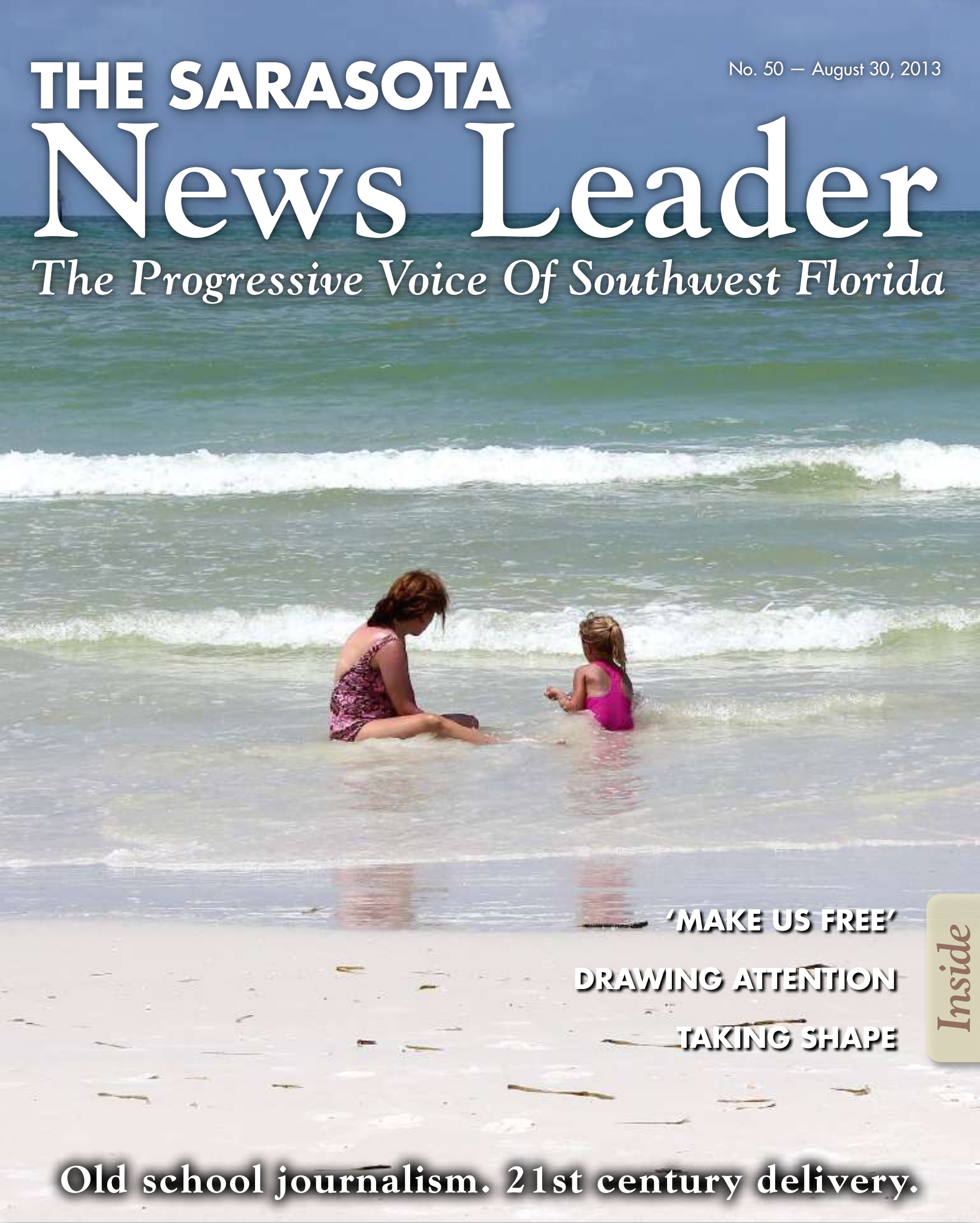


**THE SARASOTA**

No. 50 — August 30, 2013

# News Leader

*The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida*



**'MAKE US FREE'**

**DRAWING ATTENTION**

**TAKING SHAPE**

*Inside*

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# SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

*The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida*

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# Welcome

After this week, I never again want to hear that August is a slow month around here.

After watching two long days of County Commission discussions — Wednesday's meeting did not end until 7 p.m. — I could find no way to write all the stories generated and still meet deadline. As I type this, I envision Cleve, our production manager, and Vicki, our copy editor, getting just a wee bit anxious about when I am going to finish all the topics I did tackle.

Cooper Levey-Baker and Roger Drouin were just as busy as I was. In fact, we all spent time with the County Commission this week.

And lest you think county government was the only source of our latest news, Roger also has an update on businessman Chris Brown's New Orleans-style restaurant project in downtown Sarasota.

We may be a little lighter on features this week than we were for our Aug. 23 issue, but one article is actually a carryover from last week. Thanks to that good ol' deadline again, A&E Reporter Elinor Rogosin's lovely review of the grand finale of the Carreño Dance Festival appears in this issue. (My fault, not hers.) Nonetheless, it is a charming alternative to all the hard news flowing through the first part of "the book," as Staff Photographer Norm Schimmel calls our newsweekly.

Thank goodness Labor Day is around the corner. I think we all will need the time to recover so we can be ready to pull together this week's leftover stories for the Sept. 6 issue.

And we sure hope all of you have a safe and happy holiday weekend.

*Rachel Brown Hackney*  
Editor and Publisher





## DRAWING ATTENTION



## 'NOT READY FOR BRT'



Click Any **Headline** To Go Directly To That Article



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**'MAKE US FREE'**

*The County Commission sits in session earlier this year. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **AMID A CONDO DISCRIMINATION DISPUTE AND ARSON INVESTIGATION, LGBT RIGHTS ADVOCATES ASK THE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION**

**By Cooper Levey-Baker**

*Associate Editor*

Julia Nowak asked the Sarasota County Commission for one thing Tuesday morning, Aug. 27: “Write an ordinance to make us free.”

That document, a human rights ordinance, would offer protection against discrimination in employment and housing based on age, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and veteran status. While the cities of Sarasota and Venice both have similar measures on the books, Sarasota County has yet to OK such protections.

Nowak, an Englewood realtor, was inspired to stand up for the or-

dinance after she discovered discriminatory language embedded in documents approved by the Venice condo complex, Casa Di Amici. The rules would have limited condo ownership to married couples and individuals — in effect banning gay and lesbian partners. After pointing out the offending language behind closed doors, Nowak went to the media, in an effort to apply “public pressure,” she tells *The Sarasota News Leader*. What surprised

her most was that, because the complex is located in unincorporated Sarasota County, the language was perfectly legal.

“*This issue won’t go away.*”

Ken Shelin  
LGBT advocate  
Sarasota



While the Casa Di Amici board acted last week to recommend removing the discriminatory wording (attorney Dan Lobeck called the measure “inadvertent”), Nowak says the voting population of the complex still must approve the revisions. That vote won’t come till early October, according to Nowak.

She feels confident the complex will strike the discriminatory section. Several owners have called and emailed her, apologizing for voting in favor of the new documents, which many said they never even read. Nowak told the County Commission many were “appalled” to find out what they had supported.

But Nowak’s point Tuesday was that the condo complex’s changes never would have been allowed in the first place if Sarasota County offered comprehensive protections against discrimination.

Former Sarasota City Commissioner and outspoken LGBT rights activist Ken Shelin echoed Nowak’s comments, pointing out that “legislative action is often needed” to guard against discrimination. “There is still a disconcerting undercurrent that demonizes certain people in order to exclude them,” he said, bringing up the Casa Di Amici dispute, as well as rumors that local community and business leaders have been forced out because of their sexual orientation.

Another example of local intolerance Shelin mentioned: arson.

Allie Langley and her girlfriend, Carrie Wojtczak, were sleeping in the front room of their Nokomis trailer early Saturday morning when Wojtczak got up to use the restroom. She heard crackling and saw flames. Wojtczak hurriedly woke Langley, who dialed 911. They



*Florida Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater.  
Image from [www.myfloridacfo.com](http://www.myfloridacfo.com)*

ran outside. The couple was in the middle of moving, and boxes stacked outside were on fire.

That’s when Wojtczak realized their cats were still inside. Wojtczak went around to break open the back door to let the pets escape, and even (“foolishly,” Langley says) went inside to open an interior door. They lost six cats in the blaze, but seven survived.

The couple screamed for help and even tried to put out the fire with a hose, but it was no use. “Within I’d say four minutes of us getting outside, the whole front room was engulfed in flames,” Langley tells the *News Leader*.

That wasn’t all. Someone had slashed the tires on the couple’s car, and their water pipes had been smashed.

Chris Cate — communications director for Florida CFO Jeff Atwater, who oversees the Office of the State Fire Marshal — writes in an email that the incident “is being considered a



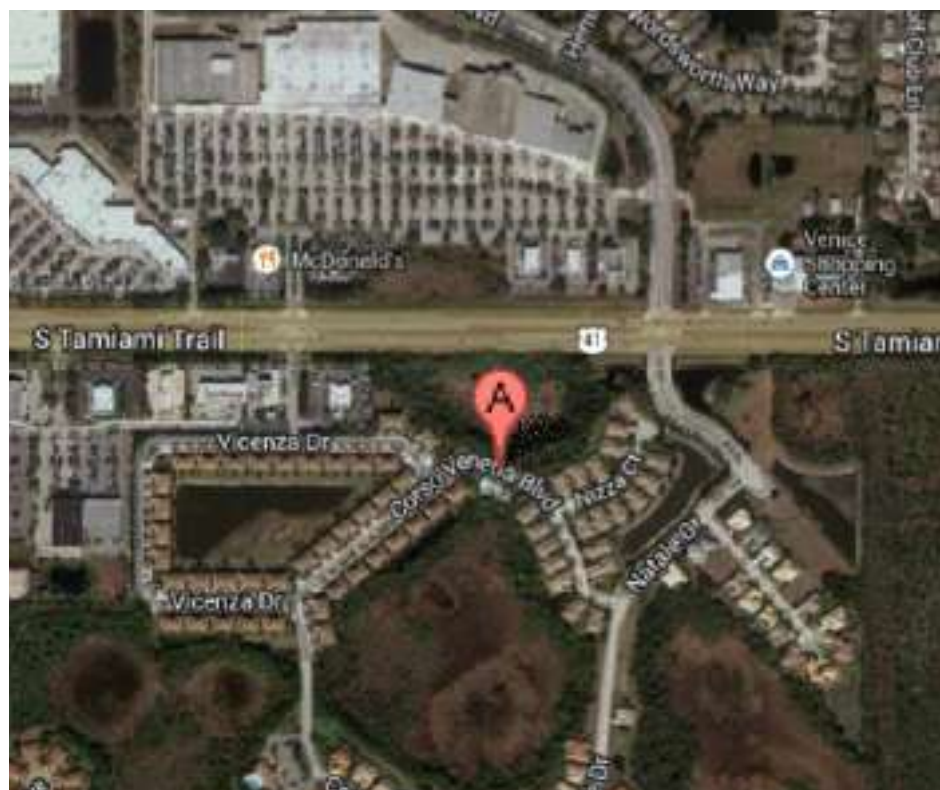
case of arson,” but adds that “no other details can be released at this time.”

While certainly the most extreme example, the fire wasn’t the first time Langley and Wojtczak had experienced intimidation or harassment in their neighborhood. Langley says a neighbor called Wojtczak a “stupid dyke bitch” three years ago and threatened to start a fire. People have thrown eggs, fruit and even rocks at their trailer. “We’ve had two broken windows. We’ve had our water pipe broken a couple times,” Langley says.

The couple had planned to celebrate their two-year anniversary this week with a drive to Venice to file as domestic partners, a registry approved just this year. The program provides unmarried couples who live together certain rights, such as hospital visitation and healthcare decision-making. But instead of doing that, Langley and Wojtczak are looking for a new home. The Red Cross put them up in a hotel for three nights, but the couple can’t afford to stay there much longer. Aside from some clothes, they lost everything.

Nowak calls the fire a “hate crime,” and says she wishes there were greater punishments for criminals who target victims because of sexual orientation. Her fight may have begun over Casa Di Amici’s unintentional discrimination, but she won’t stop even if the County Commission does eventually adopt a human rights ordinance. She wants the Florida Division of Real Estate to implement similar anti-discrimination rules. While she’s been politically conscious for years, Nowak says she’s been “quiet.” No longer.

No one on the County Commission immediately commented on Nowak and Shelin’s pro-




*A map shows the location of the Casa Di Amici condominium complex in Venice. Image courtesy Google maps*

positional, but Commissioner Christine Robinson tells the *News Leader* that’s just a reflection of two days of marathon meetings. “There’s a whole host of things I didn’t get to,” says Robinson, who calls herself “interested” in having a “conversation” about a human rights ordinance. “It probably will be brought up again.”

“My plan is to be at every South County meeting,” Nowak says. “If you get in their face long enough, they’re going to notice.”

“This issue won’t go away,” Shelin told the commission Tuesday.

“I don’t feel free in this country,” Nowak said. “To be able to discriminate against me legally — that does not make me feel free.” She brought up the closing words of the national anthem: “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

“I don’t want to be the brave one,” she said. “I want to be the free one. I want my freedom.” 



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# DRAWING ATTENTION



*Cheryl Walker, a 100 Central Ave. resident, stands in front of Floribbean. 'I don't think it fits in with Sarasota architecture in any way, shape or form,' she says of owner Chris Brown's plans for the structure. Photo by Roger Drouin*

## LOVE IT OR HATE IT, RESIDENTS HAVE STARTED TO WEIGH IN ON A PROJECT THAT WOULD DRASTICALLY CHANGE ONE OF THE MOST VISIBLE CORNERS DOWNTOWN

**By Roger Drouin**  
*County Editor*

Chris Brown wants to build something different — but not entirely unprecedented — in downtown Sarasota.

With a brick façade and second-story “galleries” over the sidewalk at his 1400 Main St. triangular building, he envisions an architectural nod to Sarasota’s main thoroughfare of the 1920s.

Modern second-story galleries are allowed in the Downtown Code, yet no other de-

veloper has attempted to incorporate them into a design.

Initially, Brown contemplated a ground-level deck at the building he purchased in May for \$2.65 million. But the concept blossomed into bigger plans.

“*That is one of the best locations in the city. Why not showcase it.*”

Chris Brown  
Owner of the 1400 Main St. property

“As I started talking with different folks and the architects, the architecture grew into something that would be aesthetically pleasing,” Brown told *The*



*Sarasota News Leader.* “Something you’d see in old Savannah, GA, or St. Augustine.”

Brown is in talks with an “extremely high-end” restaurant and bar company that wants to occupy the renovated space. However, he will have to win the approval of the city commissioners — who could review his plans as early as October.

“To put up gallery seating and bring back that old school look with the brick, that’s the intention of the design process,” Brown said.

“That is one of the best locations in the city,” he added. “Why not showcase it.”

Brown is best known as the owner of the Beach Club, The Hub Baja Grill and The Cottage restaurant on Siesta Key.

Love it or hate it, residents have started to weigh in on his proposed showcase at 1400 Main Street.

One thing is certain: It would drastically change one of the most visible corners in Sarasota. The property, bordering the southeast corner of Five Points, fronts one of the most utilized sidewalks downtown.

“I don’t think it fits in with Sarasota architecture in any way, shape or form,” said Cheryl



*Cheryl Walker, a 100 Central Ave. resident, is concerned about the encroachment of the galleries 8 feet out to Main Street’s sidewalk. Photo by Roger Drouin*



Walker, who lives in the condominium tower at 100 Central Ave.

But not everyone is displeased.

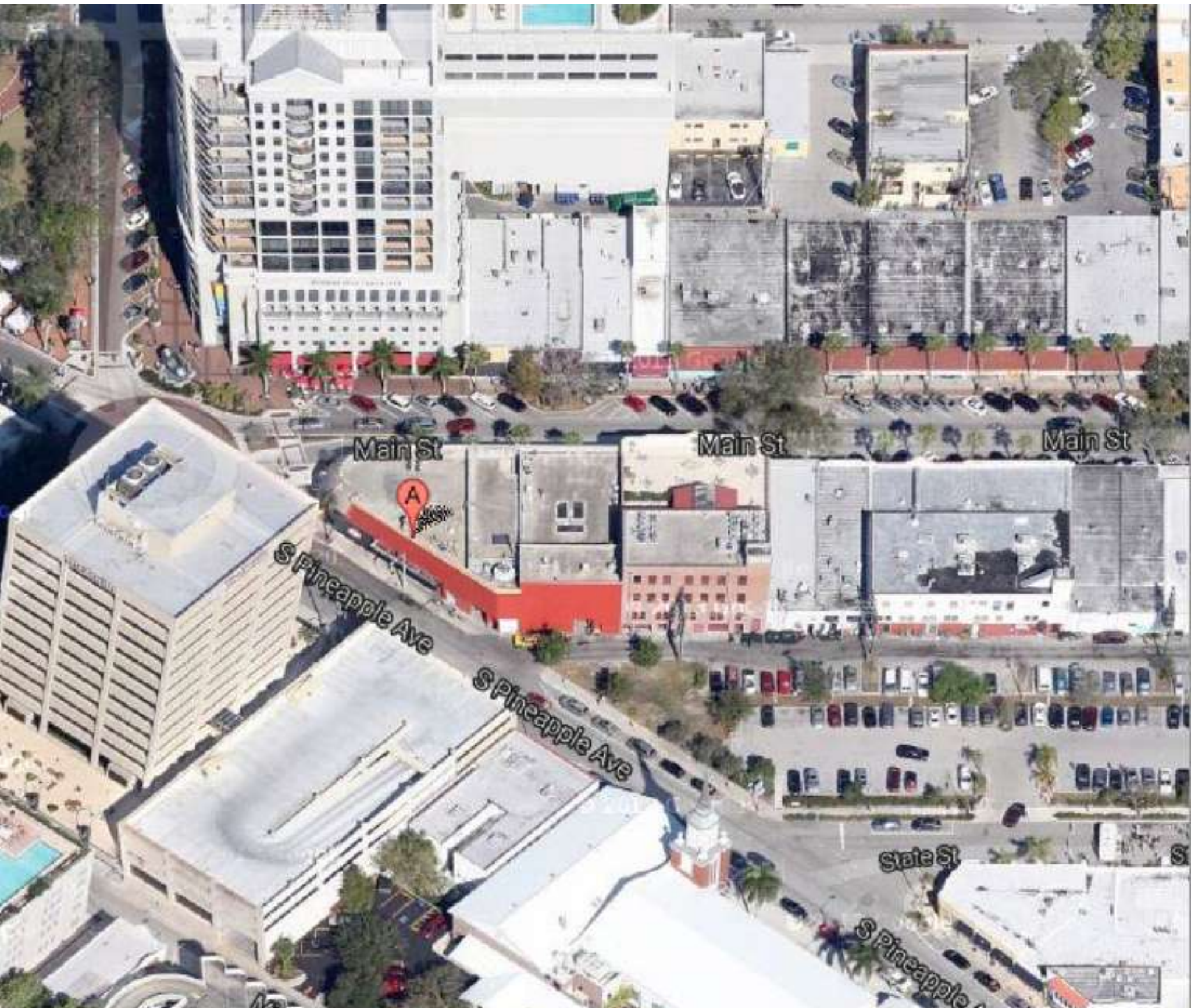
Vincent Taschetti, a creative art director, likes the architectural renderings he has seen.

“I think it’s fascinating,” Taschetti said of Brown’s proposal.

## VOICING CONCERNS

Walker is one of about a dozen residents who had contacted city planning staff as of Tuesday, Aug. 27, to voice concerns about the project, Courtney Mendez, a senior city planner, told the *News Leader*.

“I don’t think this 1920s deal will fit downtown,” Walker said in an interview with the *News Leader* this week.



The structure Chris Brown wants to transform is the historic Kress Building at Five Points located at 1400 Main Street. Image from Google Maps



“It is definitely a New Orleans type design,” she added. “[Sarasota] was never New Orleans.”

Walker is worried about the 12-foot-tall columns that would extend over the sidewalk. She thinks they will make it difficult for pedestrians and people using wheelchairs to navigate around the building, and she feels the covered area will obstruct views and block sunlight.

