

THE SARASOTA

Vol. 2, No. 8 — November 8, 2013

# News Leader

*The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida*



**FIRST, A DISCUSSION  
CITY SETTLES ... AGAIN  
'IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE'**

*Inside*

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# A.K.A. HELP

# SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

*The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida*

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# Welcome

As City Editor Stan Zimmerman put it just before 1:30 p.m. Thursday, “Nothing quite like deadline to get the ol’ juices flowing.”

Our publication has many advantages, thanks to its digital format, but our staff — like those of all publications — has a cut-off point for delivering copy. On Wednesday, Stan called to say the City Commission would be meeting at 11 a.m. on Thursday — our production day — to talk about settling the latest Government in the Sunshine lawsuit filed against it. Having no idea how long the session might last, I told him to call the next day after it ended, and we would decide how to proceed.

As it turned out, County Editor Roger Drouin and I both had stories to finish, so when Stan called, I told him he could go home and write, and I gave him about an hour and 15 minutes to do that. He beat the timer.

The only thing better than a late-breaking story is producing articles about significant topics that can be found nowhere else. We take much pride in pursuit of that endeavor, and you will see quite a few examples in this issue. Even Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel has a big scoop.

Our *Sarasota Leisure* section this week also is brimming with articles I have seen nowhere else. And while I am loathe to “toot my own horn,” I want to put in a plug for my story about Operation Second Chance in Sarasota County — not because of my involvement with it but because the people I interviewed are among the most inspiring I ever have encountered.

***Rachel Brown Hackney***  
Editor and Publisher





## FIRST, A DISCUSSION



## 'IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE'



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# FIRST, A DISCUSSION



“ Although Lido Key is within the city limits of the City of Sarasota, and the majority of the beach within the project area is city-owned, Sarasota County owns the South Lido Park property.

Amy Meese  
Director  
Natural Resources  
Sarasota County

”



## THE COUNTY COMMISSION WILL TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE LIDO BEACH RENOURISHMENT PROJECT, HAVING LEARNED THAT ONE OR MORE PROPOSED GROINS WOULD BE ON COUNTY PROPERTY

By Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor

With new information having arisen about Sarasota County's involvement in the Lido Beach Renourishment Project — and lingering questions about other aspects of the plan — the county commissioners this week asked staff to schedule a board discussion on the topic.

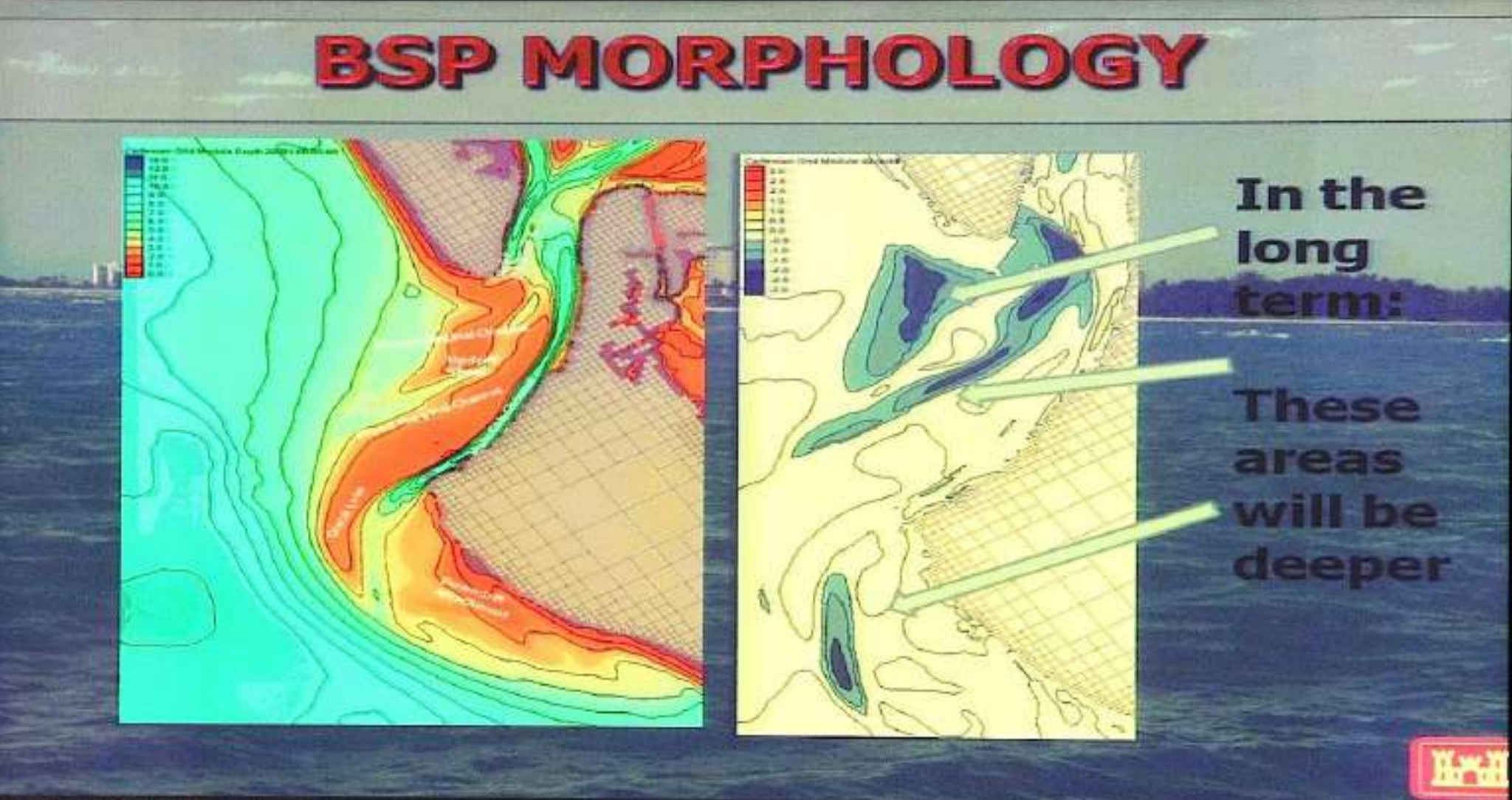
That agenda item has been set for Jan. 28, Laird Wreford, the county's coastal resources manager, told *The Sarasota News Leader* on Nov. 6.

Commissioner Christine Robinson raised the issue during the Commission Reports segment

of the Nov. 5 regular meeting in Venice, referencing an email from Wreford to Rob Patten, the county's former director of environmental services.

Wreford wrote that Sarasota County had not been asked to be a co-applicant with the City of Sarasota in its effort to obtain a permit from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to enable the renourishment to proceed as planned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Wreford also referenced an email that Amy Meese, the county's director of natural



*The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presentation on the Lido Beach Renourishment Project included graphics showing long-term effects on Big Pass from dredging and the construction of three groins on south Lido Key. File photo*



resources, sent to the County Commission on Oct. 30. Meese wrote:

“At the [Oct. 22] joint meeting with the City of Sarasota Commission, ... [o]ne issue raised by the public has been the question of what direct authority or involvement the County has in approving final plans for this project. Although Lido Key is within the city limits of the City of Sarasota, and the majority of the beach within the project area is city-owned, Sarasota County owns the South Lido Park property. Consequently, we have determined that the southern-most 600 feet (approx.) of the

project limits are on and/or immediately adjacent to County property (The total project length is 8,280 feet).

