

THE SARASOTA

No. 47 & 48 — August 9 & 16, 2013

News Leader

The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida

**SUMMER
DOUBLE
ISSUE**

SEEKING NEW SOLUTIONS

A REFLECTION OF 'BIG EASY'

MORE TWEAKS TO 2050?

Inside

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SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida

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Welcome

Just as we were working Wednesday on this double issue (if *The New Yorker* can do it, so can we) — to enable our staff to enjoy some vacation next week — what to our wondering eyes did appear but a big bolt of lightning.

Sadly, I am not speaking in metaphorical terms about a spectacular story idea. I am talking about a bolt from the sky that made my fingers tingle as I typed on my computer keyboard.

We normally are proud to tout the miracles of modern technology, but those miracles can die a fast death at the ages-old “hands” of Mother Nature. And boy, did our Internet connection die a violent death.

Thankfully, we had a good start on the numerous stories for this double issue of Aug. 9 and Aug. 16. Otherwise, Thursday would have been a very unhappy day. We can survive at work without air conditioning; we simply cannot survive without that powerful source of information called the World Wide Web, or email, or our software editing/production program.

Apparently, the live people my husband finally reached — after threading the maze of computer-animated responses — at the local office of our Internet provider heard from more than a few folks on Wednesday who suffered serious storm-related woes. Thankfully though, my husband proved very persuasive, and a kind repairman came to our rescue on Thursday.

As a result, you will find plenty to read until Aug. 23, when our next issue will appear. And, as usual, we take great delight in having scooped the daily newspaper on a number of this issue’s stories.

Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor and Publisher



A REFLECTION OF 'BIG EASY'



ONE HURDLE LEFT



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Maj. Ethan and Sue Frizzell are welcomed to Sarasota during a Salvation Army Advisory Board meeting. Image courtesy of [The Salvation Army of Sarasota Facebook page](#)

THE SALVATION ARMY DROPS ITS DAILY RATES AND HOLDS ITS FIRST PLANNED TOWN HALL MEETING ON THE COMMUNITY'S HOMELESSNESS ISSUES

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

Despite a driving rainstorm, more than 60 people showed up at the Salvation Army Wednesday evening, Aug. 7, to participate in a “town hall-style meeting” to talk about strategies to address homelessness.

Two developments made the meeting significant. It introduced Maj. Ethan Frizzell, the new commander of Sarasota's Salvation Army. And it posi-

tioned the organization for a possible realignment of social service agencies.

The Salvation Army is only one of the many organizations assisting the vagrant and homeless populations in the county. But because it offers shelter from the elements, the people it serves seldom stray far from its doors. With its location on 10th Street, in a modern \$17-million facility, “the Sal-

“ *And I'm starting a birthday program. Every month, on the day of your birthday, say it's the 25th, we'll give you seven days for one dollar a day for seven days. It allows us to begin building a relationship.* ”

Maj. Ethan Frizzell
Commander
Salvation Army, Sarasota

ly” as it is known to its patrons, can sleep in excess of 300 people per night. Its proximity to downtown has vexed some residents since the day it opened its doors.

Under Frizzell’s predecessor, sleepers were charged \$10 per night if they were not enrolled in an educational or rehabilitation program. Frizzell announced Wednesday he was cutting the rate to \$7 per night.

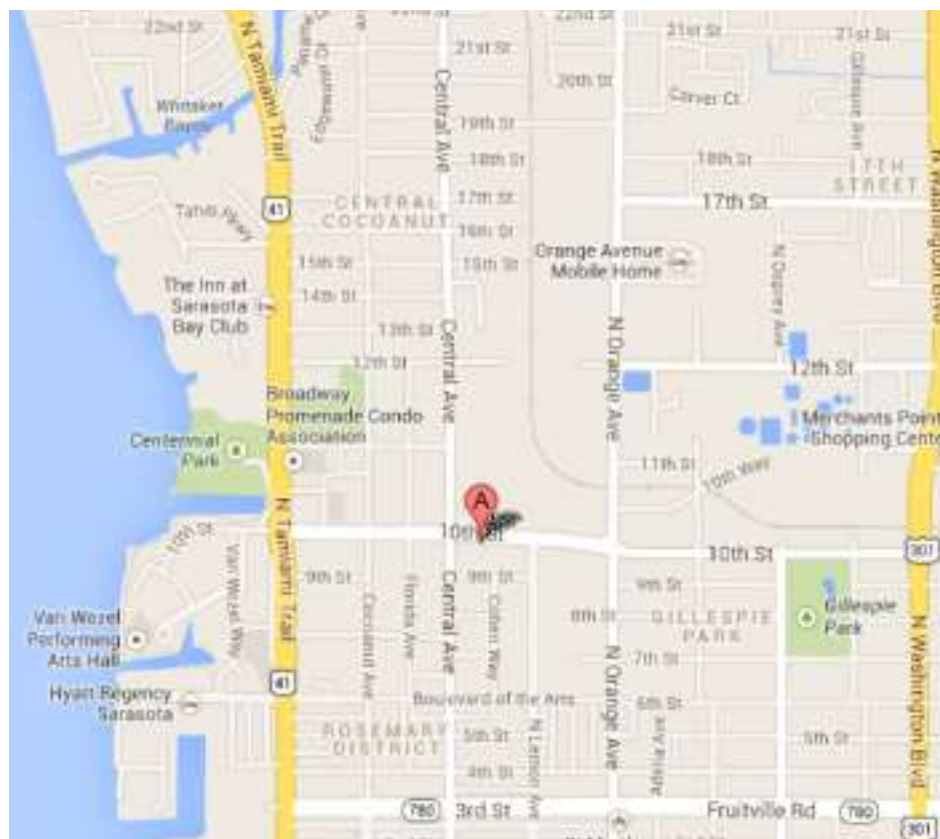
But for women, the rate will drop to \$1 per night for the month of September, in an effort to provide females who are homeless and vagrant a more secure nighttime environment. Stories of rapes and beatings are common among women who live on the streets.

Frizzell proposed yet another change in the rates for men. In the past, the \$10 fee was waived for rain; a place to sleep became free. He called that “gambling,” when people would stay away from the shelter, betting it would not rain and saving their \$10. When drops started falling steadily, there would be a rush to get in the door.

He would like to change that.

“You know, Channel Seven studios [WXLT-TV, Channel 40] are across the street, and they give a weather forecast every night at 6 p.m.,” Frizzell said. “I’m proposing if there is a 70 percent chance of rain, we drop [the rate] to \$3. And for 80 percent, \$2. And if there’s a 90 percent chance of rain, it would be \$1.”

“If it doesn’t work, I’ll change it again,” Frizzell added. “And I’m starting a birthday program. Every month on the day of your birthday, say it’s the 25th, we’ll give you seven days for one dollar a day for seven days. It allows us to begin building a relationship.”



The Salvation Army Shelter is located on 10th Street in Sarasota. Image courtesy of Google Maps

NEW QUARTERS

Two subsets of the homeless and vagrant populations are being singled out for special attention at the Sarasota Salvation Army. For older women, the news is a new facility. Dr. David Sutton said he is working to create a space upstairs, with private showers for them. Next month, he said, they will be able to stay there for \$1 per night.

Shelter for families was on Frizzell’s agenda, too, on Wednesday. The space available consists of five dorms with 12 apartments, he said. People will be limited to two-week stays before they have to move out. The first week, the goal will be to help them rest; there will be no case management services. The second week, there will be intensive case management assistance to enable them to move out. “It is not acceptable to keep families in a shelter,” he pointed out.

To resolve the latter situation, Frizzell wants to locate 20 to 25 affordable housing units that

can be utilized every month for the next year, so people can transition from the Salvation Army's programs — with financial assistance — to their own abodes. "We're confident the community will help us find them," he said.

While the organization's facility in Sarasota can sleep in excess of 300 people, more than half of those beds are taken by individuals enrolled in a variety of programs encouraging sobriety and self-reliance. Affordable housing for them could free up more room for vagrants and the homeless.


"We need an affordable housing rate with single-room occupancy," he pointed out, noting that European cities for decades have used dormitory-style facilities with sliding-scale rents to move people off the streets and into productive lives.

"Do we need another shelter?" he asked. "Yes, we do, for the other 1 percent." While the term "1 percent" was popularized to describe the nation's wealthiest plutocrats, the "other 1 percent" has come into use as a reference to people at the lowest rung of the economic ladder. "It might only need 20 to 50 beds, maybe," Frizzell said of a new shelter, "for people who just don't want to participate [in Salvation Army programs]."

All of these changes were conveyed piecemeal as Frizzell made brief presentations and then responded to questions. "What about women?" led to the discussion of a new shelter with showers. "Why \$10 a night?" led to the rainy-day rate changes, and then the overall change to \$7 per night.

Frizzell is new to this post. Although a 20-year veteran of the Salvation Army, he has had less than a month at his latest assignment in Sarasota. Meanwhile, the issue of homelessness and vagrancy has risen to the top of the political agenda.

Sarasota's relatively new city manager considers it a significant civic challenge. The Community Alliance of Sarasota County has formed a new committee chaired by former Sarasota Police Capt. Paul Sutton to tackle the issue. And community activists are seeking to hire Robert Marbut, a national expert on handling homelessness and vagrancy problems.

Into this turbulent mix, Frizzell launched himself and his organization Wednesday in a search for new approaches. Cutting the daily rate is only the beginning. 



A homeless person sleeps in Five Points Park last summer. Photo by Norman Schimmel

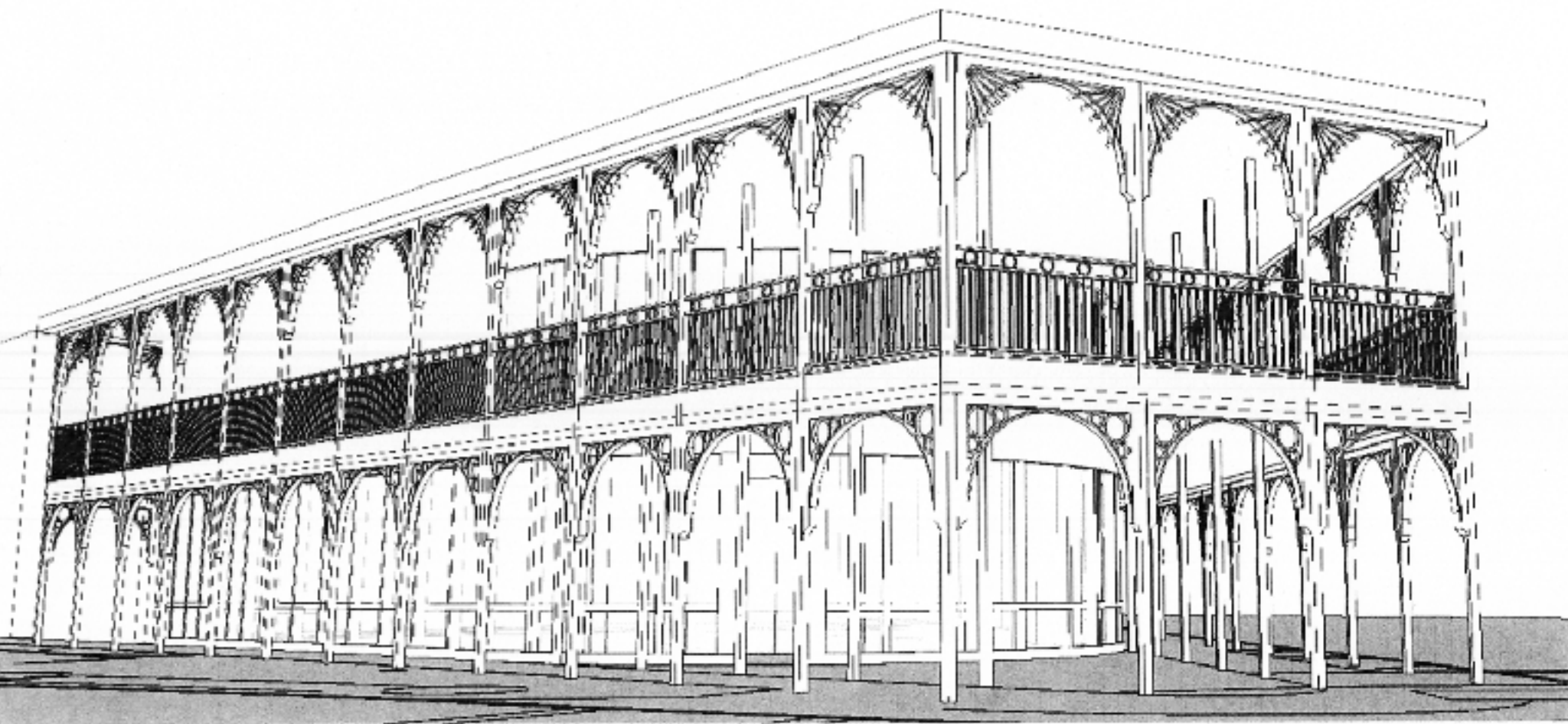
This may take a while.

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

The first impulse is just to gobble it all up.

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

You have a whole week.



A REFLECTION OF 'BIG EASY'

Architect Chris Gallagher has submitted to city officials a New Orleans-style design for a restaurant in the triangular building at Five Points. Image courtesy City of Sarasota

BUSINESSMAN CHRIS BROWN PROPOSES A NEW ORLEANS-STYLE DESIGN FOR THE RESTAURANT HE PLANS TO OPEN IN THE LANDMARK BUILDING AT FIVE POINTS

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

Chris Brown hopes the City of Sarasota will approve his plans for a radical makeover of the triangular structure at Five Points in the heart of downtown.

The building housed Patrick's Restaurant for more than 20 years; recently, it was home to the Floribbean.

Brown wants to add "galleries" on the second floor that would protrude over the side-

walks. They would be supported by columns stretching 12 feet down to the sidewalk. Because the sidewalk is public property, he needs city permission to proceed with the design.

He took the initial step in that process on Wednesday, Aug. 7, when he asked the Development Review Committee (DRC) to look at his plans and offer feedback. He heard an earful, but not a turndown.

“You are aware of the scrutiny on this block.”

Courtney Mendez
Senior Planner
City of Sarasota





An angled view provides a close-up view of the galleries designed for the building. Image courtesy City of Sarasota

Courtney Mendez, a senior city planner, noted this would be the first application of a zoning code amendment that allows galleries. Not only would the structures be 12 feet above the sidewalk, but they also would project 8 feet out from the building and be fronted with a railing. Brown offered two sketches, which show a New Orleans French Quarter flavor, including wrought iron railings.

The construction would take place on two sides of the triangular building, running along both Pineapple Avenue and Main Street and wrapping around the “point” of the structure.

“We see this as a real landmark site,” said Brown’s architect, Chris Gallagher. “There are

extraordinary views of downtown from the second floor.”

The DRC comprises representatives of the various city departments that oversee regulations, along with the Sarasota County Fire Department. It purports to help developers by giving them a one-stop, top-level review of plans before they spend money on engineering drawings and architectural renderings, as well as a variety of studies (traffic, soil, etc.) necessary to obtain a building permit.

The committee members on Wednesday provided 32 separate comments on Brown’s plans. City Engineer Alexandria DavisShaw wanted more information about the “footers” that will



Chris Brown closed the Floribbean restaurant after he bought the iconic building at Five Points this spring. Photo by Norman Schimmel

underlie the columns at the sidewalk level, for example. “I need more detail on their depth and the impact on existing utilities,” she said.

A ROSE IS A ROSE

Exactly what to call Brown’s addition was of some concern, too. Gallagher said, “We have a series of definitions that are not in alignment” with city code language.

“Galleries”? “Canopies”? “Balconies”? He could have added, but did not, the term, “arcades,” a design feature once included in the zoning text but quickly pulled out after one construction project downtown incorporated arcades. The public reacted negatively, so arcades were eliminated as a future building element.

During the DRC meeting, there was a strong public showing of people who remembered the scrap over arcades and wanted to hear more about Brown’s project.

Normally, building plans for a downtown project require only staff approval, but because Brown’s design needs to encroach on the sidewalk, he will have to gain the City Commission’s nod as well. One of the roles of the DRC is to explain to a developer what is required to win such approval.

Gretchen Schneider, a senior Building Department official with the city, told Brown and Gallagher, “It is a combination of technical issues plus the use from a zoning standpoint. You are coming on city property, so the encroachment issue is very exact. [The commis-



An aerial view shows Five Points in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel


sioners] will be looking for more specificity for the encroachment.”

Brown also will need to provide extra details regarding how he plans to illuminate the sidewalk below the galleries, where he will put garbage receptacles and what impact the structure will have on general street lighting.

This is not Brown's first restaurant. He also owns The Hub Baja Grill and The Cottage on Siesta Key. His phone “is ringing off the hook,” he says, with people interested in occupying the Five Points space. He has signed a letter of intent with “an extremely high-end restaurant” that is willing to send down a design team and

make a presentation to the City Commission, he added. “The price point will price out the Daiquiri Deck and Hooter's clients,” he said.

But his project will encompass just a restaurant, he promised the DRC members. “Everybody wants to put a nightclub there,” he noted.

“This is the first gallery [proposed to be built in the city],” Mendez said, “so we want it to move forward cautiously. The first time there was an attempt to build an arcade, it was not well received. You are aware of the scrutiny on this block,” she told Brown. 

“The fearless are merely fearless. People who act in spite of their fear are truly brave.” — *James A. LaFond-Lewis*

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MORE TWEAKS TO 2050?

“ While the public process seeks to address complex and more global 2050 implementation issues, there are unique features of the Clark Road Properties that present their own opportunities and constraints which are best addressed through a set of unique policies and design guidelines.

James Paulmann
Senior Principal
Stantec

”

An aerial map shows the boundary lines for the 2050 South Village Area. Image courtesy Sarasota County

CLARK ROAD PROPERTY OWNERS PROPOSE THEIR OWN CHANGES TO SARASOTA COUNTY'S CONTROVERSIAL LAND-DEVELOPMENT PLAN

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

Sarasota 2050, the county's long-range development blueprint, is already facing tough scrutiny. Now, thanks to a proposal brought by owners of 4,638 acres along Clark Road, even more changes might be in the offing.

The Sarasota County Planning Commission next week will consider big changes to the section of 2050 dealing with the so-called South Village Area. The 2050 plan, approved a decade ago to encourage walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods in previously undeveloped areas, stipulates "only one Village Master Development Plan may initially be approved on land designated for Village land use located south of Clark Road."

According to the proposal brought by representatives of LT Ranch and 3 H Ranch, that language would be eliminated and swapped out with text stating that "the County shall support development within the portion of the South Village Area" to be dubbed "the Clark Road Properties." That agricultural land, 4,638 acres in total, lies south of Clark and east of Ibis Street and the neighborhood of Serenoa.

According to the proposal, the 2050 revisions would ensure that development within the Clark Road Properties would generally follow current 2050 guidelines, but they would also allow for just 33 percent of open space in a new neighborhood, rather than the current 50 percent rule. Other changes would allow for looser greenway buffer rules and remove specific requirements for affordable housing — the latter move suggested because "surrounding existing neighbors do not desire substantial affordable housing near their neighborhoods of larger lot/home communities," among other reasons. Overall, the document claims, the changes would allow for the construction of 9,110 units.

The proposal lands in the midst of a much larger-scale effort by the Sarasota County Commission to revamp 2050. In July, the board approved a timetable for staff to revise several sections of the plan, a process begun last year when commissioners instructed county employees to meet with developers to hear their frustrations with 2050 regulations.



Gov. Rick Scott meets with a group. Photo by Meredyth Hope Hall

Developers say 2050's web of rules, rather than encouraging smart growth, has in fact prevented any growth, while defenders of the plan argue the global economic downturn and the housing implosion have had much greater impacts on construction. The county has approved more than 7,000 units under 2050, but only one project has broken ground: Neal Communities' Grand Palm.

THE 'FISCAL NEUTRALITY' FACTOR

One of the thorniest issues in the 2050 debate has been fiscal neutrality — the requirement that any new neighborhood pay for the increased demand for county services that accompanies it through impact fees and taxes. In July, the commission authorized County Administrator Randy Reid to negotiate with three economists with “development project experience” (Commissioner Joe Barbetta's phrase) to evaluate 2050's fiscal neutrality policies.

Reid tells *The Sarasota News Leader* two of the three people suggested by the board have dropped out, leaving only Arduin, Laffer & Moore Econometrics. Donna Arduin, recommended by Barbetta, is perhaps most famous to Floridians for having crafted then-candidate Rick Scott's “7-7-7” plan to create 700,000 jobs in seven years. Shortly after being elected in 2010, Scott named Arduin to his budget advisory team. Arduin has also consulted with former Gov. Jeb Bush and former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Her firm's co-founder, Arthur Laffer, served in the Reagan administration; he touts himself as “the father of supply-side economics” — the notion that cutting taxes, particularly for the rich, leads to greater government revenue in the long run.



Donna Arduin addresses a program hosted by the Virginia Institute for Public Policy. Image courtesy of the Virginia Institute for Public Policy

According to a draft document supplied by Reid, Arduin's firm would be responsible for delivering an initial fiscal neutrality report within 60 days and making three public presentations on its findings. Reid says the goal is to hammer out a methodology by which fiscal neutrality could be assessed, as well as how best to time the monitoring system. He hopes to have something finalized this week with Arduin, Laffer & Moore.

BACK ON CLARK ROAD ...

The proposal submitted by LT and 3 H acknowledges the county's in-progress overhaul of 2050, but it argues that shouldn't affect how officials view their request. “While the public process seeks to address complex and more global 2050 implementation issues, there are unique features of the Clark Road Properties that present their own opportunities and con-

straints which are best addressed through a set of unique policies and design guidelines,” Stantec Senior Principal James Paulmann wrote to county officials in March. Stantec is part of the team handling the 2050 change request for LT and 3 H.

But the Clark Road proposal just needlessly “complicates” 2050, argues Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations President Lourdes Ramirez. A vocal critic of the decision to overhaul 2050, she says there are “so many things wrong with this project.” For one, according to county analysis of the proposal, 50 percent of the land in question “is located within the 100-year floodplain,” but county policy is to “protect floodplains,” per the comprehensive plan.

In that staff analysis, sent to Paulmann in May, county employees posed a number of questions about the proposal and asked for a “detailed narrative” answering questions such as, “What about this property is unique that justifies the proposed modifications?” Ramirez stresses that point: “What makes this parcel so special?” (County staff did not respond to a *News Leader* request for more information.)

“You can’t call it Sarasota 2050,” says Ramirez, a likely County Commission candidate next year. “It’s sprawl.”

At a neighborhood meeting held at nearby Twin Lakes Park in April, Charlie Bailey, the agent for the proposal and an attorney with Williams Parker Harrison Dietz & Getzen, emphasized “that no development is contemplated at this time,” according to a memo re-


counting the event. “Rather, this is a policy plan amendment which is the first step in a very long process.” (Bailey did not respond to a *News Leader* call; neither did property owner John Hales.)

But some details did emerge. “Our vision is to create a master planned community approach similar to what you see in Grand Palm in the Venice area,” Paulmann told meeting attendees. “We want to meet the intent of the goals that were identified in the 2050 Plan, better utilize infrastructure and design the development to meet the market conditions.”

Paulmann also explained that the property owners want to eliminate the requirement that the commercial portion of the mixed-use plan be located in the center of the neighborhood, a New Urbanist principle intended to make neighborhood residents less dependent on cars.

“That has proven not to work,” Paulmann said. “It is better to be located at a more efficient location for providing goods and services. We first saw that in The Meadows. That commercial area still struggles to survive. The same thing is seen in other noted New Urbanist developments, like Disney’s Celebration.”

“If they can’t make it work in Celebration,” said Williams Parker attorney Jim Turner, “we certainly can’t make it work here.”