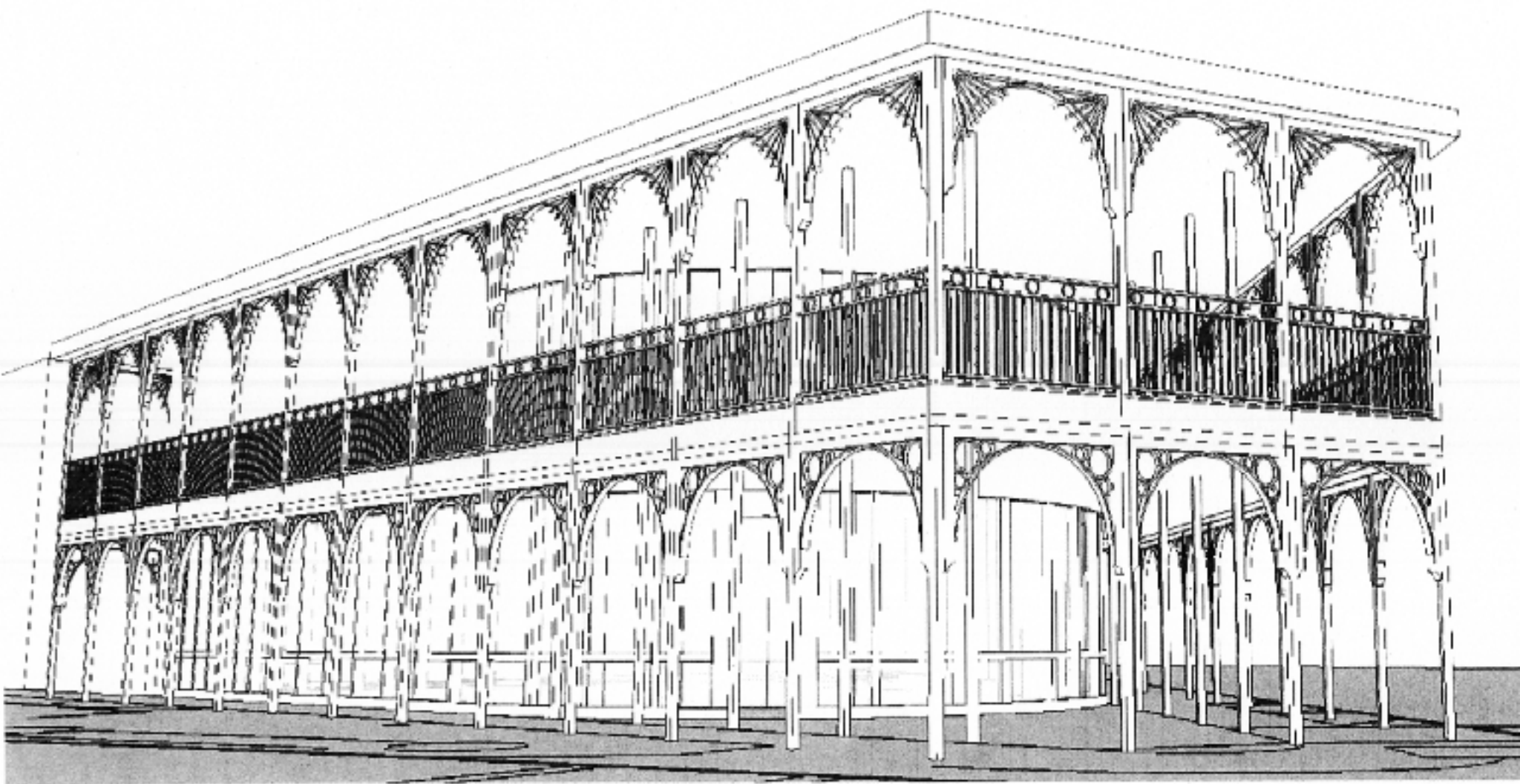
Aesthetics aside, Walker is frustrated that such an important and visible location can be transformed without a community workshop before the City Commission votes.

“Whether I like it or not is not as important as getting a public forum,” Walker said.

The proposed design necessitates Brown’s submission of a major encroachment application — a process that does not require a community workshop or a Sarasota Planning Board vote. However, residents will be able to speak at the City Commission meeting when that board addresses the application.

A more complex Conditional Use approval would have required a Planning Board hearing prior to the City Commission meeting.

On Aug. 7, Brown first presented his concept to the Development Review Committee (DRC). He heard an earful: Committee members offered 32 separate comments about the proposal, but not a turndown.



*The proposed design for the building at 1400 Main St. in Sarasota calls for galleries on the upper floor. Image courtesy of City of Sarasota*



Brown is scheduled to provide more details as well as answers to those comments when DRC meets on Sept. 18, said Mendez.

“It still needs to come back before DRC and then be scheduled by the City Auditor and Clerk’s Office [for the City Commission discussion],” Mendez pointed out. “October may be a possibility [for the City Commission action].”

Mendez noted this would be the first application regarding a project 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.

Emails and letters to city staff have mentioned the same concerns Walker has raised about the impact on pedestrians and the project’s appropriateness for the location. There have also been some concerns regarding the general appearance of the project.

In an interview with the *News Leader*, Denis Adams, also a resident at 100 Central Ave, mentioned the highly contested issue of noise downtown.

Adams said a restaurant would be suitable at the location, but he has concerns that the proposal opens the door for a nightclub.

“Right now Chris Brown is saying it will be a restaurant,” Adams noted. “But it has the potential to morph into something else. If you build a structure that’s something like Bourbon Street, I have a concern it could turn into some kind of club.”

Adams moved downtown with his wife two years ago. He says they love being able to walk everywhere. And while they enjoy the vitality downtown, Adams thinks there are enough bars in the 1400 block of Main Street, including Club Ivory, a nightclub at 1413 Main St.

“I look at the Beach Club, and I wouldn’t want anything like that on Main Street,” Adams said.

## FASCINATING PROJECT

Taschetti, the creative art director, wants to see something at 1400 Main St. that brings back the energy with which Patrick’s Restaurant imbued the triangular building before that establishment moved in 2011.

After Patrick’s relocated up the street, the building was home to Floribbean, a restaurant and nightclub. The structure has sat empty for several months.

Taschetti said the location is perfect for something that attracts people and inspires them to walk around.

“Anyone who wants to make that experience happen, I would support,” Taschetti added.

Taschetti has a bigger vision for Main Street that includes closing the street to traffic to make it a pedestrian mall similar to Lincoln Road on South Beach in Miami.

“Even Main Street on Lakewood Ranch seems to be more pedestrian-friendly, and it’s packed on Friday night,” Taschetti pointed out. 

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# TAKING SHAPE



SWEET SPARKMAN  
ARCHITECTS

## Historic Pavilion, West Concession and Public Safety Building



*The west pavilions and new public safety building at Siesta Public Beach have been designed by Sweet Sparkman Architects. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

## WITH THE FINAL CONTRACTS TENTATIVELY SET TO BE APPROVED IN LATE OCTOBER, THE COUNTY COMMISSION VOTES ON RANKING 'EXTRAS' FOR THE SIESTA BEACH PROJECT, FUNDS PERMITTING

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

If the subcontractors come in with bids below the maximum construction cost of \$16.7 million, the public will see more dune walkovers, additional two-pole shelters and an upgrade of the size of trees planted in the park and parking lot at Siesta Public Beach, the Sarasota County Commission agreed on Aug. 28.

Early indications are that the total cost will be about \$375,000 be-

low budget, Brad W. Gaubitz, a project manager in the Public Works Department, told the board. "We have been working diligently to assure that we'll be at the \$16.7 million level for the construction," he added.

“There’s nothing uglier than somebody who did a parking lot and put in spindly little trees.”

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County



“It’s no secret that time is of the essence on this project,” Commissioner Joe Barbetta pointed out. Further delays could cost the county another \$100,000 to \$200,000 in



annual interest on the bank loan staff proposes to take out to pay for the improvements, he added. “We need to get this thing moving.”

The commission is scheduled to receive the guaranteed maximum price of the project on Oct. 22 or 23, enabling it to cast a final vote to set the two years of work in motion. In the meantime, staff this week wanted to know the board’s views on the “extras” included in a list last presented in December. Those can be added to the project if expenses do come in lower than originally anticipated, staff noted.

Before the ranking review began, however, staff provided an overview of the project, with Carolyn N. Brown, director of parks and recreation, pointing out that the goal is to create features that would enhance “the No. 1 beach in the nation.”

Jerry Sparkman, a principal with Sweet Sparkman Architects in Sarasota, told the board the project team members were “super excited” about the design.

Referring to the original pavilion — which Brown noted dates to 1960 — Sparkman said it “is really a significant part of our cultural history. ... We want to clean off the barnacles to make it as good as it was. ... This is the introduction to our special beach.”

Sparkman said he invited renowned Sarasota architect Tim Seibert, who designed the pavilion, to come to the beach to talk with him about the structure. During that visit, Seibert asked the design team to protect the pavilion, Sparkman added, which the plans do.

The new public safety building on the site will be “floated” atop a storage structure near the



**East Concession / New Restrooms – View along Ramp**

*Dune walkovers will be elevated 19 feet. Image courtesy Sarasota County*



pavilion, Sparkman told the commissioners. That way, deputies with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office will have almost a 270-degree view of the surroundings, enabling them to keep a better eye on the parking lot as well as the beach, he added.

When Commissioner Christine Robinson asked whether members of the design team had consulted with administrative personnel of the Sheriff's Office regarding the design of the building, Sparkman replied that three meetings had been conducted since 2010 with representatives of the Sheriff's Office, including Sheriff Tom Knight and Siesta Key deputies.

Several months ago, Commissioner Nora Patterson said, Knight indicated he was not happy with the original proposal for two-way traffic

around the parking area. When she asked for the status of the traffic plan, Gaubitz replied that the current design calls for one-way traffic in the parking lot wherever possible.

Bill Waddell of Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc. added that Knight had given his approval to that latest design.

Sheriff's Office representatives have said one-way traffic decreases the potential for people fighting over parking spaces, as physical altercations are not uncommon during bustling days at the beach.

Waddell pointed out that the parking lot still would be able to accommodate a two-way flow of vehicles, but it would be striped to indicate one-way traffic.



**East Concession / New Restrooms – View from Deck**

*Visitors will have an expansive view of the beach and the Gulf of Mexico from the East Concession area. Image courtesy Sarasota County*



A new concession facility and restrooms will be constructed in the eastern section of the park, he continued. An elevated walkway — 19 feet high — will be built to allow people to walk from the west pavilion area to the east concessions, he explained. That structure will resemble one at Selby Gardens that allows people to roam through a natural area close to the water, he said. From the east concession area, visitors will have “a view [that] is quite extraordinary.”

THE ‘EXTRAS’

After the overview, Gaubitz asked the commissioners to consider the list of alternate features that could be added if the budget permits.

As proposed by staff, the list ranged from additional dune walkovers, at an approximate

Exhibit B

Siesta Beach Improvements – CIP # 93037

Project Alternates – Project Management Team Recommendation for Ranking

August 14, 2013

Rank	Alternate	Estimated Cost
1	Additional Replacements - Dune Walkovers	\$ 214,500.00
2	West "Wedding" Pavilion	\$ 241,697.50
3	10 Additional Two Pole Shelters	\$ 142,780.00
4	Tree Size and Species Upgrade	\$ 330,000.00
5	Upgrade Esplanade Concrete to Standard Pavers	\$ 124,609.10
6	Concrete Paving at Maintenance Yard	\$ 86,130.00
7	Covered Maintenance Building	\$ 73,689.00
8	Beach Road Improvements	\$ 486,000.00

Not Recommended:

9	1400 LF Precast Seat Wall	\$ 81,125.00
10	Upgrade Esplanade Concrete to Specified Plank Pavers (would replace Standard Pavers ranked 5 above)	\$ 754,755.12
11	Parking Lot Lighting Upgrade	\$ 995,720.00

*The County Commission this week revised a list of alternate features for Siesta Public Beach that previously was presented in December. Image courtesy Sarasota County*



East Pavilion 1



cost of \$214,500, to a multipurpose pavilion in the western section of the park (\$241,697.50) to 10 more two-pole shelters (\$142,780) to improvements on Beach Road at the entrance to the park (\$486,000).

Although the extra west pavilion was indicated on the chart to be for weddings, Barbetta reminded Gaubitz that the decision had been made to create a multi-functional facility.

In response to another question from Barbetta, Gaubitz said the dune walkovers, a covered maintenance building (\$73,689) and the multi-purpose pavilion all are eligible to be paid for with Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue, a decision the board could make later.

When Patterson asked what the “Beach Road Improvements” on the list indicated, Waddell explained the original plan called for milling and resurfacing of the road at the beach entry and exits. The design team later felt that work was unnecessary. “But it’s still there [on the list],” Patterson pointed out.

The team left it there because that was the list the commissioners had seen in December, Waddell told her. “Staff and the design team are not recommending that it be included.”

He added of the road, “It’s in pretty good shape right now.” On the other hand, he said, the landscaping along the road next to the park will be upgraded.

“Ah, good,” Patterson said.

Patterson also questioned Item 5 on the list — “Upgrade Esplanade Concrete to Standard Pavers” at an estimated cost of \$124,609.10.



*Decorative glass pavers will be used at intersections along the esplanade. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

“If you were to put pavers down for the whole esplanade, it kind of speaks against what the conversation was on doing a 15-foot-wide esplanade,” she added.

When former Parks and Recreation Manager John McCarthy unveiled the original park plan several years ago, he called the esplanade a safe means for people to walk from one end of the park to the other, and he noted it would be wide enough for people on bicycles and rollerblades to use it along with pedestrians.

Patterson told Gaubitz pavers are not as good a surface for bikes, especially with young children riding the vehicles. Still, she said, “Your design is really very pretty with embedded glass and the colors.”

Gaubitz earlier had presented an image of the decorative type of paver that would be used on walkway intersections at the park.

Responding to Patterson, he noted that “with so much sand moving around there,” dimples between the pavers most likely would fill with fine Siesta quartz, creating a smoother ride.

## THE RANKINGS

When it came down to ranking the alternates, Patterson announced, “I see no reason in the world why we have almost half a million in ... [for] repaving a road that doesn’t need to be paved.” That money could be used for other items on the list, she added.

Barbetta made a motion to eliminate the Beach Road Improvements from the list. It passed unanimously.

Further discussion ensued about the Tree Size and Species Upgrade, at an estimated cost of \$330,000.

Vice Chairman Charles Hines asked whether the plan called for removing mature Australian pines in the eastern section of the site, where they provide shade for picnic tables and the children’s playground. “No,” Gaubitz told him.

“To lose those, that’s a huge character part of the park,” Hines pointed out.

Asked for more details about that item, Gaubitz said the plan is for 64 green buttonwoods and 338 cabbage palms to be planted in the park and parking lot. With the upgrade, 5-inch buttonwoods would be used instead of 2-inch trees.

“I’m for the larger ones,” Patterson said. “There’s nothing uglier than somebody who

did a parking lot and put in spindly little trees,” especially given the need for cooling, as asphalt gets so hot in the sun.

A motion by Robinson passed unanimously: A revised Item 4 calls for \$190,000 for the tree upgrade for the park. A new Item 8 would be an upgrade for the parking lot, at a cost of \$140,000.

Then Patterson asked about the 10 additional two-pole shelters. “Is this an inordinate number [for the park]?”


The extra number would bring the total to 23, Gaubitz explained. “From an aesthetic standpoint,” he continued, “I think it’ll look really nice ... especially when [the shelters are] occupied with people enjoying themselves during the day.”

The shelters would have picnic tables, he noted.

Robinson told her colleagues that when she goes to the North Jetty Beach, she frequently has difficulty finding a two-pole shelter her family can use. “They’re worse than parking spots, actually,” she said of the demand for the structures.

The North Jetty Beach has five of the shelters, Gaubitz pointed out.

“That [park] probably has many, many fewer visitors [than Siesta],” Patterson conceded.

Finally, the commissioners unanimously approved a motion providing the reordered rankings to staff, as revised during their discussions and earlier votes. 



# This may take a while.

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## FOCUS ON FRUITVILLE

*Land to the east of Coburn Road falls within the boundaries of the proposed Fruitville Initiative. Photo by Roger Drouin*

### **AFTER THREE YEARS OF INACTION ON THE FRUITVILLE INITIATIVE, COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SAY THEY WANT TO SEE PROGRESS ON THE PLAN**

**By Roger Drouin**  
*County Editor*

After nearly three years at a standstill, Sarasota County's Fruitville Initiative — which would implement a form-based code for 320 acres of vacant land east of Interstate 75 — is on track to move ahead in two phases over the next few months, county staff told the County Commission Wednesday, Aug. 28.

“The county really has an opportunity to be a catalyst in future development in this area,” said Beth

Rozansky, the county's project manager on the Initiative.

Residents will be invited to participate in workshops before the final plan comes back to the County Commission by the end of this

year or the beginning of 2014, Rozansky said. The county is also scheduled to file an application to rezone the vacant land at the start of 2014.

“*We need to move this thing forward.*”

Joe Barbetta  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County





If the plan comes to fruition, proponents say the large-scale New Urbanist development would bring jobs to the southern edge of the growing I-75 corridor — and additional property tax revenue.

In light of that, three county commissioners said the Initiative has been taking much too long.

A plan should have been implemented several years ago after a blueprint in the form of a comprehensive plan change was approved in 2010, Commissioner Joe Barbetta pointed out.

“We need to move this thing forward,” he said.

Barbetta was frustrated that the project has been stalled over the past three years.

“The comp plan amendment was done in 2010, and nothing has happened since then. Nothing. Why?” he asked county staff.

“Three years is unacceptable,” Barbetta added. “This could have taken six months.”

## NOT A SHINING MOMENT

Commissioner Christine Robinson said the long delay “has not been a shining moment for Sarasota County,” that property owners have been kept waiting for the plan to come together.

The Fruitville Initiative encompasses several vacant properties east of I-75. Among the owners are the county, which has a public library and 42 vacant acres adjacent to that facility.



*Private land and county-owned property within the area totals 320 acres. Photo by Roger Drouin*



The area includes five other parcels, which are owned by Fox Creek Holdings; Glenn D. and Margaret E. Walters; Luella M. and Bryan E. Crofut; Thomas F. Kelly; and Sarasota Business Plaza.

“I want to say thanks to the property owners for sticking with us,” Robinson said.

Agreeing with Barbetta that county staff had not taken enough action over the past three years, she made a motion to require staff to turn in a progress report on the 15th of each month.

Robinson added that the request was unusual, but the updates would “hold everyone’s feet to the fire.”

“I can’t let this go anymore without making sure we stay on top of this,” she said.

Barbetta seconded the motion, which was approved in a 5-0 vote.

As county officials try to wrap up the Initiative area boundaries and an agreement with property owners, as well as apply for rezoning of the vacant land, timing is key, Barbetta said.

He predicts the five private property owners in the Fruitville Initiative area will be interested in trying to find development options as the economy recovers.

“We are coming out of a tough cycle,” Barbetta pointed out.



*Fox Creek is one of the residential communities on Richardson Road, to the northeast of the project area. Photo by Roger Drouin*



Barbetta believes the Initiative area can become a draw for companies looking to relocate to the area.

Chairwoman Carolyn Mason called the five property owners saints for waiting for the county to put together the plan.

“We will get there from here,” Mason said to the three who were in the audience at the meeting.

## MOVING THE BALL FORWARD

The 320 acres of vacant land in the Fruitville Initiative area is bordered by property with a variety of different land uses. The site borders I-75 to the west, existing rural neighborhoods to the east and the Celery Fields preserve to the south.

The goal of the Fruitville Initiative is to promote smart growth, setting guidelines for development that does not include the typical “big box retail” found at an interchange, said David Brain, a New College professor and consultant for the county whose research has focused on place-making.

“This is a fairly complicated project with a lot of stakeholders,” Brain noted at Wednesday’s County Commission meeting.

One of the goals of public workshops will be to reintroduce residents to the discussion and concepts, many which were already worked out in 2010 during a public process that included a five-day charrette.

“We want to engage stakeholders, but in way that is building off some of the public input we already have,” Brain said.

Barbetta responded that he did not want to see the conversation start from scratch.

“The charrette was a week long,” Barbetta noted. “We are not reinventing the wheel here. I don’t want a repeat of all the themes, when all this work has been done.”

Brain said the upcoming public workshops are necessary because so much time has lapsed since the comprehensive plan amendment was passed. Residents need to be updated and provided a forum where they can offer comments.

Brain and consultants at the firm Sweet Sparkman Architects will focus on moving “the ball forward,” the planning professor added.


The 42-acre county-owned parcel, called the “Quad” tract, could become a key catalyst in the development of the Initiative area, said Commissioner Nora Patterson.

She has high hopes for what is built there.

Over the years, there have been talks with representatives of several universities, who approached the county about locating a facility on the site, Patterson noted.

“None of these had worked out,” Patterson said. “The economy probably had something to with that.”

Jackson Laboratory’s failed plan to expand its facility to Sarasota County included talks about using the county-owned 42 acres, Patterson pointed out.

Patterson told county staff she wants to see the county’s Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) on the Initiative advertised widely, so interested investors and developers can send proposals. 





## TAKEN TO THE WOODSHED

*County Administrator Randall Reid addresses the County Commission during 2012 budget workshop as Chief Financial Planning Officer Steve Botelho listens. File photo*

### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS LAMBAST THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION TO THEM REGARDING AN EMPLOYEE'S RESIGNATION IN JULY

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

Almost exactly five months after Sarasota County commissioners criticized County Administrator Randall Reid for communications failings, they rebuked him this week for mishandling their notification about the July resignation of an employee in the Office of Financial Planning.