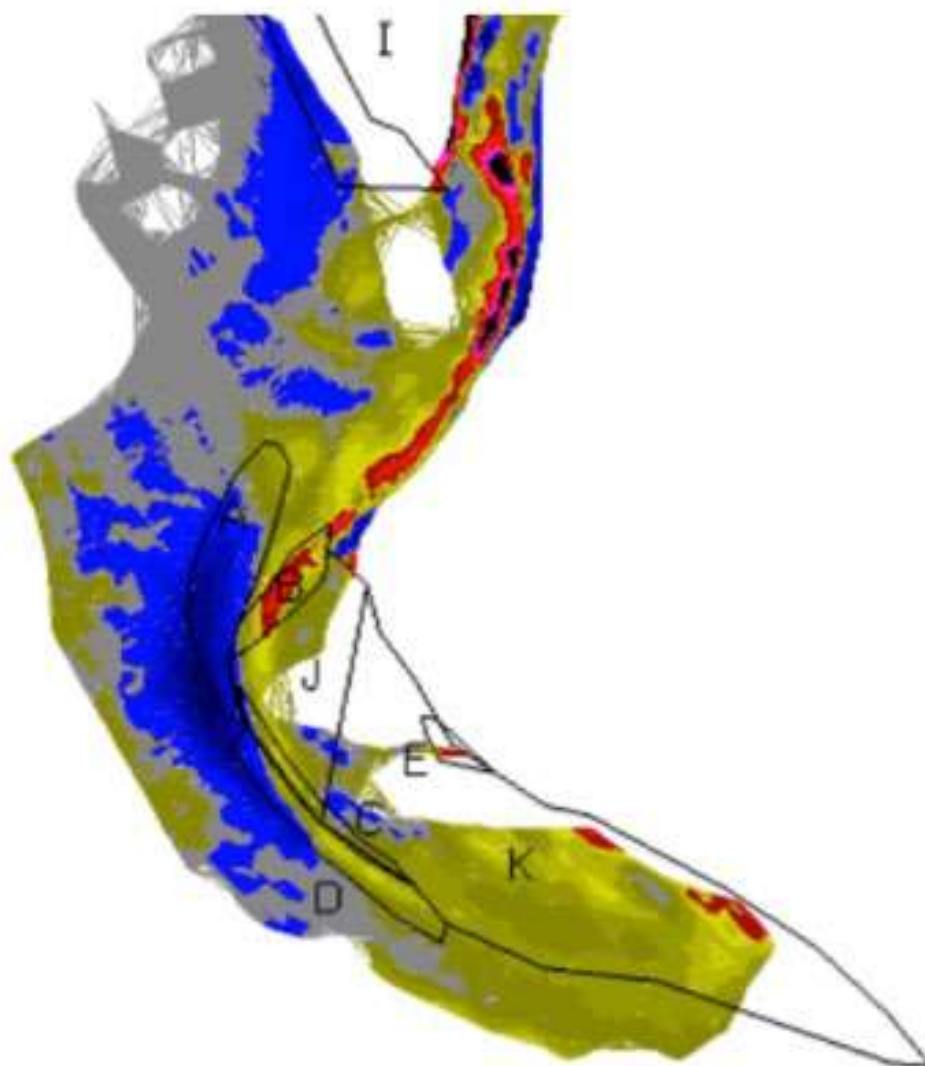
“By virtue of owning property within the project area, the County is a direct party to the project as currently designed. The extent to

“*I was extremely uncomfortable with the presentation by the Army Corps that we received [on Oct. 22].*

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

which proposed project features (sand, rock groins, etc.) would be located on County property will need to be clarified before the project could proceed. The City will need to either seek approval from the County to use part of South Lido Park for the project, or adjust

the design to avoid encroaching upon County property.”





*A 2008 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers report includes a 1995 aerial view of Big Pass. Image courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*



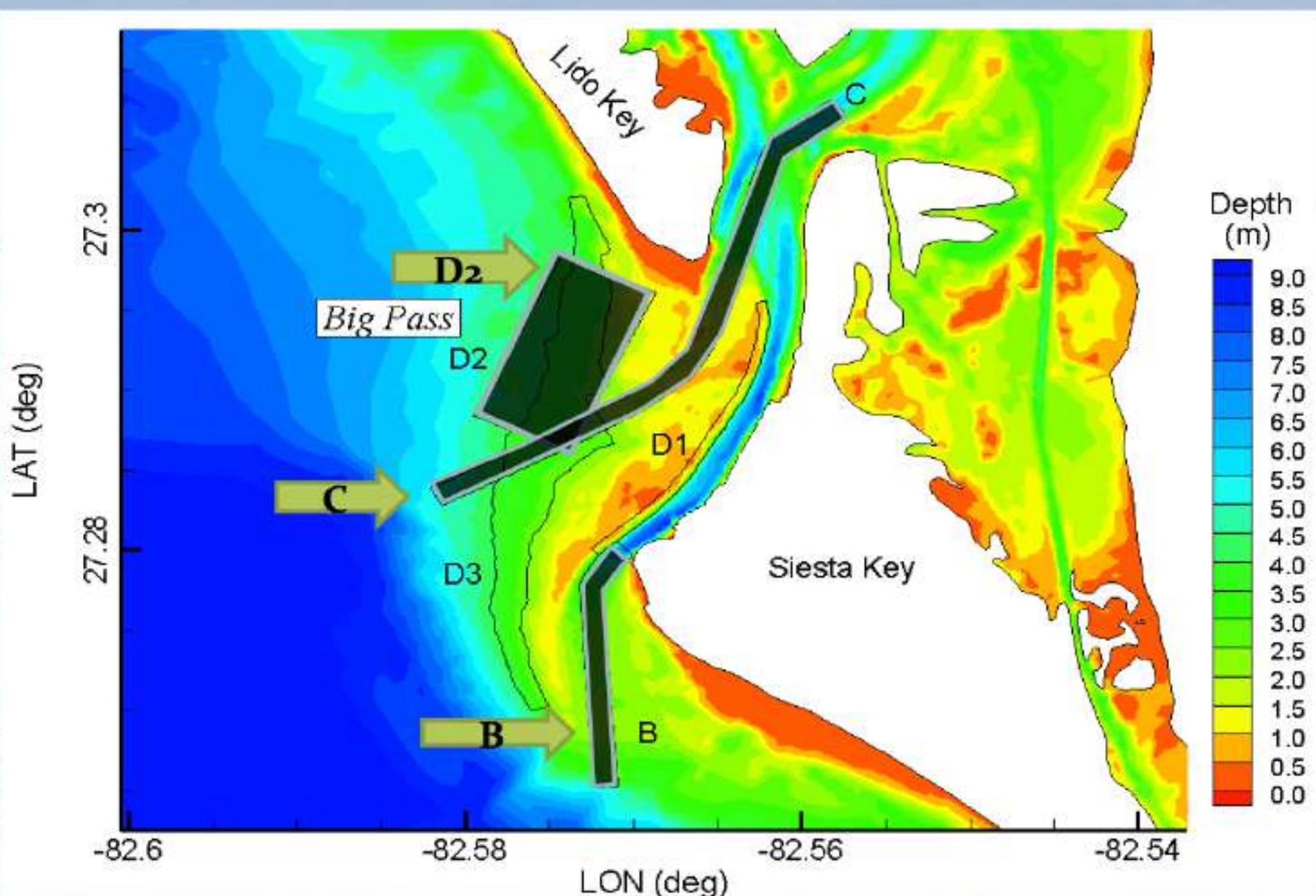
Wreford told the *News Leader* that Jan. 28 was the earliest date the board's meeting schedule allowed sufficient time for the discussion, but the delay should give him and other county staff sufficient time to answer the commissioners' questions. He already is working with city and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff, he added. "We're going through some fact-finding right now."

Not only is the county property a new factor in that research, Wreford noted, but a determination also needs to be made about whether the project will affect state-submerged lands with an east-west orientation off Lido Beach.

Once the answers are clear about exactly where county and state property is in

conjunction with the project's design, Wreford continued, then city and Army Corps staff can determine whether they need to make adjustments to the project to deal with encroachment issues. At that point, he added, it would be up to the County Commission to settle on its response to the facts and proposals the city and Army Corps offer. "And that could take a lot of different forms," Wreford said of the county board's action. "It's too early yet to know which direction we're going to be aiming towards."

One possibility is that the county could end up being a party to the DEP permit application, Wreford noted.