The Sarasota County Planning Commission will consider the proposed 2050 changes at a public meeting 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 15, at the Sarasota County Administration Center, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota. 



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ONE HURDLE LEFT

Teams compete in mid-April during the Florida Scholastic Rowing Association Sculling Championships at Benderson Park. Photo by Norman Schimmel

SARASOTA AND MANATEE COUNTIES CELEBRATE THE RECOMMENDATION THAT BENDERSON PARK HOST THE 2017 WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Visit Sarasota County President Virginia Haley said she had cautioned her staff just that morning not to celebrate prematurely if good news came about the Benderson Park bid for hosting the 2017 World Rowing Championships.

So what did she do when the news arrived that the Council of the *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron* — the International Federation of Rowing Associations (FISA) — was recommending its Congress award the bid to Benderson?

“If you could see me,” she told *The Sarasota News Leader* laughingly on Monday, Aug. 5, “you would see me doing a ‘happy dance.’”

At 2:45 p.m. that day, Sarasota County Administrator Randall Reid sent an email to the County Commission with the subject line: “We got it!!!!”

The official news release, issued about an hour later, said, “The FISA Council announced today that it is formally recommending to its 136 member Congress that Sarasota/Bradenton host the

“*We’ve got a good plan and we think we’ll do well.*”

Paul Blacketter
President
SunCoast Aquatic Nature Center Association



2017 World Rowing Championships at Nathan Benderson Park.”

“It’s fantastic!” Commissioner Nora Patterson told the *News Leader*.

“We are extremely pleased,” said Sarasota County Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Mason in the county news release. “Sarasota County has a long history of hosting major sporting events with great success and we are eager to show the world our amazing community and world-class rowing venue.”

“I felt we had a pretty good shot at it,” Patterson told the *News Leader*, especially after the bid presentation went so well in Lausanne, Switzerland, a couple of weeks ago.



A sign at Benderson Park shows where to find various facilities. Photo by Norman Schimmel



Sarasota County Commissioners Joe Barbetta and Carolyn Mason present a rowing competition trophy to members of Sarasota Crew at an event held at Benderson Park in 2012. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Reached in Reid's office that same afternoon, Paul Blackketter, president of the not-for-profit SunCoast Aquatic Nature Center Association (SANCA) — which manages Benderson Park events — told the *News Leader*, "The recommendation means a lot," pointing out that FISA "is a very, very professional organization" that undertakes a thorough vetting process before making any decision. "We're pretty proud," Blackketter added as an understatement.

According to county and SANCA estimates, the 2017 World Rowing Championships would be expected to attract about 42,000 visitors to the region from 62 countries for two weeks. An estimated 130 million people from around the world would watch the events on television and on the web, the county news release notes.

Haley and Blackketter told the Sarasota County Commission the event could have a regional economic impact of \$24 million. The championships were last held in the United States in 1994 in Indianapolis.

A copy of the official FISA Council recommendation may be found [here](#). The Council recommended Benderson's competition for the 2017 event — Plodiv, Bulgaria — host the 2018 championships.

Everyone the *News Leader* contacted about the announcement emphasized that one more big step lies ahead: The FISA Congress has to vote on the recommendation during the 2013 World Championships in Chungju, South Korea. The official bid award is scheduled to be announced on Sept. 2.



(From left) Paul Blackketter, Commissioner Joe Barbetta and Randy Benderson, president of Benderson Development, gather at Benderson Park earlier this year. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Still, Blackketter told the *News Leader*, “We’re confident. We feel that our strongest suit is the partnership” among Sarasota and Manatee counties as well as Benderson Development, which has invested private money along with Sarasota County’s \$19.1 million for infrastructure to transform the park into an international rowing venue.

FISA representatives have noted multiple times how impressed they have been with that partnership as local government representatives and even Randy Benderson — president of Benderson — have traveled the world, talking with rowing officials, in the effort to win the 2017 bid, Blackketter added.

Blackketter has logged more frequent flier miles than anyone else in the years-long initiative to learn as much as possible about what features are and are not desirable for an Olympic-quality rowing facility.

“It’s amazing, when you work together, what you can do,” Blackketter said.

As he has in past interviews on the subject, Reid emphasized to the *News Leader* that Benderson Park already is becoming known worldwide as an international rowing venue. That burgeoning reputation means tremendous potential for the county in its efforts to build upon the economic potential of sports tourism, Reid added.

THE LAST STOP

In just a few weeks, Blackketter, Reid and Haley all pointed out, a Sarasota/Manatee delegation will travel to South Korea for the 2013 World Championships. There, everyone in the group will be working hard to lobby members

of the FISA Congress, to let them know the importance of the 2017 bid to the community.

Blackketter characterized the 136 members of the FISA Congress as “the highest of high levels [of representation] when it comes to rowing.”

It is very vital, Blackketter continued, for the Sarasota/Manatee delegation members to meet with all of them and convey the details of the public-private partnership as well as the technical aspects of the venue itself.

“Make sure we walk the floor a little bit,” was how Reid put the lobbying effort.

“We need to make sure we are shaking hands and saying, ‘Hello,’ to all the federations,” Haley added.

“We’ve got a good plan,” Blackketter pointed out, “and we think we’ll do well.”

Even though “the real work’s about to begin,” Haley said, “this is just so thrilling.”

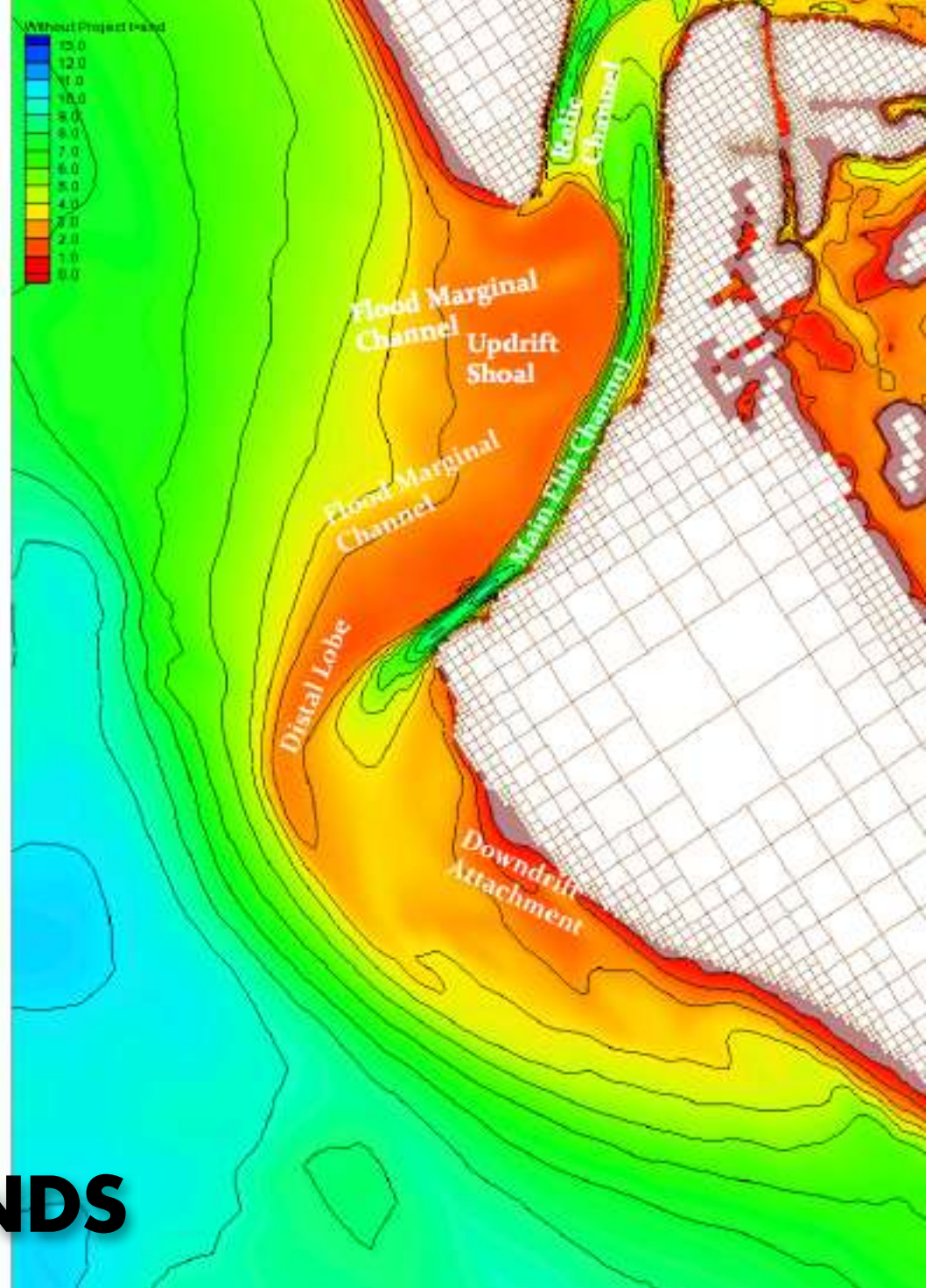
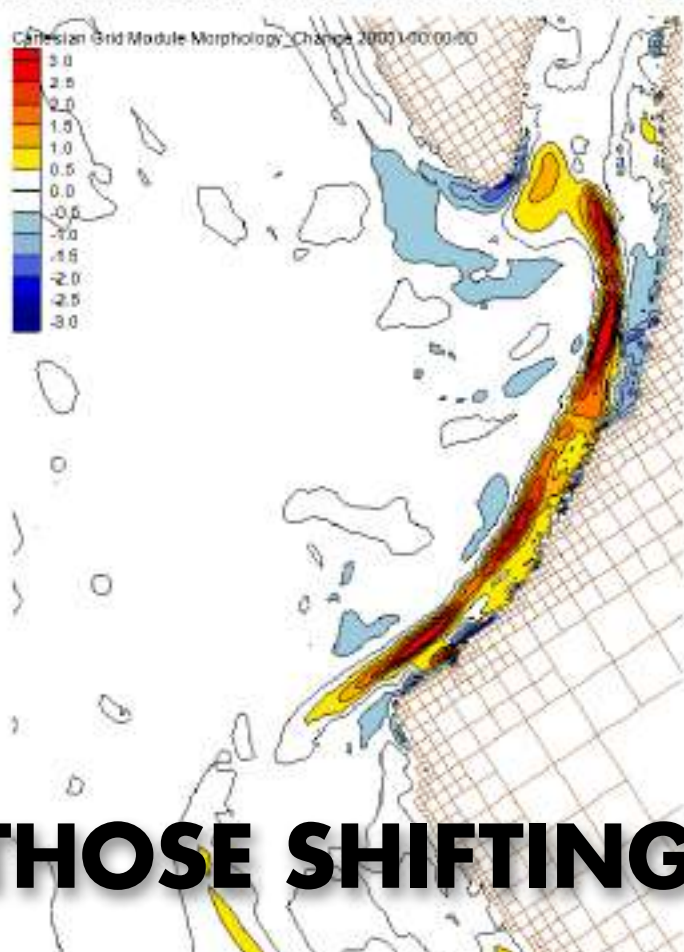
She added, “I think back to when we got together in October, looking at the [bid] package, [wondering], ‘How are we ever going to complete this thing. And now we’ve got it under our belt.’”

Just before 5 p.m. on Aug. 5, it was evident the celebratory air had not waned in the Sarasota County government offices. Reid sent one more email on the subject to the County Commission:

“A closing thought for the day

“In future years could ... ‘Sarasota’ be to the sport of rowing what ‘Wimbledon’ is to tennis, ‘Indianapolis’ or ‘Daytona’ is to [auto] racing, or ‘Augusta’ or ‘Pebble Beach’ is to golf?”

- Southern Lido Beaches/North Flood Marginal Channel
- General Deflation of the Updrift Shoal
- Infilling of the Main Ebb Channel
- Slight accretion of the Distal Lobe
- “clockwise rotation” – updrift shoal to main ebb channel to distal lobe



THOSE SHIFTING SANDS

Diagrams showing details about the changes in the Big Pass shoal were part of a study released in December 2012 regarding the Lido Beach renourishment project. The study was undertaken by the firms JALBTCX, Coastal Tech and Coastal Engineering Consultants Inc., along with the University of South Florida. Image courtesy of the City of Sarasota

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS MODELS ARE TO BE COMPLETED BY LATE FALL IN AN EFFORT TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE DREDGING OF BIG PASS AND GROIN CONSTRUCTION WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO RENOURISH AND STABILIZE LIDO BEACH

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is continuing work on the design of the proposed Lido Beach renourishment project, including an examination of shoaling in Big Pass and plans for three proposed groins on the south end of Lido Key to help stabilize the beach,

Alexandrea DavisShaw, engineer for the City of Sarasota, told *The Sarasota News Leader* this week.

Sarasota County staff members provided the Corps several different modeling scenarios relative to Big Pass, she said. Corps officials

have expanded on those, she added, spending the past several months running them out for a number of years as they consider the best approach.

Corps officials also are looking at reducing the size of the groins, she added, while trying to ensure the structures will provide much-needed protection for the shoreline.

The modeling is scheduled to be complete in October, DavisShaw said, with the results to be made available not just to city and county officials but also to the public.

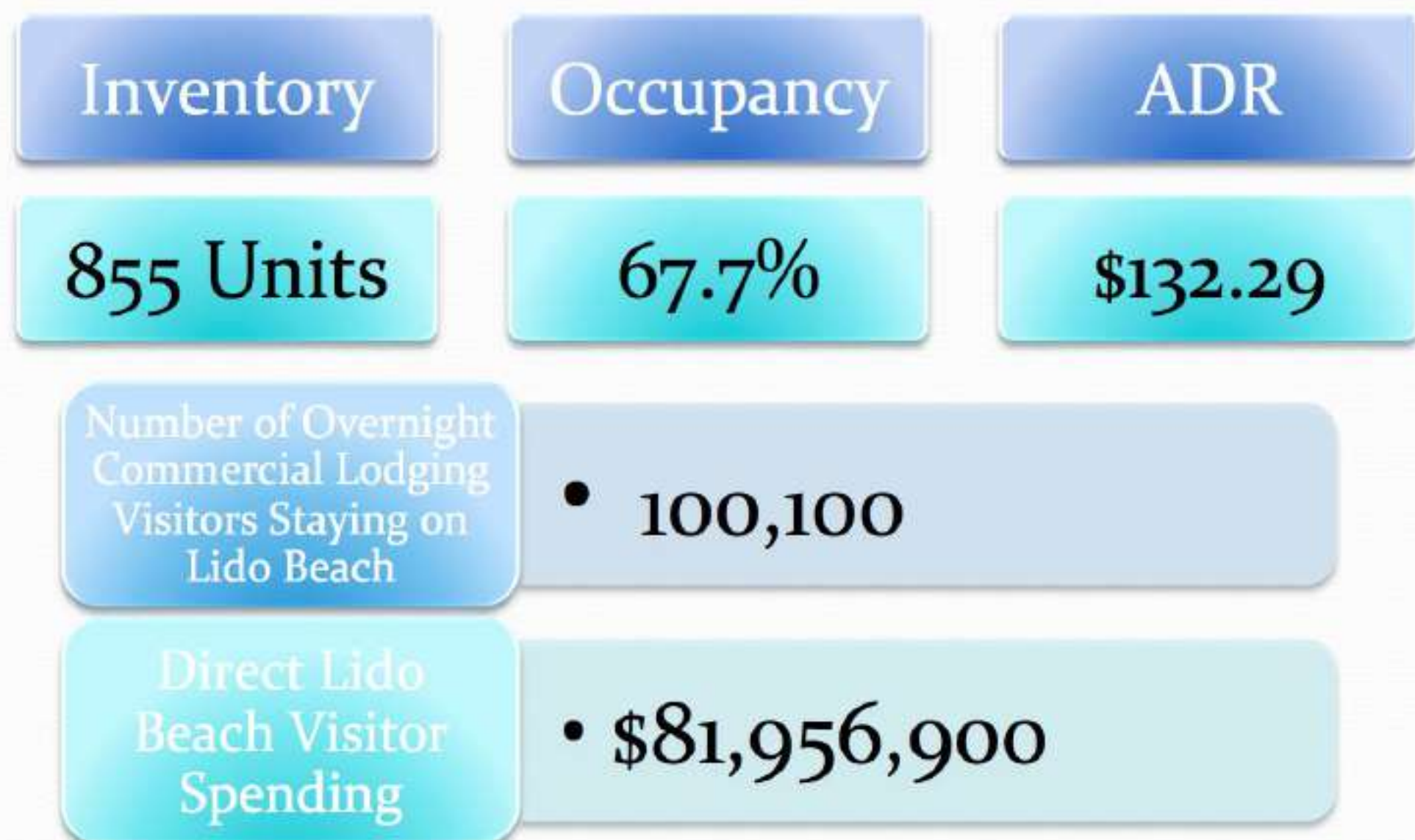
Tourism on Lido Beach is vital to the community's economy, DavisShaw pointed out, which is all the more reason the City of Sarasota is proceeding with plans to renourish that beach. City officials have estimated the cost

of the project at \$17.5 million, while federal officials have put it at \$20 million, she noted, though the latter figure includes "a very large contingency."

The federal government would pay 62 percent of the cost, she said, with the city applying to the state for 19 percent of the remainder and the city taking responsibility for about \$3.8 million of the expense.

The local money is expected to come out of a Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue fund set aside for renourishment projects.

It could be as long as 18 months before the Corps puts in a request for federal funding, DavisShaw pointed out, because it does not apply for money until the design of a project has been completed and "[it is] at least fairly far along in permitting."



Once the request is submitted, she continued, it is “probably anybody’s guess” how long it will take to get the funds.

A memo to the County Commission in late April from Laird Wreford, the county’s coastal resources manager, said the city is hoping the renourishment can take place in the 2017 fiscal year.

SIESTA WORRIES

In the meantime, boaters and Siesta residents remain worried about whether the Corps will end up dredging Big Pass for that Lido renourishment and what impact the groins might have on Siesta Key’s shoreline.

A 1994 scientific study undertaken by D.G. Aubrey and Robert Dolan noted, “Siesta Key’s

stability and low erosion rates are linked, both directly and indirectly, to the Big Sarasota Pass ebb shoal’s capacity to shelter the key from high wave and storm forces, as well as to the sand transport that occurs in conjunction with the shoal, the pass, and the key. If [proposed] dredging ... by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is carried out, this will modify the wave and storm protection [and] alter the sediment supply to the onshore beaches.”

At the time, Aubrey was president of his own consulting firm and a senior scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Dolan was a professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia.

Their report was written as the Corps pursued plans to undertake a 2.1 million cubic yard re-

“*The number one recommendation for all estuarine shoreline types is land planning (i.e. leave the land in its natural state).*”

Physical Processes Work Group
Recommendations for Appropriate Shoreline Stabilization Methods
for the Different North Carolina Estuarine Shoreline Types
August 2006

”



A groin juts into the Gulf of Mexico on Longboat Key. Photo by Norman Schimmel

nourishment project for beaches in the Venice area.

County Commissioner Patterson pointed out during the Feb. 7 Siesta Key Association (SKA) meeting that sand on the west coast of Florida naturally drifts south. County staff has pointed out that Siesta Public Beach has accreted sand over the past few years as a result of that effect.

Ultimately, the decision was made not to dredge sand from Big Pass for that initiative.

SKA Secretary Peter van Roekens remembers the Aubrey/Dolan report clearly. A boater who regularly provides reports on the New Pass channel as a public service, he has voiced his worries about the fact that, once again, the Corps is eying Big Pass as a sand source for Lido. On Aug. 1, van Roekens won unanimous support from his fellow SKA board members

for the organization to pay up to \$2,000 for an independent review of the Corps' latest modeling when it is completed.

Van Roekens pointed out during the Aug. 1 SKA meeting that Big Pass never has been dredged and that when New Pass was dredged for the last Lido renourishment — in 2009 — “the channel got severely damaged.”

New Pass has been remarked, he added, “and apparently it’s OK now.” Still, that factor increases his wariness of any effort to remove sand from the Big Pass shoal.

Van Roekens said he would feel more comfortable having an independent coastal engineer look at the studies provided for the latest renourishment effort.

He has cited scientific research warning against groins, too.



A lot for sale on Siesta Key's Ocean Boulevard offers a view of Lido Key across Big Pass. File photo.

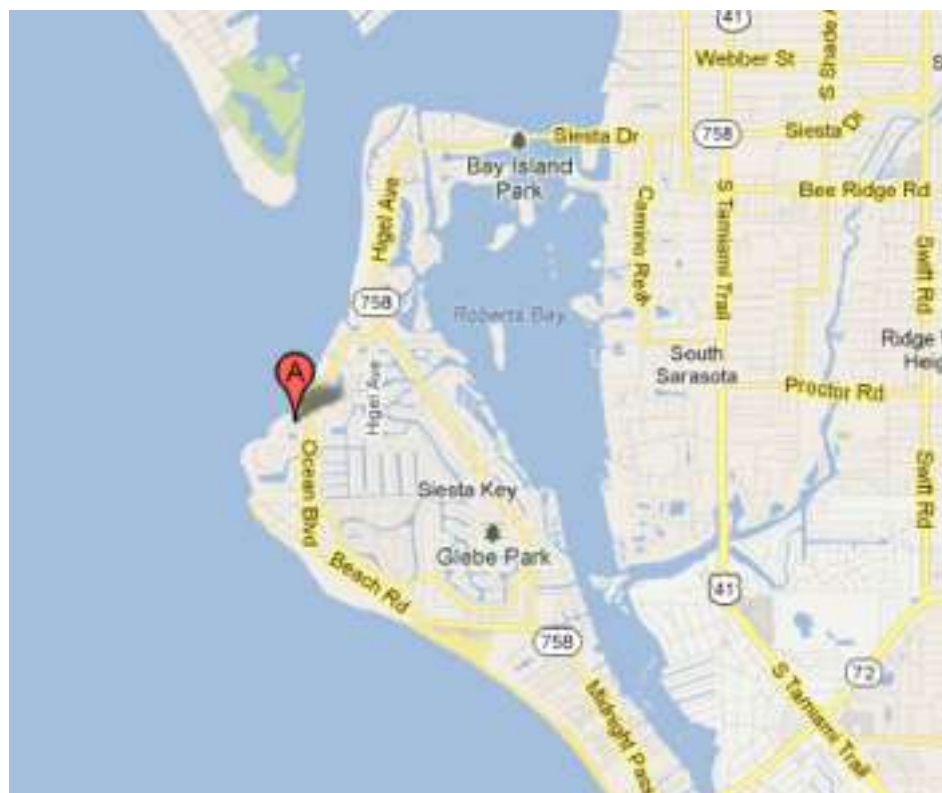
THE SCIENCE AND THE RESERVATIONS

Dr. Stanley R. Riggs, a highly respected geologist with expertise in marine and coastal issues, was a member of the North Carolina Estuarine Biological and Physical Processes Work Group that issued an August 2006 [report](#) on stabilization methods for various North Carolina estuarine shoreline types.

The report points out that groins “trap sand on the updrift side to build out the upland.”

However, it says, “The number one recommendation for all estuarine shoreline types is land planning (i.e. leave the land in its natural state). Typically, the number two recommendation is to use vegetation control because vegetation is a natural and environmentally beneficial stabilization method. In many cases, beach fill is a recommended action to maintain the current shoreline type due to its non-structural, non-hardening attributes. When shoreline hardening stabilization methods are proposed, the Work Group [ranks] sills as the most preferred option since it is a small structure that is constructed to support wetland plantings, or the conservation of existing wetland vegetation.”

Another nationally known expert on coastal geology, Orrin H. Pilkey — James B. Duke professor emeritus at Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment — also has expressed opposition to groins. Writing, for one example, in *The News and Observer* on April 26, 2011, he described the situation in North Carolina’s [Oregon Inlet](#), a highly unstable area of the Outer Banks between Nags Head and Cape Hatteras.



