stranger than we imagine, it is stranger than we can imagine.’”

Referring to the paintings in this series as, “layered systems that form analogs to the biological, chemical and even psychological components that construct our world view,” Stephens “paints incessantly, using multiple, transparent layers of ink and acrylic and oil paints and shellac — resulting in rich saturated colors and astounding dimensionality,” the release points out.

A resident of Buffalo, NY, Stephens graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and attended the University of Siena in Italy, the release continues. His works are featured in major collections, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum and Burchfield-Penney Art Center, the release adds. For more information about Peter Stephens, visit [www.peterdstephens.com](http://www.peterdstephens.com).

A reception with the artist is set for April 5 from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information about the exhibit, call 366-2454 or visit [www.allyn-gallup.com](http://www.allyn-gallup.com). The gallery is located at 1288 N. Palm Ave. in Sarasota.



*Constellation by Peter Stephens/Contributed photo*

## HERMITAGE ARTISTS TO PRESENT ART ON THE BEACH

Hermitage artists will present an open discussion on their processes and work at the next beach reading on Friday, March 29, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at 6660 Manasota Key Road in Englewood, The Hermitage has announced.

The program will begin with open house tours of the historic Hermitage House and open studios with painter Michael Eade, and assemblage artist John Zaklikowski, a news release says. Art will be available for sale, with a portion of the proceeds donated to the Hermitage.

At 6:30 p.m., the program will move to the beach, where poet Sandra Alcosser will read from her work. Afterward, playwright Dare Clubb will lead a discussion about work and process with all of the Hermitage artists. “Mother Nature’s sunset ends the evening’s festivities,” the release notes.

“Another interesting mix of artists are in residency and we are looking forward to our beach ‘show and tell,’” Hermitage Executive Director Bruce E. Rodgers says in the release. “Each one of these talented artists travels a different road to reach their destination. It will be interesting to have them all together, sharing how they get to where they want to go.”

Alcosser’s poetry is about ecology and nature, the release continues. She is the author of *Except By Nature*, which received the Academy’s 1998 James Laughlin Award and was selected by Eamon Grennan for the 1997 National Poetry Series; *Sleeping Inside the Glacier*, a collaboration with artist Michele Burgess; and *A Fish to Feed All Hunger*, selected by James Tate to be the Associated Writing Programs Award Series winner. Her poems have



*Michael Eade/Contributed photo*

appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *New Yorker*, *Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry* and *Yale Review*, the release points out.

Eade has received many honors, including a studio membership at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts and fellowships from the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, the National Academy Museum and School of the Fine Arts, Artists’ Fellowship Inc. and Aljira, the release adds. Eade is a finalist to create public art designs in New York City for the MTA Arts for Transit and for Metro Taipei in Taiwan, it notes.

“Zaklikowski is a multi-faceted artist (writer, photographer, musician, painter and assemblage), the release says. “At the Hermitage he is devoting his time to assemblage art, giving new meaning to the term ‘repurposed,’” the release adds. “He uses pieces from computers