A graphic shows the areas of Big Pass that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes dredging for the Lido Renourishment Project. Image courtesy City of Sarasota



When Milan A. Mora, the project engineer for the Army Corps in its Jacksonville office, presented the plans for the renourishment project to the county's Coastal Advisory Committee on Sept. 18, he indicated the permit application would be submitted in October or early November. However, Wreford said he felt Mora was considering that time frame from an "optimal hope" standpoint. Wreford pointed out that, even then, additional public outreach sessions were scheduled for Dec. 5 and 6 in Sarasota. He added that he also felt the city and Army Corps "were fully prepared to be sensitive" to the potential for county involvement in the project.

Wreford said he did not believe the city and Army Corps would submit a permit application

"until we all have a mutual comfort level on all these issues."

When the city and county boards held a joint meeting on Oct. 22, Mora never mentioned the county property ownership factor. Alex DavisShaw, the city's engineer — who also participated in the discussion — also did not note that fact.

Mora made plain on Oct. 22 and during lengthier remarks at the Sept. 18 Coastal Advisory Committee meeting that three groins were planned on the southern end of Lido Key to protect the renourishment of the beach. He indicated those structures were integral to the design of the project.

Dear Commissioners,

I understand the Army Corps of Engineers is proposing to dredge Big Pass as part of a multi-million dollar, fifty-year project without having any Peer Review of their project or without a Public Hearing before the Commission. Given the risks of disturbing a natural process of sand transport from Big Pass that has kept Siesta Beach re-nourished for as long as there have been records, I strongly object. In light of the negative results that have occurred in other inlets that have been dredged by the Corps, I am requesting that these current plans have a full review by independent Coastal Engineers followed by Commission hearings before any dredging of Big Pass sands is allowed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Initial here if you oppose dredging Big Pass under any conditions \_\_\_\_\_

*Members of the Sarasota County Boaters' Coalition are encouraging people to sign a petition to the County Commission regarding peer review of the Lido Renourishment Project. Image courtesy Peter van Roekens*



## COMMISSION QUERIES

During the Nov. 5 County Commission meeting, Robinson told her colleagues that regardless of whether the county would have to be included on the DEP permit application, she would like to request a formal board discussion of the project, so all the commissioners would be able to ask questions they might have about the proposal.

She herself had questions during the joint session with the City Commission, she added, but it did not seem the appropriate setting for her to ask them, she pointed out. “And I would really like for the five of us by ourselves to try and ... get direction on this.”

Robinson continued, “It looks like it’s not entirely clear to everybody, either, exactly [what] our involvement [is in the project].”

Commissioner Nora Patterson immediately responded, “I was extremely uncomfortable with the presentation by the Army Corps that we received,” especially what she characterized as a “brush-off” of the question she asked Mora regarding the increase in wave action that he indicated the northern end of Siesta Key would experience from the placement of the three groins on South Lido Key, along with the dredging of Big Pass.

His comments about that wave action seemed more opinion than based on fact, Patterson added. The north end of Siesta Key is “an area that has constantly become hardened, because there is a lot of erosion there, with a few property owners trying to cling to not hardening there,” she added.

Patterson has commented a number of times over the past months about her concerns regarding a section of North Beach Road that has crumbled repeatedly over the years, as a

result of wave action and erosion. In October 2012, part of the pavement collapsed when the shore was lashed by waves and wind as part of the weather system that became known as Superstorm Sandy.

“Lido Beach is a *huge* asset to the county, to the city,” Patterson pointed out during the Nov. 5 discussion, “and I very much want to see [the city] get the benefit of federal [funding] help and state help,” especially with the cost of the project estimated at \$22.7 million.

That amount seemed almost double the expense of other recent renourishment projects, she noted.

## PEER REVIEW

Further, Patterson reminded her colleagues, she raised the issue during the Oct. 22 meeting about peer review of the project. Subsequent emails from Rob Patten — the former director of environmental services — to county officials have made it clear that no peer review has been undertaken of this latest proposal for renourishing Lido Beach.

In response to one of those emails, Wreford — writing on Oct. 23 — noted that the three peer reviews to which Mora referred on Oct. 22 “were solely about the Inlet Management Plan that was completed by [a Sarasota firm] several years ago ...” The current plan has not had a peer review, he confirmed.

Wreford continued, “I agree there would be value in requesting that the City arrange to have this specific project design peer reviewed, to give greater comfort level relative to the technical science involved. Once results were received, the City and County could then discuss how best to move forward (or not) with the project.”



Patterson added on Nov. 5, “I am really concerned, and I really welcome Commissioner Robinson bringing it up.”

Patterson said that perhaps it would be a good idea for the County Commission to conduct a public forum on the Army Corps’ plan, “which may include conflicting scientific and engineering expertise.”

She continued, “The concern, obviously, is for the effect on the Siesta Key Beach, which is at least as much a gem as Lido.”

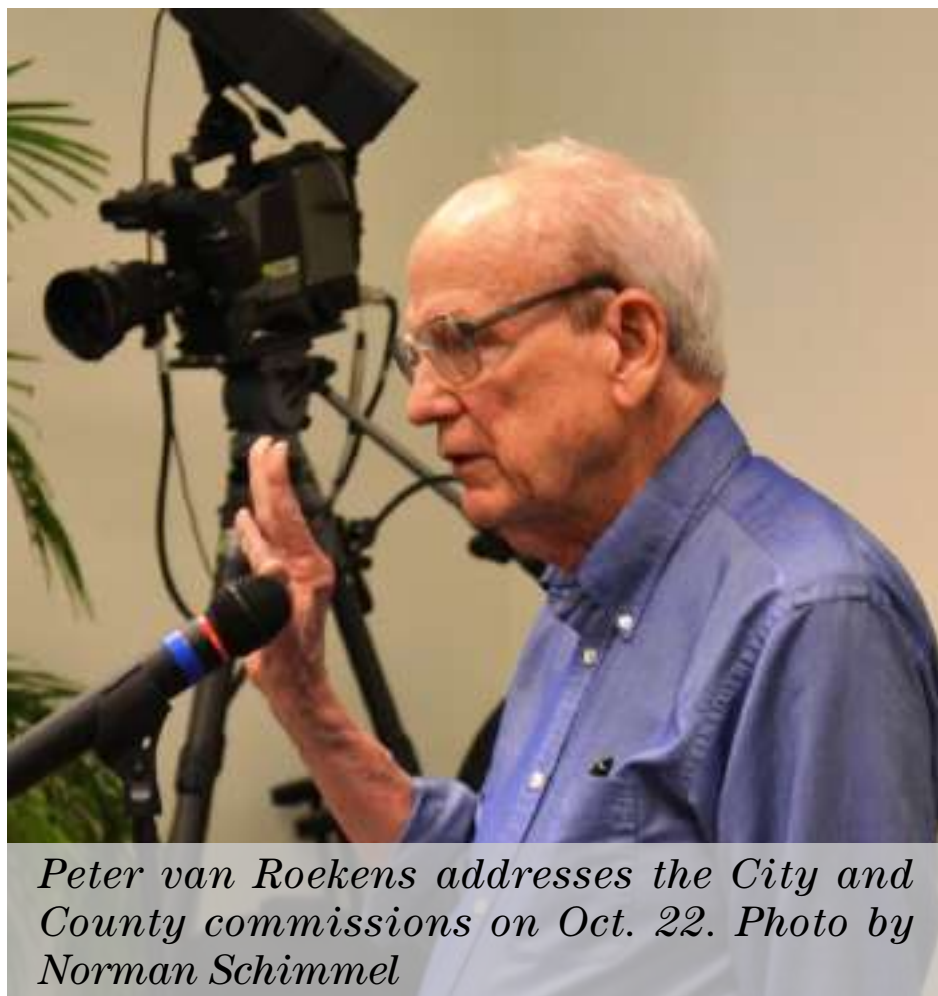
The commissioners agreed they would plan on the discussion first and then decide how to proceed.

## SIESTA CONCERNS

Earlier that day, Siesta Key resident and Boaters’ Coalition representative Peter van Roekens urged members of the Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) to press for a peer review and offered them an opportunity to participate in a petition drive seeking such action as well as a public hearing on the plan, conducted by the County Commission.