A map shows the location of Big Pass north of Siesta Key, with Lido Key on the other side of the inlet. Image courtesy of Google Maps

Addressing the Corps of Engineers’ decision to allow the construction of a 3,000-foot terminal groin to protect N.C. Highway 12, which runs between the Atlantic Ocean and Pamlico Sound, Pilkey referenced an article by Robert Dolan, who had written that the terminal groin did not work as claimed to protect the shoreline. Severe erosion had continued, Pilkey pointed out, and the groin had led to the clogging of Oregon Inlet, “since sand exchange across the inlet is now halted.”

In late March, Laird Wreford, coastal resources manager for Sarasota County, told the *News Leader* that the Corps would have to determine through a cost-benefit analysis that future Lido renourishment projects would be “extended out much longer” before approving the construction of the groins on the southern tip of Lido.

However, DavisShaw told the *News Leader* on April 2, “I think there’s a lot of improvement in technology” regarding the design of groins,

“so they are better able to address the needs” of the areas where they are placed.

Permeable adjustable groins on Longboat Key “have been working well,” she pointed out.

PUBLIC VETTING

The Corps has agreed to present its findings during the SKA’s Dec. 5 meeting, van Roekens said. Representatives also will provide that information to the Boaters Coalition, he added.

Corps representatives generally prefer to set up “stations” featuring individual aspects of a project, DavisShaw told the *News Leader*, instead of making a traditional presentation to an audience. The Corps’ view is that such a process encourages people to ask questions about specific aspects of a project that interests them, and Corps representatives provide the answers. “That [method] seems to be best received,” she added.

Still, she pointed out, she was not certain what the Corps representatives would do when they come to Sarasota in December.

TOURIST TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

When questions about the cost of the Lido renourishment arose during the SKA meeting on Aug. 1, Patterson explained the use of Tourist Development Tax revenue for such projects.

A certain portion of the TDT money is allocated to local governments in the county according to a formula based on population, she pointed out.

“My guess is they’ve stockpiled enough” of the city’s portion of the TDT revenue, she added, to pay for the Lido expense.

Patterson added, “I’m not terribly personally supportive of this project in its form,” referring to the potential dredging of Big Pass.

However, she said she was in full support of keeping all the county’s beaches “in good shape.”

THE DEBBY PROBLEMS


While the wait continues on the next big Lido renourishment, DavisShaw emphasized this week that she is anxious to move forward on more immediate, emergency plans to stabilize that beach because of the severe erosion it suffered in 2012 during the days-long onslaught of Tropical Storm Debby.

“We’re moving forward slowly,” she told the *News Leader*. “Permitting is the biggest unknown in any of the beach projects.”

Yet, DavisShaw referenced what Patterson had alluded to during the SKA meeting: Tourism data confirms the value of maintaining the beach at a such a level that it continues to draw tourists.

Data for 2012, commissioned by Visit Sarasota County and released on July 22, showed 100,100 visitors stayed overnight in commercial lodging on Lido Beach, with direct spending of \$81,956,900.

The total economic impact of those tourists on the county’s economy was put at \$155,537,800, the data shows. Additionally, those visitors paid \$5,163,300 in state and local taxes and supported 3,617 jobs.

That is why, DavisShaw told the *News Leader*, “we try to make the beaches as healthy as possible.” 

A THOUSAND NEW HOTEL ROOMS

THE MEMBERS OF THE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS HEAR ABOUT NEW HOTELS PLANNED AND MORE 'RENT-A-COPS,' AND IT AGREES TO PROVIDE A BIKE RACK AT SMOKIN' JOE'S

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

As many as six new hotels are planned for the downtown area, City of Sarasota Chief Planner Steve Stancel told the Downtown Improvement District board on Tuesday, Aug 6.

While five of them are already well-known projects as a result of recent community discussions, Stancel said there is “potential for a sixth, which I cannot tell you about.”

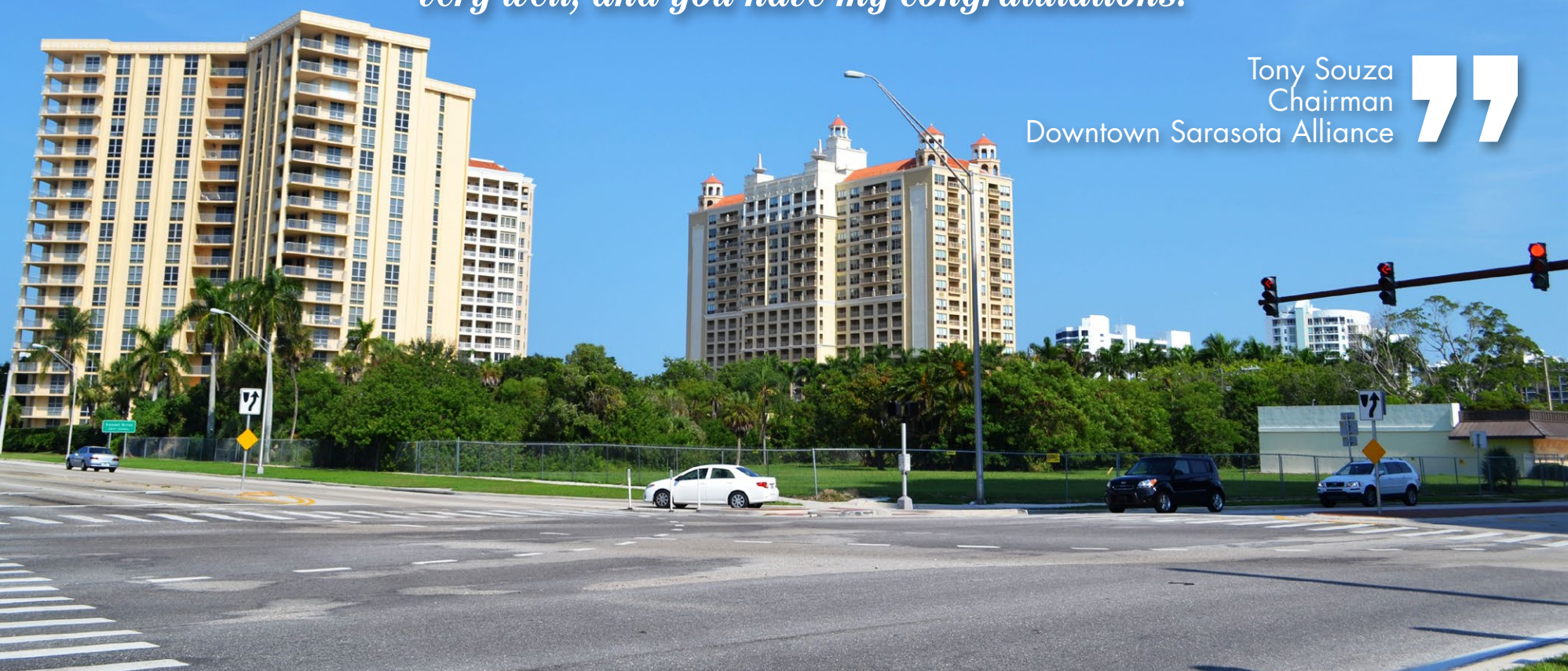
If just five were actually built, they would add more than 1,000 hotel rooms in the down-

town area. And just as important, Stancel noted, would be the range of room rates: “That makes a difference, because you reach different markets.”

One of them — the Gulfstream Sarasota — would be adjacent to the Ritz-Carlton at the intersection of U.S. 41 and the Ringling Causeway. Embassy Suites has filed pre-application paperwork for a 200-room hotel at Second Street and Tamiami Trail, across the street from the Ritz.

“*I congratulate you on your work on lower Main Street. All the complaints in the papers are null and void. It's going very well, and you have my congratulations.*”

Tony Souza
Chairman
Downtown Sarasota Alliance



Plans call for the Gulfstream Sarasota hotel to be constructed on the corner of U.S. 41 and Gulfstream Avenue/Ringling Causeway. Photo by Norman Schimmel

A combination hotel/condominium building is inching forward for the intersection of Palm Avenue and Charles Ringling Boulevard. It has received three “adjustments” in design, courtesy of the Sarasota Planning Board, and is starting to firm up. And a boutique hotel is proposed for the parking lot immediately north of the historic Sarasota County Courthouse. No formal paperwork has been filed for the latter project, but developers are talking about 150 rooms with a restaurant and 7,000 square feet of meeting space.

Stancel also related good legal news regarding the Floridays hotel planned for the intersection of Palm and Coconut avenues. The project has been stalled because of two lawsuits filed by a developer who tried, but failed, to put something else on that site. Stancel said a court hearing had been scheduled for the day before the DID meeting, but it was suddenly cancelled at the request of the Buck Leiter development team. “It looks like the suit may be dropped,” he said.

If so, that would allow the Floridays initiative to begin moving forward without any cloud over the title to the land. Two outstanding agreements between the city and Floridays have been hammered out; they will go to the City Commission on Sept. 3, Stancel noted.

SECURITY TO BE DETERMINED

The presence of the homeless and vagrant populations has forced several downtown merchants to band together and hire private security to provide customers a sense of safety. For the same reason, Sarasota County hired private security for the downtown Selby Public Library and the Sarasota County Area Transit bus transfer station on Lemon Avenue.

The DID board this week was prepared to hear a pitch for broader participation in the security-for-hire scheme from Norman Gollub, the city’s downtown economic development coordinator. However, Gollub asked that the issue be deferred to the next meeting of the group. He said he wanted to present crime sta-



*Plans may start moving again on the Floridays hotel project next to the Palm Avenue parking garage.
Photo by Norman Schimmel*

tistics and a trend analysis to underpin any request he might make for financial assistance to expand the private security force.

The City Commission already takes \$1 million from the pot of Community Redevelopment Agency funds to pay for increased city police presence downtown and in north Sarasota. The question for the DID board will be whether it should utilize revenue from its district to pay for private security.

HOW TO GET A NEW BIKE RACK

The DID recently completed new landscaping along lower Main Street, and in one area, the plants are already being trampled. That is outside Smokin' Joe's café and tobacconist, where patrons are chaining their bicycles to the trees and crashing through the underbrush to get to the bar.



Patrons of Smokin' Joe's in downtown Sarasota will soon have a new bike rack to use. Photo by Norman Schimmel



Construction was under way on lower Main Street in late July. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Businessman Ron Soto came forward during the “Open to the Public” part of the DID meeting to suggest a bike rack might be the solution.

“They wanted the bench taken out to keep the homeless away and replaced with a bike rack,” he said of the Smokin’ Joe’s management. “Some of their patrons have DUIs, so [the customers] bike there. You paid for all kinds of new plants recently, and now the bike guys are going through the plants, tearing the hell out of the plants you just paid for.”

Soto operates the family optometry shop a half-block away.

While the organization’s rules forbid discussion during the open-to-the-public portion of the meeting, the issue did come up again during “Member Comments.” Stancel noted a redesign of the bike parking area at the Palm Avenue parking garage had resulted in a couple of excess racks.

“This could be an administrative issue,” he said.

DID Vice Chairman William Pettey made a motion to authorize “up to \$1,000 to install a new bike rack” at Smokin’ Joe’s. The motion passed unanimously.

A PLUS AND A MINUS

Also during the Open to the Public session, Tony Souza, chairman of the Downtown Sarasota Alliance, stepped forward to offer words of praise to the organization. At this moment, downtown is a mess. Construction crews are digging and pouring and demolishing and rebuilding streets and sidewalks, all part of a DID-financed beautification scheme that should be completed next month.



An apparently homeless man sleeps on a bench in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

Any merchant fears the consequences of such confusion. But Souza stepped forward to say, “I congratulate you on your work on lower Main Street. All the complaints in the papers are null and void. It’s going very well, and you have my congratulations.”

On the minus side of the karmic ledger, during an end-of-meeting budget wrap-up, it was noted the financial reserves had not yet paid for \$8,300 in legal fees resulting from a public records lawsuit. The suit was filed after two DID members said publicly that they had erased from their personal computers emails that concerned DID business. DID Members Dr. Mark Kaufman and Pettey surrendered their computers; some emails were found, and some were gone forever.

“Dr. Kaufman, I don’t mind the DID paying for that because it doesn’t come out of our pockets,” said Pettey. 



NOT GIVING UP

A chickee serves as the bar at O'Leary's in Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota. File photo

WITH THE CITY OF SARASOTA PLANNING TO INSTALL TWO CHICKEES FOR BUS SHELTERS, A SARASOTA COUNTY COMMISSIONER SAYS HE WILL RAISE THE TOPIC AGAIN IN REFERENCE TO COUNTY BUS STOPS

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Sarasota County Commissioner Joe Barbetta is not giving up on the idea of using chickees — thatch-covered shelters built by the Miccosukee and Seminole Indians — as bus shelters in Sarasota County.

As the City of Sarasota proceeds with plans to install such structures at two bus stops along Old Bradenton Road, Barbetta will bring up the subject again when the County Commission meets the

last week of this month, he told *The Sarasota News Leader* on Aug. 5.

He called a staff memo completed in April — noting numerous reasons why chickees would not make good bus stop shelters — “pretty amazing,” and not in a good way.

“Our goal is to make them work.”

Bill Nichols
Project Manager
Old Bradenton Road Improvements

The April 5 memo was prepared for the County Commission by Glama Carter, director of Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT), and

Assistant County Administrator Mark Cunningham.

Barbetta also pointed to the estimated cost of a regular bus stop shelter in that memo: between \$27,360 and \$37,360. During a Jan. 29 workshop with the County Commission, Carter had put the cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000, prompting Commissioner Nora Patterson to remark, “That’s just nuts.”

“Now all of a sudden they’ve come down to \$27,000?” Barbetta told the *News Leader* on Aug. 5.

Asked whether he felt the lower price was just another indication — beyond those in the memo — that staff did not want to pursue the use of chickees, Barbetta replied, “I’m getting that feeling.”



A chickee stands on the Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation in Glades County. Photo by Ebyabe via Wikimedia Commons



A man waits in a standard Sarasota County Area Transit bus shelter at Westfield Southgate Mall during mid-March. File photo

The expense Carter mentioned in January was one reason Barbetta asked County Administrator Randall Reid in March to have staff check out the feasibility of chickees — an idea that Jack Gurney, a former Sarasota mayor and longtime journalist, had proposed about three years ago when Gurney was serving on the county’s Tree Advisory Council.

In response to a call from the *News Leader*, Patterson determined the Carter-Cunningham memo was logged in as having been provided to the County Commission on April 8. However, neither she nor Barbetta nor Commissioner Christine Robinson recalled any subsequent discussion of the document at the dais. The commission meetings held on April 9 and 10 covered a diverse array of other topics — from a pilot program involving the planting of wildflowers at the Fruitville Road/Interstate 75 interchange to a dispute over a fuel contract to improvements for Myrtle Street in Newtown to an update on the effort to replace the county’s aging 800MHz emergency radio system; but no chickee bus shelters, pursuant to a *News Leader* review of minutes from those meetings.

Robinson told the *News Leader* this week that she would be open to discussing chick-

ees again. She had joined Patterson in asking numerous questions of Carter in January regarding the cost of bus shelters.

Patterson said she remembered reading the April 5 memo, especially that it noted concerns she had raised whether the chickees could withstand strong storms.

THE MEMO

When the *News Leader* contacted the SCAT office last week for an update on Barbetta’s request on March 5 for more information on chickees, an assistant to Carter responded with a copy of the April 5 memo.

As Barbetta had pointed out during that March meeting, the memo notes that chickees constructed by the Miccosukee or Seminole tribes “are exempt from building code requirements,” but they “are still subject to typical zoning regulations such as setback requirements, right-of-way considerations and other local government regulations.”

Regarding chickees and storms, the memo says, “Researching this issue provided evidence found on-line that is anecdotal only.” Cape Coral guidelines for use of chickees,

Activities	SCAT Shelter	Chickee Hut
Acquisition services (i.e. survey, title search, etc. <i>Does not include purchase cost of Right of Way</i>)	\$6,000	\$6,000
Design & Construction of Concrete Pad (i.e. ADA, connectivity to sidewalk, etc.)	\$15,000 - \$25,000	\$15,000 - \$25,000
Purchase cost of shelter/Chickee and bench	\$4,645 shelter +\$300 bench \$4,945 Total	\$5,100 *Chickee +\$300 bench \$5,400 Total
Installation cost of shelter and bench	\$705 shelter +\$210 bench \$915 Total	\$210 (bench)

Part of an April 5 memo to the County Commission compares costs for putting in a chickee bus shelter and a regular bus shelter. Image courtesy Sarasota County

for example, said, “[T]he palm fronds are attached in such a way as to be sacrificed when the wind exceeds 70 miles per hour.”

For another example: The City of Naples building and zoning director was quoted in a newspaper article as saying that chickees in Southwest Florida “held up pretty well during ... four storms that pounded Florida ... Several [chickees] on Marco Island [though] were damaged, even though the island was spared a direct hit.”

The memo also notes that the thatched roofs, according to research, tend to last from five to 10 years before they must be replaced.

The memo adds, “SCAT does not recommend [chickees’] use as bus shelters in Sarasota County” for a number of reasons. Those range from the fact that maintenance appears “to be more involved than first apparent” to

the need to spray the palm fronds with both pesticide and a substance to protect them from mold (“SCAT does not have the staff or the budget to accommodate [that]”) to the fact that the chickees are designed to lose their thatch entirely “during even a Category 1 hurricane.”

MOVING FORWARD IN THE CITY

Those issues are not worrisome to Bill Nichols, project manager for the [Old Bradenton Road](#) improvements under way in the city of Sarasota.

In an interview with the *News Leader* on Aug. 6, Nichols said he had checked with people at four locations in the area where chickees are standing and learned the structures held up to 65-mph winds without problems, thanks to the design.

Staff Determination

SCAT has concerns about Chickee Huts and does not recommend their use as bus shelters in Sarasota County due to the following reasons:

1. Maintenance of Chickee Huts appears to be more involved than first apparent. They are stated to last 10 years before thatch replacement. An experienced owner reported to City of Sarasota Capital Improvement Projects staff that Chickee Huts were replaced in 7 years due to detritus (acorns, small limbs and leaves helped reduce the useable life). Other sources have stated that huts have to be re-thatched every five (5) years. In comparison, a metal bus shelter easily lasts 10 years.
2. Maintenance of the palm fronds is required, and contractors installing Chickee Huts recommend spraying the palm fronds with both pesticide and mold resistant spray at least once during the 5 year life cycle of the palm frond roof. SCAT does not have the staff or the budget to accommodate this additional maintenance.
3. The Chickee Huts are designed to lose the roof thatch entirely during even a Category 1 hurricane. As a result, re-thatching of the roof may be required more often than every 5-7 years.
4. The project costs would continue to be over \$20,000 because of the need to design and construct the concrete pad and ADA landing pad at each stop. There would be no significant cost savings for purchasing a Chickee Hut as opposed to the standard SCAT shelter. There could be some savings on the installation and permitting costs.

The only deterrent to the city using them might be cost he added.

The city has 8-foot by 14-foot concrete pads already in place at the two locations where it proposes to install the chickees as bus shelters, he explained. Those sites are at the first Old Bradenton Road bus stop just south of University Parkway — across from the Sarasota Kennel Club track — and at 32nd Street.

A typical hard shelter like those used at SCAT stops costs about \$5,000, Nichols pointed out. Staff is working through the city's Procurement Department, he continued, to get quotes on chickee models. "The design can vary," he pointed out. "We just want shade. ... We like the natural approach ... [and] the community likes it."

Because of the need to obtain quotes, he pointed out, he has no guess about what cost will be involved. However, he said, the city's design "is a fairly simple [one]," so he is hopeful the price will come in lower than \$5,000. If the price per chickee "gets to be much more expensive [than that], it's going to be hard to justify," Nichols added.

Still, he is maintaining a positive outlook on the process. "It's going to happen."

Nichols said he anticipated the chickees going up in late November or early December, in the latter stages of the Old Bradenton Road project.

IN-HOUSE DESIGN

In March and April, County Commissioners Robinson and Charles Hines exchanged emails with Carter, the SCAT director, about the possibility of in-house design of standard bus shelters.


Carter replied to Hines on April 5, saying that staff had completed an analysis of the cost of county staff handling the work compared to the cost of contracting it out. Based on plans for installing about 20 bus shelters per year over the next three years, she wrote, the estimate was \$9,500 per shelter. "This total includes staff resources, project management charges, central service charge, and survey costs."

Historical data showed the cost of outsourcing bus stop designs is about \$10,000 per stop, she added. "As that cost is very comparable to the in-house estimate, staff next evaluated whether or not the time associated with design could be shortened by designing in-house. It was determined that the labor hours necessary to complete the design are comparable whether done in-house or by a consultant."

Carter then pointed out, "SCAT and Public Works are discussing the development of a new solicitation encompassing the design, construction, and installation of bus shelters that could be used for multiple years. Staff anticipates that this approach will not only be more cost effective, but more timely and efficient, in addressing the overwhelming need for bus shelters in Sarasota County."

Robinson — who was on vacation when contacted by the *News Leader* this week — said she "believed that we could save some time and money by taking care of [bus shelter design] in-house."

Barbetta told the *News Leader* he would be eager to see the quotes the City of Sarasota receives for chickee shelters.

"Our goal is to make them work," Nichols said. "We're going to do something that works." 

THE UNIQUE SPRING

MOTE STEPS UP AS POSSIBLE SITE OPERATOR, BUT ACQUISITION COST IS THE BIGGEST UNKNOWN IN SARASOTA COUNTY'S EFFORT TO PURCHASE THE ARCHAEOLOGICALLY RICH LITTLE SALT SPRING

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

The things found under the surface tell the story of Little Salt Spring, a prehistoric watering hole once used at the twilight of the last Ice Age.

Here researchers have unearthed an extinct species of tortoise on a shelf 90 feet below the surface. They also have found a sharp stake a hunter might have used 12,000 years ago to impale the turtle.

In 2005, University of Miami Research Associate Steve Koski excavated a green stone pendant from Little Salt Spring. The 8,000-year-old object was made from material that originated

at least 600 miles from the spring. The stone suggested to researchers that prehistoric people in Florida had an exchange network stretching into the Carolinas, Koski said.

The discoveries are two of many notable archaeological finds at the 112-acre preserve. Tucked at the end of a dirt road not far from Heron Creek Middle School and several newer homes in North Port, the spring, due to its combination of peat and low oxygen level in the water, preserves some of the oldest dated artifacts ever found in the Southeastern United States. And it still holds some of the oldest cultural remains in North America.



The University of Miami is looking to sell the 112-acre Little Salt Spring property to Sarasota County.
Photo by Curt Bowen

“It is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the Southeast,” said Koski, who has lived on the property since 2004.

Sarasota County soon could become the owner of the archaeologically rich spring.

The University of Miami has owned the site since 1982, thanks to a donation. However, because of cuts in funding to the university’s Rosenstiel School’s Division of Marine Affairs program — which managed research at the spring — the university is looking to sell the property. Talks are continuing between Sarasota County and the University over the cost.

Commissioner Christine Robinson told *The Sarasota News Leader* she believes the university wants to sell the site soon. “I think we are talking months, not years,” Robinson noted.

“I call this a legacy moment for Sarasota County,” Robinson said about the county’s opportunity to purchase and protect Little Salt Spring and Warm Mineral Springs, both located in North Port.

Unlike Warm Mineral Springs — which began operating in the 1960s as a health spa — Little Salt Spring should be protected as a limited-access archaeological and ecological preserve, Robinson pointed out.

Koski used an exaggerated metaphor to illustrate the differences between the two springs located less than five miles apart: If Warm Mineral Springs is like Disney World, Little Salt Spring is more like Jurassic Park.

“North Port is on the map because of Warm Mineral Springs,” Koski said. “It is a shame [the resort is] closed, and hopefully it will



“There is no other place on the planet like it.”