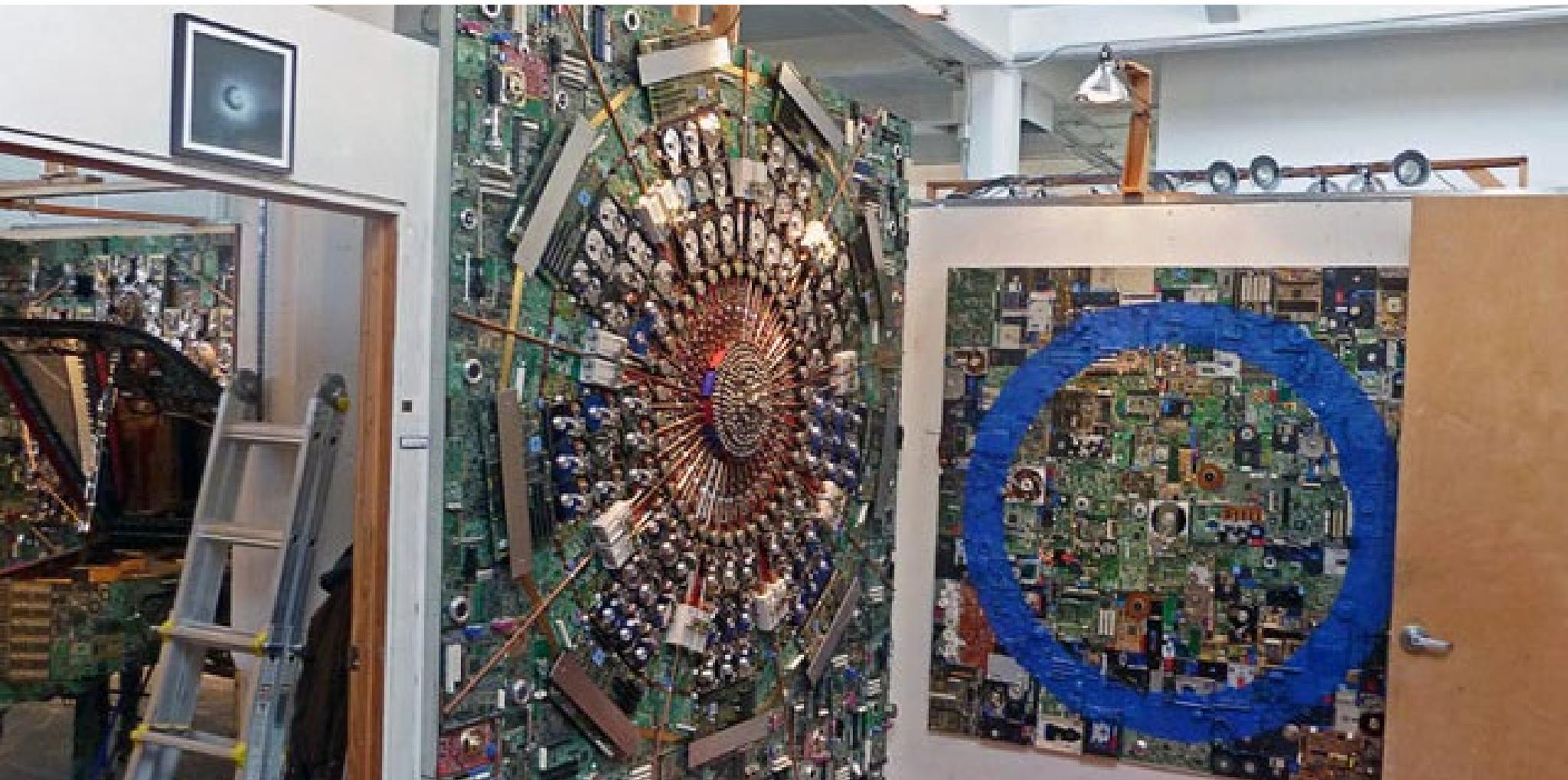
and other high-tech devices, as well as hand tools, kitchen implements, lab equipment, optical apparatus, vacuum tubes and surgical supplies, to create large and imaginative works of art.

Clubb is an award-winning playwright and associate professor of playwriting, dramatic literature and theory at the University of Iowa. He is also co-head of Iowa Playwrights Workshop, the release continues. He has taught playwriting at Princeton, Barnard College and the Bread Loaf Graduate School of English at Middlebury College, as well as dramatic literature and theory at the New School for Social Research in New York City. Clubb's plays have been performed at Yale Rep, Juilliard and the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, the release adds. His original play *Oedipus* was produced by the Blue Light Theater Co. at the CSC Theater in New York City; it received an Obie award in 1999.

For more information about the beach reading or The Hermitage Artist Retreat, call 941-475-2098 or visit the website at [www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org).



*The Hermitage will present readings on the beach on the evening of March 29. Contributed photo*



*Visitors to The Hermitage on March 29 will be able to see John Zaklikowski's works in the studio. Contributed photo*

## **TWO ARTISTS; TWO VISIONS TO OPEN AT WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER**

*Joni and Jane: Two Artists; Two Visions* will be on display from April 4 through June 27 at The Women's Resource Center, 340 S. Tuttle Ave, Sarasota.

The show features the work of two friends/neighbors "who express their artistic vision in very different ways using different mediums," a news release notes: Di Pirro's work is done in oil; McClintock's, in watercolor.