Although van Roekens is the secretary of the Siesta Key Association (SKA), Michael Shay, the SKA vice president, told the approximately 20 people present that the SKA itself is still studying the renourishment project and has not reached a decision on the view it will take.

In the meantime, the [West Coast Inland Navigation District](#) (WCIND) board decided during its Nov. 1 meeting to become involved in the Lido project, van Roekens noted — a fact County Commission Vice Chairman Charles Hines reported to his colleagues on Nov. 5. The WCIND board agreed to act as an intermediary among the Army Corps, the



*Peter van Roekens addresses the City and County commissions on Oct. 22. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

County and City commissions and the public, Hines said.

During his comments at the SKVA meeting, van Roekens pointed out, “One of the biggest threats we face here on Siesta Key is the dredging of Big Pass,” which never has been done.

In 2008, Steven M. Bratos and Jason A. Engle, coastal engineers with the Army Corps in Jacksonville, released a paper titled *Application of Regional Sediment Management Techniques at New Pass and Big Sarasota Pass, Florida*. In the introduction to that paper, they wrote, “The Jacksonville District ... was directed to conduct a regional sediment study of a section of the Sarasota County, Florida Gulf Coast shoreline that encompasses New Pass and Big Sarasota Pass and the adjacent beaches to develop an in-depth understanding of wave-forced and tidally-forced sediment transport processes and to configure an analytical model of the two-inlet system that includes regional



sediment sources, sinks, and pathways that could be used for evaluating engineering and management alternatives.”

Referring to Big Pass, that paper says in its conclusion, “Bottom change volume between the model and observed values have percent differences ranging from 30% to 200%,” a section van Roekens read to the SKVA members. “Now that’s significant,” van Roekens added.

As for the Army Corps engineers involved in the proposed project, he continued, “They have no idea what [the dredging of Big Pass] will do, and neither do we.”

He also pointed to a comment Mora made during the presentation to the Coastal Advisory Committee on Sept. 18: “We cannot predict what Mother Nature will do.”

“People who know the business of coastal engineering other than the people who are

proposing [the project]” need to review it, van Roekens added. “Let’s get the facts.”

However, just as Patterson would tell her County Commission colleagues later, van Roekens said, “We’re not against Lido Beach being renourished, but we are if it impacts Siesta Beach, and that’s the risk. ... This whole thing needs to be out in the open, not just steamrolled through by people who want to dredge.”

Shay, the SKA vice president, pointed out that the SKA board members are putting together a list of questions they want to pose to Army Corps representatives during a presentation of the renourishment project plans on Dec. 5, during an SKA meeting at St. Boniface Episcopal Church on Siesta Key.

“We’re hoping to get some concrete answers,” Shay added. 

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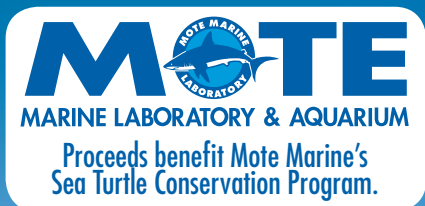


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# CITY SETTLES ... AGAIN



*The City Commission listens to public comments at a recent meeting. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## THE CITY COMMISSION VOTES 3-1 — WITH SUSAN CHAPMAN ABSTAINING — TO RESOLVE ITS LATEST PROBLEM WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE LAWS

By Stan Zimmerman  
*City Editor*

By a 3-1 margin, with one legal abstention, the Sarasota City Commission agreed to make an offer Thursday, Nov. 7, to settle a lawsuit claiming a violation of Florida's Government in the Sunshine laws.

Vice Mayor Willie Shaw voted against the motion, and Commissioner Susan Chapman abstained because the outcome could affect her financially. She and Commissioner

Suzanne Atwell were named personally in the suit after they met with downtown merchants to hear concerns about homelessness and vagrancy.

*I was hung out to dry by my political opponents. It is a decision that disregards people's constitutional rights to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.*

Susan Chapman  
Commissioner  
City of Sarasota

Mayor Shannon Snyder passed the gavel to make a motion to offer the settlement, and Commissioner Paul Caragiulo seconded the motion by telephone from the Appalachian Trail, where he was vacationing.



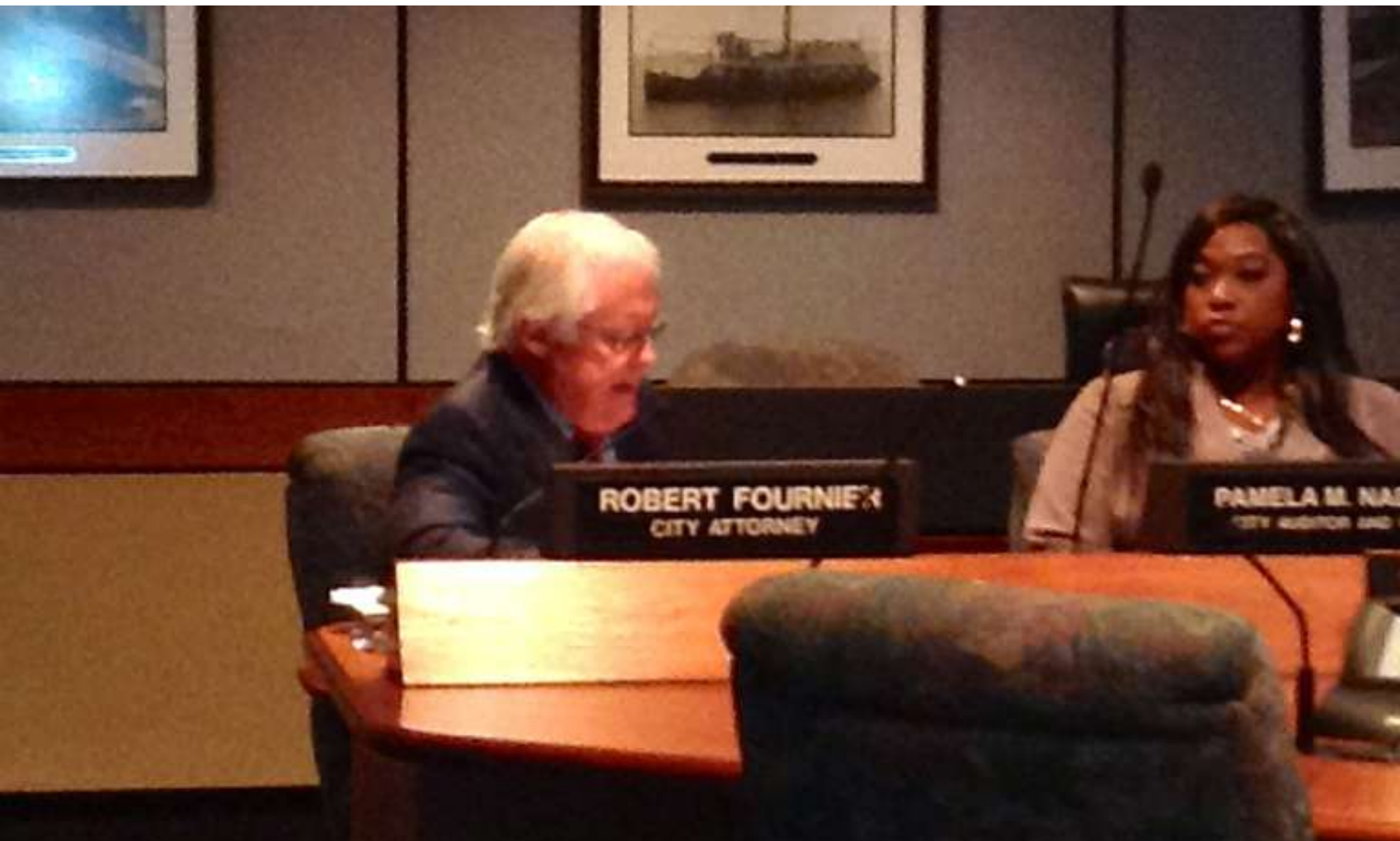
Earlier in the meeting, Atwell's attorney, Robert Lincoln, announced he had reached an understanding with the plaintiffs — Citizens for Sunshine — and Atwell had signed a settlement agreement. That relieved her of any conflict of interest, he noted. Without comment, she supported the motion to offer a city settlement.