Bill Goetz
Correspondence Secretary
Friends of Little Salt Spring

The University of Miami has owned and operated Little Salt Spring since 1982. Photo courtesy Friends of Little Salt Spring

open soon. But Little Salt Spring is different. Its value isn't in the dollars it can bring in. It has so much value because it is a reflection of Florida's past and a cultural resource."

A BOOST AND A BIG UNKNOWN

The county's plan to purchase Little Salt Spring got a boost last week when County Administrator Randall Reid told the county commissioners he had met with Mote Marine Laboratory representatives about the possibility of the research center and aquarium managing the spring if Sarasota County purchases it using Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program funds.

Reid wrote in a July 29 email to the county commissioners that Mote would be a good steward of the site.

While Mote could end up operating both Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring, "Little Salt Spring (should it be acquired by the county) may be even more appropriate for Mote involvement," Reid pointed out in the email.

Florida Aquarium of Tampa could also assist in operating Little Salt Spring.

The biggest unknowns, however, are the acquisition expense and operating costs associated with keeping Little Salt Spring open.

"I don't know if we have any knowledge of a price," said County Commissioner Nora Patterson. "That is going to be an issue, of course."

Patterson referenced the donation of the property to the university by the now defunct company General Development, which found-



The 8,000-year-old green stone pendant was found by archeologist Steve Koski. Material used to make the pendant originated in an area at least 600 miles from the spring. Photo courtesy of Friends of Little Salt Spring

ed and built much of North Port. And Patterson believes university officials favor Sarasota County as a prospective new owner because the county has undertaken earlier initiatives to preserve land near the spring.

“I had the impression because we worked on [that] in the past, [the university] liked the idea of working with us,” Patterson told the *News Leader*, referring to the county’s effort to purchase land across Price Boulevard from the spring.

From 2004 to 2007, the county purchased 24 residential lots, which are now managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. The county-owned land is called Little Salt Slough.

But that does not necessarily mean the county will get the property at a bargain, Patterson said.

In June, the county commissioners voted to begin the acquisition process through the county’s Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program.

Robinson is confident the university will try to make the transaction happen. Because of the uniqueness of the spring, the deal would not be a typical real estate sale.

“I have said, with University of Miami representatives in the room, that this is about research and cultural history,” Robinson pointed out.

County staff is negotiating with University of Miami representatives on the acquisition cost, she added.

The discussion between Dr. Kumar Mahadevan, former CEO and president of Mote, and Reid — which could lead to Mote’s over-



An incised deer bone handle found at the spring appears to have been wrapped in twine for decorative purposes. Photo courtesy of Friends of Little Salt Spring

seeing operation of the spring — is a significant development that excites Robinson.

While public access at the ecologically and archaeologically sensitive site would likely be limited under county ownership — as it has been under the university's control — the county would probably work to make certain an educational outreach initiative is established at the site. In addition to the cultural artifacts, the spring-fed sinkhole is home to several rare plant species.

“We at the county are interested in artifacts staying local and making sure they are able to

be viewed, whether at a nearby facility or another facility locally,” Robinson pointed out.

Bill Goetz, correspondence secretary for Friends of Little Salt Spring, said that although several trailers were put on the site in the 1970s, the property does not have any permanent buildings there.

“Potentially, there could be a research and educational facility at the site, if Mote takes over,” Goetz noted, “and that is what the Friends of Little Salt Springs has really wanted to see at the spring.”



Little Salt Spring. Photo by Steve Koski, University of Miami

“I can’t think of anyone better to manage the spring,” Goetz said of Mote.

The research facility could be used to study artifacts also found at nearby Warm Mineral Springs and Nona Spring,” Goetz added.

A plan to build a modest structure at Little Salt Spring was launched before the downturn in the economy, Koski pointed out.

Although the university received \$250,000 from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice to support research expansion, plans for the research facility, interpretative nature walks and a visitors’ center were not continued under the new dean at the Rosenstiel School of Marine & Atmospheric Science.

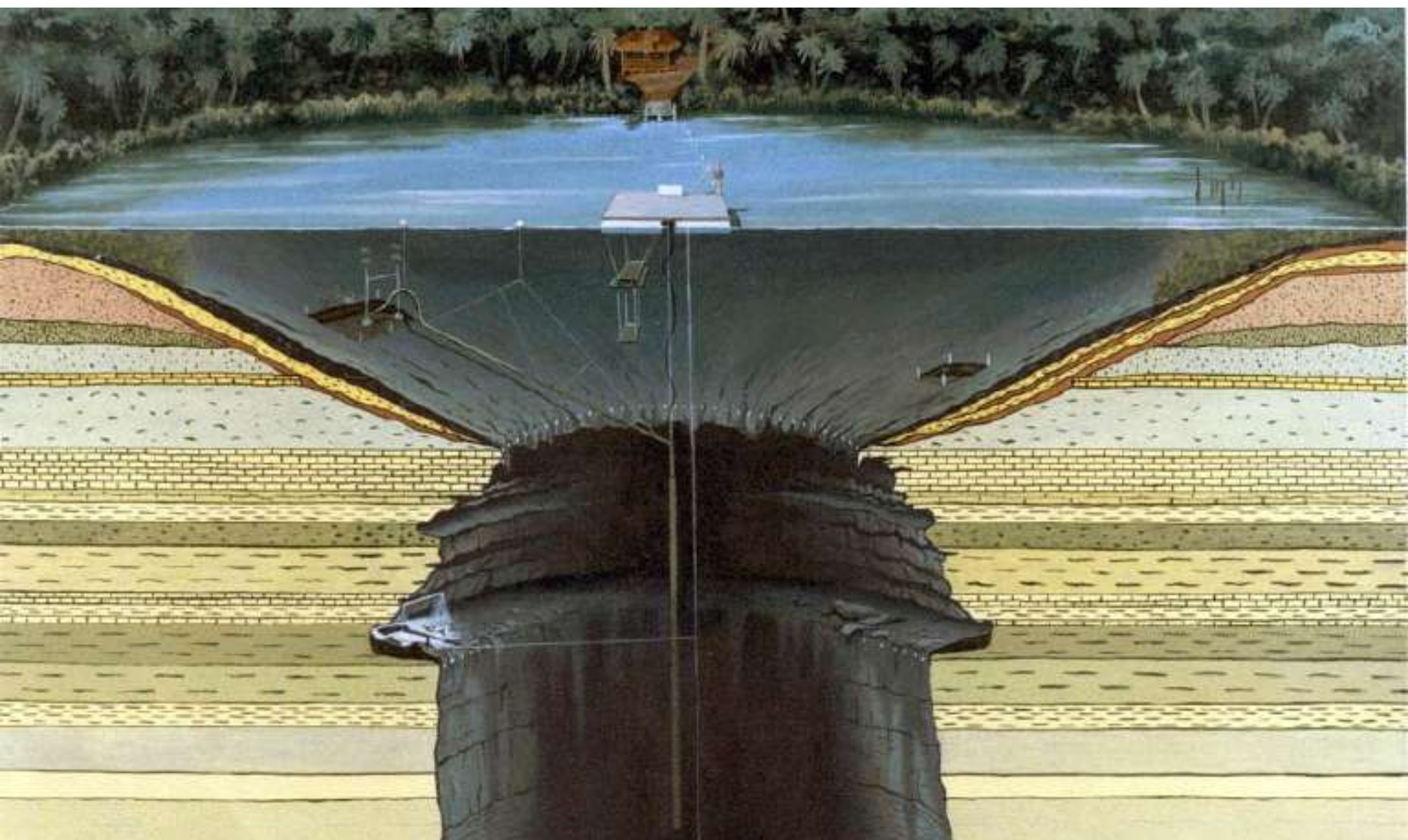
ARCHAEOLOGICAL GOLDMINE

“There is no other place on the planet like it,” Goetz said of the spring, which is relatively unknown, even in Sarasota County.

Because of the anoxic climate and near constant temperature, the spring maintains artifacts in far better condition than other environments do, even rivers.

“Little Salt Spring preserves wood and bone and brain,” Goetz noted. “A brain found inside [a] skull was preserved. I believe it was from a 7-year-old child, and it was 7,000 years old.”

“Even insect wings are iridescent after 12,000 years,” Goetz said. “Little Salt Spring can tell us about geology, archeology, hydrology, bi-



This illustration shows the sinkhole and spring at Little Salt Spring. The ledge in the middle of the illustration — 90 feet under the surface of the spring — is where the extinct tortoise shell and sharp stake were discovered. Illustration by Steve Daniels, University of Miami

ology, climatology. The fact there is not a research facility there is astounding.”

The spring has been featured in *National Geographic* and the *New York Times*, as well as academic journals such as *Southeastern Archaeology*, but Goetz said a research facility would entice more media to feature discoveries at the spring.

“The site is so important, and yet there are not that many publications [writing about it],” Goetz added.

The spring is also one of the few bodies of water within the state that served as a cemetery for the people of the Archaic period. In addition to some of the oldest man-made tools discovered, several remains of extinct animals have been pulled from its depths.


Only about 5 percent of the spring’s basin has been excavated.

“There is a lifetime of research [left],” Koski said.

But the best research is slow and methodical, and Koski hopes that kind of work continues.

Koski believes Sarasota County is the best potential new owner to “manage the property into a new generation.”

In collaboration with Mote and Florida Aquarium, Koski hopes the county would broaden the research and educational aspects of the spring, using the site as an ecological and archaeological preserve.

“It’s not about digging up everything that is there,” the researcher pointed out. “It is about conserving what is there and looking at and publishing reports on what has been recovered.” 



Steve Koski talks about Little Salt Spring as an ecological and archaeological preserve



AFTER THE STORM

A comprehensive plan for handling a future disaster could help Sarasota County return quickly to its usual welcoming state. Photo by Norman Schimmel

SARASOTA COUNTY BEGAN DRAFTING ITS POST DISASTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AFTER THE BACK-TO-BACK STORM SEASONS OF 2004 AND 2005

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

Sarasota County is finalizing its blueprint for rebuilding after a major storm or disaster strikes.

Over the next few months, county staff will be making revisions and updates to a 130-page draft Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP), which outlines a strategy for the long-term redevelopment after an event

such as a hurricane coming ashore at the bayfront.

“This is not the immediate post-storm management plan,” said Laird Wreford, Sarasota County coastal resources manager. “This is how do you get your community back up and running long-term after something catastrophic has happened.”

“We are hoping to develop something that will help the community and save us a significant amount of money if we get hit by a disaster.”

Laird Wreford
Coastal Resources Manager
Sarasota County



Because the plan involves so many complex elements — from infrastructure reconstruction to financing — and different aspects of county government, it is an “ambitious undertaking,” Wreford told *The Sarasota News Leader*.

County officials began drafting the plan several years ago.

“The biggest incentive to move forward with this was the back-to-back storm seasons of 2004 and 2005,” Wreford said.

But the planning effort was slowed after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. County staff working on the PDRP was redirected to respond to the Gulf of Mexico environmental disaster, which had the potential to impact Southwest Florida.

Wreford now hopes to have the final draft of the plan ready to present to the county commissioners for approval in April 2014. Before that happens, however, residents will be able to weigh in on the PDRP at several public workshops. County staff will also work closely on the document with officials in Sarasota, Longboat Key, North Port and Venice.

“This is a county plan, but we wanted to make sure we get engagement from the municipalities,” Wreford noted. “Storms don’t know political boundaries.”

The county hired a consultant at the cost of \$100,000 to facilitate the creation of the draft plan.



Sarasota County Emergency Management Chief Ed McCrane addresses the County Commission in late August 2012, before an expected strike by Tropical Storm Isaac. Photo by Norman Schimmel

A GOOD DOCUMENT TO HAVE

In addition to Sarasota County, Lee County, to the south, has been at work on one of Florida's pilot programs to develop a similar plan. After Pensacola was hit by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004, officials in that Panhandle community came up with a comprehensive redevelopment plan as well, said Scott Montgomery, recovery chief for Sarasota County Emergency Management.

"It's a good document for coastal communities to have," Montgomery pointed out.

The draft of the recovery plan is organized into chapters covering topics such as housing and planning, infrastructure, economic development, environmental restructuring and financing.

Each chapter outlines possible major issues and challenges, along with an action plan, Wreford said. For instance, the financing chapter predicts anticipated revenue shortfalls and highlights possible ways to coordinate private and public funding. That chapter includes sections on how affected local governments can keep a high bond rating as well as information on available redevelopment funding.

"Whether it's grants or federal assistance, what is out there?" will be one of the big questions in any redevelopment effort, Wreford noted.

"We would want to minimize the downtime for tourism and minimize the effect of residents and the tax base that would flee the area," Wreford said. Another goal is to "avoid losing business and employers in the area."

The most important goal is how to plan redevelopment so Sarasota County regains its nor-



County Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford presents a program to the Siesta Key Association in 2012. File photo

mal community atmosphere and the culture it had before a disaster, Wreford added.

While the plan is being written to apply to any major disaster, county staff anticipates the most likely catastrophe to affect the area would be a hurricane.

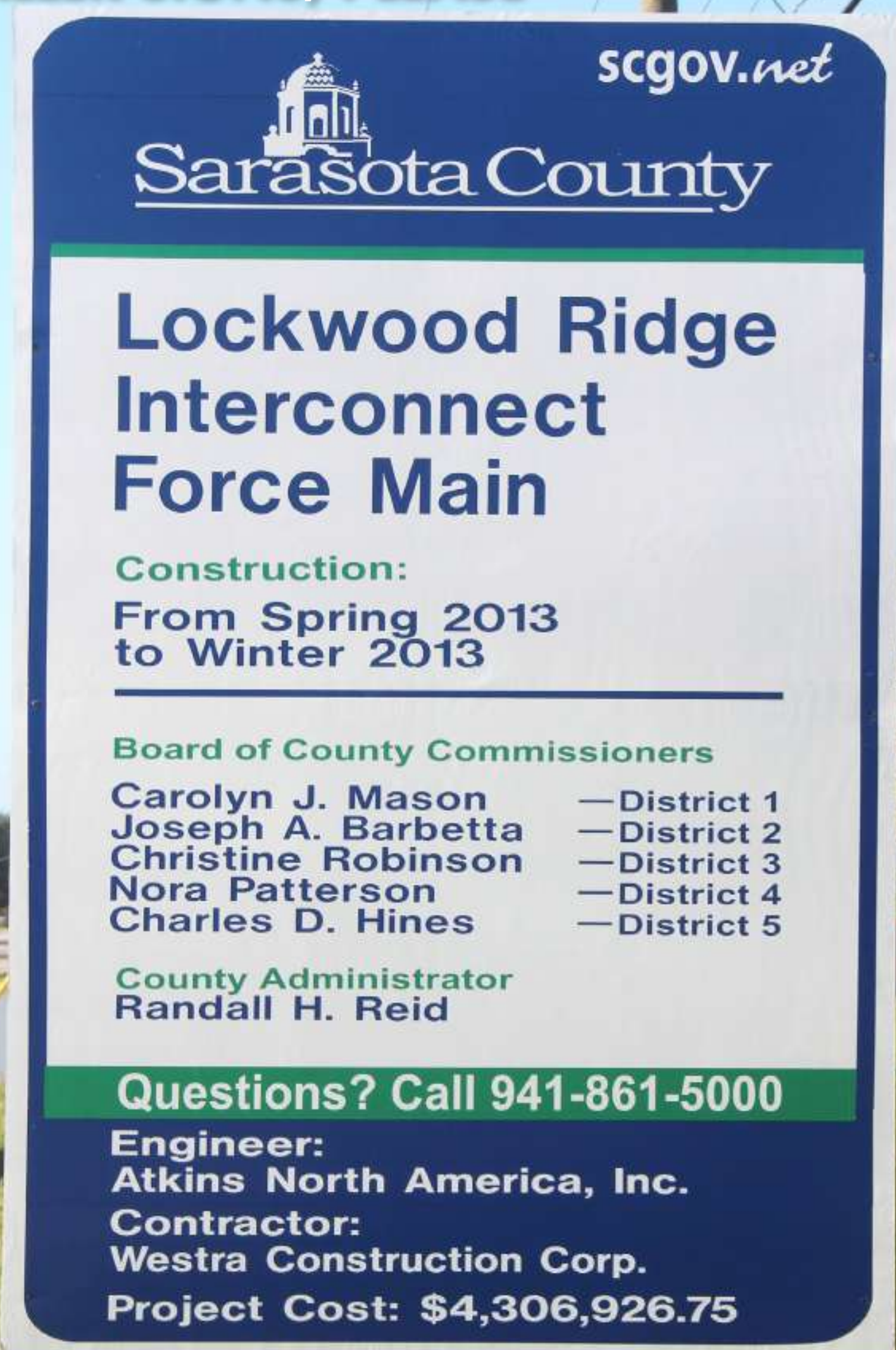
After the plan is approved, it will become a blueprint for periodic drills, and it will need periodic updates.

"We will have a review of the plan to see if it needs to be tweaked," Montgomery said. "It is not something you put on the shelf and say that is done."

If roads or utilities change, for instance, those factors would have to be reflected in the redevelopment strategy.

"We are hoping to develop something that will help the community and save us a significant amount of money if we get hit by a disaster," Wreford added. 

SMALLER SIGNS, PLEASE



A Sarasota County sign alerts the public that work has begun on South Lockwood Ridge Road to install a total of about 14,000 linear feet of force main sewer piping. Photo by Rachel Hackney

THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGREE THAT THE PUBLIC DOES NOT NEED TO SEE SUCH BIG SIGNS ANNOUNCING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

By Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor

Although the Sarasota County Commission's budget workshops have not been a fount of levity this year, one brief discussion in late June drew more than a few chuckles — and resulted in one of the solid decisions made so far on future spending.

The board members were talking about practices regarding the posting of permits on construction sites when Commissioner Joe Barbetta called for changes relative to a different type of signage:

"It just seems ironic that ... when we ride around town ... we see these huge wooden signs with our names on 'em, which I think is a waste."

We've got to stop putting up those big signs. Let's save that money.

Joe Barbetta
Commissioner
Sarasota County

He was referring to the signs denoting work on county projects. Each lists the names of the current commissioners.

Instead of those signs being so prominent, Barbetta pointed out, building permits needed to be displayed in an eye-catching manner.

He continued, "We've got to stop putting up those big signs. Let's save that money."

"I'm fine with not putting the signs up," Commissioner Nora Patterson weighed in.

The concept for the notices grew out of the passage of the last penny surtax measure, she added. The idea was to let voters know

how the revenue they had approved was being spent — on capital projects — "so they'd vote for [the tax] again the next time."

Voters approved the latest penny surtax in November 2007.

"Make it a smaller sign," Barbetta responded.

Patterson agreed. "I don't give a hoot about our names being up there," she added.

The discussion gravitated back to unlicensed contractors. Then Commissioner Christine Robinson came back to Barbetta's comments.

The signage really is important, she pointed out, "to tell people

what's going on."

Especially in places where road resurfacing will be getting under way, Robinson continued, the signs serve to alert the public to the disruptions they might encounter. People can plan accordingly, she said.

Moreover, the county's Call Center could be expected to receive fewer inquiries about a project if the signage provided sufficient information, Robinson told her colleagues.

In fact, she pointed out, when the Harbor Drive repaving project was undertaken in the fall of 2012 in Venice, residents actually offered a lot of thanks to staff after seeing the signs go up.


"I think the signs are good, but I think they are *way* too big," Chairwoman Carolyn Mason said.

If the board consensus were for county staff to erect smaller signs, he would make sure that happened, County Administrator Randall Reid said, drawing chuckles. The signs still would look nice, he promised.

"I actually think the names detract from the message," Patterson added. "[That] sort of irritates people, like we're self-promoting."

Reid said he would make sure the change took place over time.

"You shouldn't go take them down if they're already up," Patterson responded, eliciting more laughter.

"Or in the case of Nokomis [neighborhood improvements], where [the signs are] up two years after the project was completed," Robinson added, prompting yet more laughter. 



Commissioner Joe Barbetta contemplates agenda material during the June 21 budget workshop. File photo

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“ I agree that these shouldn’t be things willy-nilly flying every which way. ... I have mannequins wearing a pretty dress. ... I respect that the Village shouldn’t look like a carnival.

Martha Smith
Business Owner
Siesta Village

”

sary before the groups take the matter back to the County Commission.

However, Gaddie added, she was hopeful that by September the organizations' discussions would have made clear how each felt about any proposed changes.

Gaddie said she and Cooper had met both with County Commissioner Nora Patterson — who lives on Siesta Key — and with Catherine Luckner, president of the Siesta Key Association, to talk about the project. “We’re moving forward with trying to figure out exactly what the needs are for outdoor displays,” Gaddie said.

One key factor, she pointed out, is the concern that if displays are allowed, they remain in a “very tight and well defined” area.

The discussion originally arose during the June 4 SKVA meeting, when Martha Smith — owner of [Le Grand Bisou Caribbean Boutique](#) in Siesta Center on Ocean Boulevard — saw her sales revenue drop from \$1,600 a day to \$195 a day in one week after a Sarasota County Code Enforcement officer told her it was a violation of the SKOD to display clothes on racks outside her shop.

James Ritter, manager of Siesta Key Outfitters — also in Siesta Center — had described a similar situation in loss of sales.

Subsequently, Cooper explained to members during the Aug. 6 meeting, he undertook research to determine what other Florida communities allow in terms of outdoor displays. The answers he received, he said, ranged from “Do whatever you want” to a prohibition, as in Sarasota County.



Martha Smith makes a point to Siesta Key Association members on Aug. 1. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Using the material he had compiled, he drafted an amendment to the SKOD and provided it to various people on Siesta Key for their comments.

Cooper explained that after Smith and Rick Lizotte, the owner of Comfort Shoes in Siesta Village, had provided Patterson a copy of those proposed changes, Patterson brought up the matter on July 9 during a commission meeting. However, her fellow board members suggested the organizations on Siesta collaborate on any changes before the commissioners weighed in on the matter.

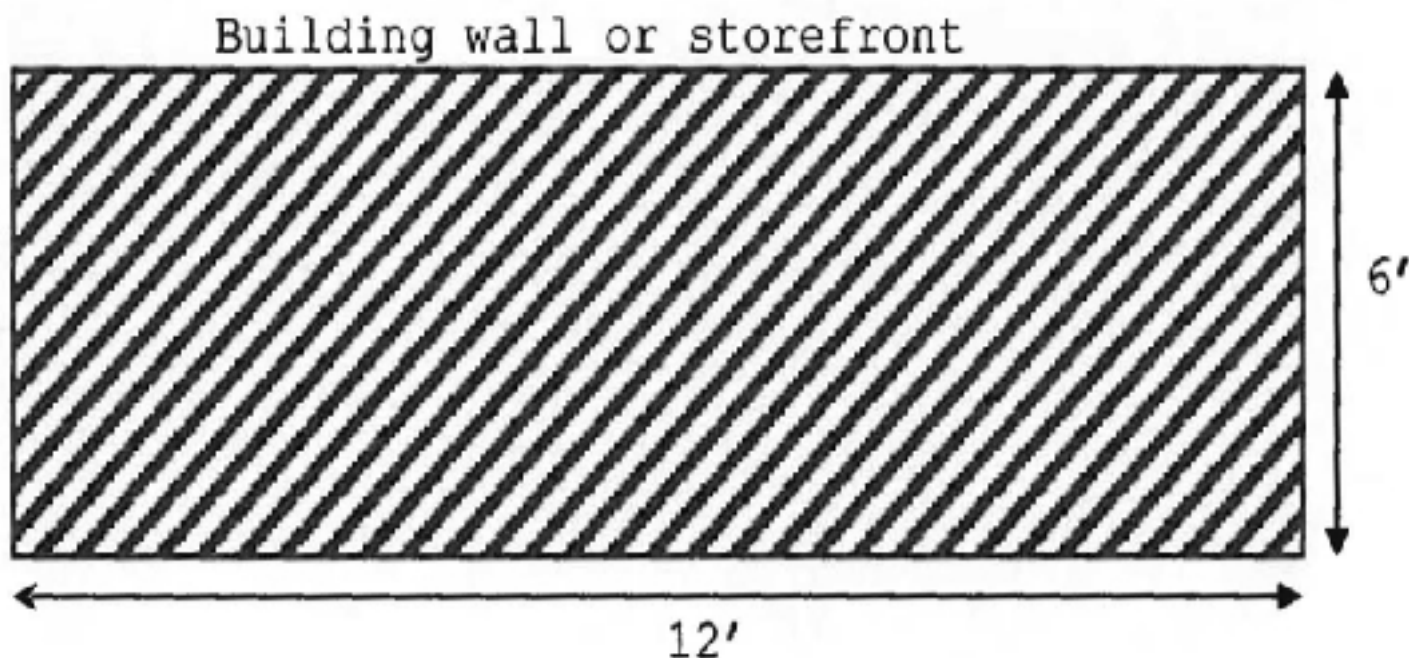
Cooper added that it was clear from the commissioners' comments that any changes to the SKOD will have to be “closely aligned” with the original intent of the ordinance — maintaining the character and aesthetics of the Village — and easy to enforce.