Di Pirro's wide variety of paintings includes still lifes, portraits, pet portraits, murals and landscapes. She studied at the Academy of Florence in Italy, where, from 1968-1972, she was a protégée of contemporary Florentine master, Pietro Annigoni, the release says. She later studied at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Her work has been exhibited in Italy, England and France as well as in New York, California and Florida in the United States. Among the owners of her paintings are princes, baronesses, am-

bassadors and former First Lady and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the release adds.

McClintock's "precise and colorful watercolors capture the reflections of light on urban streets and buildings," the release continues. "Often, her images are more abstract than representational, resulting in paintings that are graceful, intimate, lively and colorful." Each piece begins as a photograph that is then cropped, enlarged, cropped again and executed as a smaller study, the release points out.

McClintock's works have been exhibited in New York, Brazil, Canada and Colorado. They can be found in collections of major corpo-

rations, such as Pepsico, McKinsey and Co. and the University of Virginia Art Museum, the release adds.

The opening and an artists' reception will be held Thursday, April 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. The public is invited; refreshments will be served.

For more information, call the center at 366-1700.



*Artists Jane McClintock and Joni Di Pirro. Contributed photo*

## BROADWAY HIT *VENUS IN FUR* COMING TO ASOLO THEATER

The must-see hit of the recent Broadway season, *Venus in Fur*, written by David Ives, opens in the Historic Asolo Theater Friday, April 5, and runs through April 28, the theater has announced.

“Tea Alagi, an exciting new talent originally from the Czech Republic, directs this wickedly entertaining comedy that explores the complex relationship between an aspiring stage actress and her playwright/director,” a news release says.

“*Venus in Fur* is a hot ticket in every sense,” the release continues. “This alluring tale of love, lust and literature illuminates the ultimate battle of the sexes,” it adds.

The plot focuses on Vanda, the far-from-typical young actress who arrives to audition for the lead in playwright Thomas’ adaptation of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s 1870 erotic novel, *Venus in Furs*, the release notes. “As her audition proceeds, Vanda’s continually shifting personas, accents, moods, expressions and apparent (and not-so-apparent) intentions engage Thomas in an emotionally charged

game of cat and mouse,” the release continues. “Is art imitating life? Or is it the other way around?”

The Broadway production made an instant star of its leading actress, Nina Arianda, who won the Tony Award for Best Actress in 2012, the release points out. The play also received nominations for the Drama League Award for Distinguished Production of a Play and the Tony Award for Best Play.

Critics hailed *Venus in Fur* as “Best of the Year” in *The New York Times*, the Associated Press, Wall Street Journal, *Newsday*, *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine* and *Time Out New York*, the release notes.

Ticket prices for *Venus in Fur* in the Historic Asolo Theater range from \$25 to \$40. They may be purchased at the box office in person at 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, by calling 351-8000 or by going online at [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org). The Asolo Repertory Theatre and box office are located in The Florida State University Performing Arts Center adjacent to the Ringling Museum of Art.



# VENUS IN FUR

## **CHICAGO: THE MUSICAL RESCHEDULES DATES AT THE VAN WEZEL**

*Chicago: The Musical* has elected to reschedule its 2013 touring route, the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall has announced. The April 9-10 dates at the hall have been rescheduled for March 4-5, 2014.

The Van Wezel will be sending out tickets for the new date within the month, with patrons retaining their seating locations, a news re-

lease says. If a patron is unable to attend on the new date, he must return the tickets to the box office for an online credit or a full refund, the release notes.

Contact the Van Wezel box office at 953-3368 for more details regarding ticketing, the release adds.

## **WRAP-UP EVENT TO BE HELD APRIL 7 FOR PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT**

An exhibit of fine art photography titled, *Florida in Context*, will feature the artists talking about their work at a wrap-up event from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, April 7, at the Sarasota County Visitor Information Center and History Center Museum, 701 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, the center has announced.

The public is invited to the free event.

Participants in the event, *A Deeper Look: Florida in Context*, will have the opportunity to ask questions and talk to the featured artists about their work, a news release says. The exhibit captures images of old Florida buildings and abandoned factories, as well as still lifes and vistas, including relics of boom-and-bust development, the release notes. It features the work of fine art photographers Virginia Hoffman, Matt Allison, Salvatore Brancifort, Brian Braun, Dale Ann Clancy and Richard Porter.