"I was hung out to dry by my political opponents," Chapman said after the meeting adjourned. "It is a decision that disregards people's constitutional rights to assemble and petition for redress of grievances."

The proposed settlement at press time was still a draft; it had not been submitted to Citizens for Sunshine's attorney, Andrea Mogensen of Sarasota.

The draft says, "The city admits that the city's failure to provide notice of the Oct. 10, 2013 9 a.m. meeting at the Tsunami restaurant and to take minutes was in violation of the Sunshine Law because it was known to the city that two or more city commissioners would be present; and because the city accepted the invitation to the meeting intending 'to build a coalition to support our homeless efforts' and to build support for a subject that was reasonably foreseeable to come before the city commission for future action."

The agreement adds that the city will pay for Mogensen's attorney's fees in the case. If Mogensen and her client agree, the settlement will go to 12th Judicial Circuit Judge Charles Williams.



*City Attorney Bob Fournier explains the intricacies of his proposed settlement with Citizens for Sunshine. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*



## OUT IN THE COLD

The settlement offer leaves more questions unanswered. If “two or more city commissioners” are invited to, or attend, private meetings — a gathering of a neighborhood association, business group, nonprofit board, etc. — who will “provide notice” and who will “take minutes”?

And will the city pay for Chapman’s continued legal defense, if she decides not to surrender? Her lawyer, Richard Harrison, wrote that he offered to attend the Nov. 7 City Commission meeting when it first was set for 9 a.m., but he was unavailable at 11 a.m. However, Snyder said he had “personal obligations” at 9 a.m., so the meeting was pushed back to 11 a.m. Harrison wrote that the time change was “outrageous” and that Snyder’s “desire to settle



*City Commissioner Susan Chapman listens to remarks during a joint city/county meeting. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*Attorney Robert Lincoln talks with his client, City Commissioner Suzanne Atwell, after the commission agreed to settle her part of the Citizens for Sunshine lawsuit. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*



without regard for consequences is clear to everyone. We request the city take no action and reschedule.”

Snyder responded, “These continuing special meetings are taking a toll on people’s family lives.”

Shaw moved to reschedule the meeting, but that failed for lack of a second.

With the settlement agreement motion passing 3-1, Chapman was left standing alone.

## SETTLEMENT COULD BE UNSETTLING

Even if the suit is settled, a number of loose ends need to be tied up. Fournier said after the meeting he would put them on the next City Commission agenda. The first is a constitutional issue.

“I cannot believe you are considering a settlement that will affect citizens’ constitutional rights to petition for redress of grievances,” said Gretchen Serrie, the secretary of the Indian Beach Sapphire Shores neighborhood. “I beg you to reconsider the impact of a settlement on community organizations and reject this radical interpretation of the Sunshine Law.”

Kate Lowman, former president of the Laurel Park Neighborhood Association, told the



*Vice Mayor Willie Shaw, Mayor Shannon Snyder and Commissioner Susan Chapman listen to a speaker at the Nov. 7 meeting. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*

commissioners, “The goal of Sunshine is to prevent backroom deals. But it is not intended to prevent you from engaging the people you represent.”

Both suggested the board not make a hasty decision, not only because of the consequences regarding commissioner participation in neighborhood meetings, but also because of their involvement in meetings such as those of the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs and others.

“It will be necessary to put on the next agenda some discussion about the policy for [meeting] notice and the responsibility for taking minutes,” said Fournier.



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## 'IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE'

*Ken Shelin makes comments about the proposed registry — one of many trips he has made to the podium since the commission began discussing an ordinance. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### THE COUNTY COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES A DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP REGISTRY

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

Ken Shelin did not get everything he had sought, but he was ecstatic on the afternoon of Nov. 6: With a unanimous vote, the Sarasota County Commission approved a Domestic Partnership Registry ordinance — something Shelin has been advocating for about a year.

“I’m really delighted in the end result,” he told *The Sarasota News Leader* shortly after the board made

its decision. “If we need to tweak [the ordinance] later on, they can always amend it. ... Fundamentally, the major rights that domestic partners need are there.”

Those rights include the ability to visit a domestic partner in the hospital and to be able to make funeral and burial decisions.

The ordinance will take effect 120 days from the date it is

“Partners want to be together because they love one another. ... I hope you will recognize the joy such relationships bring to the individuals involved, their families, friends, neighbors and the county at large.”

Ken Shelin  
Advocate  
Domestic Partnership Registries





registered with the Office of the Florida Secretary of State, according to a memo provided to the County Commission. Shelin added that he was told that registration probably would happen by the end of this week.

Among the facets the ordinance does not include — which Shelin and supporters requested — were that any couples in Sarasota County could register for it, even if they were not full-time residents, and that domestic partners be able to participate in parent-teacher conferences, for example, with access to educational records of their partners' children as long as that was agreeable to the other legal parent.

However, Shelin was successful on one other point he had pressed: that some type of documentation be provided to domestic partners after they register, so they have proof of their action.



*Orlando attorney Mary Meeks argues for changes to the proposed ordinance. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*Chairwoman Carolyn Mason listens to a speaker during the public hearing. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



Chuck Henry, the county's health and human services director, told the county commissioners he had met with representatives of local hospitals about the proposed ordinance, as they had requested. During those discussions, he pointed out, while the county plans to list its domestic partners in a searchable database, hospital officials "thought that was going to be more of a hindrance ... every time a client came in." Instead, he said, they preferred that domestic partners have a certificate or a card, which could be scanned and included as part of a patient's medical records.

As a result, Henry said, the Sarasota County Clerk of Court's Office staff was exploring options with its vendor to enable it to provide such a card "to address those concerns."



*Vice Chairman Charles Hines makes a point.  
Photo by Norman Schimmel*



*Once again, Klaus Obermeit asks the County Commission to approve a domestic partnership registry for the county. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



The Clerk of Court and County Comptroller will handle the registry, including setting a fee schedule to cover the costs, according to a staff memo provided to the County Commission.

Additionally — at the request of public speakers — the commission voted unanimously to change the language in one section of the ordinance to make it clear that a surviving domestic partner would have the right to make funeral and burial decisions after the other partner's death.

"I think that's consistent with the intent of the [proposed] ordinance," County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh said when questioned on that point by Commissioner Christine Robinson.

Robinson made the motion to approve the change.

## PASSAGE URGED

Among the speakers who addressed the commission during the Nov. 6 public hearing on the ordinance was Mary Meeks, a constitutional attorney in Orlando who helped draft the domestic partnership ordinance in that

city about three years ago, she said, at the mayor's request.

Since then, she told the County Commission, she has worked with a number of other municipalities on similar action. "And [I] have literally seen thousands of Florida families register and be able to obtain those very important protections" provided by such laws. Those partners ranged from couples with children," she added, to older people who had been together "30, 40 and even 50 or more years."

Meeks pointed out, "I have also seen the great pain and suffering that has been [endured] by individuals in this state who have not had these protections when they needed them."

Vice Chairman Charles Hines took exception to one point Meeks made in her remarks. She told the board, "The rights provided by a domestic partnership registry cannot be duplicated by legal documents. That is a complete and utter falsehood. No power of attorney or other legal contractual document can give you the legal right to make sure your partner is in the hospital room with you" or allow a domestic partner to make funeral and burial decisions.



*(From left) Commissioner Joe Barbetta asks a question as Commissioner Christine Robinson and Chairwoman Carolyn Mason listen. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



Hines pointed out that the ordinance DeMarsh had drafted made it clear that even if people registered as domestic partners in Sarasota County, they should make certain they obtain

power of attorney and legal healthcare surrogate documents with the assistance of a lawyer. The registry, Hines continued, "is an added layer. ... I disagree with your view. ...