- Special District Outdoor Display Regulations

- a. Siesta Key Overlay District (SKOD)

- 1. Except as otherwise noted, any outdoor display area will comply with the standards contained in this section:

- a) The outdoor display area shall not exceed six (6) feet above finished grade unless a greater height is permitted through the special exception process.
 - b) The outdoor display area shall only be located adjacent to and/or against a single building wall, or storefront, of the responsible business but shall not extend further than six (6) feet from the same building wall or storefront unless a greater length is permitted through the special exception process.
 - c) The outdoor display area shall not extend beyond the width of the single building wall, or storefront, whichever is narrower, of the responsible business and must not exceed twelve (12) feet unless a greater width is permitted through the special exception process.
 - d) No tents or canopies can be placed over the display area.



THE SKA DISCUSSION

During the Aug. 1 SKA meeting, Smith of Le Grand Bisou told the approximately 20 members present she agreed with concerns that had been raised about the proposal to change the SKOD: “I don’t want to see Siesta Key turned into a honky tonk. ... I really value where I live.”

However, she pointed out, “If I can’t show my wares, I’ve seen my [sales] numbers drop drastically.”

She was hopeful, she added, that through dialogue, members of the SKA, SKVA, the Chamber and the merchants could come to agreement on changes.

Adding that the SKOD dates to 2002, Smith said, “I kind of feel like it could use a little tweaking.”

SKA board member Deet Jonker told her he was on the committee that crafted the zoning code language for the island. “There was a reason we did that,” he noted of the prohibition on outdoor displays.

Siesta residents have mentioned in earlier discussions that they wanted to maintain a more attractive environment for tourists. Russell Matthes, co-owner of the Dairiqui Deck Raw Bars, for example, told the *News Leader* last month that the goal was to avoid a Daytona Beach type of atmosphere.

“I agree that these shouldn’t be things willy-nilly flying every which way,” Smith responded, referring to displays. “I have mannequins wearing a pretty dress. ... I respect that the Village shouldn’t look like a carnival.”

“But who judges?” asked Patterson, who was a guest at the SKA meeting.



Kevin Cooper. Photo by Rachel Hackney

“I know,” Smith told Patterson. “But I’m wondering how we as a group can come together and make some kind of small amendment ...”

When Secretary Peter van Roekens said he believed the SKVA was working on the issue, Smith replied that was correct.

Referring to the ordinance amendment Cooper had drafted, Patterson continued, “I read it, and, quite frankly, I would not support it as written. It allocates a rather large space outside shops ...”

The amendment proposed that an outdoor display area not exceed 6 feet in height above the finished grade — unless a greater height

is allowed by special exception. It further suggested the display area not extend more than 6 feet from the storefront and that it “shall not extend beyond the width of the single building wall, or storefront, whichever is narrower, of the responsible business and must not exceed ... 12 feet” unless a greater width is allowed by special exception.

“It needs to be tweaked,” Smith said of Cooper’s draft.

Referring to the work on the original SKOD language, Jonker pointed out, “[It] was difficult for us to ... get it done ... and tinkering with it doesn’t excite me.”

He added that the island used to have numerous clothing stores before the SKOD went into effect.

Smith told him her concern was that retailers, including her, would be driven out if outdoor displays continue to be banned. “Then [it] will become a bar town.”

Van Roekens said residents do not want to see the latter happen.

“There are a lot of people with a lot of different opinions on this one,” Patterson added.

The final SKOD was approved after extensive cooperation among the merchants, residents and condominium owners on the key, she continued, “and it took a year or more to come to the conclusion [that the ordinance had to focus on factors that could be regulated]. Your mannequin with a pretty dress,” Patterson told Smith, “is somebody else’s not pretty dress, and there’s no reason, if you’re given a space, why you can’t put a rack of clothing out there. ... A rack of T-shirts has a different impact.”


The SKOD measures “were not dissimilar to what St. Armands does in regulating itself,” she continued. “[T]he Village merchants wanted to see something more St. Armands-like and a little more upper class.” That was why, when she saw Cooper’s proposed amendment, she pointed out, she thought, “Well, this is going to get really out of hand.”

Patterson added, “So I’m real nervous about it and I don’t want to change the ordinance without a lot of weigh-in from a lot of people.”

At the same time, she said to Smith, “I’m all for your success.”

Patterson also noted that the county zoning code allows for merchants to apply for temporary use permits that are good for one week, four times a year. That way, merchants can provide displays not ordinarily allowed by SKOD. A business owner also can apply for a special exception, Patterson noted.

“I know that it’s going to take a lot of conversation and I know that it’s going to take a lot of input, and I respect that there is a certain way to do things,” Smith responded. “I’m not necessarily here to ruffle feathers. I’m just here to say ... I want to stay here. I love this island. I want to take care of it in the best way I know how, and I don’t want to see it turn into a bargain town, either. And that’s my biggest concern — if I can’t stay here and a T-shirt shop can stay.”

Luckner, the SKA president, told members the Siesta organizations had been working well together over the past couple of years, “to sort out things. I hope we will do [so with] this as well.” 



TRASH TALK

Larry Alexander (right) addresses members of the Siesta Key Village Association on Aug. 6. Photo by Rachel Hackney

THE SIESTA KEY VILLAGE ASSOCIATION PLANS TO WORK ON WAYS TO FUND A RECYCLING PROGRAM ALONG OCEAN BOULEVARD

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Building on a July 2 discussion, members of the Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) this week requested county staff assistance in their quest to implement a recycling program in Siesta Village. The only question is how to pay for the bins and collection.

SKVA President Cheryl Gaddie said after an Aug. 6 presentation by Larry Alexander, the county's manager of solid waste collections, "So what you're telling us is we have to get creative and find money?"

"It's never as expensive as garbage collection," Alexander replied, "because there's no disposal fee."

Moreover, he said, a vendor sometimes will reduce the fee if the customer — in this case, the SKVA — allows it to keep any money it receives for the recyclables it picks up.

“*Our job is to get you what you want.*”

Larry Alexander
Manager
Solid Waste Collections
Sarasota County

SKVA members also learned this week that Sarasota County Code Enforcement staff will begin handling all complaints about dumpsters not



A BigBelly solar recycling bin stands in the Center City part of Philadelphia. According to the BigBelly website, Philadelphia is saving \$1 million a year in solid waste costs, thanks to its installation of the equipment. Photo by George100 via Wikimedia Commons

complying with the zoning code governing the island. However, John Lally, the Siesta Code Enforcement officer, pointed out that he and his colleagues will have to undergo training first.

Members spent considerable time during the July 2 meeting talking about numerous complaints that had been lodged regarding dumpsters left open, with trash strewn around them, as well as dumpsters left out of the enclosures where the Siesta Key Overlay District (SKOD) zoning ordinance dictates they must remain — out of sight.

BOTTLES AND CANS

Regarding the recycling initiative, Gaddie told those gathered for the Aug. 6 meeting that the SKVA board had invited Alexander to discuss what it needs to do to start a Village recycling program.

Alexander joked at the outset of his remarks, “If you put it at the curb or put it in the dumpster, it’s my job to make sure it gets picked up.”

He added that, as a matter of fact, the county’s single biggest contract is with Waste Management.

(Curt Preisser, a county spokesman, told *The Sarasota News Leader* that the annual con-

tract with the firm for both residential and commercial collections is about \$22 million.)

Because the organization would be entering into a commercial recycling contract, Alexander continued, “[The SKVA members would] get to select from a group of vendors.” A number provide that service in the county, he noted.

One consideration upfront, he said, is what types of containers the SKVA wants to put out for the public — whether they should be similar to the Village garbage containers, for aesthetic purposes.

Michael Shay, vice president of the Siesta Key Association (SKA), who has been spearheading the recycling initiative for the SKVA, told Alexander the recycling containers should resemble the garbage cans, but in a different color, “to try to keep [the look] uniform.”

Further, Shay said, the majority of recyclable items that end up in Village garbage cans are water bottles and soda cans, as many businesses have signs posted asking customers not to bring food and drinks inside.

Based on earlier SKVA discussions, Shay continued, his impression was that there was not an interest at this point in recycling paper goods.



Siesta Key Village Association members would like to move the dumpster out of a parking space in the municipal lot. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Alexander replied that the SKVA could settle on a bin design while it is proceeding to negotiate with vendors.

“We could just go purchase the cans right now and put them out on the right of way without a problem?” asked architect Mark Smith, a past SKVA president.

“You should be able to do so,” Alexander told him, though Alexander said he would double-check to make sure the containers could stand on the right of way.

Past SKVA President Russell Matthes asked Alexander’s opinion of the [BigBelly](#) solar-powered recycling bins in use on the island of Venice.

“They work very good,” Alexander replied. In fact, he said, in many places, they become an attraction for tourists. However, he noted, “They’re a little bit expensive” — about \$3,800 to \$3,900 each.

“Correct,” Shay said.

In response to a question from Smith, Alexander said the BigBelly bins do not compact materials so tightly that heavy-duty equipment has to be used to empty them.

Alexander estimated that, outside Venice, four of the BigBelly bins are in operation in the county. The Parks and Recreation Department bought one from Waste Management, he said.

However, Alexander and his staff have not had enough experience with the equipment to recommend it, he noted.

“Is it unique enough to create interest so people wouldn’t throw trash into it?” Gaddie asked.

One way to fight contamination is to have volunteers in the Village who can direct people to put bottles and cans in the recycling bins, Alexander pointed out.



A dumpster in Siesta Village sits in an enclosure, but the gates are not closed, as required by county ordinance. Photo courtesy of Michael Shay

“That’s Michael,” SKA Secretary Peter van Roekens said of Shay with a chuckle. Van Roekens also represents the Terrace East condominium complex at the SKVA meetings.

“Been there, done that,” Shay said.

Keeping recyclables separate from garbage, Alexander noted, is a constant concern in these initiatives.

Glen Cappetta, owner of Sun Ride Pedicab, responded, “You talk about contamination. There’s no rhyme or reason [on Saturday and Sunday mornings]. Cans are in the garbage and trash is in the recycling [bins provided by the county at beach accesses].”

Regarding the number of bins needed in the Village, Shay confirmed that he had identified 12 spots where he felt they would be best utilized. One of those is outside The Beach Club, which, he pointed out, apparently provides bottles of water to customers as the latter are leaving at night.

He typically finds at least a dozen water bottles on the ground outside the club after a busy evening, usually around the garbage can, he added.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Gaddie asked Alexander to provide her with a list of recycling vendors the organization could begin contacting.

THE DUMPSTER ISSUES

Regarding Siesta Village garbage: Lally, the county Code Enforcement officer, told SKVA members that prior to a county administrative decision this year, he and his colleagues had been responsible just for making sure dumpsters remained inside the enclosures mandated by the zoning ordinance. They had no oversight of commercial waste matters, though they did handle residential solid waste problems, he added.

“We haven’t had any training [in commercial solid waste matters],” Lally continued, “and there’s a lot of rules out there.”

Before 2010, Alexander explained, the Solid Waste Department had its own staff of Code Enforcement officers. After that year, as a cost-cutting measure, the officers were transferred to the regular Code Enforcement Office.

Since the SKOD went into effect in 1998, SKVA Vice President Kay Kouvatsos noted, all dumpsters have to be enclosed, regardless of whether they are used by restaurants or other commercial businesses.

Kouvatsos and her husband, Tom, are co-owners of Village Café.

In response to questions, Alexander said each restaurant dumpster has to have a plug in the bottom. “The Health Department would typi-



Michael Shay. Photo by Rachel Hackney

cally come in and cite you if your container is leaking fluids,” he added.

Smith also asked whether the zoning code specifies the amount of space that must be provided around a dumpster to allow the collection company to empty it. Smith, who oversees the upkeep of the Village as a representative of the Siesta Key Village Maintenance Corp., pointed out that he has been trying for months to relocate the dumpster in the municipal parking lot between Avenida Madera and Avenida de Mayo. However, Waste Management representatives have told him they need a certain amount of room for their trucks to maneuver around the dumpster.

More parking space could be provided in the lot if the dumpster can be repositioned, Smith noted.

“I would be more than happy to either come out myself or have one of my staff come out [and look at the situation],” Alexander replied. “Our job is to get you what you want.”

“I like the way you think,” Smith told him. 



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Tracy Knight (left) and Ticia Mahler are partners in Knight Marketing. Contributed photo

KNIGHT MARKETING MOVES TO SARASOTA

Knight Marketing (knightmarketing.com), a strategic marketing firm originally based in Venice, has moved its offices to 2032 Hawthorne Street in Sarasota.

According to the firm's president, Tracy Knight, the move was prompted by a need for additional space and the fact that the majority of its team, including staff and many freelancers, lives in Sarasota.

"Our growth in the past year demanded that we find a larger space for our staff of 10," said Knight in a press release. "And, we wanted to be closer to the talent pool in Sarasota, as we frequently partner with freelancers and independent firms specializing in all facets of design and marketing."

One such partner, 360-Degrees Public Relations, will be sharing the space with Knight Marketing. The firm is owned by Candice McElyea, who will operate from the location along with her own staff.

Knight Marketing is owned by Tracy Knight and Ticia Mahler.

Since its move, Knight Marketing has added two national clients.

One of them, Cinemoves (cinemoves.com), is the film and entertainment industry's leading camera movement company, the release notes. "With offices in Venice, FL, Atlanta and Los Angeles, Cinemoves provides filmmakers with the equipment and expertise they need for award-winning camera shots, whether from a crane, helicopter or moving vehicle," the release notes. Knight Marketing is updating the Cinemoves brand and working with the company on strategic planning.

Sunspire Health LLC is a fast-growing behavioral health company with six addiction recovery centers in Florida (Tampa and Pompano Beach), California and Massachusetts, the release continues. "Knight Marketing is rebranding the parent company and providing marketing services for the individual centers, including branding, collateral and digital development," it adds.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OPENS PRIVATE PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE

Licensed psychologist Dr. Nathan White has begun practicing with Dr. Laura d'Angelo and Linda Miller, LMHC, at 950 S. Tamiami Trail, counseling on a variety of concerns, including anxiety, depression, grief, career and life transitions and relationship concerns, a news release says.

“White focuses on well being, helping individuals to identify and acknowledge their strengths and develop an effective plan to address challenges,” the release adds.

“An important part of counseling not only involves helping to increase coping skills but helping clients learn to dream more, envisioning the possibilities for their future rather than feeling restricted by self-imposed limitations,” said White in the release. “[This is] actually how I got into psychology. I was drawn to the idea that the way we think can influence every part of our lives. Now I look to help others pursue their goals and create the strategy that will help manifest their dreams.”

After receiving his doctorate in counseling psychology from Arizona State University in 2011, White completed a postdoctoral fellowship at New College of Florida in Sarasota, the release continues. He also holds a Master of Education and a Bachelor of Arts in sociology; he worked with diverse populations throughout his clinical training, the release notes.



Dr. Nathan White. Contributed photo by Cliff Roles

One of many young professionals choosing to set up a business in Sarasota in recent years, White “loves the area, especially the quality of life and the sense of vibrancy downtown,” the release points out.

His practice accepts most major insurance providers and offers reasonable rates for those without insurance. For appointments and more information, White may be reached at 315-6895 or online at universitybh.com.

The Sarasota News Leader

No-Nonsense Reporting

BENTLEY ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF FLORIDA'S COMMISSION ON ETHICS

The State of Florida Commission on Ethics on July 26 unanimously elected Morgan R. Bentley of Bentley & Bruning P.A. in Sarasota as chairman for the 2013-2014 term, the commission has announced.

Bentley served as vice chairman during the 2012-2013 term, after being appointed to the board by House Speaker Larry Cretul in 2010 and reappointed by House Speaker Dean Cannon in 2012.

"It's a tremendous honor to be elected to this position," Bentley said in a news release. "The commission oversees nearly 40,000 elected officials and public employees throughout Florida, so it's a big job. Even more, we are going through huge changes to the ethics laws, something that hasn't occurred in almost 30 years. Not since our last local member, Pat Neal, was chair have we gone through so many changes."

He added in the release, "In the future, I'd like to try to establish a local ethics commission for Sarasota and Manatee counties."

Bentley & Bruning, located at 783 S. Orange Ave., Suite 220, in Sarasota, "is a litigation firm



Morgan Bentley/Contributed photo

focused exclusively on complex commercial matters and protecting its clients from attack or loss of assets," the release notes. "The firm is led by Bentley and attorney Kevin R. Bruning. For more information, phone 556-9030 or visit www.bentleyandbruning.com.

GALLAGHER JOINS HOYT ARCHITECTS IN SARASOTA

Hoyt Architects, an architectural and urban design firm in downtown Sarasota, has announced the addition of Chris Gallagher as a new partner.

Formerly of Jonathan Parks Architect, "Gallagher has designed some of Sarasota's iconic city views, including downtown Sarasota's Citrus Square, which was voted the best low-rise, multi-family project in America in 2011,"

a news release notes. Gallagher's other projects include the first cottages at Rivendell in Osprey, the master plan for the New Gate School Clark Road campus (now the Island Village Montessori School), several private homes and the Palm Avenue garage.

"Chris and I have overlapping skill sets that are compatible even though we each have our own unique edge," said Gary Hoyt, president

of Hoyt Architects, in the release. “From the architectural side, it was a very logical extension to bring Chris on board. We hope to set a strong example in urban design for the Sarasota community, and our collaborative efforts will enhance the work we provide.”

Gallagher earned a Bachelor of Science in environmental design from the University of Massachusetts and a Master of Architecture from the University of Colorado, the release continues. A Sarasota resident since 1992, Gallagher serves as the vice chairman of the City of Sarasota Planning Board and is on the Parking Advisory Board. He also is a member of the Downtown Sarasota Alliance Board of

Directors and serves on the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, where he heads up the Community and Economic Development Division.

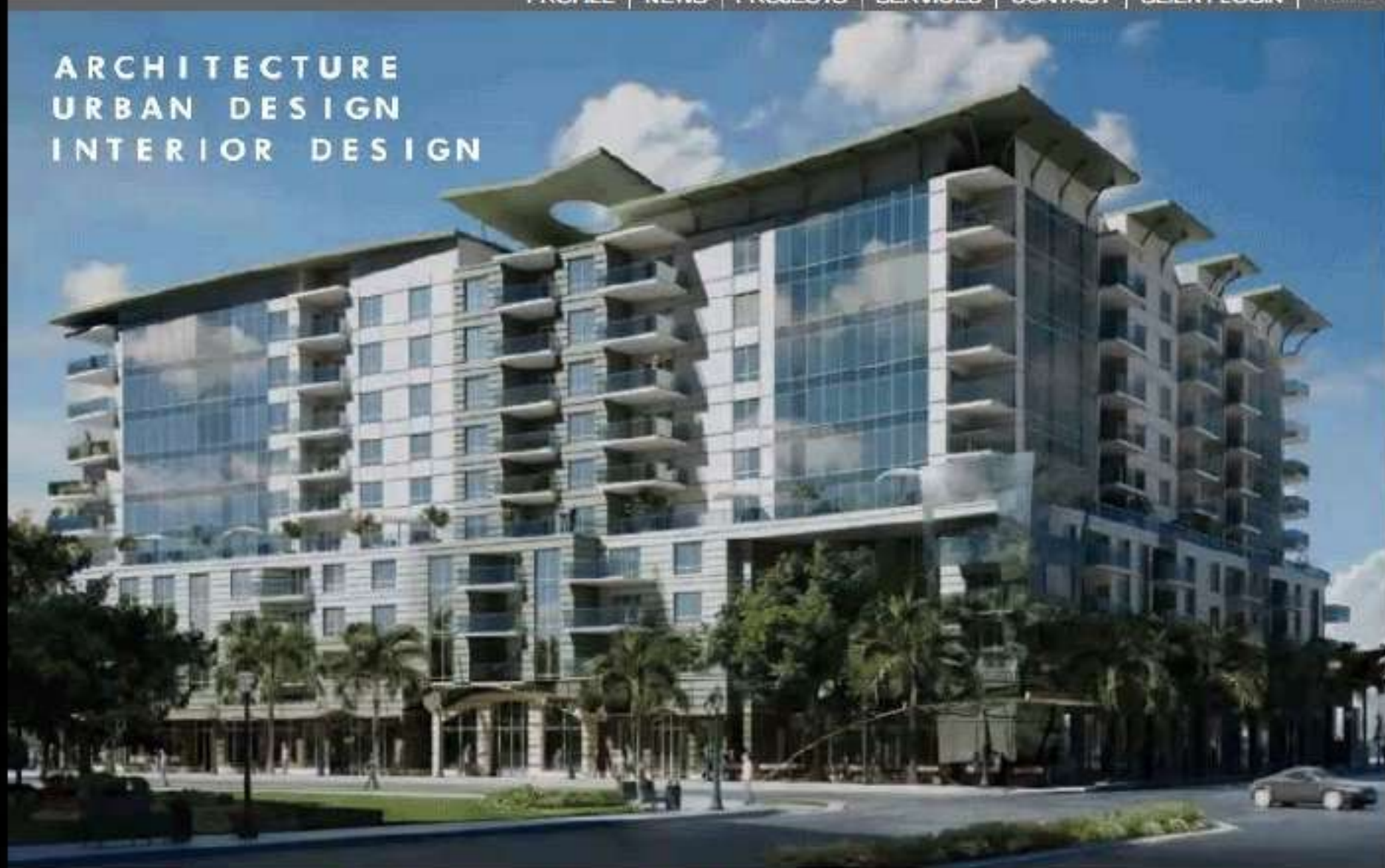
“I have always had a passion for working with historical buildings and touching projects no one else wanted,” Gallagher said in the release. “Gary is the only other architect in the area who is interested in the same type of work in the urban sphere, and we each have the ultimate goal of helping Sarasota realize its master plan of making a more vibrant and memorable downtown.”

To learn more about Hoyt Architects, visit www.hoytarchitects.com.



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ARCHITECTURE
URBAN DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN



WEINTRAUB NAMED FLORIDA RISING STAR BY SUPER LAWYERS

Real Estate attorney Anne Weintraub, a founding partner of Sarasota law firm Band Weintraub P.L., has been selected as a *Rising Star* in the current issue of *Super Lawyers* magazine, her firm has announced.

Less than 2.5 percent of lawyers in the state are selected for the *Rising Stars* distinction, and they must be age 40 or younger, a news release notes; Ms. Weintraub is 35.

Super Lawyers, a Thomson Reuters publication, “is an impartial third-party rating service of outstanding lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement,” the release notes. “The annual selections are made using a patented multiphase process that includes a statewide survey of lawyers, an independent research evaluation of candidates and peer reviews by practice area,” the release adds.