Chairwoman Carolyn Mason raised the issue at the end of the board's regular business session on Aug. 28. The fact that Reid

never mentioned to her Suzanne Gable's lack of a valid CPA license when Gable resigned in early July "is really distressing to me. It makes me feel like I was misled," Mason told her colleagues.

**“Mr. Botelho knew [Suzanne Gable] and thought she had a CPA and asked to hire her. He was also shocked when it came up that she did not [have the license].**

Randall Reid  
Administrator  
Sarasota County



Reid told her only that Gable was leaving because of a family situation, Mason pointed out. Later, after Reid had gone to Switzerland as part of the delegation trying to win the 2017 World Row-



ing Championships bid for Benderson Park, she learned about the CPA factor.

Gable was hired in mid-August 2012 to fill the vacant position of strategic and financial planning director in the Office of Financial Planning. In an Aug. 17 email to the County Commission, Reid wrote that he had worked with her for 10 years in Alachua County “and know of her integrity, work ethic, and intelligence.”

Gable started employment in Sarasota County on Sept. 24, 2012. According to a timeline put together by Gable’s boss, Chief Financial Planning Officer Steve Botelho, and Joanie Whitley, the county’s director of human resources, an employee in Clerk of Court Karen Rushing’s office notified Botelho on July 1 that Gable’s CPA license was not valid. On July 2, Botelho and Deputy County Administrator Tom

Harmer briefed Reid on the situation. When Botelho met with Gable on the afternoon of July 3, the timeline says, Gable confirmed the “null and void” CPA status.

On the morning of July 5, Botelho briefed the employee and labor relations manager in the Human Resources Department, who was acting in Whitley’s stead. Reid was out of the office, the timeline adds. On the afternoon of July 8, Botelho asked Gable to come to Whitley’s office to discuss the situation; during that meeting, Gable resigned, the timeline notes.

Before the commissioners opened their regular meeting on July 9, Reid notified them individually of Gable’s departure, the timeline adds.



*Commissioner Christine Robinson (left) confers with Chairwoman Carolyn Mason during a January board meeting. File photo*



## OTHER BOARD MEMBERS WEIGH IN

Mason told her colleagues their Aug. 28 meeting was the first opportunity she had had to discuss the matter with them, as it would not have been appropriate for her to talk with them about it individually. She wanted to know whether any of them had a concern, she added.

“I’m surprised to hear what you had to say, because it was presented to me by Mr. Reid that [Gable] didn’t have the CPA [license] that I thought she had,” Commissioner Nora Patterson said.

She and Reid had concurred in the view that Gable was “an awfully good employee,” Patterson added.

Regarding the CPA issue, Patterson continued, “I find it difficult to believe he didn’t communicate the same thing to everybody.”

Mason responded that she and Reid did discuss the matter after his return from Switzerland. “Mr. Reid feels fairly certain that he did tell me [about the CPA matter], but I’m fairly certain he didn’t.”

Commissioner Joe Barbetta said he recalled Reid mentioning only that Gable was leaving because of her parents’ health problems. “It wasn’t until I got back from Switzerland that I actually learned that she was not in fact a CPA,” he continued, “and that was disturbing because [Gable] held herself out to be one for quite a few years.” (Barbetta also was a member of the rowing bid delegation.)

“My bigger problem,” Barbetta pointed out, “is just the ongoing morale concerns” and major project delays, including the improvements



*Suzanne Gable awaits the resumption of a May budget workshop. File photo*

at Siesta Public Beach. “I find ... there’s been no sense of urgency on the part of staff, and leadership needs to direct that. Leadership needs to ride herd on the managers or the department heads who are not doing their jobs properly. ... The Gable thing is just one more thing on top of that.”

He added, “I worry about employee morale and, from what I hear, the fear that is permeating the organization — fear of us or administration, I don’t know. ... So my frustration has to deal with needing more confidence in the leadership to make this a first-class professional organization, where employees shouldn’t be afraid ... to say ‘Hi’ to commissioners.”

Commissioner Christine Robinson pointed out that Reid never mentioned the CPA factor to her, either. Robinson reminded her col-



leagues that, after she learned of the situation, she undertook her own research — combing through emails and personnel files — to determine what had happened when.

She discovered Gable had not had a CPA license since 2005, Robinson noted. “It would have been a different story,” she said, “had I gotten the explanation [from staff] ... ‘We made a mistake; we should have checked. ...

Here’s what we’re doing to make sure this doesn’t happen again.’ But that’s not what happened in this circumstance.”

*“My bigger problem is just the ongoing morale concerns.”*

Joe Barbetta  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

Vice Chairman Charles Hines told his colleagues that he, like Patterson, had heard from Reid about the CPA factor. The impression he had from Reid, Hines added, was that Reid was very upset that Gable never made him aware of the situation.

Robinson said she was also upset because Gable “was touted in a press release” as a CPA.

The Aug. 17 email Reid sent to the board about Gable’s accepting the Sarasota County position said, “This hiring adds a CPA to our financial management staff, which was one of the concerns expressed in my initial interviews.”

County staff and the commissioners were told Gable was a CPA, Robinson added, “and that’s a pretty big deal.”

Regarding the resignation, Patterson said, “The administrator was not going to want to hang her out to dry publicly. ... I don’t think I would respect an administrator that went to

the public and said, ‘This employee lied about having a CPA degree.’”

Patterson added, “It doesn’t seem to me to be the end of the world.”

Moreover, she pointed out, Reid has been the county’s administrator only since January 2012, and “the county was in turmoil” when he came. County Administrator Jim

Ley had been forced to resign as a result of a scandal in the Procurement Department, and the deputy administrator “was pushed out. A number of people lost their

jobs,” Patterson stressed.

As for the employee atmosphere, she continued, “When we climb on staff, which I’m guilty of, too — I’m not pointing fingers — it makes people actually literally scared to come in front of us. They should be able to handle it, but it doesn’t help morale.”

## REID’S REMARKS

After Patterson suggested Reid be given an opportunity to respond, he told the commissioners he had made an effort to inform each of them about Gable’s situation — both the lack of the CPA license and her family health concerns. “It was hurtful to me,” he added, that Gable had not told him about her CPA status.

Additionally, he said, “We have resignations frequently here, and they tend to be left as resignations,” without elaboration on the reasons.



Reid apologized directly to Mason, saying he thought he had told her the full story about Gable's departure.

"Thank you," Mason replied.


As for Gable's relocation to Sarasota County: "Mr. Botelho knew her and thought she had a CPA and asked to hire her," Reid pointed out. "He was also shocked when it came up that she did not [have the license]."

If the commissioners preferred, he said, he would start notifying them of any important situation by email. The reason he had not been doing that, he pointed out, was because they became upset if the public, including the news media, learned of a situation by reading county emails before the board members read their notes from him.

Patterson said that if an important matter arose, she preferred a verbal communication followed by email.

Reid should have phoned the board members about the Gable resignation, Robinson pointed out, instead of trying to speak with them individually in a hurry before the July 9 meeting.

Reid also told the board that Gable did not falsify any documents while she was employed with the county. And though he was surprised staff did not check to see whether her CPA license was valid when she was considered for the position in the Office of Financial Planning, he continued, the certification was not necessary for the job.

At the conclusion of almost 35 minutes of discussion, Patterson said to Mason, "Madame Chair, it's best to air these things ... and maybe we can all live together better ...." 



*County Administrator Randall Reid reviews an agenda item this spring. File photo*



*Christine Robinson. Photo by Norman Schimmel*





# A DAY IN COURT

*Attorneys and county commissioners say more courtroom facilities are needed at the R.L. Anderson Administration Center in Venice. Image courtesy Google Maps*

## **SOUTH COUNTY ATTORNEYS PUSH FOR EASIER ACCESS TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

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

County Commissioner Christine Robinson calls it a step forward, albeit a “very itty bitty step.” Last week the commission voted to have staff report back on the future of space allocation at the county’s R.L. Anderson Administration Center in Venice, with an eye toward expanding courtrooms there.

The move comes amid a wide-ranging debate about how court resources are allocated around the county, a point of particular contention for South County lawyers who

say the limited facilities outside downtown Sarasota make access to the justice system difficult. Say you live in Englewood and you need to file a lawsuit. It’s going to take all day to schlep to downtown Sarasota and back, says Englewood attorney Dorothy Korszen, the immediate past president of the South County Division of the Sarasota County Bar Association.

“*I obviously want to see more court services in South County, just because it’s the right thing to do for our residents.*”

Christine Robinson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County



While the Anderson building does include courtroom space, it currently handles only misdemeanors and small civil cases (where the “money at



issue” is less than \$15,000), as well as family hearings, divorces and domestic violence cases, notes 12th Judicial Circuit Court Administrator Walt Smith. Two full-time judges and one part-time magistrate work in the facility; Smith has been trying to figure out ways to redistribute resources to increase the Anderson building’s capacity.

One short-term proposal: bringing a judge to Venice to handle civil hearings during times when the courts there aren’t occupied. Smith hopes to have that in place by January, when his office changes judicial assignments.

The courts had installed a video linking system between Anderson and the Sarasota courthouse, but Smith says it was rarely used.

Robinson, a Venice attorney herself, says the video system “wasn’t utilized a whole lot” because lawyers want face-to-face communication with judges. She chaired a task force on the issue of court access for the Bar’s South County Division, so she’s intimately familiar with the issue.

Many lawyers “are of the opinion that a new facility should be located in the south county,” says Korszen. During a facilities planning workshop held with the commission this March, Smith laid out one possibility for southern expansion: displacing other offices housed at the Anderson facility, such as those of the tax collector and the property appraiser. “We think we could deliver better service



*Judicial system facilities planning has focused largely on the courthouses and jail in downtown Sarasota. Image courtesy Sarasota Count*



to the south county citizens by doing that,” Smith said.


He argued it would be cheaper and easier to remodel Anderson to provide more courtrooms than it would be to construct a whole new courthouse. Finding new office space for the tax collector and others would be less demanding than building something secure enough to serve the courts.

Robinson tells *The Sarasota News Leader* the county is “trying to come up with short-term solution, understanding that we just don’t have the money for a long-term solution.” Everybody wants a South County jail, she says, but that alone would be a “\$50 million endeavor.”

“I obviously want to see more court services in South County, just because it’s the right

thing to do for our residents,” Robinson said in March. “They’ve got to take an hour and a half of travel time ... sometimes for a five-minute court hearing.”

She added that she would oppose any changes that would remove misdemeanor hearings from the Anderson facility. “Those folks are the ones who have a hard time getting around. Getting to court is a problem; getting off work is a problem,” she argued. “That would turn much of that population into felony offenders.” Instead of getting minor offenders “out of the system,” it would send them on a “downward spiral.”

County Commissioner Charles Hines said in March he was “very happy” the commission was examining the issue. “Services to the South County have gone down at the same time the population has increased.” 



*South County residents can lose a whole day, having to travel to Sarasota for court proceedings. Photo by Scott Proffitt*



An aerial photograph of a coastal region. On the left, a large body of greenish water meets a sandy beach. A road, labeled 'Blind Pass Rd', runs along the beach. To the right of the beach, there is a large, dark, irregularly shaped area that appears to be a former inlet or a large pond, with some lighter-colored patches. Further right, another road is labeled 'North Casey Key Rd'. In the upper right, a small cluster of land is labeled 'Bird Keys'. The overall terrain is a mix of dark green vegetation and lighter sandy or muddy areas.

# AN OPENING FOR A (CHANNEL) OPENING

“ *You plug an inlet like that and ... Mother Nature [will react]. She's making the best of a bad situation.* ”

Jim Herbert  
Chairman  
Midnight Pass Society

”

*An aerial view shows the general area where Midnight Pass once was located, between Blind Pass Road and North Casey Key Road. Image from Google Maps*



## SARASOTA RESIDENTS HAVE LEARNED THAT A STATE RULE CHANGE CREATES A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR THE COUNTY TO TRY TO REOPEN MIDNIGHT PASS

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

The chairman of the [Midnight Pass Society](#) says he is “cautiously optimistic” about renewing an effort this year to open Midnight Pass, as the area marks the 30th anniversary of the inlet’s closing.

Jim Herbert was among a delegation of Sarasota County residents who met on Aug. 21

with officials of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to discuss whether the county was treated unfairly in its last attempt to gain state and federal approval to allow water once again to flow through Midnight Pass from Little Sarasota Bay to the Gulf of Mexico.

### Impacts of Midnight Pass Closure



Changes to Bay, Beaches and Recreational Use Resulting from Closure and New Reopening

Project Design Ameliorates for these Losses and Strives to Maximize Benefits



*A slide from a presentation to the County Commission several years ago shows impacts emanating from the closing of Midnight Pass in 1983. Image courtesy of Sarasota County*



“We feel Sarasota County’s permit application was improperly handled [in 2008],” Herbert told *The Sarasota News Leader* on Aug. 26. The Aug. 21 meeting was an opportunity to make the case for DEP’s reconsideration of the issue, he added.

Although it will be up to the Sarasota County Commission to pursue the endeavor, state officials have indicated they are “open to scheduling a formal pre-application meeting during which specific elements of a proposed project would be carefully vetted,” Sarasota County

Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford wrote to County Administrator Randall Reid in an email on Aug. 22 that summed up the meeting.

Wreford explained to the *News Leader* that he sat in on the discussion “to be the eyes and ears” for the county as the delegation members talked with FDEP Deputy Secretary Jeff Littlejohn, along with a division director, a deputy division director and the assistant general counsel for the department — “just so we [could] be aware of what’s going on.”

## Midnight Pass Reopening Project (with Turtle Beach Access Channel)



A 2006 presentation prepared by Erickson Consulting Engineers shows how the pass could be reopened with a Turtle Beach access channel. Image courtesy of Sarasota County



Commissioner Nora Patterson, who lives on Siesta Key and long has been supportive of efforts to reopen the pass, told *The Sarasota News Leader* on Aug. 26 that her primary concern at this point is how much it would cost the county to revive the project.

“I have mixed feelings about [the new initiative],” she said.

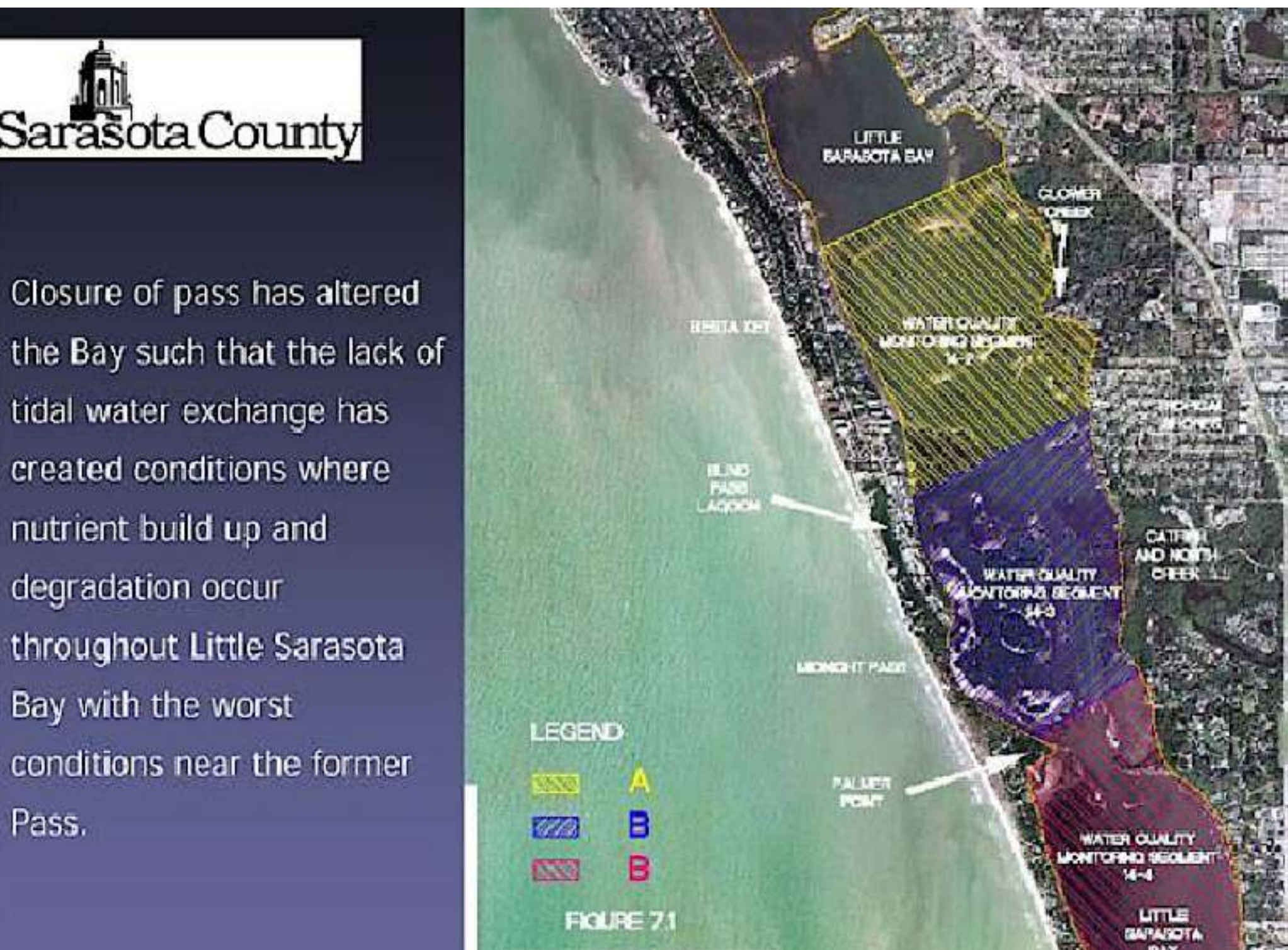
The 2008 estimate she recalled for physically reopening the channel was about \$5 million, she added, with an extra expense of \$1 million

to \$2 million every two to three years to keep the pass clear.

“The county’s got a lot of straws reaching into its budget right now,” Patterson continued, referring to the 2014 fiscal year spending plan. “And while we hope for the best in terms of adding to our tax base, I think [the pass project] is a pretty unknown quantity.”

## THE FDEP MEETING

After FDEP sent the county an informal letter in 2008 to indicate a denial of its application



A 2006 graphic shows how the lack of tidal water exchange has allowed nutrient build-up and degradation in Little Sarasota Bay. Image courtesy of Sarasota County



was coming, the county withdrew that application, Wreford explained to the *News Leader*.

Herbert told the *News Leader* the Midnight Pass Society challenged the department's action at that time, saying it had exceeded its authority in a number of ways.

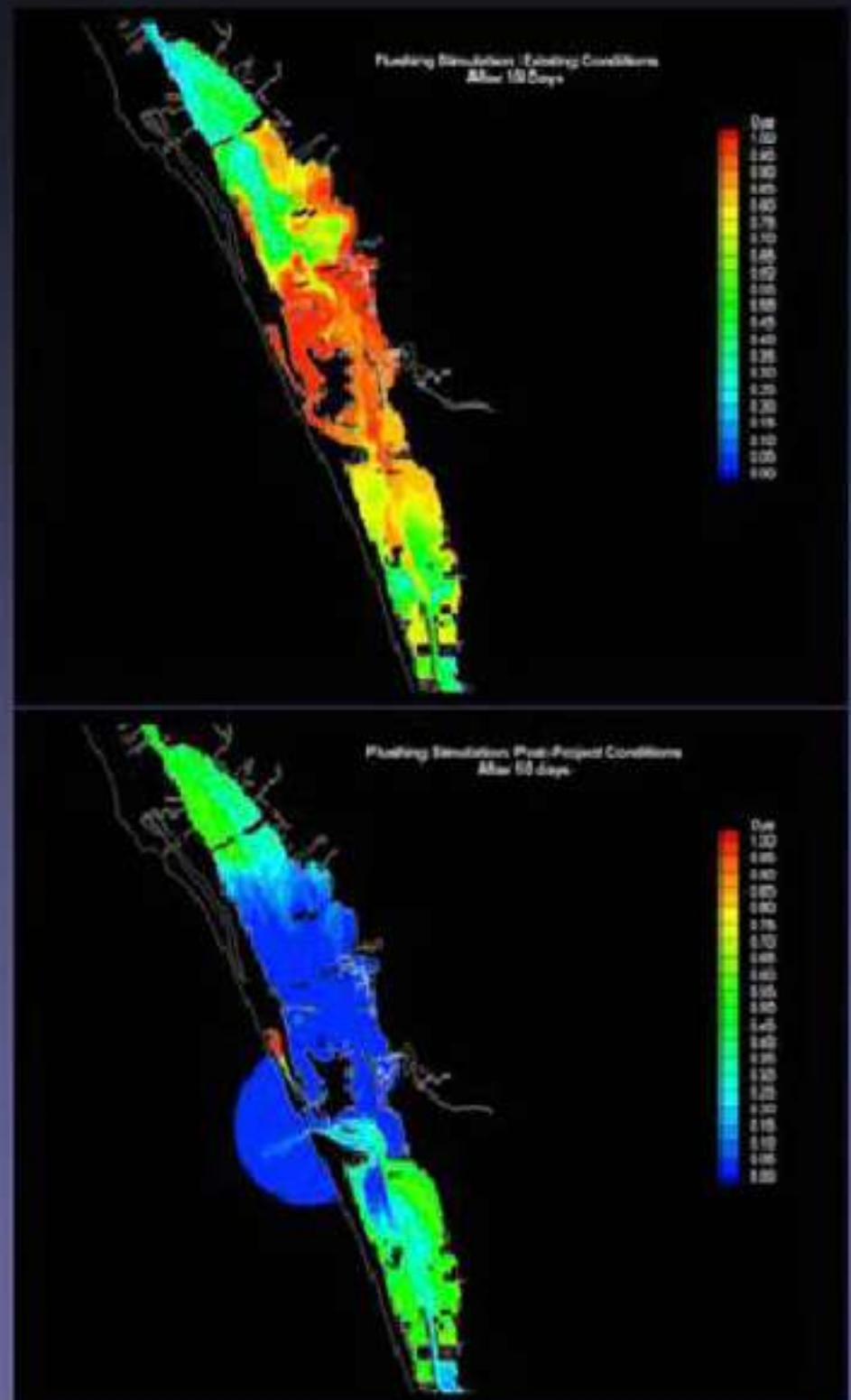
As a result of that, Herbert continued, the state's Joint Administrative Procedure Committee (JAPC) sent a letter to the FDEP general counsel on March 11, 2009, agreeing with

the Midnight Pass Society. "We were astounded," Herbert added.