### **Sec. 62-340. Rights of Registered Domestic Partners.**

To the extent not superseded or pre-empted by federal laws, state laws, or other Sarasota County law or ordinance, or contrary to rights conferred by contract or separate legal instrument, Registered Domestic Partners shall have the following rights:

(a) *Healthcare Facility Visitation.* All Healthcare Facilities operating within Sarasota County or under the jurisdiction of Sarasota County shall honor the Registered Domestic Partnership documentation issued pursuant to this Article XII as evidence of the Registered Domestic Partnership and shall allow visitation rights as provided under federal law to the Registered Domestic Partner.

(b) *Healthcare Decisions.* This Subsection pertains to decisions concerning both physical and mental health. Registering as a Domestic Partner shall be considered to be written direction by each Registered Domestic Partner designating the other to make health care decisions for their incapacitated Registered Domestic Partner, and shall authorize each Registered Domestic Partner to act as the other's healthcare surrogate as provided in Chapter 765, Florida Statutes, and otherwise as provided by federal law. Further, no Individual designated as a health care surrogate shall be denied or otherwise defeated in serving as a health care surrogate based solely upon his or her status as the Registered Domestic Partner of his or her incapacitated Registered Domestic Partner on whose behalf health care decisions are to be made. If any health care surrogate designation forms are properly executed after the Domestic Partners' Affidavit of Domestic Partnership was recorded and such forms contain conflicting designations, the later dated authorization and direction shall control.

(c) *Funeral and Burial Decisions.* Registering as Registered Domestic Partners shall be considered to be written direction by a deceased Registered Domestic Partner ("Decedent") of his or her intention to have his or her Registered Domestic Partner direct the disposition of the Decedent's body for funeral and burial purposes as provided in Chapter 497, Florida Statutes, unless the Decedent provides conflicting, written inter vivos authorization and directions that are dated after the date the Domestic Partner's Affidavit of Domestic Partnership was recorded, in which case the later dated authorization and directions shall control.



I think [the comments are] a disservice to the public.”

“I would never tell anyone not to do the documents, if they’re registered,” Meeks responded. “Even with both, I still think there are some gaps with protection.”

After Hines thanked her, Meeks pointed out that the only way for domestic partners to ensure they will have the right to make healthcare decisions for each other is “for somebody — this board — to tell hospitals they have to allow that.”

## CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

Meeks also asked the board to include in the ordinance a provision allowing participation in partners’ children’s education. That measure would grant the same rights to domestic partners that step-parents enjoy, she noted, and it would “in no way [interfere] with the legal priority of the biological parents.”

Robinson responded, “In the State of Florida, the only way that you can have access to children is through being a parent, which is legal or biological or by court order.”

Meeks was referring only to very specific situations, she said, such as allowing a domestic partner to serve as a chaperone for a school trip involving the child of the partner, or participating in parent-teacher conferences regarding a child.

Such provisions are provided for under federal law, Meeks added.

However, when Commissioner Joe Barbetta pulled up on his computer the law to which Meeks was referring — the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act, or FERPA — he pointed out that state law has primacy

over that federal law. “I think Commissioner Robinson’s right,” he added.

When Shelin stood at the podium, he told the commissioners, “I’m really grateful that we find ourselves at this point.”

Although he joined Meeks in asking for several changes, he said, “It’s all about love. Partners want to be together because they love one another. ... I hope you will recognize the joy such relationships bring to the individuals involved, their families, friends, neighbors and the county at large.”


## LITTLE DEBATE

After the public comments concluded — with only one speaker asking the board not to approve the registry — the commissioners took care of the ordinance tweaks in short order. Hines did query DeMarsh about language in one section of the ordinance referring to “long-time committed domestic partnerships.”

“Just to be clear, to register, you could date for a day and go in and sign up the next day?” Hines asked.

DeMarsh indicated he hoped those registering would be people who had been in relationships for some time.

After the vote, Mason — who had championed the initiative at the board dais — offered words of gratitude to her colleagues and staff, as well as to the audience members who were present for the agenda item, most of them wearing red shirts to show their support.

Mason also said, “I want to take this opportunity to thank Ken Shelin for his persistence and consistence with this issue.” 



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# DEMAND FOR MORE OVERSIGHT



*School Board members Caroline Zucker and Jane Goodwin review agenda material. File photo*

## MEMBERS OF THE CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS ORGANIZATION WANT AN INDEPENDENT GROUP TO KEEP TABS ON THE USE OF REVENUE FROM A SPECIAL 1 MILL SCHOOLS TAX

By Stan Zimmerman  
*City Editor*

The Sarasota County School Board on Tuesday, Nov. 5, decided to ask for a fourth bite at the surtax apple. In March 2002, 2006 and 2010, voters agreed to tax themselves an extra mill in property taxes to support the school system.

They are expected to get to make the choice again on March 25, 2014 — although the County Commission has to approve the ballot language, and some grumbling

ensued again this week about whether the referendum should be in November instead of March. Commissioners Joe Barbetta and Nora Patterson were most vocal in supporting the November time frame. The matter

is expected to come up at the County Commission's next meeting, on Nov. 19.

All voters county-wide are eligible to cast a ballot on the School Board's latest initiative.

**“ We need to create a financial tracking system to understand how the money is invested to improve student outcomes at all public schools. ”**

Kelly Kirschner  
Former Mayor  
City of Sarasota

The surtax on property raised as much as \$60.8 million in fiscal year 2008-2009, at the peak of the real estate boom. This year, it is expected to raise \$45.8 million.

Voters in 2000 rejected the tax. Two years later, the school Board waged a more sophisticated electoral campaign, seeking approval of the measure. Among the changes in 2002 was a provision to empanel a committee to watch over the spending and report on it annually.

Prior to the first successful election, voters were promised the money would be used to save the arts in the public schools. Legislators in Tallahassee were slashing state funding for local schools, and arts education statewide was suffering. However, before the second and subsequent elections on the special 1 mill

tax, voters were told the extra money would be used for teacher and staff salaries.

An examination of the funding for the eight years (2006-2014) shows about \$180.9 million was spent on salary increases above the base set by the state. That figure accounts for about 58 percent of the \$309.3 million raised by the surtax in those eight years.

By contrast, the first four years of the surtax, from 2002 to 2006, saw 29.3 percent of the \$126.6 million raised going for pay hikes.

District employees, including teachers, received a 3 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 2002; a 4.5 percent COLA in 2003; a 5.25 percent COLA in 2006; a 3 percent “across the board salary increase” in 2007; and in Fiscal Year 2008-2009, another 1



*Al Weidner, the Sarasota County Schools' deputy chief financial officer, presents the draft Fiscal Year 2014 budget in July. File photo*



percent “across the board” raise and a 1 percent “one-time” bonus.

In 2005, the state Legislature mandated that teachers work an extra one-half hour per day. The district has used surtax funds to cover that expense as well, paying as much as \$14.6 million in Fiscal Year 2008-2009. This is called an “unfunded mandate,” when the state orders something done but does not pay for it.

## OVERSIGHT REQUESTED

On Saturday, Nov. 2, former Sarasota Mayor Kelly Kirschner sought the support of the Coalition of City Neighborhoods Association (CCNA) to insure that independent oversight of the surtax monies continues. “You may have noticed on your [Truth in Millage] notice that more than half of your taxes go to the School Board,” he told the neighborhood leaders at their regular meeting. “We need to create a financial tracking system to understand how the money is invested to improve student outcomes at all public schools.”

The CCNA representatives agreed and voted to support a motion calling for the creation of a financial tracking system for the surtax monies after the referendum is held. In the past, the “financial oversight committee” was the School Board. This time, the referendum will call for a specific organization to handle the duties.

The resolution says, “Provided the continuation of the millage increase for Sarasota County Schools is approved, a financial oversight committee appointed by the School Board shall issue an annual report to insure proper financial stewardship of the funds. In addition the committee shall identify




*Kelly Kirschner/Contributed photo*

relevant outcomes and report results to the community.”