Weintraub focuses her practice on real property closings, title insurance and foreclosure avoidance, the release notes. She also assists clients with short sales, deeds-in-lieu of foreclosure, purchasing bank-owned properties and negotiations with lenders.

Named by the *Tampa Bay Business Journal* as one of Tampa Bay’s *Top 25 People to Watch* in 2013, Weintraub speaks frequently at public forums and television news programs on the subject of real estate, the release continues. She recently was appointed a member of the



Anne Weintraub/Contributed photo

Sarasota-Manatee Campus Board of the University of South Florida. She also serves on the Stetson University College of Law Board of Overseers, which advises and assists the dean of the College of Law and the president of Stetson University in developing legal education and financial resources, the release says.

[Band Weintraub](#) is located at 1 S. School Ave., suite 500, in downtown Sarasota. 

NEWS LEADER PUBLISHING A DOUBLE ISSUE THIS WEEK

Just in case readers missed it in the Welcome Letter, the staff of *The Sarasota News Leader* wants to make certain everyone is aware this is a “double issue,” for Aug. 9 and Aug. 16.

The reason: The staff will take the opportunity to enjoy a bit of summer vacation.

The *News Leader* will be back Aug. 23 with plenty to report — from the latest City Commission news to County Commission decisions about the 2014 fiscal year budget.

**SUMMER
DOUBLE
ISSUE**



CITY EXPANDS UTILITY BILL PAYMENT LOCATIONS

As of Aug. 1, the City of Sarasota has expanded its partnership with local businesses to offer more locations for residents to pay their utility bills in person, the city has announced.

Through an agreement with Amscot, customers may pay their utility bill seven days a week at any Amscot location, a city news release says. Those locations follow:

- 3333 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota: Monday through Thursday and Saturday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- 1155 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota: Monday through Thursday and Saturday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- 560 N. Washington Blvd., Sarasota: Monday through Sunday, 7 a.m. to midnight.
- 4206 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota: Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- 5900 S. Tamiami Trail, Suite A, Sarasota: Monday through Thursday and Saturday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

To pay a bill at one of those locations, a customer will need his account number and bill information, the release adds. A \$1.50 convenience fee charged by Amscot also will be applied.

CHILDREN'S FOUNTAIN TO CLOSE FOR MAINTENANCE

The Steigerwaldt-Jockey Children's Fountain, located in Bayfront Park, will be closed temporarily for routine maintenance most of next week, the City of Sarasota has announced.

The work on the foundation is scheduled from Monday, Aug. 19, through Thursday, Aug. 22, a news release says.

The fountain is scheduled to reopen on Friday, Aug. 23, at 10 a.m.



The Steigerwaldt-Jockey Children's Fountain is a popular feature of Bayfront Park. Photo by Norman Schimmel

SERTOMA KIDS FUNDRAISER TO SUPPORT SPEECH THERAPY

Sertoma Kids, a division of the Sertoma Club of Greater Sarasota, will raise money for its kids' speech therapy programs at a fundraiser this Saturday evening, Aug. 10.

With a name that is shorthand for the phrase "Service to mankind," Sertoma is an international organization over a century old. The Sarasota club was created all the way back in 1956. While its primary purpose is to help those with hearing health issues, it supports a number of other causes, too.

Sertoma Kids is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit affiliate of the Sarasota club that has provided speech and language therapy for local children for more than 25 years. The organization operates an outpatient speech program at the Berlin Branch of the YMCA, offering affordable ther-

apy sessions to qualifying families. Its mission "is to provide the most advanced speech therapy available to every child in need in the Suncoast area regardless of their family's ability to pay."

But that means money, which is where Saturday night's fundraiser comes in. Dubbed the Summer Band Bash, the party will run from 7:30 to 11 p.m. at Columbus Hall, 4880 Fruitville Road. There will be a cash bar and light refreshments, and the band NexxLevel ("Florida's Premiere High Energy Party Band") will perform hits from its repertoire of classic soul and contemporary pop.

Tickets at the door are \$25. Get more information at sertomakids.com.

Cooper Levey-Baker



The NexxLevel band will perform at an Aug. 10 fundraiser for Sertoma Kids. (Photo courtesy of nexus-levelband.com). (Inset) Image courtesy of sertomakids.com

PRINCETON REVIEW LISTS NEW COLLEGE AS ONE OF NATION'S BEST

The Princeton Review has again named New College of Florida one of the country's best colleges, placing it in the top 15 percent of all four-year institutions nationwide for the 12th consecutive year, New College has announced.

The listing comes in The Princeton Review's *The Best 378 Colleges: 2014 Edition*, published this week. The Review already recognized New College with a third-place ranking among public colleges for quality and affordability in its annual *150 Best Value Colleges* listing, released in February.

The Best 378 Colleges does not provide an overall rank for each of the institutions listed, but it includes ratings in eight categories,



New College students watch the sunset on the bayfront. Photo courtesy of New College



New College of Florida is located off U.S. 41 in north Sarasota. Image courtesy of New College

based on data it collected in 2012-13 and on student surveys, a news release says.

The ratings are on a scale of 60 to 99. Among New College's statistics-based ratings were the following:

- Academics: 97.
- Admissions selectivity: 93.

Among the ratings in the survey-driven data were the following:

- Interesting professors: 97.
- Accessible professors: 91.

The college guide's main feature is its detailed profiles of each school, based on and quoting from an 80-question survey of students, the

release notes. Among students' remarks from the New College profile are the following:

- The College "provides challenging courses for highly self-motivated students who want a large amount of control over their academic choices."
- Academics "are undeniably awesome" while the small-school setting and the student body "encourage a love of learning, whether it be academic, political, or hobby-related."
- Students receive "a rounded education that enables them to critically and pragmatically examine and understand the world in which we live."

The Princeton Review's school profiles and ranking lists in *The Best 378 Colleges* are posted at PrincetonReview.com.

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CLEANUP WILL BE HELD AUG. 10

It is time to clean out the garage and shed and gather up discarded household items, junk and yard waste: Sarasota County will hold its annual free community cleanup in the Newtown area of Sarasota from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10.

Dumpsters will be provided at three intersections for residents, a county news release says: Newtown Estates Park and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way — the main site; 44th Street and Lockwood Ridge Road; and 23rd Street and Chester Avenue.

Residents may dispose of household items, scrap materials, garbage, unbundled yard waste and tree trimmings during this free event, the release notes. Sarasota County employees will be available at each site to offer assistance.

Items such as televisions, computers and other electronics will be accepted only at the intersection of Newtown Estates Park and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, the release points out.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 (TTY 7-1-1).

The Sarasota News Leader

No-Nonsense Reporting

CITY COMMISSION TO HOLD PENSIONS WORKSHOP ON AUG. 23

The Sarasota City Commission has scheduled a workshop at 2 p.m. on Aug. 23 for the presentation of a report, *Annual State of the City's Pension Plans*, including the general employees', police officers' and firefighters' defined benefit plans and the General Employees Defined Contribution (DC) Plan, a city news release says.

Presentations will be made by the plans' attorneys, investment consultants and actuaries, the release notes.

The attorneys will discuss the legal perspective of a Florida Senate bill regarding such plans, trends in municipal pension plans across the state and the release of certain monies to the police plan by the Florida Department of Management Services.

The plans' investment consultants will discuss the returns over the past year compared to the benchmarks that had been set, as well as their views on action by the boards governing the plans relative to investment rate of return assumptions, the release says. They also will talk about their expectations for future rates of return.

The plans' actuaries will provide a description of each type of actuarial assumption the plans use and the effects of not meeting those assumptions. Additionally, they will present their perspective on state legislation; positive and negative trends; and whether the current funding levels are reasonable. They also will compare the city's plans to others, the release continues.

The Defined Contribution Plan professionals will provide an explanation of which funds were selected as investment choices and what selection process was used. They further will offer data regarding the number of participant accounts in the plan and the number of employees taking advantage of the matching benefit offered by the city, the release notes. They also will talk about the status of participant engagement, the processes implemented to improve participant understanding of the plans and the type of continuing education available.

The public is invited to attend the workshop. It will be recorded and made available for future viewing on demand through the city's [website](#).



The City Commission sits in session in June. Photo by Norman Schimmel

YOUNG ADULTS REMINDED TO GET VACCINES TO STAY HEALTHY

As part of the August Immunization Awareness Month campaign, local health officials are reminding the public, especially adults who are 19 to 26, to catch up on their vaccinations.

The following groups are encouraged to get vaccinations to maintain health and wellness, the Sarasota County Health Department says in a news release: college-age students who will be studying abroad or living in dormitories; overseas travelers who are leaving the country on business or for recreation, mission trips or adoptions; persons who are sexually active; pregnant women; new parents and caregivers to young children; and persons with certain health conditions and occupational and lifestyle risks.

“Vaccines offer safe and effective protection against influenza (flu), pneumonia, human papilloma virus (HPV), tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough)” and many other preventable diseases, the release adds. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 40 million adults die each year from diseases that can be effectively prevented with immunizations.

For example, the release says, the flu vaccine continues to be the best defense against circulating flu viruses. The 2013-2014 seasonal flu vaccines will be available beginning in late August or early September at the downtown Sarasota and North Port locations

of the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) and at area pharmacies, the release adds.

For another example, tetanus diphtheria boosters are recommended every 10 years. However, the CDC points out that people 10 years of age and older should receive a booster of tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (TDaP) in place of one tetanus diphtheria booster. Additionally, pregnant women are now advised to get a TDaP booster with each pregnancy, preferably in the second or third trimester. Along with providing protection to the person vaccinated, the booster helps protect infants up to 18 months of age, “who are at very high risk for severe complications” from whooping cough and are not old enough to be fully immunized, the release points out.

[Click here to see what vaccinations you need.](#)

Immunizations are available at two county locations, Monday through Friday. Call for hours at each site. Appointments are encouraged for adults, the release adds. The locations are as follows:

- William L. Little Health & Human Services Center, 2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota; 861-2900.
- North Port Health Center, 6950 Outreach Way, North Port; 861-3864.

For more information, visit www.sarasotahealth.org or the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT FOR SECURITY CAMERAS

The Historical Society of Sarasota County has received a grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County for a security camera system for the historic Bidwell-Wood House (1882) and the Crocker Memorial Church (1901), both of which are located at 1260 12th St. in Sarasota's Pioneer Park, the Historical Society has announced.

The \$3,770 grant is from the Frances T. Bourne Fund at the Community Foundation, a news release says.

"It's a sad fact that almost any historical site, monument or even museum in our country can be a target of senseless vandalism," said Historical Society President Howard Rosenthal in the release, "but we can all be encouraged that through modern security technology, we can discourage and diminish violence to places we strive to preserve for future generations. This grant for security cameras at Sarasota County's oldest private residence and at the Crocker Memorial Church demonstrates that our community takes pride in Sarasota history and supports the structures that bear witness to our pioneer past."

In 2006, the Bidwell-Wood House and the Crocker Memorial Church were moved by the City of Sarasota to Pioneer Park and placed under the protection of the Historical Society of Sarasota County, a community membership organization of approximately 400 annual and life members, the release notes. The mission of the Historical Society "is to create public awareness of the rich historical heritage of Sarasota and the State of Florida," the release adds. The organization encourages inquiry, research, memorabilia preservation and protection of historic sites, the release points out.



A sign welcomes visitors to the Historical Society buildings in Pioneer Park in Sarasota. Photo by Scott Proffitt

The Bidwell-Wood House and the Crocker Memorial Church are open for docent-led tours and for community events organized under the auspices of the Historical Society. For more information, visit the website at: www.hsosc.com.

SARASOTA BAY WATER FESTIVAL ACCEPTING EXHIBITOR APPLICATIONS

The Sarasota Bay Water Festival is accepting applications from prospective exhibitors for the regional event on Saturday, Nov. 2, at Ken Thompson Park, organizers have announced.

An online application is available at sarasotabaywaterfestival.com. Most of the exhibitors will be promoting water recreation sports and activities, recreational boating, fine arts and crafts, wildlife and nature photography, wildlife conservation and environmental education, a news release says. The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) is the presenting

sponsor, and HDR Inc. is the host sponsor for 2013, the release says.

Along with the exhibits, other highlights of the festival will be dragon boat races, live music on stage, fine artists selling unique gift items, panel discussions about bay-friendly living, tasty treats provided by food trucks and local restaurants, vintage boat displays, an exhibition of the winning submissions for the *I Love Sarasota Bay Photo Contest* and activities for children — including dip netting and nature walks.



Exhibitors draw crowds at the 2012 Sarasota Bay Water Festival. Photo courtesy of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

SARASOTA POLICE DEPARTMENT CHOSEN TO TRAIN IRAQI OFFICERS

The Sarasota Police Department is among 20 American law enforcement agencies that have been selected by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to provide leadership and tactical and field training to Iraqi Police officials, the Police Department has announced.

The Iraqi officers were in Sarasota June 27 to July 8, the department says in a news release.

While they were with the Sarasota Police Department, the Iraqi Police personnel observed field training officers and specialized units, rode with patrol supervisors and street officers and met with command staff and city officials, the release notes. The Iraqi officers were also introduced to American police training techniques and curriculum.

The program is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of In-



The Iraqi police officers gather with Sarasota officers for a group photo. Contributed photo



Chief Bernadette DiPino (center) and her command staff (left side of the photo, from left) — Col. Stephen Moyer, Capt. Corrine Stannish, Capt. Jeff Karr, Lt. Pat Ledwith and Capt. Pat Robinson — greet the Iraqi officers in the Sarasota Police Department on Adams Lane. Contributed photo


ternational Narcotics & Law Enforcement (INL), the release adds. INL is administering the transition of the police officers' education and training mission from the U.S. military to the State Department, "which will focus on capacity building and the rule of law development," the release continues. The goal of the program is to enhance the participants' professional development and provide them a look at American policing techniques.

The IACP and INL plan to train as many as 120 Iraqi officers over three years; the first Iraqi participants arrived for their training in early 2011, the release points out.

The Sarasota Police Department "was chosen for its excellence in Community Policing and

for its ability to assist with the integration of the Iraqi police officials [into] the democratic, community oriented, and evidence-based culture of American policing," the release adds

This is Chief Bernadette DiPino's fourth time in the rotations. Previously, she hosted the Iraqi Police Education Program twice in Ocean City, MD, and she and Sarasota Police Capt. Corinne Stannish participated in a panel for the Iraqi Women's Delegation, the release points out.

According to the Department of State, this effort "will also seek to establish solid, long-term relationships as Iraqis work alongside U.S. police officers for a unique on-the-job experience," the release notes. 

CRIME BLOTTER



Cash and drugs were recovered from a house in Nokomis on Aug. 7 during a Sheriff's Office search. Photo courtesy of the Sheriff's Office. (Inset top) Miguel Torres/Contributed photo. (Inset bottom) Heather Johnson/Contributed photo

TWO ARRESTED IN DRUGS AND WEAPONS CASE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested two people with long criminal histories on drug and weapons charges after the Special Investigations Section and SWAT units executed a narcotics search warrant on Aug. 7 at a Nokomis home, the office has announced.

The detectives who arrived at 812 Padua Court just before 10 a.m. found nearly 14 grams of marijuana, a loaded .38 caliber handgun, a box of ammunition, 99 prescription pills and \$1,954 in cash, a report says.

Miguel Torres, 26, who lives in an efficiency apartment at the house, has more than 20 felo-

ny arrests and 13 misdemeanors on his record, according to a news release. Heather Johnson, 27, of 2940 Sunset Beach Drive, Venice, has nine felony and seven misdemeanor arrests on her record, the release adds.

Both are charged with Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, Possession of Ammunition by a Convicted Felon, Possession of Cannabis, Possession of Alprazolam, Possession of Methadone, Trafficking in Hydromorphone and Trafficking in Oxycodone.



TWO ARRESTED AFTER FLYING INTO FLORIDA TO COMMIT FRAUD

The Sarasota County Sheriff's office has arrested two people from New York who flew to Florida on Aug. 6 "solely to commit widespread fraud throughout the state," a news release says.

Walmart loss prevention personnel contacted deputies on the night of Aug. 6 "to report that the suspicious pair tried to buy gift cards at the North Port store and then the Cattlemen Road location but left when they were asked for identification," the release says. The Tactical Unit responded and found the suspects in a rental vehicle at Burlington Coat Factory in Sarasota, it adds.

During the investigation, deputies learned the pair allegedly had used cloned credit cards to buy gift cards at more than a half-dozen stores on Aug. 6 along the west coast, from Zephyrhills to Port Charlotte, the release continues. More than 50 credit cards and approximately \$3,000 worth of gift cards were found in the car, the release says.

On Aug. 7, a search of the suspects' room at the Courtyard by Marriott on Riverfront Drive

in Bradenton, with the assistance of the Bradenton Police Department, led to the discovery of the cloning machine, a computer, a thumb drive with stolen credit card numbers and more credit cards, the release adds.

As of Aug. 7, both Graisy Pichardo, 22, and Myles Nicholas, 26, had been charged with Trafficking in Counterfeit Credit Cards, two counts of Grand Theft, one count of Petit Theft and three counts of Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card.

Detectives are continuing the investigation locally and with a number of other jurisdictions, the release continues. Additional charges, including multiple counts of Identity Theft, are pending.

"This investigation and quick apprehension of the suspects was possible because of the public-private partnership the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has developed with national retailers and their local loss prevention officers in an ongoing effort to stop retail theft and fraud," the release points out.



Two suspects were arrested on Aug. 6 with more than 50 credit cards they allegedly had cloned. Photo courtesy of the Sheriff's Office



Gift cards with a combined value of about \$3,000 were recovered from two suspects arrested on Aug. 6. Photo courtesy of the Sheriff's Office

TWO CHARGED WITH MULTIPLE VENICE BURGLARIES

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested two people in connection with a string of alleged vehicle and residential burglaries on Saturday morning, Aug. 3, on Olympia Road in Venice.

After receiving one report of a burglary, deputies responding to the call located a male and a female matching the description of the suspects, a news release says. Those suspects were identified as Mackenzie Egeland, 19, of 1249 Olympia Road and Brittiany DuPuis, 22, of 277 Capri Ave., the release adds.

DuPuis was located less than two blocks away from the house where one resident said DuPuis had tried to pry open a window, the report notes.

As deputies were questioning DuPuis and Egeland, they learned of additional burglary victims at four homes on Olympia Road, the

report says. During a search of DuPuis' purse, deputies found several pieces of jewelry that had been reported missing from other homes, the report continues.

The investigation began after a resident of one home told deputies she had seen DuPuis ring her doorbell and knock on her door, the report notes. The homeowner said that after she did not go to the door, she watched DuPuis walk over to the door of the attached garage and try to forcibly open the sliding window in the door.

During questioning, the pair was initially cooperative, "but DuPuis became agitated and Egeland grew hostile," throwing a chair, which damaged the drywall in the interview room, and kicking a door, the release notes. Deputies told Egeland to stop resisting, the report continues, but he refused to comply "until we had him controlled," the report says.



Mackenzie Egeland/Contributed photo



Brittiany DuPuis/Contributed photo

One deputy suffered minor scratches, the report adds.

DuPuis later told detectives the pair had been smoking “spice,” also known as synthetic marijuana.

Both suspects were charged with six felonies, including four counts of Vehicle Burglary, one count of Residential Burglary and one count of Attempted Residential Burglary. Egeland was also charged with Criminal Mischief for damaging Sarasota County property.

BROTHERS ARRESTED FOR MAKING ‘METH’ AT HOMELESS CAMP

The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office arrested two brothers on Aug. 1 for manufacturing methamphetamine at a homeless camp in the wooded area east of Cattlemen Road and Webber Street in Sarasota, the office has announced.

Special Investigations Section detectives received information from their counterparts at the Sarasota Police Department that John Bedford, 30, and David Haring, 19, were cooking “meth” in their tents, the report says. Detectives determined Haring had bought one of the main ingredients, pseudoephedrine, on

July 31, and Bedford had purchased more on Aug. 1, the report adds. Undercover detectives and deputies from the Tactical Unit went to the campsite just before 9 p.m. Aug. 1 “and found all the materials necessary to cook meth and significant quantities of the drug,” a news release notes.

Both men admitted cooking “meth,” the report adds. They were charged with Manufacturing Methamphetamine and Trafficking in Methamphetamine.

Bedford has a history of drug, burglary and battery arrests, the news release notes.



John Bedford/Contributed photo



David Haring/Contributed photo

59 ARRESTED IN RETAIL THEFT CRACKDOWN BY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sarasota County Sheriff's deputies made 59 arrests and obtained warrants for two additional suspects during Operation Booster Buster, a crackdown on retail theft by individuals and organized crime rings, Sheriff Tom Knight announced during a press conference on Aug. 1.

The Sheriff's Office formed a unique public-private partnership with several major retailers to curb retail theft, "which is a global issue and multi-million-dollar problem locally," a news release says. "Retail theft adds to the rising cost of doing business and impacts merchants and consumers alike."

During the operation, which spanned about eight days, deputies worked two retail corridors: Cattlemen Road just south of Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota, and U.S. 41 just south of Jacaranda Boulevard in Venice, the release continues. Store loss prevention employees reported crimes directly to the operation sergeant, and personnel moved in to apprehend the suspects and immediately recover stolen merchandise, it adds.

The 59 people arrested have nearly 1,000 prior charges and now face 99 new charges, the release notes. Fifteen prolific offenders were



A Sheriff's Office poster shows the people arrested during Operation Booster Buster. Image courtesy Sheriff's Office

apprehended in this operation, and some arrestees belonged to two organized retail theft rings operating out of Lee County, it says.

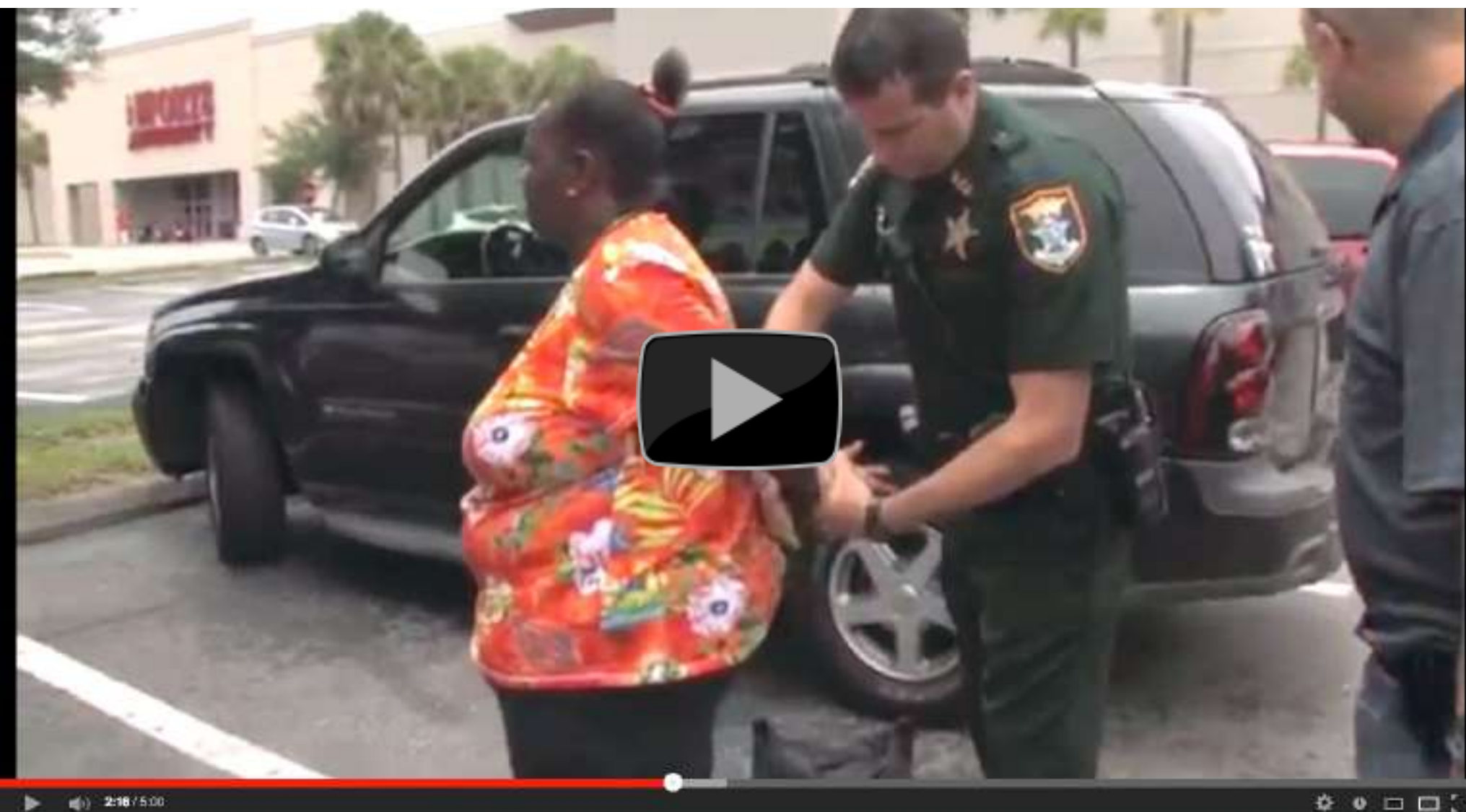
“This operation was another innovation of ‘Intelligence 2 Action,’ our approach to intelligence-led policing,” said Knight in the release. “Local analysis dictated a need to visibly address a consistent problem of retail theft. Locations were chosen based on crime mapping and field intelligence. Our goal was to not only assist these businesses but also to send a message to criminals that there is a strong collaboration against retail crimes in this community.”