That JAPC letter to Tom Beason, general counsel of the department, pointed out concerns with DEP Rule 62B-41.005. Among other facets of that rule, the letter points out, the rule "also states that previously existing inlets which have been closed due to recent human activity 'may' be reopened if certain conditions are met. Use of the word 'may' necessarily implies that the department ei-

## Flushing and Exchange

- Closure of Midnight Pass created conditions where the exchange of water in Little Sarasota Bay with the Gulf was greatly reduced compared to adjacent water bodies, Big Sarasota Bay, Blackburn Bay.
- This altered the conditions in Little Sarasota Bay and created potential for greater build-up of pollutants and potential degradation of the ecosystem.
- Potential influence on water clarity and seagrass distribution.
- Opening of Pass would return Little Sarasota Bay closer to its past conditions.



Another 2006 chart prepared by Erickson Consulting Engineers shows more details regarding the effects the pass's closure has had on Little Sarasota Bay. Image courtesy Sarasota County



ther may or may not choose to allow an inlet to be reopened at its option with or without any rational basis. This appears to constitute an arrogation of unbridled discretion to the department.”

The letter continued, “Section 120.52(8)(d) [of the Florida State Statutes] defines invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority as the vesting of unbridled discretion in an agency by rule.”

It added, “The category of existing inlets which have been closed due to recent human

activity, which appears in this rule, is not included in the law implemented, s.161.041(1), F.S. This rule therefore appears to enlarge upon the law implemented.

“Finally, the phrase ‘recent human activity’ is not defined, rendering this rule impermissibly vague,” the letter says.

The conclusion, Herbert pointed out, was that FDEP rules needed to be rewritten, and they were.

To further underscore the question of whether Sarasota County had been treated unfairly in

## Biotic Changes to Bay

- ❑ Pass channel and sediment trap will result in direct impact to 3.0 ac of mangrove habitat and 12.65 ac of seagrass habitat
- ❑ Opening of the Pass will result in more productive climax species of seagrass will colonize existing and new areas areas of seagrass beds (turtle grass and manatee grass)
- ❑ Newly formed intertidal shoals will positively impact shorebirds
- ❑ Opening of the Pass expected to result in increased fish diversity, increased presence of snapper-grouper complex species, and allow for migratory passage of species from interior seagrass and mangrove habitat to offshore areas

*A chart in the 2006 Erickson report shows positive impacts that could be expected from the reopening of Midnight Pass. Image courtesy of Sarasota County*



the review of its application, Herbert noted, the Midnight Pass Society later learned that a Lee County application to reopen an inlet — submitted about the same time as the Sarasota County application regarding Midnight Pass — was approved.

Karyn Erickson, the consultant who worked on the county's permit application, was astonished when she discovered the Lee County action, Herbert added. Erickson, who is pres-

ident of her own [consulting firm](#), was part of the delegation that appeared before DEP last week, he noted.

## THE LAWSUIT

Last year, the Midnight Pass Society was one of the plaintiffs in a revised federal lawsuit filed in the effort to reopen the channel. The defendants were Sarasota County, FDEP, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Com-



*Sarasota County Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford. File photo*



mission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The plaintiffs originally filed the suit in March 2011 but withdrew it in the fall of 2011 after the determination was made that errors in the lawsuit could have hindered its progress through the legal system, Herbert told the *News Leader* in June 2012.

The revised lawsuit contended that “acts and omissions of federal, state and local governmental officials are keeping Midnight Pass artificially closed, which is causing ongoing harm to the environment, the Florida manatee, and residents of the Siesta Key area in continuing violation of the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act ...”

The lawsuit pointed out that Midnight Pass “was a natural and navigable channel owned by the State of Florida at the juncture of Sies-

ta Key and Casey Key ... [which are] barrier islands located between the western side of Little Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 12 miles south of the city of Sarasota.”

It further noted that the pass appeared on navigation charts dating to 1883. Even the “improper dumping of approximately 225,000 cubic yards of dredged material” during the construction of the Intracoastal Waterway in the 1960s did not cause the pass to close naturally, the lawsuit contended, though that dumping did result in the pass migrating, leading to erosion of beachfront property.

In 1983, two Siesta Key residents “whose homes were threatened by beach erosion artificially filled Midnight Pass with spoil and sand and closed it,” the lawsuit pointed out.

Those private homeowners were Syd Solomon and Pasco Carter Jr.



Commissioner Nora Patterson. Photo by Norman Schimmel



The county, the state and the Army Corps of Engineers issued the permits for that closure, the lawsuit said, “on the condition that [the pass] be reopened in the future. Midnight Pass remains closed, resulting in ongoing harm to the water in Little Sarasota Bay, the property of thousands of homeowners, the economic livelihood of businesses that depend on tourism, fishing and boating, and the safety and well-being of the endangered Florida Manatee.”

Filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida in Tampa, the lawsuit was voluntarily dismissed in July.

The Notice of Dismissal, filed on April 26, noted that on March 26, “the court dismissed the case against all state defendants on sovereign immunity grounds. Without [them], the court may not be able to afford plaintiffs the relief they sought,” the notice added.

Instead of appealing, Herbert told the *News Leader*, the plaintiffs chose to pursue the option to “sit down and talk turkey” with FDEP officials in light of the rules change.

He pointed out that county representatives also had felt DEP was unfair in its handling of the application in 2008, but they decided not to pursue legal action then because of the expense.

## THE WAITING GAME

The only county commissioner to comment at length after receiving the Wreford email forwarded by Reid last week was Vice Chairman Charles Hines. “I say ... let’s keep this on or put it on our ‘to do’ list,” he wrote Reid on Aug. 22. “Just not sure of the timing of when this should or could be picked back up with all of the other pending projects.”

Chairwoman Carolyn Mason just thanked Reid and Wreford for the update.

In an interview with the *News Leader*, Wreford noted that while the FDEP officials on Aug. 21 “certainly seem open” to considering the issue anew, the decision to pursue the application again rests with the County Commission.


In an interview before his trip to Tallahassee, Wreford pointed out that the county withdrew its application in 2008 before DEP formally denied it. Therefore, he said, if the County Commission decided once more to seek the reopening of the channel, it might be possible to reactivate that previous application, saving the considerable expense of starting all over.

“It’s a huge investment in that application,” Herbert concurred. If it could be resubmitted, he added, new fees would be avoided and the action would “potentially salvage a huge amount of the environmental and engineering work that’s been done.”

Still, as Wreford pointed out in the Aug. 22 email, “the next step would be to schedule formal pre-application meetings with FDEP and with the Federal review agencies, with particular focus on the National Marine Fisheries and the Fish and Wildlife Service.”

Referring to the FDEP officials, he told the *News Leader* last week, “As expected, really ... they couldn’t be terribly committal.”

“It’s not a done deal,” Herbert conceded. “Our only attempt ... was not to leave any stone unturned.”

As for the pass itself, he said, “It’s still a pale shadow of what it used to be and what it could be. ... You plug an inlet like that and ... Mother Nature [will react]. She’s making the best of a bad situation.” 





## RAMPING IT UP

*Children ages 2 to 5 compete in BMX Strider events at the Sarasota track. Photo courtesy of Sarasota County*

### THE COUNTY COMMISSION TENTATIVELY AGREES TO FUND THE UPGRADES NEEDED TO MAKE ITS BMX TRACK A MAJOR COMPETITION VENUE

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

It took him a few months, but Sarasota County Commissioner Joe Barbetta finally won support from his fellow board members this week for upgrading the county's [BMX facility on 17th Street](#).

Although Barbetta's motion was pegged to the county's Parks and Recreation Department supplying documentation of project details and estimates, his motion passed on a unanimous vote.

It came after more people appeared be-

fore the County Commission during the public comments portion of its regular meeting on Aug. 27 to plead for the addition of a 5-meter ramp and the reconfiguration of the track to make the BMX facility the only one of its type available on the U.S. East Coast — and only the second one in the nation. The other facility, in [Chula Vista, CA](#), is in demand by athletes from all over the world for training purposes, the commissioners heard in public comments at their Aug. 20 budget workshop.

“*I can support the project. It's hard to resist when these kids come in front of you.*”

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County



# Sarasota BMX



1500 North Tuttle Avenue  
Sarasota, Florida 34237



**FUTURE HOME OF SARASOTA BMX SUPERCROSS**



Wednesday, August 28, 2013

## The Supercross Track has been Approved!



### BMX Race Times

- Practice Tues 6pm-8pm \$3.
- Practice Thurs 6pm-8pm \$3.
- Practice Fri 6pm-7:30, Race 8pm \$5.
- 1st and 3rd Fri - Trophy Race \$7.
- Event Calendar

### Strider Race Times

Strider Practice  
Small Track  
Tues & Thurs  
5-6pm & 8pm  
Cost \$2.

Strider Practice  
Small Track  
Fri 6-7:30pm  
Big Track 8pm

Strider Racing  
1st & 3rd Fri  
Race 7:45 Cost \$5.

### Our Facebook Page



### Google+ Badge



### Pages

- Home
- The Place to Race
- Getting Started
- Track Rules
- Local Pros
- Photo Galleries
- Board of Directors
- By Laws (Updated)
- Contact Us

### Welcome to Sarasota BMX



### Blog Archive

- ▼ 2013 (20)
  - ▼ August (7)
    - The Supercross Track has been Approved!
    - Supercross Vote has been Delayed
    - Official Meeting for the SuperCross Track
    - BMX Community shows support for SX Track
    - Supercross Awareness Race Details
    - SuperCross Awareness Race Coming August 16th
    - SRQ Magazine is Coming to Sarasota BMX
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  - April (2)
  - March (1)
  - February (1)
  - January (1)

The idea has been years in the making. Volunteers from Sarasota BMX and members of the Florida BMX community have brought forth proposals year after year to build a Supercross track in Sarasota County. The 2013 vote received more attention and support than any before and the result was a resounding YES!

We would like to thank each and every person that has had our back through all of this. BIG thank you to Joey Leto for getting up and speaking in front of the commissioners. BIG thank you to each and every parent and bmx member that went to the meetings and spoke to the commissioners. A BIG thank you to everyone that sent in emails! Congrats to all our riders, current and future...

## Supercross is COMING TO SARASOTA!

As a big THANK YOU to everyone, tomorrow night's practice is FREE. We will have cake to celebrate getting our new Supercross track! Come out and celebrate with us.

Posted by Alex Hutchinson

+1 Recommend this on Google

Tuesday, August 20, 2013

## Supercross Vote has been Delayed



Sarasota BMX already is celebrating the County Commission vote supporting the expansion of the local track. Image from [www.sarasotabmx.net](http://www.sarasotabmx.net)



Since the commissioners took an initial vote on May 14 to reduce the county's disaster recovery reserve fund from a 90-day operation level to 75 days, Barbetta has argued that the \$8.1 million freed up by the change should be put to use for economic development in the community. However, his motion on Aug. 28 left the source of the \$1 million needed for the BMX project open-ended.

In response to questions from the board, Chief Financial Planning Officer Steve Botelho recently consulted with Deputy County Attorney Kathleen Schneider to learn whether Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue could be utilized for projects such as the BMX upgrades. According to an email Botelho sent the commissioners on Aug. 26, Schneider's opinion

was that the BMX project was not eligible for such funds.

However, Commissioner Nora Patterson told her colleagues on Aug. 28, "I'm pretty sure that [the BMX track] was eligible" for TDT revenue several years ago.

A portion of the TDT tax that Patterson thought could be allocated for physical improvements may be used only for events, according to Schneider, Patterson noted.

Nonetheless, Commissioner Christine Robinson pointed out that Virginia Haley, president of Visit Sarasota County — the community's tourism office — is scheduled to appear before the commission in late September to discuss a revision of the ordinance governing TDT revenue usage.



*Athletes compete in a BMX race in France. Five of the world's permanent supercross tracks are outside the United States. Photo via Wikimedia Commons*



“And I think this may be part of that [discussion],” Patterson added.

If so, she continued, that would provide between \$300,000 and \$400,000 per year that could go to the BMX project. “That’s not going to get you there, but it gets you closer than needing the full million [dollars],” she told Barbetta.

“I can support the project,” Patterson added. “It’s hard to resist when these kids come in front of you.”

Two children were among the public speakers on Aug. 27 who pleaded for the upgrades of the BMX track.

Another speaker who addressed the board that day was Jeff Leto, vice president of Sarasota BMX. On Aug. 10, he sent the commissioners an email with the following facts:


- A Sarasota supercross track will conservatively generate more than \$2.7 million annually for the county’s economy.
- Sarasota BMX has a written commitment from the U.S. Olympic cyclist governing body, the International Cycling Union (UCI), to host at least three supercross races over the next three years should the track be built.
- “Sarasota BMX was found in 1974 by volunteers and has been operating on the same county property since its inception.”
- Over 98 percent of the cost to operate the track comes from state and national races and local members.

- “All of the labor to run the track comes from volunteers.”
- There are only six permanent supercross tracks in the world and only one in the U.S. (The upgrades at the Sarasota facility would make it a supercross track.)
- Sarasota BMX hosts at least one state race annually and it will host the 2014 State Championship.
- Sarasota BMX has a verbal commitment from the national USA BMX organization saying it will hold a national race here every year should the track be built
- Professional BMXers and Olympians will move to Sarasota so they can train at the track.

“I’m going to support this because if [the money] can come from TDT, I’ll be OK with that,” Robinson said, cautioning that if that did not prove to be the case, she would not guarantee her “Yes” vote on the formal approval of the project.

“I would prefer to see it come from TDT funds also,” Vice Chairman Charles Hines said. Nonetheless, he pointed out, “The park’s already there; we’re adding a very important piece to it.”

Barbetta already had explained that if the board did not act this week, a BMX track builder was working on an offer to construct a facility between Daytona and Orlando.

“There is an urgency factor,” Hines noted. “I think this will become a really big deal in our community.” 





## 'NOT READY FOR BRT'

**THE COUNTY COMMISSION AGREES TO WITHDRAW AN APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR A BUS RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM BUT ASKS STAFF TO CONTINUE TO LOOK AT OTHER OPTIONS**

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

Once again, it came down to the money.

After about nine months of more intensive staff time and discussions among the Sarasota County Commission, the Sarasota City Commission and the Manatee County Commission, the Sarasota County board this week voted 4-1 to

withdraw its application for federal support for a bus rapid transit (BRT) system to serve the community.

“*Redevelopment follows transit, and we're never going to get the North Trail redeveloped if we don't proceed with the BRT proposal, albeit as costly as it is.*”

Joe Barbetta  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

The board was facing a September deadline to decide on proceeding with its 2010 application for federal support for a BRT system along the CSX railroad corridor or choosing

*(Above) The bus rapid transit system in Portland, OR, is considered one of the best in the nation, according to Sarasota County staff. Image courtesy of Sarasota County*



to withdraw it and pursue a new application for a system along U.S. 41.

Both the City Commission and the Manatee Commission had voiced support for the latter option in meetings in February and April, respectively.

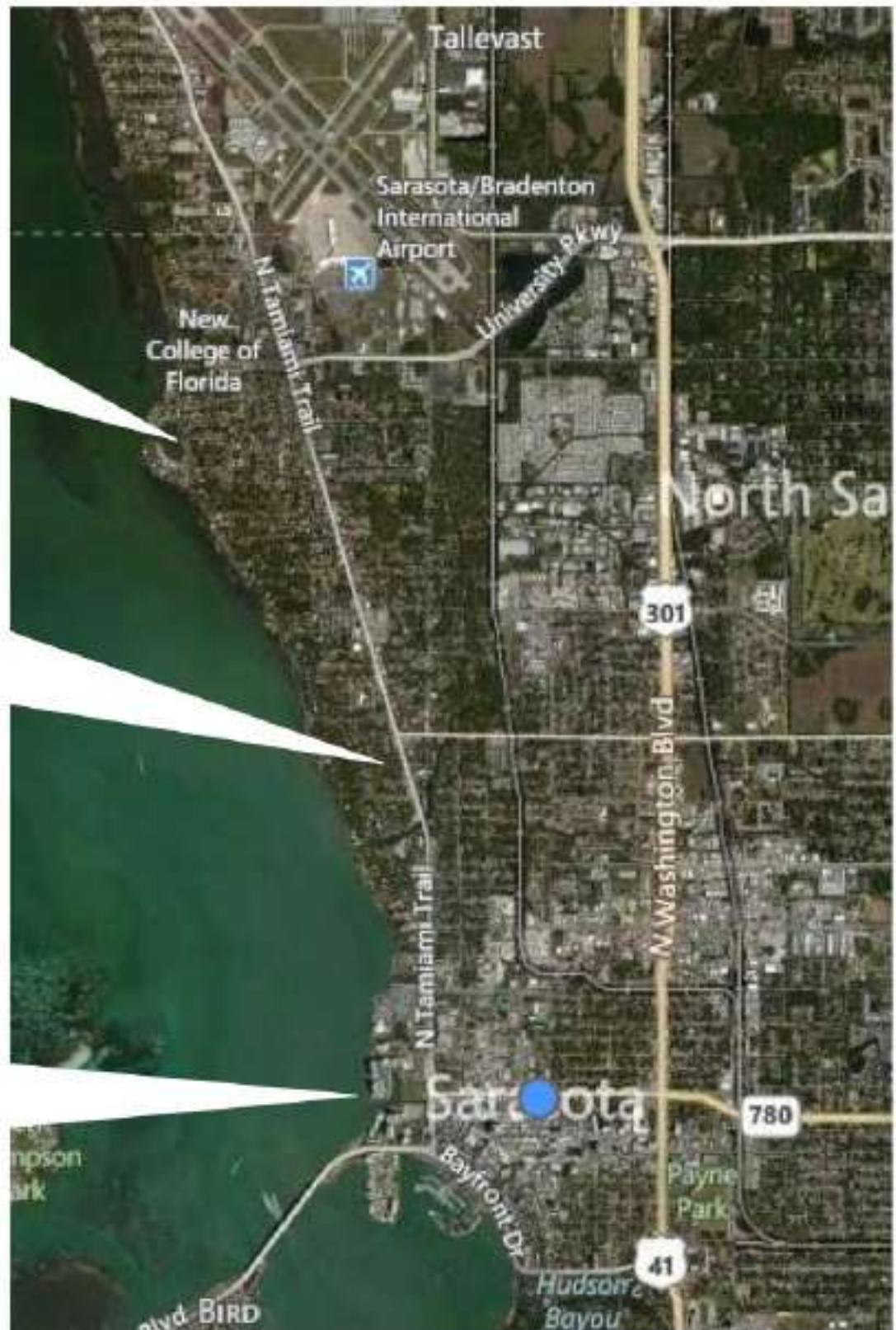
Commissioner Joe Barbetta, who has been a staunch advocate of the BRT as a means of redeveloping the North Tamiami Trail, cast the lone “No” vote on withdrawing the applica-

tion after the board discussed the issue again during its Aug. 27 regular meeting.

“Redevelopment follows transit,” he said, “and we’re never going to get the North Trail redeveloped if we don’t proceed with the BRT proposal, albeit as costly as it is.”

“I totally believe in public transportation,” Vice Chairman Charles Hines said. “It’s the way of the future.”