The oversight proposal is the work of the Coalition of City Business Associations, in return for its support at the polls. After studying a previous report on the funds generated by the 1 mill tax, the group found, “There are things we do really well, and then there are very inefficient practices/policies that could be changed over time but they are complicated and would take a persistent pressure on the school board to change from the status quo.”

The group’s findings, and the support of organizations such as CCNA, were quietly presented to the School Board and Superintendent Lori White before Tuesday’s vote.

The resolution says that if the referendum should fail, “the school board would face a revenue shortfall that would result in significant budget cuts requiring the elimination of numerous academic programs and positions.” 





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# CLAWBACK CLAWBACK

*Tents dot the grounds of Benderson Park during the USRowing Masters National Championships in August. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

## **SARASOTA COUNTY AND THE NONPROFIT GROUP THAT MANAGES BENDERSON PARK WANT TO BLOCK A STATE MEASURE THAT COULD COST THE PARK STATE GRANT MONEY**

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

Sarasota County and its partner in managing the rowing facility at Nathan Benderson Park hope to block a measure that would call for grant money to be returned to the state if the facility does not meet certain economic development goals.

The debate over the policy, commonly known as a clawback provision, is part of ongoing negotiations among the county; SunCoast Aquatics

Nature Center Associates, the nonprofit established to raise money for and manage the park; and the state. The state has pushed for such a measure as part of the agreement covering the disbursement of the \$5 million approved for the rowing facility this year by the Legislature.

Assistant County Administrator Mark Cunningham wrote in an email sent on Halloween that the

**“ We’ll continue to work cooperatively to allow for the use of the facility, but we certainly want to get an agreement.”**

Carolyn Brown  
Director  
Parks and Recreation  
Sarasota County





county had completed an “initial discussion” with the state over removing “the ‘claw-back’ language.”

“That’s definitely part of the discussion,” confirms county Parks and Recreation Director Carolyn Brown. When the project received \$5 million from lawmakers in 2012, no clawback language was included, she points out. “The original agreement did not have that particular clause in it, and the thought process is that since this is ongoing funding, we would prefer that that clause not be in future agreements.”

Debate over the wisdom of the rowing facility grants has been hot around the state. Gov. Rick Scott vetoed funding for the park in 2011, but he eventually approved \$10 million over the past two years. Florida Tax Watch, a nonprofit Tallahassee research institute, has included the funding in its annual list of budget “turkeys,” items that have been inserted into the state budget at the behest

of special interests. The *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* reported in 2012 that Scott’s office had “demanded” a clawback agreement as part of the funding.

But Brown says the state is “open and flexible to having that removed” this year. Cunningham’s email indicated that the state needed “about 1-week to discuss and decide internally.”

While the details won’t be revealed till the agreement is brought to the Sarasota County Commission for approval, if the state accepts the plan, it would mean the state would have no way of recouping its investment in the rowing facility if economic development predictions fail to pan out.

Asked about the possible agreement, County Commissioner Christine Robinson declines to speculate about whether the board would support it. “Until I get the final document in front of me that we’re going to approve, it’s



Visitors watch a student regatta in 2012. Photo by Norman Schimmel



all complete guessing,” she tells *The Sarasota News Leader*.

On Oct. 23, the board was scheduled to discuss an agreement related to the park, but the item was pulled from the agenda “at the request of Benderson,” County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh told the commission. DeMarsh tells the *News Leader* there are two separate negotiations in progress: one between the state and the SunCoast Aquatics Nature Center Associates, chaired by Paul Blackketter, the executive director for planning with Benderson Development, and one between the county and SunCoast Aquatics over how to manage and operate the park. (Blackketter did not respond to a *News Leader* voicemail.)

County Commissioner Joe Barbetta seemed impatient Oct. 23 at the lack of a final agreement between the county and SunCoast Aquatics. “We need an agreement,” he said. “There’s too much at stake here.”

He tells the *News Leader* he’s not familiar with the details of the negotiations, which have been going on for six months, according to DeMarsh, but that the contract needs to be in place soon. “That agreement obviously needs to be done,” he adds.

DeMarsh says the details were delayed because of the need to pivot to finalize the details of the 2017 World Rowing Championships — which Benderson Park will host. He thinks his office will have an agreement ready for the County Commission in about six weeks, and he notes that whatever happens with the negotiations between SunCoast Aquatics and the state won’t significantly impact the agreement to manage the park.

Brown says it doesn’t matter which agreement is finalized first but that getting them done is a priority. “We’ll continue to work cooperatively to allow for the use of the facility,” she says, “but we certainly want to get an agreement.” 



*The park has been transformed over the past couple of years, thanks to county and state funding. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



# This may take a while.

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## PARK PROGRESS

*The site of a proposed new county sports complex is located at the northwest corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Tuttle Avenue. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

### THE COUNTY MOVES FORWARD WITH A PLAN TO BUY 115 ACRES FROM DOLOMITE UTILITY CORP. FOR USE AS A NORTH COUNTY SPORTS COMPLEX

**By Roger Drouin**  
*County Editor*

The County Commission moved forward on Wednesday, Nov. 6, with the second of two major aspects of the planned acquisition of Dolomite Utilities Corp.

In a unanimous vote, the board proceeded with the purchase of 115 acres owned by the utility system, located at the northwest corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Tuttle Avenue. Later this month, the commission is scheduled to cast a final vote on the \$2 million purchase of the property.

The plan is to develop the site into a long discussed and planned North County Sports Complex.

The property that once was home to a water plant and wastewater treatment facility has been vacant since the early 2000s.

Once the land is redeveloped as a park, it would become the third largest recreational facility in the county — behind Englewood Sports Complex, with 137 acres, and Twin Lakes Park, with 123.

**“** *I don't believe we would be able to duplicate a property of that size.*

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County





The Dolomite deal also includes the county's acquisition of the company's utility system assets, including its customers. The County Commission earlier this year voted to move forward with that acquisition.

The 115-acre purchase is "a great opportunity" for the community, said Carolyn Brown, director of the county's Parks and Recreation Department.

For Commissioner Nora Patterson, the purchase makes it possible to realize a long-held dream for a North County recreational park.

When the county was spending millions on the Englewood Sports Complex years ago, commissioners said the next big step was a similar complex in North County.