The exhibit, which is open through April 10, is part of the county's participation in the state-wide Viva Florida 500 celebration to promote Florida's history: its people, places and cultur-

al achievements, the release continues. This year is the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Ponce de Leon in "La Florida" in 1513, the release points out.

During the April 7 event, Sarasota County Historical Resources Manager Lorrie Muldowney will facilitate a dialogue among the artists.

"What I can bring to the conversation is an architectural/historic preservation/urban planning perspective," Muldowney said in the release. "I will engage each artist and encourage questions and participation from the audience."

The Sarasota County Visitor Information Center and History Center Museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sundays. There is no admission charge.

A portion of the proceeds from photography sales will go to the Friends of the Sarasota County History Center.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 (TTY 7-1-1). 



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*Alaya and Hana picked strawberries at Temple Emanu-El's 'Strawberry Shabbat.' Contributed photo*

## **TEMPLE EMANU-EL FAMILIES ENJOY 'STRAWBERRY SHABBAT'**

Temple Emanu-El's young families headed to Hunsader Farms on March 16 for the synagogue's first "Strawberry Shabbat." "Grandparents, parents and children spent the Sabbath morning thanking God for the natural world and celebrating the blessings of nature together," a news release says. After a bagel breakfast and an outdoor Shabbat service conducted by Rabbi Brenner J. Glickman, families enjoyed feeding the farm animals, frolicking on the playground and in the sandbox, taking a hayride and picking plenty of strawberries, the release adds.

"Strawberry Shabbat" is one of Temple Emanu-El's Shabbat Playdate events for young families, as well as part of the synagogue's outreach to Jewish and interfaith families in the Lakewood Ranch and Bradenton area, the release points out. Fully funded by an Incubator Grant from the Union for Reform Judaism, "Strawberry Shabbat" and other family programs at the synagogue are offered free of charge, the release notes.

For more information, call 379-1997.



*Temple Emanu-El member David Lowell brought son Mark to 'Strawberry Shabbat.' Contributed photo*



*Leo Glickman fed the barnyard animals at Temple Emanu-El's 'Strawberry Shabbat.' Contributed photo*

## TEMPLE SINAI WELCOMES SUPPORT FOR ITS 'BACKPACK KIDS'

"The BackPack Kids" sounds like a good movie title to attract a family audience. However, it has a special meaning for Temple Sinai's Social Action Committee, along with other area groups working under the auspices of the All Faiths Food Bank. The committee members have figuratively wrapped their arms around a program that provides nutritional support to children from low-income families and children who are homeless.

Introduced to the All Faiths Food Bank program in 2011, Betty Liner, Temple Sinai Social Action Committee chairwoman, brought information about this important initiative to the Temple's board of trustees. From then on, donations from members, as well as contri-

butions during fundraisers for the BackPack Kids program, have poured in.

The Oak Park School, a special facility designed to accommodate the most intellectually, emotionally and physically challenged K-12 students in the Sarasota County Schools, was selected as Temple Sinai's recipient. Realizing these children face obstacles daily that most people could not comprehend, let alone handle, Temple members believed that worrying over food on the weekend should not be part of the youngsters' lives. Temple volunteers pack lunch bags with 3 to 5 pounds of healthful, kid-friendly, nonperishable and easy-to-prepare food, including fresh produce, and send them home with the children weekly.



*A corps of volunteers from Temple Sinai pack food for low-income and homeless children. Contributed photo*

Although a large number of Sarasota County's students receive free or reduced-cost meals at school, many may see few foods of good nutritional value on the weekends.

Temple Sinai, in joining with this All Faiths Food Bank initiative, has committed to making a difference in "repairing our community" and alleviating the hunger of some of its neediest.

For one example in the past year, the Temple Sinai Men's Club joined with Temple Beth Sholom Men's Club in a Bowling for the Kids Night fundraiser, with all proceeds going to the Backpack Kids program. In fact, 100 percent of all donations from such events go to the purchase of food. Bags are donated, and all those who gather to pack the bags are volunteers.

A donation of \$43 will feed one hungry or homeless child for one semester of school; \$86 will feed that child for the entire school year. In addition, nutritional bags are provided for siblings.