# Connecting Destinations



*A graphic shows a number of destinations that made the U.S. 41 corridor a priority for a BRT system. Image courtesy Sarasota County*



However, he added, “This community, in my opinion, is not ready for [BRT] yet. ... We’re struggling so hard to fund these things.”

In spite of that decision, the commissioners did direct staff to continue research into a “BRT lite” option as it proceeds with the development of a 10-year transit development plan for the county, which is scheduled to be completed next year.

County Administrator Randall Reid will travel to Washington, D.C. soon to inform representatives of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the board’s vote. Reid told the commissioners their lobbyists in the nation’s capital had made it clear to him that he needed to discuss the situation in person with FTA staff so as not to jeopardize the county’s rela-

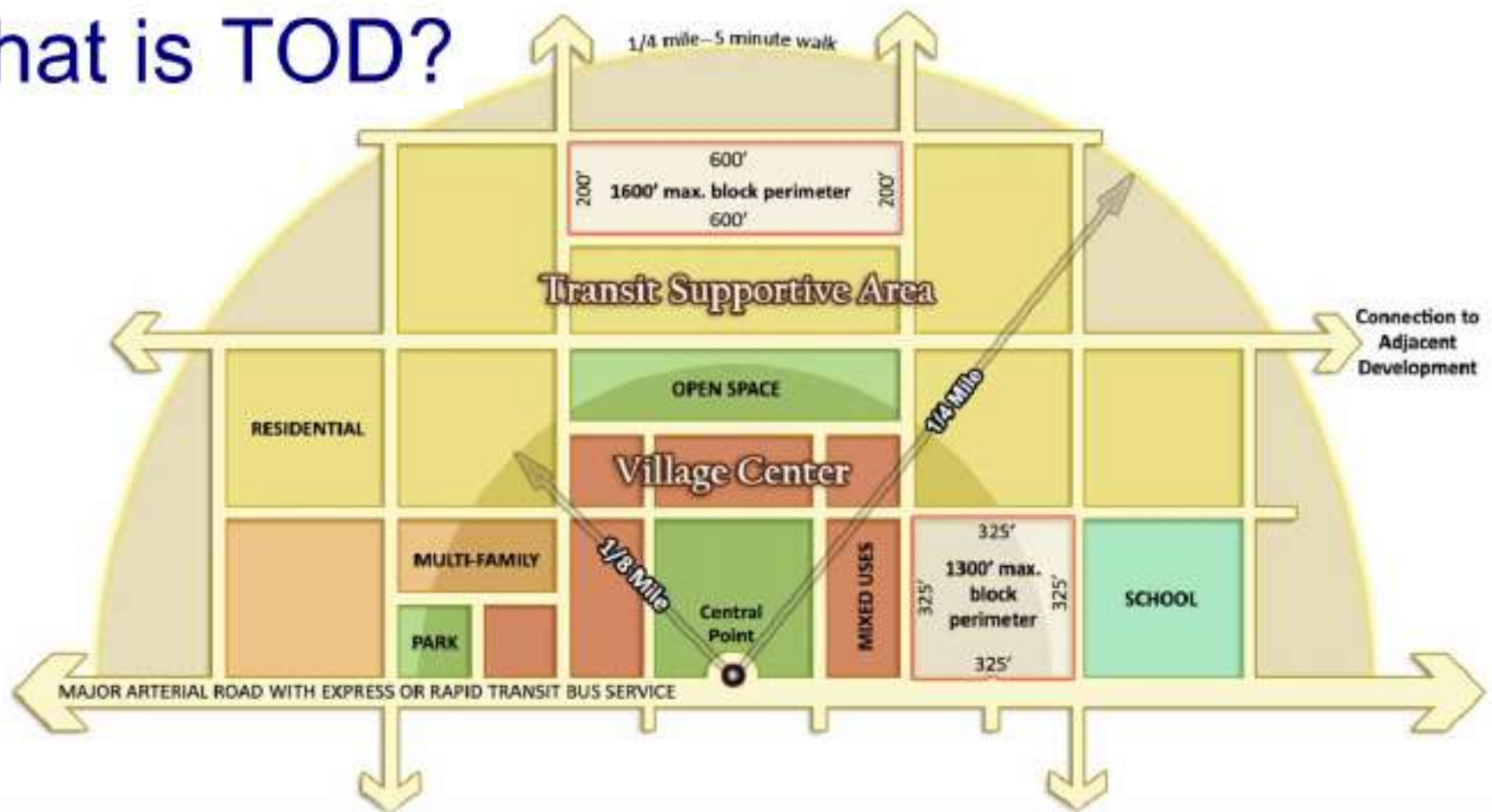
tionship with the agency. The county relies on FTA support for other transit issues, including the operation of its bus system, Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT).

“Doing it face-to-face is the better way, because you could answer any concerns they may have,” Chairwoman Carolyn Mason agreed.

## THE COSTS FOR THE OPTIONS

Jonathan B. Paul, the county’s interim transportation planning director, told the commissioners on Aug. 27 that, because of new federal transit rules released this summer, it probably would cost the county between \$700,000 and \$850,000 for a new analysis to support a BRT system along U.S. 41. Additionally, to gain FTA

## What is TOD?



Example based upon Peter Calthorpe TOD Model – New America Metropolis (1993)



*An illustration shows how land-use design would be incorporated in a successful BRT system plan. Image courtesy of Sarasota County*



approval for the plan, the county would have to commit at least 20 percent of the capital expense as a local match, Paul noted.

Some communities have been putting up matches as high as 40 to 50 percent to gain federal approval, Paul pointed out.

If the commissioners chose to pursue the suggested initial corridor from downtown Sarasota to the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport/University of South Florida area, he added, the capital cost would be about \$50 million, necessitating a \$10 million match from the county.

Paul also pointed out that residents' requests had led staff to include a loop into the Newtown community from the U.S. 41 corridor. Those residents, he said, "have expressed a desire for increased transit frequency and also for a greater transit service and connectivity to the community."

If the county pursued a "BRT Lite" proposal, it would be able to withdraw the FTA application. Under that plan, buses would run about every 15 minutes along the U.S. 41 corridor from downtown to the airport/USF area, with the ability to use signal priority technology to get ahead of other traffic and speed their travel. The projected capital cost would be \$5 million to \$10 million. The additional annual expense, he noted, would be about \$1.3 million.

The county has only \$446,000 set aside for BRT funding, Paul said.

## WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

Commissioner Nora Patterson told Paul she understood the current SCAT service, in conjunction with Manatee County Area Transit buses along U.S. 41, provides passenger pick-up every 30 minutes.

To gain FTA funding for a BRT system, Paul explained, stops — called headways — would have to be offered every 10 to 15 minutes during peak travel times. He also noted that

BRT transit stations should be no greater than half a mile apart — and ideally sited about every quarter of a mile, to encourage passengers to walk to the stops.

Glama Carter, the SCAT manager, told Patterson the current bus stops on U.S. 41 are less than a mile

apart, probably closer to three-quarters of a mile.

"It seems to me that if you doubled the number of buses on [U.S.] 41, you've got the ["lite"] bus rapid transit [Paul is] describing," Patterson said.

The county could not continue to add lanes to U.S. 41, Hines pointed out, noting he had been in Atlanta recently. Even traffic in a purportedly faster lane dedicated to drivers who had prepaid to use it "was going about 10 mph"

*I just don't see how we can afford to do this right now. I want to see that North Trail redeveloped in the worst way. ... It needs to be a better gateway to Sarasota. ... But I just don't see a way that we're going to be able to afford this right now.*

Christine Robinson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County



during rush hour, he added. The traffic in the other five lanes was at a standstill.

Nonetheless, Hines said he was certain the City Commission was prepared to pursue the land-use changes necessary to make the BRT feasible along the North Tamiami Trail.

Therefore, he continued, he felt the board should withdraw its FTA application and re-think the plan.

“Well, I guess I more or less agree with Charles,” Patterson said. “We had a lot of dollars and were looking at rapid growth when we started the concept of BRT, neither of which is true today.”



*Commissioner Joe Barbetta. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## BRT “Lite” (Mixed-Traffic)





Still, she added, “I wouldn’t mind a bit telling staff to keep up the effort to potentially plan for [BRT] and ... bring us some possibilities to move towards it.”

Reiterating points he made in previous discussions of the project, Barbetta said, “I’m going to stick to where I was all along here,” to proceed with a new application to the FTA for the U.S. 41 corridor.

Nonetheless, Barbetta said he opposed the loop into Newtown, feeling that would add to the cost and slow down the application process. His understanding, he noted, had been that SCAT buses or a trolley system would be used to transport residents from that community to BRT stops.

Barbetta also was hopeful, he said, that the analysis for the U.S. 41 corridor could be completed for the \$446,000 available.


Paul replied that he anticipated the \$446,000 would not be sufficient, given the new regulations that would have to be considered in the application.

Nonetheless, Barbetta continued, “I think we need to engage the business community; I think we have to engage the city. ... But to just give up on it now, I think, is not a good idea.”

“I just don’t see how we can afford to do this right now,” Commissioner Christine Robinson said. “I want to see that North Trail redeveloped in the worst way. ... It needs to be a better gateway to Sarasota. ... But I just don’t see a way that we’re going to be able to afford this right now.”

“I would like to support Commissioner Barbetta, because I think what he says has a lot of merit, but I just can’t see we’re in any position to commit to this at this point in time because of the dollar figure,” Chairwoman Carolyn Mason told her colleagues.

Barbetta did put forth a motion to pursue the BRT plan, including the submission of a new application to the FTA. It died for lack of a second.

Patterson then made the motion, which passed, “that we regretfully withdraw our BRT [federal] Small Starts application.” 



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## THAT'S A WRAP!

*Plans call for the Siesta trolley to make stops at Southgate Mall, where Sarasota County Area Transit already has a stop. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

### THE COUNTY COMMISSION OPTS TO PROCEED WITH PLANS FOR TROLLEY SERVICE TO SIESTA KEY, STARTING IN THE SUMMER OF 2014, INSTEAD OF FUNDING A NEW UNIVERSITY PARKWAY ROUTE RIGHT NOW

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

With perpetual concerns about parking on Siesta Key, the Sarasota County Commission this week moved ahead on a plan to implement trolley service — in the form of a regular bus with appropriate decal “wrapping” to make it resemble a trolley — starting after July 2014.

The unanimous vote came at the end of a discussion that pitted the Siesta route against new service for University Parkway — including service at

the forthcoming University Town Center and the Benderson Park rowing venue.

What won the day was the ongoing worry about the county’s future budgets. While Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) has a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to

cover half of the Siesta trolley’s operating expenses for three years, no money is available right now for the proposed University Parkway route.

“It beats not having a parking place, which is a complaint that I constantly get.”

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County





With 17 new SCAT buses arriving in May or June 2014, Sarah Blanchard, the SCAT planning manager, told the board during its regular meeting on Aug. 27, the department would have the necessary two extra buses to extend Route 11 seven days a week from downtown to Southgate Mall to Siesta Village and on to Turtle Beach.

The route to the Village would run every 30 minutes, she said, while the Turtle Beach trips would be every 60 minutes.

Glama Carter, the SCAT manager, told the board that if ridership was not sufficient to continue the trolley after the mandatory three years of operations linked to the grant, the service could end with no recriminations from FDOT.

“I’ll support it,” Commissioner Joe Barbetta said of the plans. “I’ve been an advocate for the Siesta Key trolley for a long, long time.”

Nonetheless, Barbetta pointed out to his colleagues that they all should be cognizant of the need for major bus service from the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport to the new mall and Benderson Park. If the park wins the bid to host the 2017 World Rowing Championships, he added, “My guess is from 2015 on, we’re going to have a lot of people using that [venue] for training for the games.”

He told Blanchard and Carter to begin looking the next day for a way to fund that University Parkway service.



Trolley Kit \$68,000



Trolley Wrap \$7,000



*A graphic presented to the County Commission in January shows how a ‘wrap’ can be used to make a bus look like a trolley. Image courtesy of Sarasota County*



## WEIGHING THE PROPOSALS

As Blanchard made her Aug. 27 presentation to the County Commission regarding SCAT's Transit Development Plan, she pointed out that the grant funds for the Siesta trolley would be available as of July 2014.

Commissioner Nora Patterson told Blanchard she had been unhappy with an earlier report that the trolley service could not start until 2016. "This has been promised to the [Siesta] Village merchants for forever," Patterson said, "as well as the [condominium complexes on the key], who are sort of appalled that it wasn't going to come until 2014 or 2015."

Patterson added, "It is a route that will have a *lot* of ridership, I think, when you start it." The trolley serving the island communities on Longboat Key certainly has proven to be a success, she noted.

Although Siesta Public Beach will get 140 more parking spaces as a result of the planned park project, Patterson pointed out that once those improvements are completed, "we're going to be back to fistfights for parking spaces. I really think a trolley would help a *lot* with that problem. ... We've always discussed that."

Her unwillingness to approve extra money for the budget, Patterson added, was another reason she supported the Siesta trolley over the University Parkway route.

Then Vice Chairman Charles Hines noted that a private company operated a shuttle from Southgate Mall to Siesta Key during the past season. He did not want the county to compete with a commercial business, he added.

Staff had undertaken research regarding that shuttle and could not find it was still in oper-



*A map shows the planned route for the Siesta Key trolley. Image courtesy of Sarasota County*

ation, Blanchard said. "We checked the website; we checked the phone numbers."

Although that service could begin again next season, Blanchard continued, there was no guarantee it would.

Moreover, Blanchard pointed out, that service was different from the fixed-route, seven-day-a-week schedule SCAT was proposing for the Siesta Trolley.

Then Hines asked about the ridership on the current SCAT route serving Siesta Key. "How full are the buses?"

Route 11 "is one of our higher-performing routes," Blanchard told him. According to SCAT statistics, that route averages 8,000 to 9,000 trips per month in off-season and 12,000 to 13,000 trips per month from January through March.



Patterson then asked whether staff had checked with the owners of Southgate Mall and Gulf Gate shop owners to determine whether they would be supportive of more people parking in those locations to take the trolley to Siesta. (The Turtle Beach route is planned to stop at Gulf Gate.)

“You wouldn’t have as brisk a ridership,” she added, without that support.

Blanchard replied that staff had just begun talking again with Southgate representatives. “Parking was raised as a concern by the shopping center last year,” Blanchard conceded, with mall management voicing disapproval of SCAT riders taking spaces that should be available to shoppers.

Staff will continue those discussions, Blanchard said.

Patterson next asked for clarification about the grant parameters for the trolley.

Approximately the same number of operators would be needed for the Siesta route as for the University Parkway service, Blanchard said. However, no grant funds have been secured for the latter route, she pointed out.

County Administrator Randall Reid said Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) had received an FDOT grant for service along University Parkway starting in the 2015-16 fiscal year. Blanchard noted the MCAT grant was for the same amount as Sarasota County had received for the Siesta trolley: \$1,087,000, which was



## University Parkway Route Map



A map shows the proposed new University Parkway bus route. Image courtesy of Sarasota County



for three years. The [Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) was working on defining that Manatee route, Blanchard said — whether it would originate at State Road 64 or State Road 70, for example. It would travel to east of Interstate 75 to connect with SCAT at the new University Town Center mall, which is scheduled to open on Oct. 16, 2014.

## DETAILS ON THE EXPENSES

Carter pointed out that the county would not have to spend more money out of its general fund or reserves to pay for the Siesta Trolley for three years, as the salaries of the nine bus

operators could be counted as the county's 50-percent match for the state grant.

Carter added that the cost of the Siesta trolley operations for five years would be \$3.02 million, compared to \$4.07 million for the University Parkway route.

For three years, Barbetta pointed out, the cost would be about \$2.7 million for the University Parkway route versus \$1.8 million for the Siesta trolley.

"This route's a no-brainer to complete," Hines said of the University Parkway plan for SCAT. If Sarasota County could get Manatee County



*Construction was well under way at Benderson Development's University Town Center in May. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



officials to assist with funding it, he added, “They would have riders just as much as we would.”

However, one primary argument in favor of the Siesta trolley, he continued, was the lack of parking on the island. Still, he was worried whether enough riders would use the trolley to make it worthwhile.

“How easy is it to undo a route?” he asked.

“The answer is, it’s not that easy,” Carter told him. However, she added, the county would be committed to the trolley for just three years, as a result of accepting the FDOT grant.

With either route, Commissioner Christine Robinson said, the county would be committed to funding for future budget years.


Finally, Hines said of the Siesta trolley, “It makes sense,” especially if people who live

on the south end of the island would use it to travel to Siesta Village for shopping and dining.

“I think they will,” Patterson told him. “It beats not having a parking place, which is a complaint that I constantly get.”

Patterson made the motion to proceed with the Siesta trolley. Robinson seconded it.

As for the trolley itself, Patterson asked for clarification that it would be a bus “made to look like a trolley with decals,” because the cost of an actual trolley is about double the expense to purchase a bus.

Bids would be solicited for “wraps” to give the two buses on the route a trolley appearance, Carter confirmed for Patterson. “We’ll make them as nice looking, as enjoyable, as the real trolley would [look],” Carter added. 

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*Chairwoman Carolyn Mason chats with Vice Chairman Charles Hines at the May 14 County Commission budget workshop. File photo*

## **COUNTY COMMISSION FORMALLY APPROVES NEW RESERVES POLICY**

Reaffirming action they took during their May 14 budget workshop, the Sarasota County commissioners on Aug. 27 formally voted 3-2 to reduce the amount in the county's disaster reserve fund to a level that will cover 75 days of operations instead of 90.

Chairwoman Carolyn Mason, Vice Chairman Charles Hines and Commissioner Joe Barbetta once again were in the majority, while Commissioners Nora Patterson and Christine Robinson voted "No" again.

Robinson and Patterson pulled the item from the board's Aug. 27 consent agenda to maintain consistency with their earlier position.

In making the motion for the policy change, Barbetta said, "We're still well above the average," adding that staff research presented in May indicated most Florida counties maintain a policy that calls for a 60-day operating reserve fund. "I think we're in pretty good shape," he said.

"Let's put that money to work in our community," Hines told his colleagues. He was referring to discussion that arose again during the

board's Aug. 20 budget workshop regarding whether all or part of the approximately \$8.1 million in one-time funds available as a result of the policy change should be spent on initiatives that could generate a positive impact on the county's economy.

"We're well within good practices," Hines noted, concurring with Barbetta.

"I don't agree at this point in time to do that," Patterson said of the change. "The projections don't look good," she added, referring to the continuing use of money from the county's economic uncertainty reserve fund to plug budget holes. It would be fine if a future commission chose to change the policy after seeing a need for the money in the general fund, she added, "but ... the truth is there are actually a lot more than \$8 million in requests that the commission is considering" for the next fiscal year.

Patterson continued, "To spend this money now and not have any potential a couple of years from now, I just don't think it's prudent."

*Rachel Brown Hackney*



## NEW ENGINEERING FIRM HIRED TO COMPLETE CITY LIFT STATION

McKim & Creed, a national engineering firm with a Sarasota office, has been selected to complete the evaluation and engineering of the Lift Station 87 Project (LS 87 Project), the city has announced.

The City Commission on Aug. 19 approved a contract with McKim & Creed to complete the engineering of the project, a news release says. As part of the agreement, the firm will provide community outreach, the release adds.

“We know the community has concerns about completing this project,” said Sarasota Utility Director Mitt Tidwell in the release. “We are taking a number of steps to protect the city’s investment and minimize risks going forward.

We’ll keep residents informed every step of the way through community meetings, a project website, emails and regular updates at City Commission meetings.”

Once completed, the LS 87 Project will improve wastewater service and reliability for City of Sarasota customers and protect the environment, the release points out. The new facility will replace the existing Lift Station 7, located at 935 Pomelo Ave. Wastewater flow will be redirected from LS 7 to LS 87, located in Luke Wood Park, via a new gravity sewer pipeline that will need to be constructed under Hudson Bayou, the release continues.

In early 2013, the city issued a Request for Proposals to engineering firms to complete



*The area of work on the lift station remained fenced off in November 2012. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



the project. “McKim & Creed was the top-ranked firm, demonstrating microtunneling, large diameter pipeline and lift station construction expertise,” the release adds.

Under Phase I of the contract, the firm will evaluate the original design, conduct additional geologic investigations, propose design revisions and keep residents informed of the project’s progress, the release says. Phase II, which will include final engineering and construction services, will be based on approved recommendations from the Phase I evaluations, the release adds.

Redesign of the LS 87 Project is scheduled to be completed in mid-2014. Construction is slated to begin in mid-2014 and last approximately one year, the release notes. A project website will be developed to keep residents informed about the schedule. For more information about the LS 87 Project and to register to receive updates via email, go to [www.sarasotagov.com/OALP\\_Utility\\_Project/](http://www.sarasotagov.com/OALP_Utility_Project/) or visit [www.SarasotaGov.com](http://www.SarasotaGov.com) and click the construction hard hat icon.

## CITY OFFICES TO BE CLOSED TO MARK THE LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

City of Sarasota administrative offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor Day, the city has announced. However, garbage, recycling, yard waste and bulk waste collection will *not* be impacted, a news release says.