In addition to the arrests, the Sheriff’s Office is working with local retailers to identify measures that can be taken at their locations to

further reduce thefts, the release continues. “Roundtable discussions regarding loss prevention issues and trends will also continue,” it says.

Operation Booster Buster utilized the Sheriff’s Office’s Tactical, Intelligence and Crime Analysis units, plus Criminal Investigations, Traffic, Patrol, Corrections, Crime Prevention and Reserve deputies.

During the press conference, Sheriff Knight also thanked Walmart, Home Depot, Beall’s, Beall’s Outlet, Burlington Coat Factory, Target and Sports Authority representatives for their commitment to loss prevention and for working with law enforcement officers to combat retail theft throughout Sarasota County.

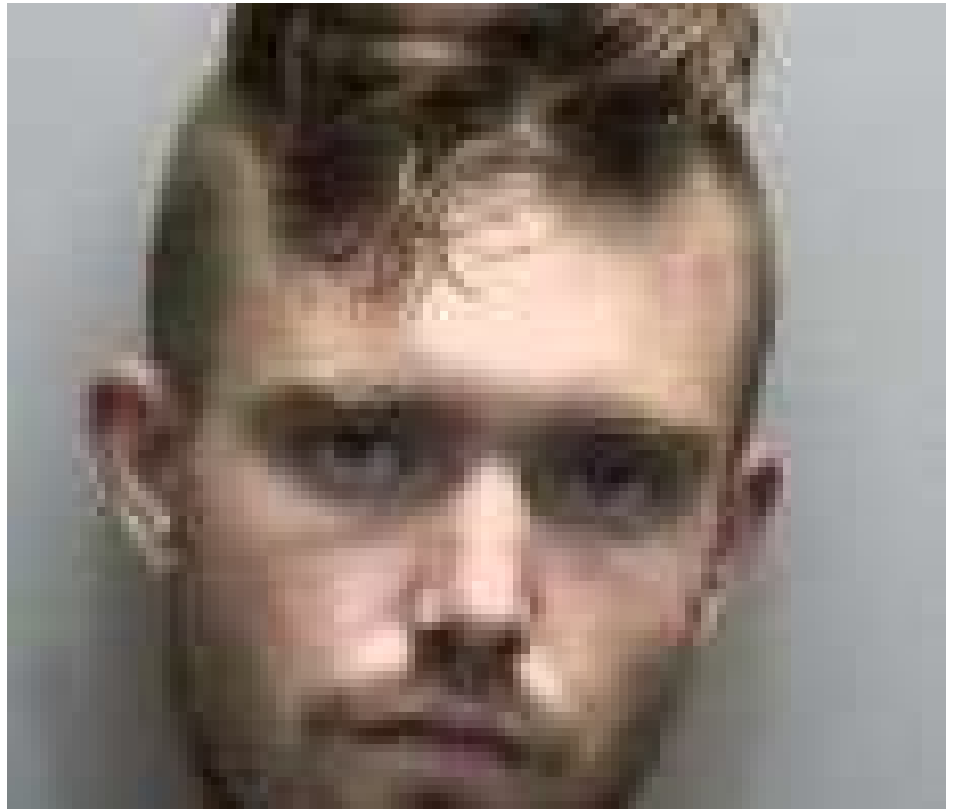


A video provided by the Sheriff’s Office shows the following defendants in action: Chanda Hewitt (in orange); Shanice Stewart (blue); Shawnise Atkins (red); Cynthia Turner (orange print); Daniel Menzel (black T-shirt); Shawn Murphy (takedown); Angel Robles; Tasha Spry; and Adetokunbo Babatunde. Video courtesy of the Sheriff’s Office


MAN ARRESTED AFTER A REPORT OF HIS COOKING 'METH' IN HIS GARAGE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office arrested Sean Flavell, 25, following an investigation that began last month when his mother reportedly found him cooking methamphetamine in their garage at 2726 Nodosa Drive in Sarasota, the office has announced.

Flavell fled the scene before deputies arrived and discovered he was using a one-pot method "to manufacture significant quantities of the drug," a news release says. Detectives continued the investigation and found he had bought the total quantity of pseudoephedrine allowed for one person for a year, confirmed the substance found was indeed "meth" and that fingerprints on the bottles belonged to Flavell, the release adds. Detectives located him on Aug. 1, the release continues, and the Manatee County Sheriff's Office arrested him in the 5600 block of Juel Gill Road, Bradenton.



Sean Flavell/Contributed photo

Flavell is charged with Trafficking in Methamphetamine and Manufacturing Methamphetamine and is being held in the Manatee County Jail on \$27,500 bond. 

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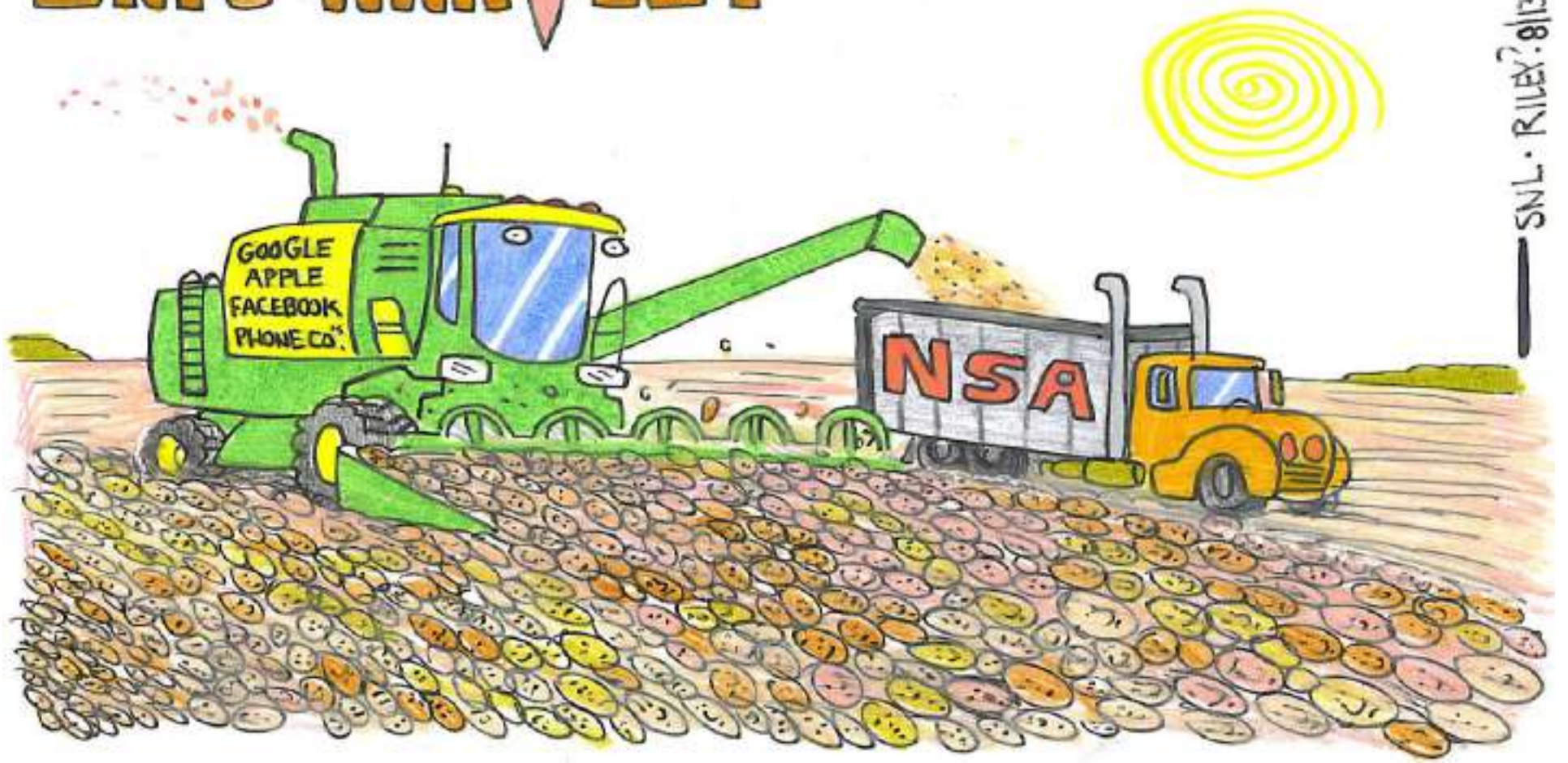
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OPINION

INFO HARVEST



CITY CRA PLAN IS HARD TO FIND AND A DECADE OUT OF DATE

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

COMMENTARY

If the City Commission wants to convince the County Commission to extend the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) beyond its 2016 expiration date, it has a lot of convincing to do. And it should not expect the County Commission to go hunting for reasons to make the extension happen.

The Sarasota News Leader is the only news organization so far to cover the work of the CRA extension committee. We have reported on a variety of experts who have traveled to town to educate the committee and one Sarasota mayor who was there at the beginning of the downtown agency. We have seen city staffers overwhelm the committee with back-

up documentation, dating back to 1986, when the two governmental bodies agreed in a short memo to fight slum and blight downtown.

To improve the area covered by the CRA, both bodies froze their property tax receipts at the 1986 level. As property values and tax rates changed, any increase in revenue over the 1986 level accrued to the CRA for spending downtown. This plan turned out to be a giant economic engine, generating as much as \$10 million per year before the recession; it is still producing nearly \$7 million per year today.

Because county tax rates are higher than the city's, the county fraction of the CRA contribution is a bit bigger. To use very round figures, of the \$7 million contributed to the CRA

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today, about \$4 million comes from the county; \$3 million, from the city.

WHERE'S THE PLAN?

While gathering information to help them make a smart decision, the CRA extension committee members scoured the state for experts. What they heard was, "Stick with the plan." Sherod Halliburton, who ran a CRA in Manatee County before returning to his banking career, said, "The plan is the key to the whole thing."

But if a Sarasota County commissioner tried to search the city's website for "CRA plan" or "CRA annual plan," he or she would come up empty. Does that mean there is no plan?

As I went from office to office in City Hall asking for the CRA plan, nobody could pull it off a shelf or pull it up on a computer. It took almost an hour of research by the deputy city clerk to find it. Why? Because its name was changed almost a decade ago, and it does not appear to have been updated since then.

In 2001, the planning firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk gave the city a final work product called the Downtown Master Plan 2020. On April 12, 2004, the City Commission held a special meeting to discuss implementation of that plan. The city's deputy director of planning and redevelopment, Mike Taylor, was there with Andres Duany for the discussion.

The minutes of the meeting say, "Mr. Taylor stated that the process of the update of the

Community Redevelopment Area plan was begun four years ago; that the resulting document is entitled the Downtown Master Plan 2020; that the process of adoption and incorporation into the City's Comprehensive Plan, also called the Sarasota City Plan, 1998 Edition (City's Comprehensive Plan) was also begun"

In other words, the revision of the CRA plan begun in 2000 was rolled into the 2001 Downtown Master Plan, which was then rolled into the City Comprehensive Plan. Thus, the CRA plan became rigid; less nimble; not readily adaptable to changing times.

Unfortunately, the Downtown Master Plan 2020 covers a different area than just the CRA. While there is overlap, the two are not congruous. Therefore, the definitions get blurred even further. Where do the elements of the 2020 plan apply, and where does the CRA portion apply? There is a reason city staffers could not lay their hands on the CRA plan — it was swallowed up and forgotten.

That same year, the city pulled another "switcheroo." The City Commission unilaterally — without asking its county partner — decided in 2004 to use some of the burgeoning CRA revenue to pay for operations, not improvements or public-private partnership deals. Today, of the roughly \$3 million the city contributes to the CRA, about \$2.6 million is plowed back into the general fund to cover expenses such as police protection and landscaping.

OPINION

TIME TO GET SERIOUS

This change could not have happened at a worse time. In 2004, the financial roses were in full bloom with no wilting in sight. CRA funds were at a level that would have been considered unbelievably high only a few years earlier. It seemed a good time to set everything “in stone.”

Since then the annual CRA revenue level has plummeted. The pot now serves as a life-saving cash cow for the City of Sarasota. With a plan frozen in time at the peak of the boom, there was every excuse to say, “Not enough money now” to keep funding those general fund expenses. However, the plan (the '04 Downtown Master Plan) remains untouched by the economic rollercoaster.

For example, the plan contains the “cultural district master plan” for the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall’s expansive parking lot. It includes buildings for a number of local cultural icons, a parking garage, retail space and restaurants and more — all to be undertaken through public-private partnerships.

It was believed, when the plan was completed, that such spending would enhance Sarasota’s claim as the home of unique cultural assets. In today’s environment, without additional public comment, it is hard to believe the County Commission would stomach a multi-year, multi-million dollar investment in cultural “bricks and mortar.”

Yet that is exactly what the CRA is supposed to do, as the committee has heard. The plan should use public-private partnerships to leverage the incremental financing of the


CRA. And as shown in the documents provided to the committee by City of Sarasota Senior Planner Steve Stancel, such public-private partnerships can prove extremely lucrative in the long term.

In 2003, the CRA provided almost \$5 million to lure a Whole Foods grocery store downtown. The property was appraised then at \$3.2 million. Today it is on the books for \$57.4 million, and Whole Foods has paid \$6.6 million in property taxes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY GOVERNANCE

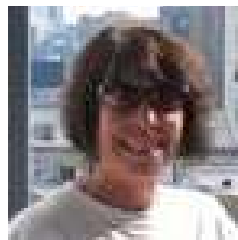
Every complex document given to a decision-maker contains an executive summary. It is rarely longer than a single page, even if the document it covers runs 100 pages or more. Neither the city nor the county commissioners in Sarasota have personal aides to read and digest extensive reports. Therefore, the commissioners are often left to depend on executive summaries to assist them in making complex decisions.

As a rule, you can tell who has read an entire document, because that person asks detailed questions. For those who did not, their discussion of an issue is often superficial. At the end of the CRA extension committee’s term, somebody is going to write a report and an executive summary.

This story is already longer than most executive summaries, and it has not touched on a host of real questions about the singular issue: Should the CRA’s lifespan be extended? If yes, for how long? And how should the money be spent — on police salaries or public-private partnerships? 

OPINION

MY FIRST AND LAST (FINGERS CROSSED) DAY IN COURT



By Harriet Cuthbert

Contributing Writer

COMMENTARY

I know!! I cannot believe it either!! After living a crime-free life all these decades, and never once entering a courtroom, I am no longer a virgin. I have been deflowered, thanks to the 12th Judicial Circuit in Sarasota (aka, the Sarasota Charitable Trust Foundation).

My presence at court on Monday, July 29, was required because I allegedly committed an offense called “Leaving the Scene Unattended.” I am still not sure whether the court system defines that as a traffic misdemeanor or a criminal offense, but as the day arrived, I thought I was scheduled to appear in the Courtroom of Traffic Offenders.

Evidently, I received this citation as a result of a “witness,” who claims he saw me backing out of an angled parking space on Main Street and side-swiping the car next to me. (I will go to my grave denying any knowledge of this “offense.”) But I will admit to tapping the car waiting for my space with my rear bumper. This tap was so inconsequential I ignored it and continued maneuvering my car out onto Main Street and driving home.

Unbeknownst to me, and according to another witness, a person was observed zooming down

Main Street in his shiny red car, and when he got to within an inch of my car, he snapped a photo of me with his camera phone. He then proceeded to deliver my license information — with a note — to the driver of the aforementioned car that I deny having sideswiped.

If I had my way, I would immediately sue Mr. X for harassing me while I was stopped at a light ... but, then again, I am not a vengeful person.

Nonetheless, the police decided that I needed to learn some kind of lesson for my evil ways, which is how I ended up with the citation to make an appearance in Courtroom 2-A on July 29.

About 8:50 a.m. that day, the doors opened and we all filed in quietly and obediently, just like first-graders do. We took our seats, and suddenly it was, “All rise for the honorable Judge Galen,” who was followed by her assistants. We then sat down and waited for our names to be called as court staff took attendance — reminiscent, again, of first grade.

I was 100 percent ready to plead, “NOT GUILTY, YOUR HONOR,” but when the judge called me up to the podium and carefully defined my options of “Guilty,” “Not guilty” or “No contest,” I chose the last one, deciding to let the judge be the judge and resolve my case

OPINION

immediately. I knew that I was innocent of all the charges — or at least I was unaware of the incident. But in the long run, sometimes it is more beneficial to cancel out a negative as quickly as possible, to get on with the business of having a positive and enjoyable lifestyle.

The judge's decision consisted of ordering me to pay a small fine and requiring me to do 25 hours of community service.

Personally, I think I handled my first day in court very well — and here is hoping it will also be my last. 

GRAVEYARD OF THE ELEPHANTS



By Rodger Skidmore
Contributing Writer

COMMENTARY

When elephants grow old and useless and have no value to anyone in the elephant community, they wander off into the jungle to die alone. That is a sad tale and one that is mirrored in Sarasota with all the old folks who retire here from elsewhere in the nation.

No, I am not referring to the (us) old folks as being useless, but to some of the stuff that we brought along when we packed everything up and trucked it all down here when we retired to Sarasota. Specifically, the VHS video cassettes that, back in the day, we bought for our children — *Bambi*, *Mary Poppins*, *Peter Pan*, *Fantasia*. Even *The Lion King*. Yes, old and useless.

Sure, they brought great pleasure to our children, who entertained themselves hour after hour watching these bright stars of the entertainment industry. And when the cassettes grew too grainy to watch, that just showed us they were achieving their intended purpose — keeping our kids out of our way while we got dinner ready, mowed the lawn, did the laundry or painted the garage doors.

These films, which had not been too hard for us to take when we and our children watched them in the theaters, had proved their value as diversions. Their titles had been imprinted on our memories, so when the films were released on VHS cassettes (not Betamax), we bought them without hesitation. (Or was it without too much whining from our children?)


Anyway, we bought them. And when they had grown old from hours of viewing, we knew exactly what to do: We threw them out and bought the Deluxe Limited Edition versions of them, as we knew they would be played each day — or, at least, each weekend — until the end of time.

But then basketball or ballet lessons or hanging out with friends at the mall became more popular pastimes for our children. Even, can you imagine, homework interfered (sometimes, anyway) with our kids' viewing schedules. Thus, these new reincarnations of old favorites sat lonely on the shelf — yes, sort of like those toys in the Disney *Toy Story* franchise.

OPINION

They may have sat there alone, but they were certainly not forgotten. We remembered them, and when we retired, we boxed them up and labeled the boxes “FOR OUR GRANDCHILDREN.” Yes, we had a plan. We would take our children and their kids to the beach, play in the water (OK, watch *them* play in the water) until we were all tired. Then we would go home, pour some wine, fire up the grill and let our grandchildren entertain themselves while we caught up with what our own children were doing.

All we had to do was pop the VHS cassette into the VHS player. Wait — we no longer had one, or if we did, it no longer worked or could not be found.

The final solution, of course, was to take a shopping bag full of old — but nearly new — VHS cassettes to Sarasota’s elephant graveyard for the old and useless — the Goodwill Store. 



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, 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*.

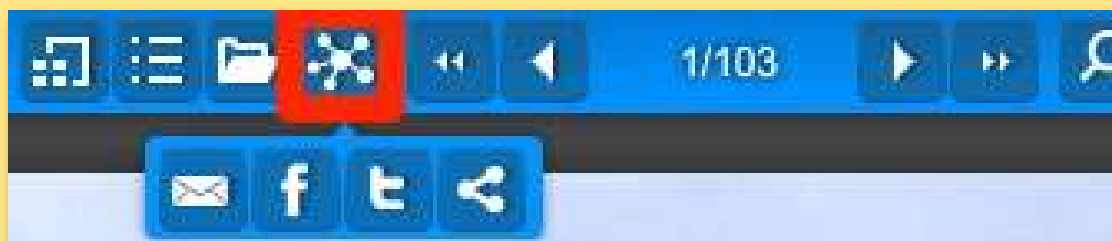
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Sarasota Leisure

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TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORNS

A bull head lies on the pavement after its removal. Photos by Rick Wielgorecki

PRUNING ENABLES PLANTS TO LIVE LONGER, MORE HEALTHFUL LIVES

By Rick Wielgorecki

Contributing Writer

There comes a point in every plant's life when the attentive gardener must consider whether pruning time is nigh.

The symptoms of a shrub or tree in need of attention include the following: plant has overgrown its space and is growing into its neighbors' area; plant is "leggy," with most of the foliage at the top and bare stems at the bottom; plant is physically injured or damaged by cold, insect infestation, disease or salt spray; plant has developed dead branches that need to be removed; plant has grown inward, with branches crossing one another, and needs to be thinned; and, finally, plant has been lightly clipped for a long period of time and has developed bull heads.

A bull head is a major stem that has been trimmed superficially over a long period time and has developed numerous points of growth that repeatedly emit new sprouts. These sprouts grow less vigorously as the plant ages, and they may eventually begin to die. Most hedges that have been formally trimmed for many years are really only a mass of bull heads in various states of health, ranging from vibrant to ailing. The ailing heads are the candidates for major pruning.

The best time to remove the less healthful heads is during or right after trimming, when they are most evident. If you do this in the spring, the plant will recover more quickly. When you see a head like the one in the ac-

companying photo, prune it with long-handled pruning shears that are very sharp. Larger bull heads may require a pruning saw. Once you have completed their removal, the plant can revive itself and generate fresh new foliage.

Through pruning the worst of a plant's bull heads occasionally, you can keep your tree, shrub or hedge healthy and enjoy it for decades. You may even celebrate your accomplishment with a couple of "Oles!!"

PLANT OF THE MONTH

I have a small camphor tree on my property. Though *Cinnamomum camphora* is capable of achieving heights of up to 40 feet, I frequently trim it to maintain it at a height of about 8 feet. It makes a nice green screen to provide privacy on my property border. Also, to my delight, swallowtail butterflies seem to be attracted to the foliage.