Any donation is welcome; it may be sent as a check, made payable to All Faiths Food Bank/BackPack Kids, to Temple Sinai, Attention: Betty Liner, Coordinator, 4631 S. Lockwood Ridge Rd., Sarasota, FL 34231

These child recipients do not know who has packed their bags, and the volunteers do not know to whom the bags go. But the students' teachers have said the children express gratitude and delight in receiving the bags, feeling someone cares about them. Their families are equally grateful, the teachers say.

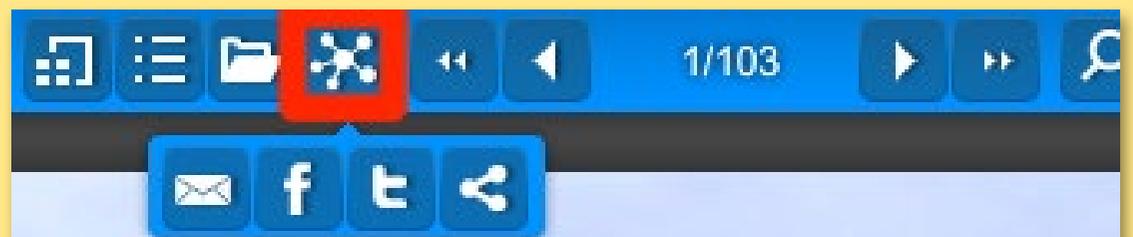
Roberta Gerlach 

## QUICK TIP



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## QUICK TIP



Share stories by clicking the  icon in the menubar and choosing to share via e-mail, post to Facebook or Twitter, or many other sharing options.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**29+**  
MAR

### ***A Tribal Collection: Rainforest Masks of Costa Rica***

Through April 19, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 900 S. Palm Ave. Exhibit free with regular admission. Free to members and to children under age 6. Admission for non-member adults, \$17; for children 6-11, \$6. Information: 366-5731 or [Selby.org](http://Selby.org).

**30**  
MAR

### **Children's Easter Party**

March 30, 9 a.m. to noon, Beach Access 5, Siesta Key (by the Terrace condominiums). Children ages 1 to 6 welcome to enjoy the hunt, games with prizes, face painting and the Sheriff's Office's Mounted Patrol. Fee: \$10 per child. Register at [www.siestakeyville.org](http://www.siestakeyville.org). For information, call 349-2770, Ext. 227.

**04**  
APRIL

### **Jazz Club of Sarasota presents vocalist Rebecca Kilgore in *Some Like it Hot: The Music of Marilyn Monroe***

April 4, 7:30 p.m., Beatrice Friedman Symphony Center, 709 N. Tamiami Trail. Tickets: \$25 for members; \$35 non-members; \$5 students (as available). Information: 366-1552 or [JazzClubSarasota.org](http://JazzClubSarasota.org).

**05**  
APRIL

### **WSLR presents Rita Hosking**

April 5, 8 p.m., Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court. Tickets: \$10 advance; \$12 at the door; purchase them at [WSLR.org](http://WSLR.org).

**05+**  
APRIL

### ***Venus in Fur (for mature audiences)***

April 5-28, 8 p.m. and some matinees; Historic Asolo Theater, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail. Tickets: \$25-\$40; purchase at 351-8000 or [AsoloRep.org](http://AsoloRep.org).

**14**  
APRIL

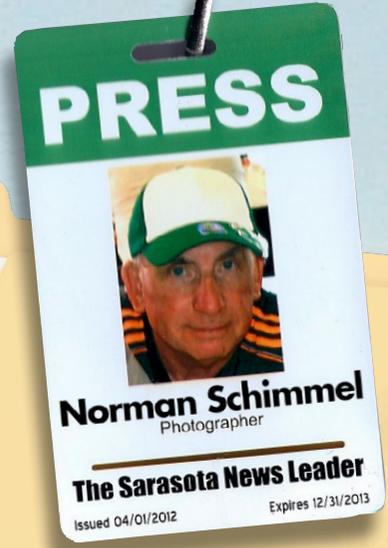
### **The Best of Chroma Quartet**

April 14, 2:30 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 3975 Fruitville Road. Tickets: \$15, including wine and cheese reception with artists. Information at [UU Sarasota Concerts](http://UUSarasotaConcerts).

*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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SARASOTA'S MASTER CALENDAR



**SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS**  
~~ED~~



# SCHIMMEL WAITS FOR HIS SIGN

Photo by Craig S. Landefeld

*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.*