The regular City Commission meeting next week will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 3, at 2:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at City Hall, 1565 First St.

Other City of Sarasota holiday hours follow:

- Bobby Jones Golf Club: regular hours (6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.).
- Lido Pool: regular hours — closed. (The pool is closed every Monday.)
- Robert L. Taylor Community Complex: 6 a.m. to 10 a.m.; pool closed.
- Steigerwaldt-Jockey Children’s Fountain in Bayfront Park: regular hours (10 a.m. to 7 p.m.). Note: Winter hours will begin the next day, Tuesday, Sept. 3: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



*City Hall will be closed on Sept. 2 in observance of Labor Day. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## GOODWILL TO HOST VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES AT JOBS FAIR

**Goodwill Manasota** is encouraging military members to attend the **Veterans and their Families Jobs and Services Fair** on Sept. 7 at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota.

More than 50 employers and service organizations will be in attendance during this free event, looking to hire qualified applicants, a news release says.

“Our veterans bring a unique set of skills, leadership capabilities and experience that can translate into valuable, hardworking employees,” said Bob Rosinsky, president and CEO of Goodwill Manasota, in the release. “With numerous employers in attendance, this outstanding event will provide a venue for veterans and employers to connect.”

“Military veterans are an unmatched economic resource for businesses,” said Mary Helen Kress, president and CEO of Suncoast Work-

force, in the release. “Equally important, by hiring veterans, companies will be contributing to America’s global competitiveness and strengthening our economy.”

The Veterans and their Families Jobs and Services Fair is sponsored by the **Legacy of Valor**, the release adds. It is collaboration among Goodwill Manasota, the **Suncoast Workforce Board** and the **Baltimore Orioles**. All service members, veterans and their families are welcome to attend. All employers wishing to take part in this event should register online at <http://bit.ly/19efK6w>.

The fair is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sept. 7 at the stadium, located at 2700 12th St., Sarasota.

Veterans are asked to dress in business attire, bring plenty of up-to-date resumes and be prepared to interview with firms, the release adds.

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## TOWN HALL MEETING BRINGS PROGRAM CHANGES TO CENTER OF HOPE

When The Salvation Army conducted its first monthly town hall meeting on Aug. 7 — with more than 80 persons in attendance — Maj. Ethan Frizzell announced a number of changes to the organization’s policies to assist homeless people in the area, a news release reminds the public.

First, Frizzell said women could stay in the shelter for \$1 per night. Maj. Sue Frizzell followed that up with the statement, “And if the women do not have \$1, The Salvation Army will work with women of the community to raise funds to cover this cost.”

The news release says the expense for The Salvation Army is \$12.50 per day to provide overnight accommodations along with breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Additionally, The Salvation Army is revamping an existing shelter dormitory to provide 16

to 18 beds “in a safe and secure location for the women who otherwise would be sleeping outdoors,” the release points out. The expansion of this shelter program, while in keeping with the organization’s mission, makes it necessary to search for further funding, the release notes.

The Salvation Army is seeking 100 women to donate \$1,000 each in honor of a woman who has had a significant impact on her life. The \$100,000 would cover not only the nightly shelter expenses but also a full-time case manager, the release says. “This case manager would be able to work exclusively with these women to help them transition back into self-sufficiency and independent living,” the release adds.

For details on how to help, call 364-8845, Ext. 221.



## COUNTY LAUNCHES INTERACTIVE GREEN MAP ON SUSTAINABILITY

A new interactive Green Map on sustainability features is available online at [www.scgov.net/greenmap](http://www.scgov.net/greenmap), the county has announced.

The mapping tool provides residents and visitors with information on sustainable community resources and facts, such as ways to find local produce and green hotels and how to check out the solar installations in neighborhoods, a news release says.

The Sarasota County Green Map will grow and change as residents use it and add to it, the release points out. "The new Sarasota County Green Map encourages you to engage with the green places in our community in brand new ways," said Aubrey Phillips, administrative manager with Sarasota County Extension, in the release. "Visitors can suggest new sites, share comments and photos and describe how places have impacted them, bringing to light the connections between neighbors and neighborhoods."

There are more than 4,000 existing sites on the Green Map, including 1,906 on solar energy, 822 on Florida-friendly landscaping, 137 on green buildings and 130 on green businesses, the release points out. Among the map's other offerings are alternative health resources as well as locations of businesses selling organic and local foods, park and recreation areas and libraries. Residents and businesses are encouraged to suggest additional sustainability resources or comment on those already featured, the release notes.

The map is a collaborative effort among Sarasota County, the University of Florida Institute for Food and Agricultural Services Extension Office and SCOPE (Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence).



Image courtesy [scgov.net](http://scgov.net)

Laurel Corrao, an analyst at SCOPE, believes the effort is particularly important in terms of engaging community members in sustainability initiatives, the release continues. "I can't wait to see all the new ways Sarasota County residents share and get excited about 'green-centric' data on the new Green Map," says Corrao in the release.

The Sarasota County Green Map is part of the award-winning global Green Map System, which supports locally led Green Map projects in encouraging environmental awareness and sustainability consciousness, the release notes. More than 400 Green Map projects exist in 51 countries to help people locate sustainable urban and rural places and institutions.

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



## **ALERT ISSUED ABOUT SALES OF CERTIFIED COPIES OF PROPERTY DEEDS**

County residents are being alerted to watch for letters from companies offering to provide them a copy of a certified property deed for a higher than normal fee, the Sarasota County Clerk of Court's Office has announced.

Such letters say the firms can provide a certified copy for \$83, including postage and handling, a news release notes.

Karen Rushing, clerk of the 12th Judicial Circuit Court and county comptroller, is reminding people that those documents are public records and may be obtained directly from her office "for a much more nominal fee," the release adds.

The cost of a certified copy of a property deed through the clerk's Public Access Department is \$1 per page, plus a \$2 charge for document certification and mailing, if applicable, the release continues. Most deeds are only a few pages long, the release says; accordingly, requests start at \$3 for a certified copy and are processed within 72 hours, or sooner.

A person may obtain a certified copy of a deed by visiting the clerk's main office in Sarasota (2000 Main St., Room 103, Sarasota) or at the Venice Branch Office (Robert L. Anderson Administration Center, 4000 S. Tamiami Trail, Venice). Both offices have staff available to assist the public from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, the release notes.

A person may also order a certified copy of a deed by calling 861-7425 and making payment by credit card. Alternatively, a free, non-certified copy may be obtained by conducting an online records search at [www.SarasotaClerk.com](http://www.SarasotaClerk.com). Go to Online Records, click on Public Records Search then on Official Records.



*The public may obtain certified copies of property deeds at the main office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court in the historic courthouse on Main Street in Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## SNOOK HAVEN PARK TO CLOSE FOR ABOUT FIVE WEEKS

Snook Haven Park, located at 5000 E. Venice Ave. in Venice, will close Sept. 3 for approximately five weeks so workers can install lines for water and sewer service to the park, Sarasota County has announced.

The county acquired the park on the Myakka River in 2006 to increase the public's access to water recreation areas, a news release notes. The 2.5-acre property consists of five cottages, a restaurant, a two-story single-family home, an entertainment stage area and boat and kayak launching facilities, the release adds.


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



Image courtesy of Google Maps

## CORRECTIONS

In the early version of the Aug. 23 article, *Roundabout sculptures proposed*, a member of the City of Sarasota Public Art Advisory Board was misidentified. He is Jeffrey Weisman, not Jerry Weisman.

In the Aug. 23 article, *Hotel race*, the original version of the story included an incorrect aerial map of the site of an Embassy Suites hotel planned for downtown Sarasota. 

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*(Left) Katelyn Kemp/Contributed photo. (Right) Kathleen Zahn/Contributed photo*

## TWO ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH RETAIL THEFT AND FRAUD CASE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested two women for allegedly stealing items from TJ Maxx and returning them to receive hundreds of dollars in store credit, the office has announced.

On July 28, deputies arrested Katelyn Kemp, 30, (no permanent address), for allegedly stealing shoes and socks from the Tuttle Avenue location of the clothing store. That arrest prompted an investigation by the TJ Maxx National Task Force, which found additional thefts and returns involving Kemp and Kathleen Zahn, 39, of 1660 7th Street, Unit A, Sarasota, a news release says. "On five different occasions in July, one woman stole merchandise and the other returned it for store credit totaling more than \$1,700," the release adds.

Both Kemp and Zahn are charged with one count of Scheme to Defraud and one count of Grand Theft. Each has an extensive local arrest history for larceny, fraud, retail theft and drug charges, the release notes. "Zahn's history reaches back to 1994 but Kemp has 15 arrests in just the past two years," the release continues. "Both say they steal to fuel their drug habits," it adds.

"This is another example of our strong collaboration with store loss prevention to crack down on retail crimes in this community," said Sheriff Tom Knight in the release. "Retail theft affects businesses and consumers, so we will continue to work to reduce this problem locally."



## SUSPECT IN 7-ELEVEN ROBBERY ARRESTED BY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a Bradenton woman in connection with the armed robbery at a 7-Eleven on Clark Road on Aug. 18, the office has announced.

The store clerk reported that a woman wearing a blonde wig and a black hooded sweat-shirt entered the store about 4:40 a.m., told the clerk she had a gun and demanded money from both registers along with three cartons of cigarettes, a news release says.

During the investigation, the clerk was contacted by her former sister-in-law, Constance Carol Newbeck, who apologized for robbing the clerk and admitting she used "a real gun," the release adds.

Newbeck, 42, of 2121 56th Avenue Terrace East, Bradenton, was taken into custody with the assistance of the U.S. Marshals Florida Regional Fugitive Task Force and charged with Robbery with a Firearm. The judge ordered her held without bond, the release notes.



*Constance Newbeck/Contributed photo*

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## SARASOTA TRIO ARRESTED ON MULTIPLE CHARGES

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office arrested three known offenders as they drove around Venice on the night of Aug. 21, "doing drugs and trying to sell stolen goods," according to a news release.

Shortly after patrol deputies responded to calls about two residential burglaries on Bahama Road — where fishing rods and reels worth \$1,400 were reported stolen — members of the Tactical Unit spotted a vehicle with several fishing rods extending out the window,

the release says. "Deputies contacted the driver, prolific offender Marianne Dolleman," of 360 Foxglove Road, "who said Steven Scott and Kayla Masek, both of 281 Mount Vernon Drive, paid her to drive them around so Scott could try to sell the stolen items," the release continues.

During a search of the vehicle deputies also found two drug pipes, a syringe that tested positive for opiates and a bag of Ryobi tools, which were later determined to have been



stolen in a third burglary on Sunset Beach Drive, the release notes. Deputies also found two bracelets Scott allegedly had stolen from Dolleman's home earlier in the night, the release adds.

Dolleman was charged with Dealing in Stolen Property; Masek was charged with Possession of a Controlled Substance and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia; and Scott was charged with four counts of Burglary.

Scott was arrested last month during Operation Booster Buster for stealing from Beall's Outlet in Venice, the release points out. He had been arrested in February for failing to appear in court on Grand Theft charges.

Altogether the trio has a local history of 35 arrests, the release concludes.



*Marianne Dolleman/Contributed photo*



*Kayla Masek/Contributed photo*



*Steven Scott/Contributed photo*




## SHERIFF'S OFFICE FIRST AGENCY IN NATION WITH NEW FINGERPRINT SYSTEM

Sheriff Tom Knight has announced that the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office is the first in the United States to utilize what is being called the world's most up-to-date and accurate fingerprint matching technology.

The Sheriff's Office upgraded its 10-year old Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) to the Morpho Biometric Identification Solution (MorphoBIS), from MorphoTrak, a news release says. AFIS includes tenprint, palmprint and latent fingerprint processing, and it allows searches of county criminal databases, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the FBI, the release points out. The MorphoBIS system architecture allows the Sheriff's Office "to easily incorporate additional biometrics in the future such as face, tattoo and iris images," as needed, the release says.

"MorphoTrak has continued to invest in increasing algorithm accuracy and overall performance for our AFIS technology, which translates directly to more crimes solved, more offenders off the streets and improved public safety," the release adds.

"We are already getting hits on crime scene prints that were previously unidentified in the old system," said Brenda Viana, AFIS supervisor, in the release. "Even low-quality prints that couldn't be searched are being identified on the new system."

Daniel Vassy, president and CEO of MorphoTrak, noted in the release, "As the fingerprint provider to the FBI and the majority of the law enforcement agencies in the U.S., we are quite proud that our cutting-edge technology is helping to create safer environments." 

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# OPINION



## REOPEN MIDNIGHT PASS!

### EDITORIAL

Sarasota County marks a somber anniversary this year. It has been three decades since two Siesta Key homeowners gained permission from the county and the state to fill in Midnight Pass, the inlet that separated Siesta and Casey keys. While that permission contained the condition that the inlet would be reopened at some point in the future, 30 years have passed and it remains closed.

The Midnight Pass Society, which purports to have 2,000 members who advocate for the reopening of that inlet, is once again working with the county and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to possibly reconsider the county's 2008 application for permission to reopen Midnight Pass.

That application was slated for denial in 2009, but the county withdrew it before the FDEP

action was formalized. Shortly thereafter, the state's Joint Administrative Procedure Committee wrote a scathing letter to the FDEP general counsel, accusing the agency of improperly appropriating legislative prerogatives in its rulemaking, including the basis for intending to deny the 2008 application by Sarasota County.

Since then, FDEP rules have been rewritten to conform to the Legislature's intent in the laws the department is charged with enforcing. Those rule changes, had they been in effect in 2008, might have resulted in the county's application being approved, and the reopening of Midnight Pass.

Now the Midnight Pass Society, county and state officials are sitting down to see how the process might be resumed. As the county withdrew its application before a formal de-



# OPINION

nial, it might be possible simply to reactivate that original application and provide new information to update it.

Unfortunately, some county commissioners, while supportive of the overall goal, now are concerned about the cost to reopen the inlet and keep it open. And the cooperation of FDEP is anything but assured. But this current action is the most encouraging sign for the reopening of Midnight Pass since the county's application in 1991 was denied by the state.

After the county withdrew its application in 2008, the Midnight Pass Society and several others joined to sue the county, state and federal governments on a host of grounds to force the reopening of the inlet. That suit, originally filed in March 2011, was withdrawn by the plaintiffs later that year because of flaws in its construction. The plaintiffs refiled the suit in June 2012, but it was voluntarily dismissed this summer when the government agencies were excused from the suit on grounds of sovereignty. That set up the current collaboration between the county and Midnight Pass Society.

We wrote last week about the City of Sarasota's shortsightedness in ignoring some realities of coastal geology, specifically the constant movement of sand along a coastline in response to winds and tides, as it seeks to preserve Lido Beach to the detriment of Siesta Key. Now we urge Sarasota County to begin in earnest to right a wrong set in motion three

decades ago, to the detriment of the Sarasota Bay estuary.

The irony of the Midnight Pass closure was its timing: By 1980, an awareness of increasing eutrophication in the Sarasota Bay estuary led to increased regulation of nitrogen loading and other contributing factors. Yet the closure of the inlet reduced by one-third the amount of seawater exchange that occurred with the Gulf of Mexico. Now seawater exchange is limited to Big Pass to the north of Siesta Key, and Venice Inlet, more than 20 miles to the southeast.

The effect has been most grave in Little Sarasota Bay. Access to bay waters to its north and south have been limited by natural and manmade narrowing, creating flow bottlenecks that exacerbate the stagnation of waters in Little Sarasota Bay. This is compounded by stormwater runoff, which decreases overall salinity while increasing nutrient and toxic load.

Little Sarasota Bay stands out as an obvious factor in a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) assessment that the eutrophication factor in the Sarasota Bay estuary is "moderate high," its second highest ranking for the deterioration of a watershed. NOAA determined that, as a result of these combined factors, the "nutrient related symptoms observed in the estuary are likely to substantially worsen."

*We urge Sarasota County to begin in earnest to right a wrong set in motion three decades ago, to the detriment of the Sarasota Bay estuary.*



# OPINION

The reopening of Midnight Pass will not resolve all of the problems in the Sarasota Bay estuary, but it will have a greater impact than any other single action. Opening the channel is not a necessity for recreational access to the gulf, although that is an additional benefit. Instead, the action is essential as a relief valve for the worsening conditions in Little Sarasota Bay ... conditions that were created when the selfish concerns of a few well-connected landowners trumped common sense and concern for the environmental health of the entire watershed.

The county should commit itself to taking whatever action is needed to win approval for the reopening of Midnight Pass. 



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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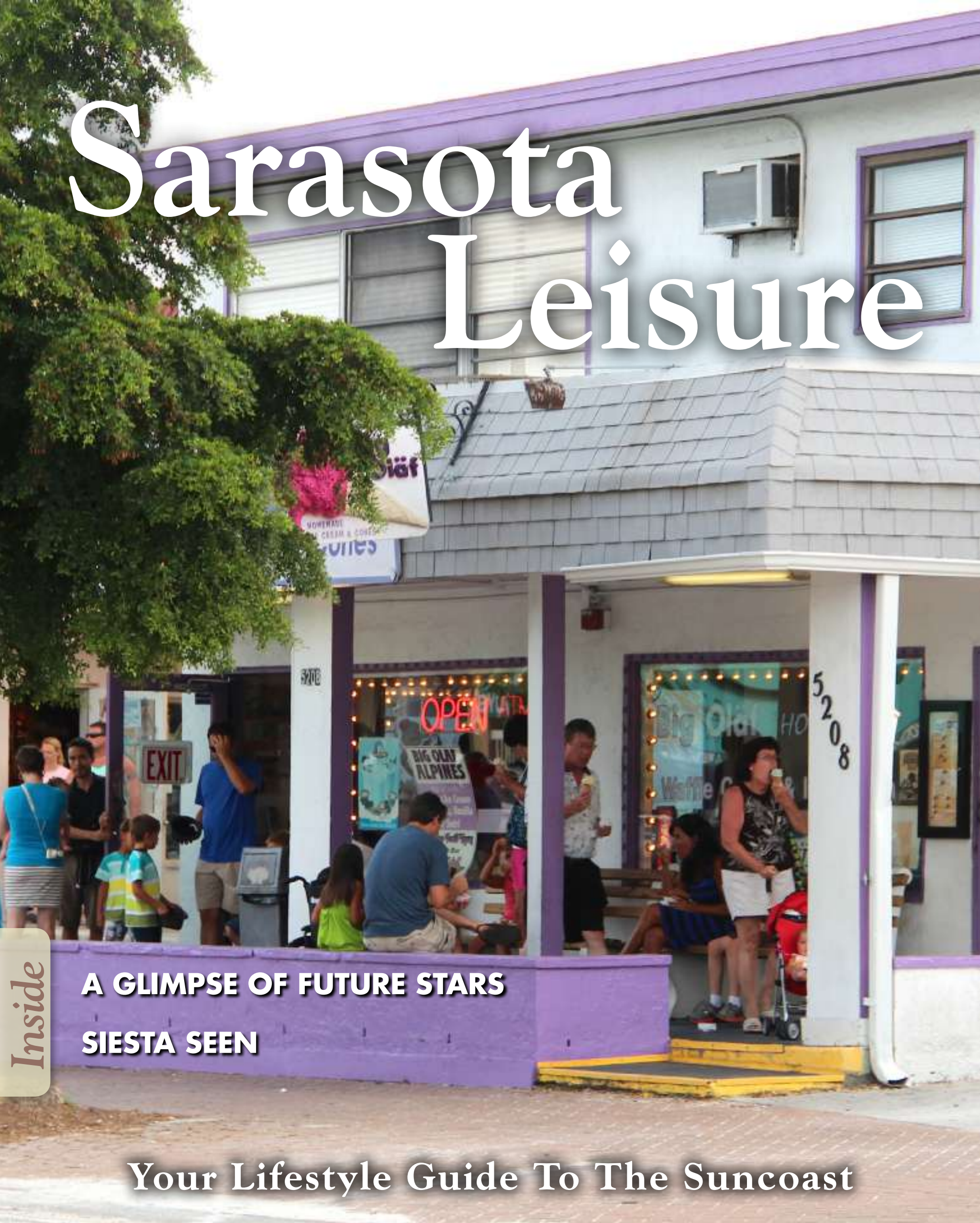
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# Sarasota Leisure

*Inside*

**A GLIMPSE OF FUTURE STARS  
SIESTA SEEN**

**Your Lifestyle Guide To The Suncoast**



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# A GLIMPSE OF FUTURE STARS

## THE THIRD CARRENO DANCE FESTIVAL SHOWS MATURITY IN CELEBRATING THE TALENTS OF ITS YOUTHFUL DANCERS

By Elinor Rogosin  
*A&E Writer*

The Carreno Dance Festival, which features an evening of ballet with students from its master class intensive program in Sarasota as well as invited stars, has morphed from a type of summer school celebration — which marked the conclusion of its first year — to an enjoyable presentation of young performers in its third year.