This spring the camphor was due for a good heavy pruning. As the accompanying photo shows, I took out many bull heads to thin it and allow it to regenerate over the growing season.

If you want to grow a camphor tree, be advised that it is considered a non-native, invasive plant. Camphors were planted here unsuccessfully in the effort to produce camphor oil. Birds, which treasure the seeds, help the trees proliferate.

A camphor is most easily identified by crushing the leaves, which emit the pungent scent of camphor. If you ever mow grass under a mature specimen, you will be treated to the stimulating aroma of camphor oil.

Rick Wielgorecki may be contacted at 362-0600 or wielgo@hotmail.com. 



A mature camphor tree can emit a stimulating odor of the oil of the same name.



MORE PARKING WILL BE PROVIDED AT BEACH ACCESS 1; GIDGET'S COASTAL PROVISIONS IS COMING TO SIESTA VILLAGE IN THE FALL; AND COUNTY STAFF IS SEEKING ANOTHER EXTENSION OF THE SUNSET DATE FOR THE NOISE ORDINANCE



By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Thanks to the intercession of Sarasota County Commissioner Nora Patterson, county staff is proceeding with a plan to clear 9 feet of vegetation along the North Shell Road right of way to provide more room for vehicle parking.

In a July 15 report to the County Commission, Chief County Engineer James K. Harriott Jr. reported that a work order had been submitted to the Field Services Office for the work.

On July 9 — during the commission's last set of meetings before its summer break — Pat-

terson referred her colleagues to a memo Harriott had sent them, offering suggestions about how best to handle residents' complaints about the haphazard parking near Beach Access 1 at the end of North Shell Road.

Because the pavement was laid down closer to the southern right of way, Harriott noted in his May 1 memo, enough room exists "to accommodate some parking along the north edge of [the road]." His rough estimate, he continued, was that up to six parallel parking spaces or 10 to 15 perpendicular spaces could



Foliage is thick on the north side of North Shell Road on Siesta Key. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

be added. That work would necessitate the removal of vegetation, including some established mangroves, he pointed out.

In the past, Harriott continued, property owners along the north side of the road had opposed any parking on that side. “To minimize needed improvements, clearing along the north right-of-way line could be done to provide a wider grass parking area,” Harriott wrote. “This would allow vehicles to park more on the shoulder of the roadway and open the travel lanes of North Shell Road for emergency access and general traffic circulations.”

“It’s a bit of a mess at Shell Road, with people parking in all kinds of places,” Patterson said during the Commission Reports part of the July 9 meeting. However, to add up to 10 or 15 extra spaces, as Harriott had indicated, would be a “pretty substantial capital improvement,” she pointed out, “and I don’t know when we would be able to address it.”

At residents’ requests, she said, she had driven down North Shell Road several times recently to assess the situation herself.

“I’m unwilling to do what a number of residents would like,” she pointed out, which



Few parking spaces are available at Beach Access 1 on North Shell Road. Photo by Rachel Hackney`v

Siesta Seen

would be putting up signs banning parking on the south side of the road.

At the very end of the road, she continued, space is insufficient for more than a handful of vehicles. “But I can see where [parking is] really jumbly right now, and it has the potential to block the street ...”

Moreover, she has seen people parking in front of the fire hydrant on the south side of the road. “But that [hydrant] needs to be more clearly marked.”

It was obvious vegetation had become overgrown on the north side of the road, Patterson said.

In the past, she continued, staff had removed about 9 feet of foliage on the north side to allow people to park safely there without compromising the travel area on the road.

Therefore, she said, she would like to ask for her fellow commissioners’ consent to direct staff once again to clear out 9 feet of the vegetation, “and I would *love* for the staff to take a look and see if there would be enough width to stripe the area on the south side for parking without blocking a driveway.”

Patterson pointed out, “That’s pretty inexpensive.”



Peter van Roekens took this photo of the Siesta sky after a recent thunderstorm. Photo courtesy of Peter van Roekens

Siesta Seen

After Patterson put her request into a motion, Commissioner Christine Robinson seconded it without hesitation.

When Chairwoman Carolyn Mason asked for any further discussion, Patterson laughed. “Not after that,” she replied, referring to the explanation she already had offered.

The motion passed unanimously.

Just weeks after that vote — on July 31 — Patterson received an email from a relatively new property owner on North Shell Road, saying he had met several of his neighbors “and share their frustration at the current parking problems ... I have counted up to 50 cars at one time, many of which are blocking private drives, mailboxes and [the] fire hydrant.”

He added that cars remain parked near the beach access after 9 p.m., “creating noise at all hours of the night.”

Patterson replied that she was copying Sheriff Tom Knight on her response, “in the hopes that he will have his men stop by occasionally and ticket those who are parked after 9 PM.”

Patterson also explained about the request the commissioners approved on July 9. “I personally will not be willing to eliminate all street parking,” she wrote, “... but would like very much to make the situation less annoying to residents.”

In the meantime, Patterson pointed out that the property owner was welcome to voice his views about the situation during the “Open to the Public” period during a County Commission meeting.

COMING SOON: GIDGET’S COASTAL PROVISIONS

Siesta Key’s master sand sculptor, Brian Wigelsworth, attended the [Siesta Key Village Association](#) meeting on Aug. 6 not only as a representative of the upcoming Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Competition in November, but also as a forthcoming new business proprietor in the Village.

Just before the Crystal Classic opens on Nov. 15 (it runs through Nov. 18), Gidget’s Coastal Provisions will open in the space long occupied by Napoli’s restaurant at 5242 Ocean Blvd. — right next to Siesta Key Oyster Bar.

Although the word “Gidget” immediately brought to my mind the old Sandra Dee beach [movie](#), Wigelsworth said the shop is named for his dog.

The store will sell more upscale gifts and clothing than a typical T-shirt store, he pointed out, but it will have a “surfer feel” to it. His wife, Trudy — who manages Blvd. Beachwear on Ocean Boulevard and has more than 20 years of retail experience — will run the new shop, Wigelsworth added. “She’s an artist when it comes to merchandising,” he said.

SKVA members arriving for the 8:30 a.m. meeting on Aug. 6 could not help but notice the construction equipment ripping out most of the building that had housed Napoli’s. According to the design, three walls of the original structure will be left in place, Wigelsworth said, so the new building will not have to be

Siesta Seen

put up on stilts to conform with flood zone regulations. The shop will have about 1,950 square feet on the first floor, with floor-to-ceiling windows — and two transient apartments will be on the second floor.

“We’ve been working on it for four years,” he added.

As reported earlier in this space, the property belongs to Jim Syrett and M. Jay Lancer. Mark Smith of Smith Architects on Siesta Key is handling the design work.

And what of Napoli’s? Word on the street is that the restaurant is moving near The Broken Egg on Avenida Messina.

ANOTHER DELAY ON THE NOISE ORDINANCE

During the Aug. 1 Siesta Key Association meeting, Secretary Peter van Roekens reported that county staff is recommending that the sunset of the Noise Ordinance and the Air and Sound Pollution Ordinance be extended for another year.

“I hadn’t heard that recommendation,” said Commissioner Patterson, who was a guest at the meeting.

In September 2012, the County Commission approved extending the sunset of both measures until Nov. 18 of this year. The board approved the staff request so the public could be



Workers tear down the structure that housed Napoli's restaurant on Ocean Boulevard. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

involved in any potential rewrite of the Noise Ordinance in regard to allowable noise levels, enforcement and penalties.

As for the Air and Sound Pollution Ordinance: Staff wanted to have sufficient time to amend it to reflect changes in state law, especially those regulating certain types of burning, including land-clearing efforts.

On Aug. 7, I spoke with Donna Thompson, the county's assistant zoning administrator. She confirmed that staff is scheduled to appear before the County Commission on Sept. 24 to seek another year's extension of the sunset deadline for both ordinances. County air quality staff is seeking more time for public meetings on issues covered by that ordinance, she said. She feels more public comments are needed on the Noise Ordinance, too, Thompson added.

However, she was not certain the requests would be granted.

In the meantime, van Roekens said during the SKA meeting that he had surveyed the residents of Terrace East — the condominium complex where he lives — about their views on noise issues in Siesta Village.

More than half the respondents “have real concerns,” he continued. “The few that don’t are either deaf or away,” he added, drawing some chuckles.

WATCH OUT FOR THOSE SNAKES!

During that Aug. 1 Siesta Key Association meeting, President Catherine Luckner reported that she had received an email from Sarasota County in regard to the stormwater project under way adjacent to Siesta Public Beach. Because so many trees are being removed to make way for the new retention pond, she pointed out, the county is warning residents to be aware they might see more snakes. (Most of the trees are invasive species, by the way



The fire station on Siesta Key is next to the site where the county is constructing a new stormwater retention pond. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

— Australian pines, for example, Luckner said — and the area will be restored after the pond has been completed.)

“I had to laugh,” Luckner added, referring to the notice, “because all over our key, we see these creatures.”

However, the ones featured in the email, she pointed out, are not typically found on the island.

“You really don’t have to be too afraid of what you see,” she continued. “People are always afraid of snakes, but we do have a lot of good snakes [on Siesta Key]. If you see one, just walk away. That’s my recommendation.”

Luckner noted that the key’s snakes eat rats and other rodents as well as palmetto bugs. “[Snakes] keep good things in balance, and mostly they are very quiet. And they will not go to the beach!”

SKA board member Deet Jonker told the audience he had received the same email from the county. “I just have to share a funny thing,” he added.

The morning after he read the email, he said, he happened to walk past the Siesta Key fire station — which is right next to the new stormwater pond site — “and for the first time ever, I saw all their doors closed.”

After the ensuing laughter died down, Jonker said, “They got the message.”

On a very important side note: Luckner also reported that the stormwater project is run-




A Google map shows the house at 5050 Commonwealth Drive on Siesta Key. Image courtesy Google Maps

ning a little behind because of some permitting delays. Instead of November, it is scheduled to be completed in December.

ZONING APPEAL

During the SKA meeting last week, President Catherine Luckner also announced that the owners of the property at 5050 Commonwealth Drive apparently want to reconfigure their pool and patio area to extend within 10 feet of the canal bordering the site. The required setback from the canal is 20 feet, she noted. Therefore, the owners plan to appear before the county’s Board of Zoning Appeals on Monday, Aug. 12, to state their case for why they should be granted a variance.

According to [Zillow](#), the house was sold in September 2011 for \$1,425,000. It is listed as having 4,626 square feet. 



I like to take my time.

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

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You have a whole week.

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FRIDAY FEST TO PRESENT IMPULSE ON AUG. 16

The Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall will host its third Friday Fest of the summer on Friday, Aug. 16, from 5 to 9 p.m., featuring Impulse, the hall has announced.

“A Friday Fest Favorite, Impulse ... [provides] a refreshing dose of reggae, zouk, and pop calypso which will set your weekend off on the right foot! The Island Foot!” a news release says. “Get your dancing shoes on because these guys know how to get the crowd moving with their energetic stage presence and pulse driving rhythm!”

People planning to attend are reminded to bring blankets or chairs. Local vendors will have food and drinks for sale. Among the latter will be Mattison’s On The Bay, J&J Bar-B-Que, Snack It To Me!, Tasty Takeout, TCBY, SRQ Pizza, Suncoast Food Trucks, Sweet Doctors and Lemonbar, the release notes.

The Van Wezel is located at 777 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. For more information, visit www.vanwezel.org.



Kettle of Fish entertains the crowd during the July Friday Fest. Photo by Norman Schimmel

THE GOLDTONES TO MAKE VENICE THEATRE DEBUT ON AUG. 17

The Venice Theatre Guild invites the public to enjoy another summer night of nostalgia, energy and fun when The Goldtones take the MainStage at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 17.

The Goldtones, which has been called the “hottest doo-wop group in Florida,” entertains its audiences “with the sweet sounds of street-corner harmony,” a news release says. The quartet features Dr. Ken Feder, a practicing chiropractor by day and second tenor by night, who has sung doo-wop in the Bronx and Atlanta; John Gualberto (Johnny G.), who has been singing professionally since he was 12; Ed Diana, who started singing professionally at 18 with the original five-man group The Orkells in New Haven, CT; and John Reinoehl (J.R.) who, like his partners, began singing at a young age when he started his own musical group in 1960, the release notes.

“The summer oldies concerts are an annual tradition of the Venice Theatre Guild,” the release continues. “What started as one show per summer has grown to a full-fledged series of four shows.” After The Goldtones’ performance, one more concert remains on the summer schedule: Yesterdayze on Sept. 14. The concerts raise money for the Guild scholarship fund, which provides tuition assistance to students studying theatre arts.

Tickets, which cost \$20, are on sale at the theatre’s box office, by phone at 488-1115 or online at www.venicestage.com. Venice Theatre is located at 140 W. Tampa Ave. on the island in Venice. Summer box office hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and one hour before all performances.



The Goldtones/Contributed photo

SARDELLI TRANSITIONING TO A NEW ROLE WITH SARASOTA BALLET

Iain Webb, director of The Sarasota Ballet has announced that principal dancer Sara Sardelli will be retiring from the stage and taking on a new role as the company's outreach coordinator.

"We will all greatly miss Sara's captivating stage presence and her memorable performances, but with her enthusiasm and loyal commitment she will be a perfect addition to the administrative team," said Webb in a news release.

In her new role, Sardelli will be coordinating community outreach for the company and for the Margaret Barbieri Conservatory of Dance, the release adds. "Sardelli will also help coordinate all special events as The Sarasota Ballet continues to broaden its presence in the local community and beyond," the release notes.



Sara Sardelli. Photo courtesy of Sarasota Ballet



Sara Sardelli (center) in John Ringling's Circus Nutcracker with David Tlaiye (left) and Logan Learned. Photo courtesy of Sarasota Ballet

“While this was an incredibly difficult decision and I will always treasure my time on stage, I am excited to remain part of The Sarasota Ballet family and have a closer connection with the audience that has always shown me so much love,” said Sardelli in the release.

Sardelli joined The Sarasota Ballet in 2009 “and quickly became an audience favorite” in ballets such as Ashton’s *Two Pigeons* and *Les Rendezvous*, Flint’s *The Lesson*, Balanchine’s *Tarantella* and *Serenade* and Tuckett’s *Spielende Kinder*, among others, the release points out. In 2012 she was promoted to a principal and featured in numerous ballets in the company’s repertoire. Leading roles were created for her in Hart’s *John Ringling’s Circus Nutcracker* and Tuckett’s *Changing Light*.

“I am so grateful to Director Iain Webb and Assistant Director Margaret Barbieri for all the amazing opportunities offered to me, and to Miss B [Barbieri] for her personal coaching,” said Sardelli in the release. “Having the chance to perform the incredible repertoire they have brought to Sarasota has been truly wonderful.”

“I understand this was not an easy decision for Sara, but I am thrilled to offer her this opportunity,” added Webb in the release. “I hope I’m always able to offer support and guidance to our dancers as they make transitions in their careers.”

Sardelli will start her new role later this month, just in time for the 2013-2014 season, the release notes.

MUSIC & MOVIES SERIES CONTINUES WITH CHICAGO ON AUG. 18

Realize Bradenton and the Manatee Players’ *Music & Movies* series will continue at 6 p.m. on Aug. 18 with vocalist Eve Caballero and the Manatee Players “performing sultry jazz favorites and setting the mood for the 7 p.m. screening of *Chicago*.”

The movie is director Rob Marshall’s Academy Award-winning adaptation of the “satirical stage musical exploring the themes of celebrity, scandal, murder and corruption in the Jazz Age,” a news release notes.


The free event will take place at the Manatee Performing Arts Center, located at 502 3rd Avenue West in downtown Bradenton. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

“This series is an excellent way to introduce the community to [the] new, cutting-edge performing arts center,” says Johnette Isham, Realize Bradenton’s executive director, in the release. “It’s our way of raising the cur-



Eve Caballero/Contributed photo

tain on this new venue and giving audiences a sneak peek at what they’ll be experiencing for years to come.”

For more information, call the Manatee Players’ box office at 748-5875. 

Deacon David Bumsted in Redeemer's St. Francis Garden. Contributed photo

NEW DEACON IN CHARGE OF YOUTH MINISTRY AT REDEEMER

The Church of the Redeemer in Sarasota has hired David Bumsted as deacon in charge of its ministry to youth, the church has announced.

Bumsted joined the Redeemer staff in early June. He will replace outgoing Youth Minister Chris Wood, who has been accepted as a postulant for Holy Orders and will enter Wisconsin's Nashotah House Theological Seminary in mid-August, a news release says.

"Throughout the summer, Bumsted and Wood have been working closely together to achieve a seamless transition in this key role for the church's large youth ministry," the release adds.

"We're delighted to have David join our ministry for youth," said the Rev. Fredrick A. Robinson, rector, in the release. "David has a wonderful enthusiasm and a great deal of experience in working with youth; as well, he possesses the requisite skills in communica-

tion and social media to stay in touch with our young people both in and out of regular church events."

Bumsted graduated from Nashotah House Theological Seminary on May 16 and was ordained to the Diaconate on June 8, the release notes. This December, he will be ordained to the priesthood.

A graduate of Florida State University with a degree in international affairs, Bumsted served as a case manager at Orlando's Covenant House from 2009 to 2012, the release notes. There he worked with homeless teens and other youth facing crises, the release adds.

He is married to Rebekah, a human resources team member with Neiman Marcus.

The Church of the Redeemer is located at 222 S. Palm Ave. in the heart of downtown Sarasota. For more information, visit redeemersarasota.org or call 955-4263.

TEMPLE EMANU-EL PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION CONTINUES


Registration is continuing for the 2013-2014 year at Temple Emanu-El Preschool, 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota, the Temple has announced.

The academic year begins Monday, Aug. 19, a news release notes.

“Nationally accredited and the recipient of Gold Seal certification by Sarasota County’s Early Learning Coalition, Temple Emanu-El Preschool offers secular and Jewish early-childhood education for ages 18 months through 5 years” — including voluntary pre-kindergarten — “in a nurturing, clean, safe environment,” the release adds.

Traditional preschool hours are available, as well as extended care from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., it notes.

Students enjoy weekly classes in gymnastics, karate, Spanish, music/movement and computers, “as well as Shabbat celebrations with Rabbi Brenner J. Glickman and an optional Jewish enrichment class that teaches about prayer, holidays, Hebrew, Bible stories, God and Jewish values through engaging, hands-on activities,” the release adds.

For more information or to schedule a tour of Temple Emanu-El Preschool, contact Elaine Sharrock at 377-8074 or preschool@sarasota-temple.org. 

“How much more grievous are the consequences of anger than the causes of it.” — *Marcus Aurelius*

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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09+
AUGUST

Florida Studio Theatre presents *The Underpants*

Through Aug. 11 (times vary), Keating Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave. Tickets: \$18 to \$42. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

09+
AUGUST

FST Summer Improv

Through Aug. 24, 8:30 p.m., John C. Court Cabaret, 1241 N. Palm Ave. Tickets: \$12. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

09+
AUGUST

Dabbert Gallery presents *Summer Showcase*

Through Sept. 30, 76 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Admission: free. Information: 955-1315 or DabbertGallery.com.

09+
AUGUST

Banyan Theater presents *Time Stands Still*

Aug. 9-25 (times vary), Jane B. Cook Theatre, FSU Center for the Performing Arts, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail. Tickets: \$28.50. Information: 351-2808 or BanyanTheaterCompany.com.

11
AUGUST

Naarai Jacobs in Concert

Aug. 11, 7 p.m., Michael's On East, 1212 East Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$35. Information: 366-1505.

11
AUGUST

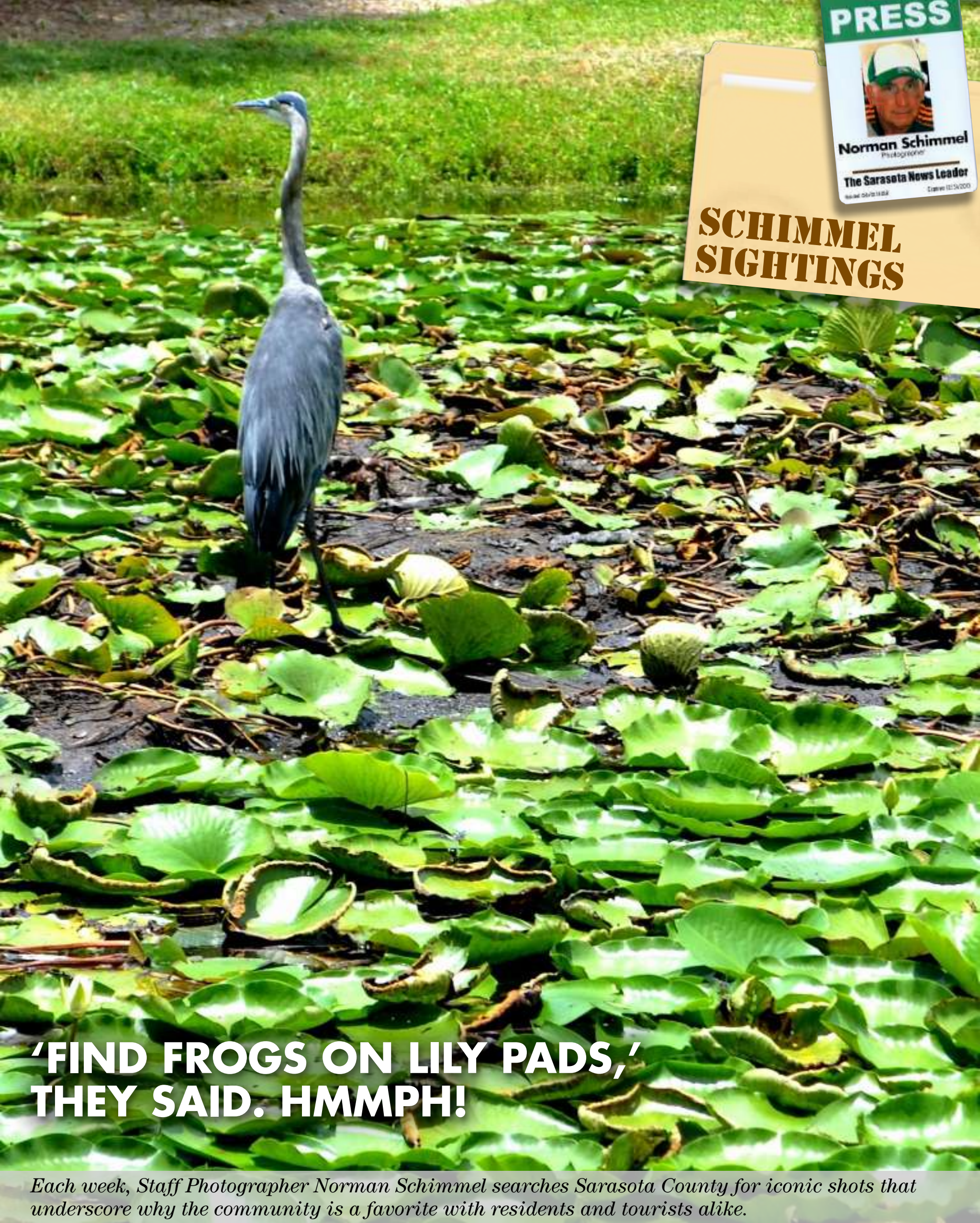
WSLR presents the fifth annual Very Merry Jerry Day, featuring Florida Mountain Boys, Ship of Fools, Kettle of Fish and Schmitz Bros. Band

Aug. 11, 3:30 to 9 p.m., 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota. Tickets: \$10. Information: 894-6469 or WSLR.org.

16
AUGUST

Friday Fest at the Van Wezel, featuring Impulse

Aug. 16, 5 p.m., Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail. Admission: Free. Information: 953-3368 or VanWezel.org.



PRESS



Norman Schimmel
Photographer

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SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS

**'FIND FROGS ON LILY PADS,'
THEY SAID. HMMPH!**

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.