Yes, aside from the stunning opening, *A Contemporary Mood*, choreographed by Carlos Dos Santos for the occasion, excerpts from *The Sleeping Beauty Suite* were used to give the students an opportunity to shine in traditional classical choreography, not unlike many school recitals. And the presence of Jose Manuel Carreno and American Ballet Theatre star

*(Above) Jose Manuel Carreno and Julie Kent dance a waltz to the Strauss melody of The Merry Widow. Photo courtesy of Rod Millington*



Julie Kent in a pleasant waltz to the familiar Strauss melody of *The Merry Widow* did add a touch of international glamour to the evening. However, the chance to spot the “stars of tomorrow” was uppermost in the minds of the audience members.

Not surprisingly, there were more than 50 girls in the program but fewer boys. Kudos, nonetheless, to Dos Santos for using their youthful energy in a pseudo-gymnastic ballet set to a pulsating score by David Goldstein. Dressed in their own shorts and barefoot, the student dancers moved like waves off and on the stage, creating a fierce world of promises to come.

There is that something called “charisma” that often sets apart one dancer from another, and that was clear as the evening unfolded. It

was obvious in the solos and duets in the first half of the program and in the excerpts from *The Sleeping Beauty Suite* — which filled the second part of the program — that one or another of the young dancers has a quality of movement that transforms the steps of the choreography into moments of inspired dancing.

Of the six soloists from the mentoring program, Adriana Baez Hitchcock impressed me with her strength and acrobatic flexibility; Gabriella Stilo charmed, both in her solo and later as Florine in the *Blue Bird pas de deux* with Aran Bell; and Francisco Serrano, all long legs and intensity, will dazzle in the future as he grows stronger and older.

As the program lacked details of casting in that section, I assume that Sasha Alvarez was



Shelby Elsbree (right) was a guest performer in the *Rose Adagio*. Photo courtesy of Rod Millington





*The corps takes the stage in excerpts from the Sleeping Beauty Suite. Photo courtesy of Rod Millington*



*In another segment of the Sleeping Beauty Suite, young dancers display lessons learned. Photo courtesy of Rod Millington*




Serrano's charming partner in the *pas de deux* from *Don Quixote* and that either she or Allie Burman was the other soloist.

Ksenia Zhiganshina, a student from the Vaganova Academy of Mariinsky Ballet — and an invited guest — was a delightful *Lilac Fair*, with impeccable technique and a fluid softness in her dancing.

While Shelby Elsbree, an exquisite delicate dancer from the Boston Ballet Company was a competent Princess Aurora, bravely meeting the challenge of the *Rose Adagio*, I found her dancing to be somewhat mechanical. But Jordan Elizabeth Long from the Royal Swedish Ballet was a joy to watch. Regal and a perfect princess as Aurora in *The Wedding Pas de Deux*, she danced with the easy smoothness of vanilla ice cream, tossing off the difficult

choreography with aplomb. Her partner, Nathan Chaney from the Zurich Ballet, was an able if not exciting Prince.

Beautiful and plentiful costumes and the backdrop of a castle added to the professional atmosphere of the festival. In addition, the Fairy Attendants, the Cavaliers, the White Cat, Puss-in-Boots, the Bad Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood were charmingly portrayed by different students.

And as for charisma, it was definitely on display when Jose Manuel Carreno took his curtain call in front of the young dancers, who filled every corner of the stage. He stepped forward and raised his arm before bowing, and with that graceful purposeful gesture brought to mind every ballet prince who has ever graced the stage. 



Francisco Serrano flies across the stage. Photo courtesy of Rod Millington





# *Siesta Seen*

**THE CRYSTAL CLASSIC LANDS A MAJOR SPONSOR; THE CALLE DE COSTA RICA PROPERTY TRANSFER WINS FINAL APPROVAL; THE SIESTA FARMERS MARKET EARNS A ONE-YEAR RENEWAL; AND THE OLD STICKNEY POINT ROAD LIGHTING DISTRICT EFFORT MOVES FORWARD A TAD**



By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

Organizers of the Siesta Key Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Competition (SKCC) have scored a big coup — and they are still months away from the Nov. 15-18 festivities.

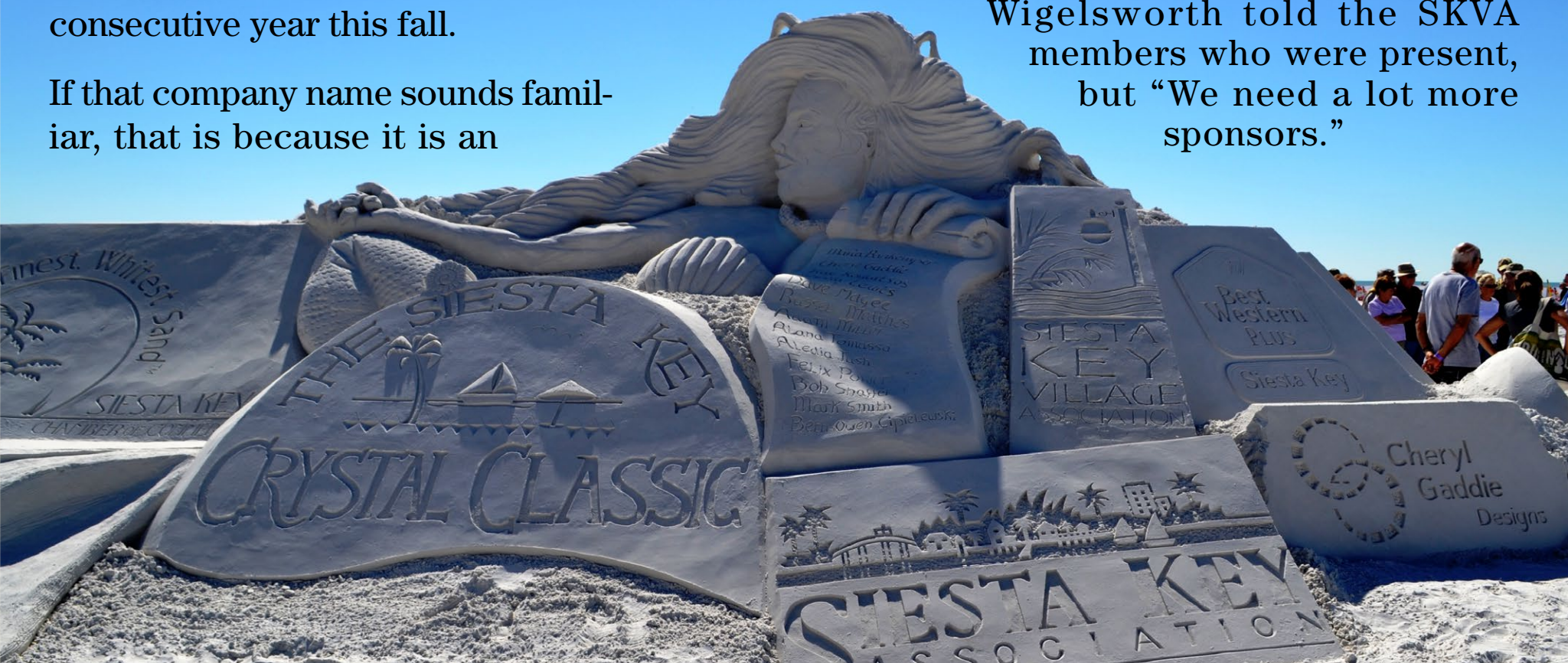
Brian Wigelsworth, Siesta's own master sand sculptor and founder of the Crystal Classic, told me this week that Margaritaville Apparel has sent in a check to be a \$20,000 sponsor of the event, which will be held for the fourth consecutive year this fall.

If that company name sounds familiar, that is because it is an

offshoot of singer Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville "empire," Wigelsworth said.

During the Aug. 6 meeting of the Siesta Key Village Association, Wigelsworth announced that a major sponsor had been secured, but he did not want to provide the name until the contract was signed, he said in a quick interview after the business session ended.

He was very excited about that support, Wigelsworth told the SKVA members who were present, but "We need a lot more sponsors."



*Sponsors are being sought for the 2013 Siesta Key Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Competition, organizers say. Information is available on the [website](#). Photo by Norman Schimmel*



# ***Siesta Seen***

One new feature for the SKCC this year, he continued, would be the company sponsorship of each team of sculptors. The company or individual's name will be very visible at the front of every sculpting team's plot of sand, he added.

'It's a very profitable event for our charity,' Wigelsworth pointed out, and it brings in a lot of money to the community.

The beneficiary of the Crystal Classic is Mote Marine Lab's Sea Turtle Rescue Program and sea turtle conservation efforts.

Kevin Cooper, executive director of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, told SKVA members that because Visit Sarasota County — the community's tourism office — provides grant funds to promote the Crystal Classic outside the area, organizers have to show a return on investment. Interviews with attendees and other market research undertaken to fulfill that requirement have indicated that of the approximately 30,000 people who have attended the competition each of the past three years, about half have traveled to the county from other parts of Florida and other states, Cooper said.



*Fossil Fuel won top honors in the 2012 Crystal Classic. Contributed photo by Peter Acker*



# *Siesta Seen*

“And they’re generating thousands of [accommodation] room nights here on Siesta Key,” Cooper pointed out, as well as spending money on meals and in stores.

Russell Matthes, past president of the SKVA, added that the event is held during a traditionally slow time of year for tourism, making it all the more important to the local economy.

Cooper noted that, over the past couple of years, the Chamber has received numerous calls from people checking the dates for the Crystal Classic so they can plan vacations around it.

Wigelsworth pointed out that as he travels the country for sand-sculpting events, people come up to him regularly, saying, “Oh, you’re from Sarasota. I went to the Crystal Classic last year.” These are people in Texas and Massachusetts, for example, Wigelsworth said. The event’s reputation is growing, he added. “The name’s getting out there.”

This year, Wigelsworth continued, he will have to miss the SKCC himself because of a major sand-sculpting event in Kuwait. In fact, he said, some of the competitors he had signed up early for the 2013 Crystal Classic had pulled out for the Kuwait trip, but he had been able to replace them.

He also noted that CNN this summer named the Crystal Classic one of its [Top 10 sand-sculpting events](#) to attend in 2013. Among the others on that list are competitions in Switzerland, Denmark and Australia.

When Peter van Roekens, secretary of the Siesta Key Association, pointed out that the Crystal Classic would overlap the Sarasota Chalk Festival in November (its dates are Nov. 13-18), Wigelsworth and Cooper called that a positive factor. People are not inclined to come to the area two separate times for such events, Wigelsworth said, but they should be more eager to come, knowing they can attend both in one trip.

Cooper added that people easily could go to the Crystal Classic and the Chalk Festival on the same day, in fact.

“I think it’s going to be a great thing,” Wigelsworth agreed.

Wigelsworth also pointed out to me this week that the event’s [Facebook](#) page is up. A link on that page enables people to buy tickets now.

## **VENTING DISPLEASURE AGAIN**

Item No. 46 on the County Commission’s consent agenda for its meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 27, called for the adoption of a formal resolution approving a vacation of public right of way on Calle de Costa Rica and turning over the property to the next-door residents, William and Katherine Baumann. The mere inclusion of the item on the consent agenda meant the odds of its quick passage were pretty good.

However, this was a contentious matter when the [board voted 3-2 on May 21](#) to grant preliminary approval to the right of way vacation. The item had to come back to the board this



# Siesta Seen

week, because staff needed to identify, locate and prepare sketches for both county and private utility company easements before the final vote could be scheduled.

The major point of disagreement during that May meeting came when Commissioners Christine Robinson and Nora Patterson voiced the view that vacating the right of way would violate the county's comprehensive plan. Robinson cited county Parks Policy 1.1.13, noting the property provides access to a Siesta canal. That policy section of the county's Comprehensive Plan says, "The County shall not vacate road segments on waterfronts along any creek, river, lake, bay, or gulf access point

and shall encourage right-of-way use of these areas for coastal beach and bay access."

However, Chairwoman Carolyn Mason, Vice Chairman Charles Hines and Commissioner Joe Barbetta all concurred with representatives of the Baumanns, who said documentation showed the right of way was platted well before the comprehensive plan was adopted, and the county never had put forth any plans to use the property as a road. According to that documentation, if the right of way was not going to be utilized, the property should be turned over to the couple. Further evidence showed the county had not been maintaining the land until the Baumanns petitioned for the



An aerial map shows the location of the Calle de Costa right of way the County Commission has vacated and turned over to adjacent property owners. Image courtesy Sarasota County



## ***Siesta Seen***

right of way vacation; they offered plans not only to maintain it but also to improve it.

Both Robinson and Patterson had notified Mason they were pulling Item No. 46 on Aug. 27 to reaffirm their May 21 votes.

When the item finally came up, Barbetta made a motion to approve it, with a second from Hines.

"I won't belabor the point," Patterson began, "but this is directly contrary to our comprehensive plan to do this. The land that will be added to the [Baumanns'] property has *enormous* value ..."

Moreover, Patterson pointed out, staff informed the board in May that people were using that right of way as access to the canal it borders.

Vacating the right of way, she continued, "really, to me, is very wrong."

"Those are ... facts not in the record, so I'm a little confused on that," Barbetta fired back at her. "All those statements you just made were factually incorrect, totally."

He reiterated the point that the plat creating the right of way predated the creation of the county's comprehensive plan.

Barbetta added, "I wish I had known you were going to argue this; I would have gotten a copy of the minutes [from May 21]. ... To reargue it when the person who was the proponent for it is not here to defend himself is just not proper."

"Actually," Robinson told Barbetta, "my recollection is along the lines of Commissioner Patterson's, because staff did testify that there was evidence of people launching [watercraft] there at that spot."

Nonetheless, Robinson said, "I don't think, unless somebody's going to switch their vote ... we need to belabor this one."

Again, the vote was 3-2, approving the resolution to turn over the 1.88-acre, 60-foot-wide piece of land to the Baumanns.

### **FARMERS MARKET EXTENSION OK'D**

In other action on Aug. 27, the County Commission voted unanimously to approve a one-year extension of the temporary use permit (TUP) to enable the Siesta Farmers Market to continue to operate in Davidson's Plaza on Sundays.

The board originally granted the market a TUP on July 28, 2008.

Before the Aug. 27 vote, Chairwoman Mason asked Assistant County Zoning Administrator Donna Thompson for clarification about the hours of operation. The application for the TUP had different hours than those provided in a letter from John Davidson, who owns Davidson Plaza, Mason pointed out.

"I didn't notice that," Commissioner Nora Patterson said. "I didn't, either," Thompson told Mason.

The application from Bryan Eible, who started the market all those years ago, says the sum-



# *Siesta Seen*

mer hours are 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., while in season, the market operates from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thompson speculated that the differing hours in the two documents had to do with the setting up and taking down of the market tents.

“It’s Mr. Davidson’s property, and at some point his own facilities are open and will compete with [those hours],” Patterson noted, referring to the other plaza tenants. “But I suppose he could order [the market vendors] off [the property] at a certain point if he wished. Actually,” she added with a chuckle, “I think I answered my own question.”

“We haven’t received any complaints where the market’s interfered with any of the businesses in the shopping center,” Thompson told the board.

With no one present to speak during the required public hearing, Mason was able to move quickly to a call for a motion. Patterson responded, specifying approval for the one-year extension.

“I’ve never heard a single complaint about this [market], and I live [on Siesta Key],” Patterson said. “I’m in the Village all the time. ... I think [the market is] enjoyed.”



*Davidson Plaza on Ocean Boulevard in Siesta Village is the setting for the Sunday Siesta Farmers Market. File photo*



# Siesta Seen

With no further comments, the motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

## SOON THERE MAY BE LIGHT

The initiative to put more lighting in place along Old Stickney Point Road is moving along once more.

During his report to the County Commission for the week of Aug. 12, Chief County Engineer James K. Harriott Jr. wrote, "The property owners have confirmed they wish to move forward with a new lighting district." However, he added, one of the key property owners, Brad Stewart of Captain Curt's Crab & Oyster

Bar, will be out of town until mid- October. "Once he is back," Harriott continued, "staff will meet with the residents/owners to guide them in the next step to form a steering committee of owners to pursue petitioning for a district."

Business owners in the area of Old Stickney Point Road have been working on this initiative for months, saying the street and its environs are terribly dark after the sun goes down.

## THE NOISE

As reported in this space in the [Aug. 9/16 issue](#), Sarasota County zoning staff will be ask-



*No light poles stand on Old Stickney Point Road to illuminate pedestrians at night. That is a situation property owners are working to rectify, with the aid of county staff. File photo*



# Siesta Seen

ing the County Commission next month to extend the sunset of the Noise and Air and Sound Pollution ordinances for another year, to allow time for more public comments and potential revisions of the ordinances.

During the Aug. 6 Siesta Key Village Association meeting, Peter van Roekens, the Siesta Key Association secretary — who also represents the Terrace East condominium complex at the SKVA gatherings — pointed out that most of the Terrace East residents are away for the summer and therefore not around to complain about the noise. However, he said, one question is whether the decibel limits allowed in the current ordinance will be changed.

“It can’t get much stricter than it is,” replied Russell Matthes, who co-owns the Daiquiri Deck Raw Bar restaurants.

“Oh, yes, it can,” van Roekens told Matthes. One vital factor is the place from where the sound is measured, van Roekens added.

An effort was made at one time to measure the sound at the “receiving point,” where a

complaint originated, Matthes pointed out. That “doesn’t work,” he added.

“It does work,” van Roekens told him, “and there are many communities that do it [that way]. I’ve talked to [five of] them.”


Such a measurement has to eliminate the effects of ambient noise to be valid, van Roekens continued.

“We just have to make really, really sure that we don’t shut this Village down,” said SKVA Vice President Kay Kouvatsos.

“Exactly,” van Roekens concurred.

“I know residents want it quiet,” Kouvatsos, co-owner of the Village Café added, but people come to the Village for its lively atmosphere.

Matthes said it would be difficult to enforce the maximum noise levels if they were measured from the locations where people register complaints.

“Well, we’ll have to see,” van Roekens responded. 



*While people exercise along the shore at Siesta Public Beach, terns and other sea birds take time to relax, it appears. Photo courtesy of Peter van Roekens*





# 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 community calendar, I always know what the most exciting happenings are each week. Plus, it is simply so beautiful, with photography that takes my breath away.

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

*You have a whole week.*

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## A&E BRIEFS

### LADY OF THE LAKE COSTUME FROM *SPAMALOT* IN SCF EXHIBITION

Florida Studio Theatre has announced its participation in *The Art of the Costume Reinvented*, a free exhibition under the aegis of the State College of Florida that will be open to the public from Sept. 6 through Oct. 16.

This show will present “outrageous, extreme and sometimes unconventional theatrical costumes, created from non-traditional and or recycled materials,” a news release points out. An opening reception will be held on Fri-

*A close-up shows details of the Lady of the Lake's 'hair.' Contributed photo*





day, Sept. 6, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Fine Art Gallery at SCF Bradenton, 5840 26<sup>th</sup> Street West.

In anticipation of the exhibition, FST staff chose to work on The Lady of the Lake costume from the upcoming production of *Monty Python's Spamalot*, the release notes. Costume Shop Manager Susan Angermann, along with her design team of Sarah Bertolozzi, Caroline Carmagnole, Mary Rathell and Caitlin Dalton, created their concept and went to work gathering materials, the release adds.

"We started brainstorming as a group and came up with a list, limited to a certain color palette that we could use," said Angermann in the release. "Then we each went out into the community to find the materials we needed. It wasn't a difficult process, it was easy! It was very collaborative and everyone brought creative ideas and enthusiasm to the project."

"The Lady of the Lake in *Monty Python's Spamalot*, while based off the Arthurian Legend, is a bit more of a diva and powerhouse," the release points out. As she aids Arthur and his knights, she pairs her traditional mysticism with "a leading lady attitude and delightful quirkiness of Monty Python," the release notes. FST's



team “has created a design embodying the showgirl quality of the Lady of the Lake while emphasizing Monty Python’s comic style.”

Other participants in the costume exhibition are SCF Studio 84 Productions, Asolo Con-

servatory, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Island Players, The Sarasota Ballet, The Glenridge Performing Arts Center, The Players of Sarasota, Theatre Odyssey, Venice Theatre and West-coast Black Theatre Troupe, the release says.



*And what would Spamalot's Lady of the Lake be without a can of Spam? Contributed photo*



## VENICE THEATRE GUILD TO PRESENT YESTERDAYZE ON THE MAINSTAGE

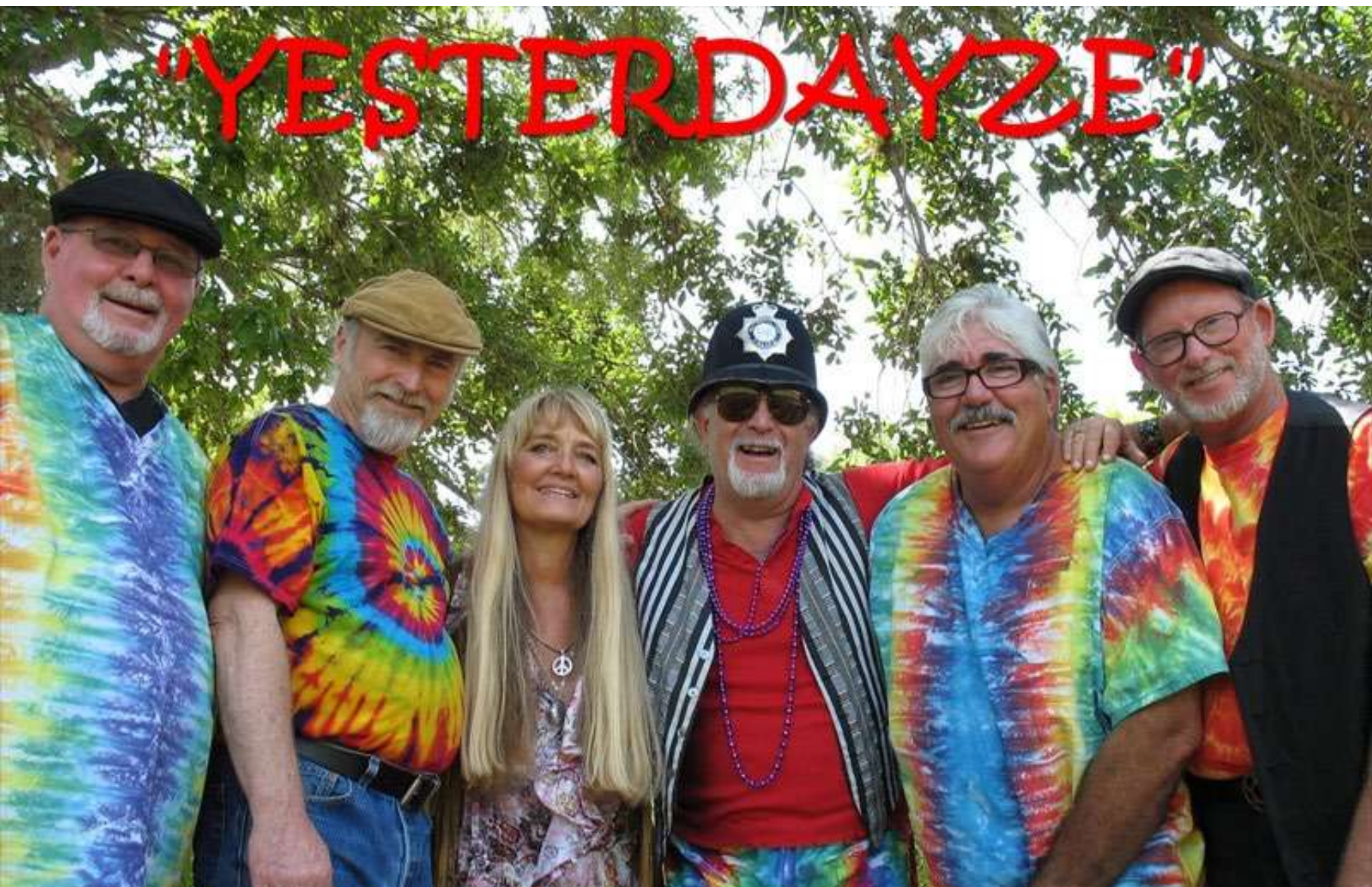
The Venice Theatre Guild invites audiences to enjoy another night of nostalgia when Yesterdayze returns to the theatre's MainStage on Saturday, Sept. 14.

"The high-energy six-piece band" will take the stage at 8 p.m. for a concert of '60s hits, from Motown to the British Invasion, a news release says. All tickets are \$20 and are on sale at the theater's box office, by phone at 488-1115 or online at [www.venicestage.com](http://www.venicestage.com). Proceeds will benefit families in need of scholarships to participate in Venice Theatre's education programs, the release adds.

The Yesterdayze performance will mark the conclusion of four summer oldies concerts,

which are an annual tradition of the Venice Theatre Guild, the release notes. "What started as one show per summer has grown to a full-fledged series," it adds. "The summer concerts have always raised money for the Guild scholarship fund, which provides tuition assistance to students studying theatre arts."

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. Extended box office hours begin again after Labor Day — from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays; and one hour before show time.



*Yesterdayze will perform on the Venice Theatre MainStage on Sept. 14. Photo courtesy of Yesterdayze*



## NEW MUSIC NEW COLLEGE MARKS 15 YEARS WITH 2013-14 SEASON

New Music New College will celebrate its 15th year with a five-concert series “featuring artists who have resonated with past audiences” and with an expanded set of opportunities to meet the musicians,” the college has announced.

“For our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, we’ve chosen to deepen the conversation with artists who have made an especially strong impact here in recent years,” said Stephen Miles, director of New Music New College and provost of New College of Florida, in a news release.

NOW ensemble



*The NOW Ensemble will perform on Sept. 20 as part of the 15th season of New Music New College. Image from the NOW Ensemble [homepage](#)*



As in past years, there will be a free “artist conversation” on the Thursday before each performance, the release notes. This year, New Music New College is adding a “pre-concert talk,” a 20-minute conversation with the artists “that will explore the themes and context of the work,” the release adds.

The series will open on Friday, Sept. 20, with the NOW Ensemble, which blends classical and electric instruments in a modern take on chamber music, the release continues. The group will perform original pieces by several composers, including its guitarist, Mark Dancigers, visiting assistant professor of music at New College. Joining NOW for the world premiere of Dancigers’ *Dreamfall* will be Fuzión Dance Artists, led by Leymis Bolaños-Wilmott, the release says.

The series will continue on Saturday, Nov. 16, with Francis Schwartz and Friends, featuring soprano Isabelle Ganz. The concert will feature a world premiere of Schwartz’s *Shady Intercontinental Songs* and compositions by Pauline Oliveros, John Cage and Eduardo Kusnir, the release notes. Appearing with Schwartz and Ganz will be New College students and Sarasota Orchestra principal bassist John Miller.

The Saturday, Jan. 18, performance of Ugly Beauties will bring back pianist Marilyn Lerner, whose solo improvisational performance, *Dreamwork*, was a highlight of last season’s series, the release continues. Joining Lerner will be two renowned performers, cellist Matt Brubeck and percussionist Nick Fraser.

This year’s outdoor show will be on Saturday, March 15, with the DIY Ensemble. Dancigers, the visiting professor of music, will lead New

College students in a performance of original works on acoustic and electronic instruments that the students will have built or transformed as part of an independent study project, the release points out.

The series will conclude on Saturday, April 19, with Miranda Cuckson and Christopher Burns. They will perform Luigi Nona’s *La Ion-tanza nostalgica utopica futura*, “a major work in musical modernism,” the release says. Their recording of the work was named one of the top classical recordings of 2012 by *The New York Times*, the release notes.

New Music New College also will include two events that will be free and open to the public:

- Sunday, April 27: The Student Composers Concert, with the Sarasota Piano Quartet.
- Thursday, May 8: Electronic Music Class Concert.

New Music New College performances take place either at the Mildred Sainer Music and Arts Pavilion/Caples Fine Arts Complex, located at 5313 Bay Shore Road (adjacent to the Ringling Museum), or at the Harry Sudakoff Conference Center, located at 5845 General Dougher Place on New College’s Pei Campus (east of Tamiami Trail).

Subscriptions for the five-concert series are priced at \$60. Single tickets are \$15 for the general public, \$5 for non-New College students, and free to the New College community. Reservations may be made online at [donate.ncf.edu/events](http://donate.ncf.edu/events), or by calling 487-4888. More information is available at [newmusic-newcollege.org](http://newmusic-newcollege.org) or [facebook.com/newmusic-newcollege](https://facebook.com/newmusic-newcollege).




## AUTHORS, ILLUSTRATORS SOUGHT FOR SARASOTA BOOK FAIR

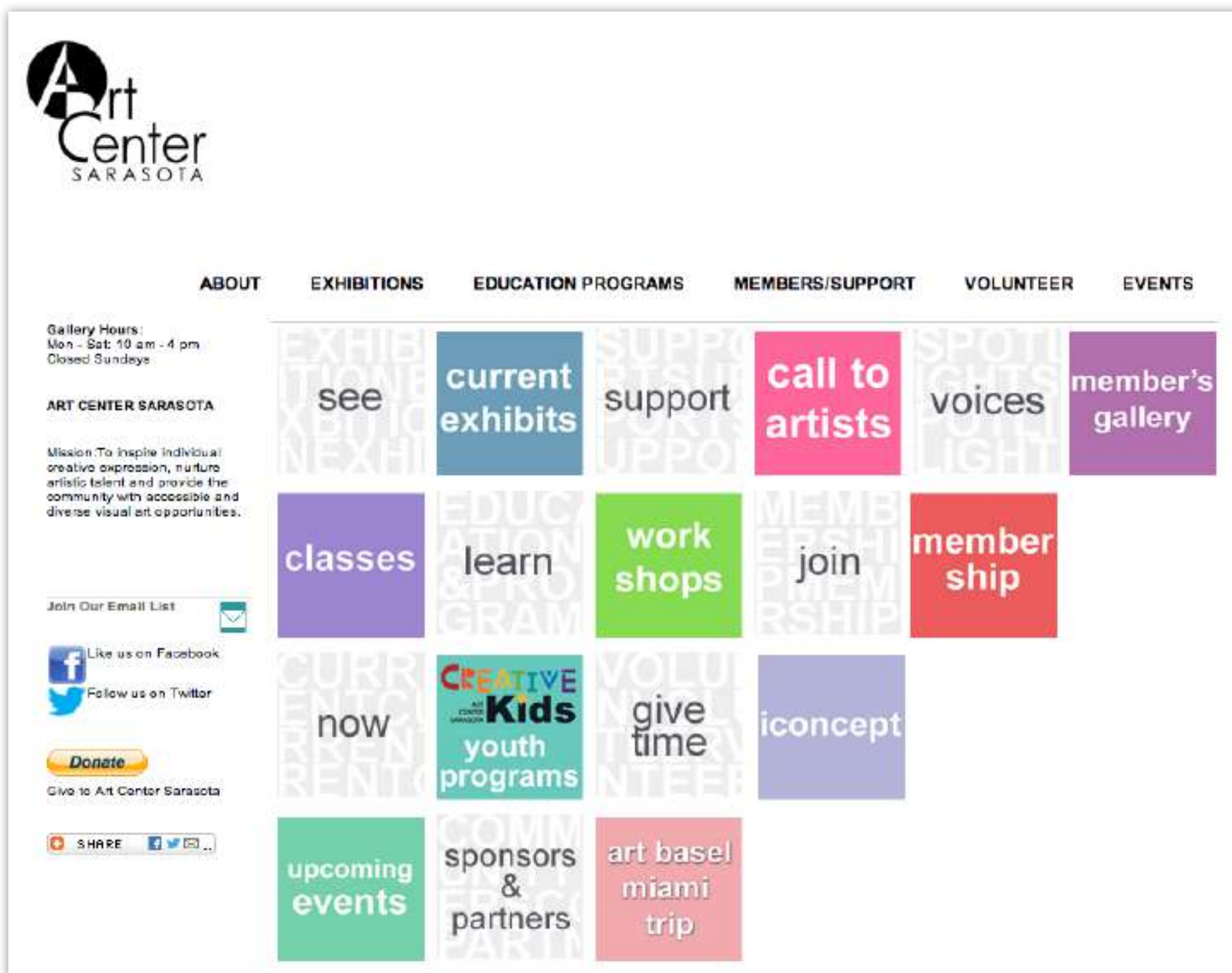
Art Center Sarasota invites self-published authors and illustrators from the area to participate in the Sarasota Book Fair, Oct. 5 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Art Center Sarasota, 707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota.

The event will be held in conjunction with ABCBooks4Children Inc., a not-for-profit networking organization for self-published authors and illustrators of all genres, a news release says. Admission to the event is free.

According to Event Coordinator Brenda Spalding, the book fair will showcase 35 to

50 regionally based authors and illustrators, some of whom are members of the Florida Writers Association, Peace River Writers and the National League of American Pen Women.

Spaces are available at a cost of \$25 for a six-foot-long table or \$15 for a table to share, the release says. The deadline to apply is Sept. 25. All authors should be self-published. For more information, email Brenda Spalding at [Brenda@artsarasota.org](mailto:Brenda@artsarasota.org) or call 365-2032. 







## RELIGION BRIEFS

*Temple Emanu-El Ritual Chairman Marian Raupp, Joe Kopper and Past President Renee Gold dressed the Torah scrolls in white mantles in preparation for the High Holy Days during last year's Selichot service. Contributed photo*

### TEMPLE TO INAUGURATE HIGH HOLY DAY SEASON WITH SELICHOT

Members of the public are warmly invited to inaugurate the Jewish High Holy Day season with Selichot services at Temple Emanu-El in Sarasota on Saturday, Aug. 31, the Temple has announced.

Temple Emanu-El is located at 151 McIntosh Road.

A gala President's Reception, featuring home-made desserts, will begin at 7:30 p.m., and the changing of the Torah mantles and Selichot service will begin at 8 p.m., a news release says.

"A ritual prescribed by Jewish mystics to help prepare spiritually for the High Holy Days, Se-



lichot services incorporate music, blessings and meditations for an inspiring and reflective worship experience,” the release explains. “Periods of silence are interspersed throughout the prayers so worshippers can engage in personal contemplation and individual communion with the Divine. The service concludes with a dramatic shofar blast to awaken

the soul to the solemnity and grandeur of the season.”

Temple Emanu-El uses an original Selichot service compiled by Rabbi Brenner Glickman; it incorporates traditional as well as modern elements, the release notes.

For more information, call the Temple Emanu-El office at 371-2788.



*Preparing homemade desserts for last year's President's Reception preceding the Selichot service were Temple Emanu-El members Deborah Solomon, Joan Blum, Judilee Sterne, Rabbi Elaine Rose Glickman, Leo Glickman and (front) Eden Glickman. Contributed photo*



## TEMPLE EMANU-EL ANNOUNCES ROSH HASHANAH SCHEDULE

Temple Emanu-El, located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota, has announced its schedule of worship services for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

Evening services will be held Wednesday, Sept. 4, at 7:30 p.m., and morning worship will begin on Thursday, Sept. 5, at 10 a.m., a news release says. Services will be conducted by Rabbi Brenner J. Glickman and the Temple Emanu-El High Holy Day Choir; the morning service will also feature a shofar service, with teenager Harris Bockler returning as the synagogue's *ba'al tekiah*, or shofar-blower, the release adds.

Reservations and tickets are required for both of these services; for more information, call the Temple office at 371-2788.

In addition to these events, Temple Emanu-El will hold a Rosh Hashanah Family Service on Thursday, Sept. 5, at 1:30 p.m. It is free and open to everyone in the community, the release notes. "All young Jewish and interfaith families are warmly invited to this special High Holy Day worship opportunity," the release says.

The Rosh Hashanah Family Service, which was created and will be led by Rabbi Glickman, features an abbreviated shofar service and Torah reading as well as music, liturgy "and a story meaningful for all ages," the release explains.



*Temple Emanu-El President Michael Richker (left) and Rabbi Brenner J. Glickman will welcome worshippers to Rosh Hashanah services. Contributed photo*



## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TO OFFER MORE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ON ISRAEL

Rabbi Ari Shapiro of Temple Sinai in Sarasota has been teaching adults and youth about Israel for many years, but now he has gained the certification to do so with a deeper understanding of how to more meaningfully engage students of any age," the Temple has announced.

Shapiro recently participated in the 12th annual Professional Development Workshop on Modern Israel, held in conjunction with the Emory Institute for the Study of Modern Israel and made possible by the generosity of The AVI CHAI Foundation, a news release explains.

"It was a week of intensive educational training" for 63 selected educators who came from 18 states, 49 schools and Israel-centered organizations, the release notes. "Reb Ari," as he is called at Temple Sinai by his Religious School students, "took part in lectures, cultural activities and breakout sessions and was exposed to cutting-edge pedagogy and experiential learning," the release continues. The workshop featured world-renowned scholars and curriculum specialists from the United States as well as Israel's Hebrew University.

"Reb Ari chose to pursue this professional development opportunity offered by the Religious School because he has seen first-hand the growing distance between young American Jews and the State of Israel and the decreasing interest in the Hebrew language and Hebrew/Jewish education," the release adds. He found encouragement in his experience, it notes.

"Being with so many educators, from varied settings, made for invigorating conversations

and exchange of ideas," Shapiro said in the release. "I learned many new ways to engage students in the learning process through music, the Internet, and group participation."

Shapiro added that he looks forward to implementing what he learned as he teaches seventh-graders and adults this coming school year.



*Rabbi Ari Shapiro. Contributed photo*



## TEMPLE EMANU-EL TO WELCOME SPEAKER FROM LEKET ISRAEL

Temple Emanu-El, located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota, is pleased to announce that Lauren Yoked, associate director of development for Israel's National Food Bank, Leket Israel, will speak during Shabbat services on Friday, Aug. 30, at 7:30 p.m. Members of the community are warmly invited, a news release says.

With the assistance of 45,000 volunteers, Leket Israel will rescue and distribute more than

25 million pounds of [produce](#) and [perishable goods](#) for Israel's poor this year, the release notes. One million [meals](#) and an additional 1.5 million [sandwiches](#) for underprivileged children will also be prepared. During Shabbat on Aug. 30, Yoked will discuss the expanding work of Leket and the ways in which interested Sarasotans can support this organization.

For more information, call 371-2788.

## CHJ WELCOMES THE PUBLIC TO HIGH HOLIDAYS SERVICES

The Congregation for Humanistic Judaism (CHJ) will celebrate Rosh Hashanah on Thursday, Sept. 5, at 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch, the Congregation has announced.

The Yom Kippur Kol Nidre Service will be at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 13, and the Memorial Service/Break the Fast will be at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 14.

The latter service, in English, "is moving and relevant," a news release says.

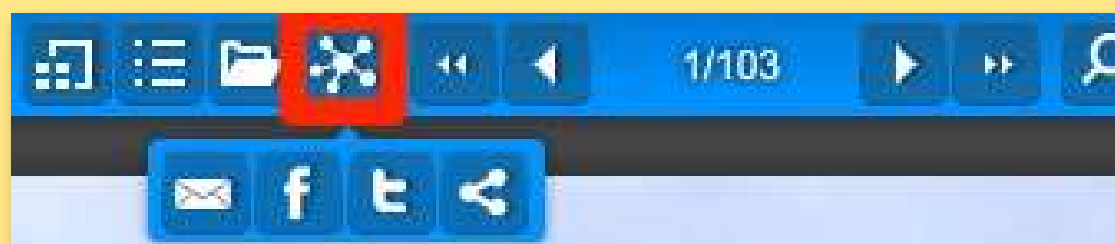
The Humanaires — a choral group under the direction of David Berman — is featured in the service, and it "is stirring" in its presentations, the release adds.


Reservations are required. To make one, call 929-7771.

All services are held at Unity, located at 3023 Proctor Road in Sarasota. 

"Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared." — *Buddha*

## QUICK TIP



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





# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**30+**  
AUGUST

***Sammy Tonight! A Tribute To Sammy Davis, Jr.***

Aug. 30 to Sept. 1 (times vary), Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, 1646 10th Way. Admission: \$29.50. Information: 366-1505 or [WBTroupe.org](http://WBTroupe.org).

**30+**  
AUGUST

**Dabbert Gallery presents *Summer Showcase***

Through Sept. 30, 76 S. Palm Ave. Admission: free. Information: 955-1315 or [DabbertGallery.com](http://DabbertGallery.com).

**30+**  
AUGUST

**Allyn Gallup Gallery presents *Some Wonderful Abstractions***

Through Oct. 5, 1288 N. Palm Ave. Free admission. Information: 366-2454 or [AllynGallup.com](http://AllynGallup.com).

**06**  
SEPTEMBER

**WSLR presents Jonathan Byrd in concert**

Sept. 6, 8 p.m., Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at door. Information: 894-6469 or [WSLR.org](http://WSLR.org).

**12**  
SEPTEMBER

**WSLR presents Grandpa's Cough Medicine**

Sept. 12, 8 p.m., Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court. Tickets: \$8 in advance; \$10 at door. Information: 894-6469 or [WSLR.org](http://WSLR.org).

**14**  
SEPTEMBER

**Venice Theatre presents Yesterdayze in concert**

Sept. 14, 8 p.m., 140 W. Tampa Ave. Tickets: \$20. Information: 488-1115 or [VeniceStage.com](http://VeniceStage.com).

**YOUR LIFESTYLE GUIDE TO THE SUNCOAST**



# WAITING FOR THE WIND

**PRESS**



**Norman Schimmel**  
Photographer

**The Sarasota News Leader**  
BORN 04/20/1934      DEPARTED 10/15/2020

## SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS

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