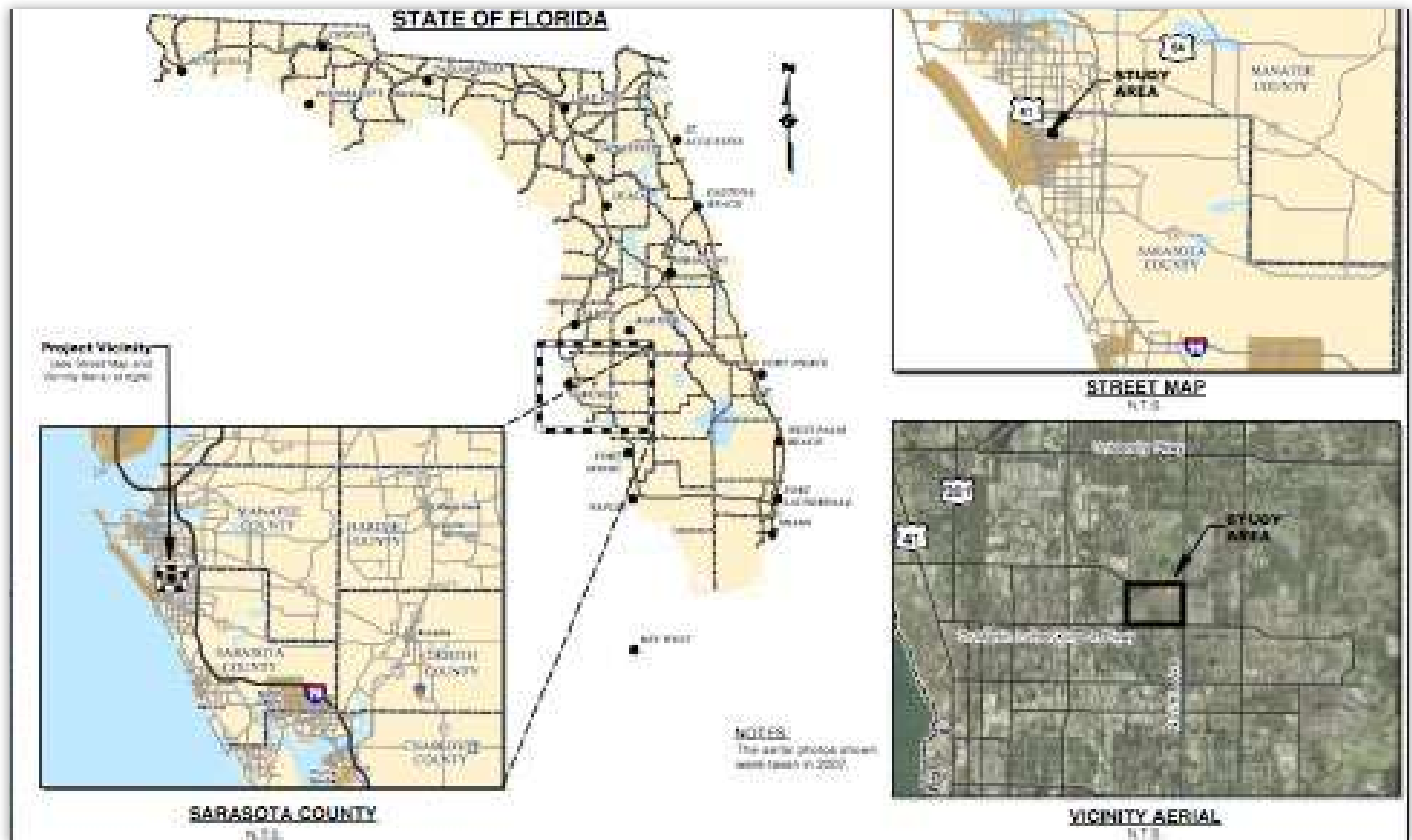


*Parks and Recreation Director Carolyn Brown makes a presentation on Siesta Key. File photo*



*County staff presents an update to the County Commission on a plan to purchase 115 acres for a North County Sports Complex. Photo by Roger Drouin*





Maps show an aerial view of Kensington Park and detail about its location in Sarasota County. Image courtesy Sarasota County



Patterson noted the county might not be able to fund the actual setup of the park facilities at the North County site for some time, but she called the planned purchase a “legacy.”

“I don’t believe we would be able to duplicate a property of that size,” Patterson said.

The first phase environmental assessment found no issues, such as hazardous materials, on the three parcels that make up the 115 acres. The consultant’s report, by Johnson Engineering, did recommend, however, a second phase of environmental testing on the two parcels that were formerly used as wastewater treatment facilities. That study will be completed before a final County Commission vote slated for Nov. 19.

According to the Johnson Engineering report, the property was a cow pasture before 1986, when it was developed as a water facility and wastewater treatment plant.

County staff presented a timetable with a December closing date, if all goes as planned.

“We are looking at an ultimate closing on Dec. 5,” said Michael Murphy with the county’s Office of Financial Planning. “That is a tentative closing. We will be monitoring the Environmental Study Phase Two.”

## A LONG TIME COMING

Once it is developed, the 115-acre parcel will be a centrally located park with a multitude of ball fields.

“Today is a great day,” Brown told *The Sarasota News Leader* after Wednesday’s vote to move



*Commissioner Nora Patterson offers remarks at a meeting. File photo*

forward with due diligence for the purchase of the land. “It’s been a long time coming.”

During the county’s upcoming comprehensive parks and recreation master planning process, staff will look into different possible uses for the new space, such as the number and type of ball fields and other facilities on the site, Brown said.

The county’s purchase — if finalized later this month — would be funded through a loan that would be repaid through surtax revenue over a 10-year period.

The park would meet a need, Brown told the commissioners.

In the early 2000s, a local study identified a deficit of ball field space.

“[The need for] this type of sports complex was specifically spelled out,” Brown noted. “The specific location was the north side of the city.”



Brown added, "This particular property provides an opportunity for addressing the longstanding need in the area." The emergence in the county of newly popular sports such as lacrosse has resulted in fans of different activities competing for the same fields at existing county parks.

Commissioner Christine Robinson asked the county financial planners participating in the presentation how the acquisition could impact other projects that would be funded through surtax dollars.

"I want to understand the risks involved," Robinson said.

"It wouldn't impact any programs that are currently planned, but if any other projects came along, the cash flow might not be there," Murphy replied.

The county has looked at other, smaller properties, but the cost was higher for them, Brown noted.

The locale, adjacent to the Newtown Estates Park and close to Emma E. Booker Elementary School and Booker High School, would provide a place for students to participate in sports after school, Brown said.

The park would enable the county to create a "sense of place" for the Newtown community, she added. The location is also close to nearby colleges and bus routes.

## THE UTILITY SYSTEM

The other major component of the Dolomite deal is the purchase of its utility system and customers. The County Commission had previously voted to move forward with that initiative.

Previous projections showed the utility system would pay for itself through its current customer payments. Patterson asked if that projection was still accurate.

"We are projecting 191 percent cash over expenditures," Murphy responded. "Our cash flow is more than significant to cover all the debt service and to cover immediate improvements to the plan."

Patterson noted that Dolomite customers have higher utility bills than other Sarasota County customers have for the same services.

"They are paying 20 percent more than county rates," Murphy concurred.

The plan is to drop those rates over a five-year period, he added. 

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## TWO PROPOSALS

*Benderson Development is proposing a business park for light manufacturing, warehouses, distribution, research and development, and related offices on the site. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WANT MORE INFORMATION FROM THE TWO DEVELOPERS VYING FOR PRIME COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTY IN THE FRUITVILLE INITIATIVE AREA EAST OF INTERSTATE 75

By Roger Drouin  
*County Editor*

County commissioners had several questions for two developers vying to build on 42 acres of county land in a prime location — in the middle of the planned Fruitville Initiative “gateway” area east of Interstate 75.

On Nov. 6, Vice Chairman Charles Hines suggested setting aside more time than was allotted during the regular meeting that day to go over the proposals. “This is too important

of a discussion to be rushed through,” Hines said. “This is a huge decision for many, many reasons.”

His fellow board members agreed to ask the two developers, Benderson Development

Co. and Goodsports Enterprises Global LLC, to answer some of their questions and then provide more detailed presentations during a Nov. 26 workshop. That session has been scheduled

“ *This is too important of a discussion to be rushed through. This is a huge decision for many, many reasons.* ”

Charles Hines  
Vice Chairman  
Sarasota County Commission



for 9 a.m. in the Think Tank at the Sarasota County Administration Building on Ringling Boulevard in downtown Sarasota.

Benderson Development Co. wants to buy the land to build a 200,000-square-foot business park that its representatives say would be the only one of its kind in the county and create jobs. The firm wants to pay \$2.5 million for the property.

Goodsports Enterprises has proposed leasing the land from the county for \$1 a year in exchange for construction of a sports village, including a hotel for athletes and a field house, which they say will produce an annual

economic impact on the county of \$105 million a year after the first five years the complex has been in existence.

But commissioners said both developers' proposals lacked details they needed to make a decision. Then they took turns asking questions Wednesday.

"I guess both proposals, for me, have a little way to go before I would support them," said Commissioner Nora Patterson.

For example, Patterson wanted to see some proof that Goodsports would carry through on its proposal if the county let it lease the



*Goodsports Enterprises proposes an athlete-centric hotel field house and water park. Image courtesy Sarasota County*



land for \$1 a year for 50 years, with possible extensions of the agreement. "So far I don't see any great basis for it to happen," Patterson added.

As for Benderson, the commissioner said a major goal she has had in mind for the property is for it to be home to a tenant committed to bringing jobs from outside the area. She did not want a plan that could result in businesses relocating from other parts of the county to that site. Patterson also said she would be "warmer to [the proposal] if the sale price was closer to the appraised value."

According to county staff, the appraised value of the property ranges between \$4.1 million and \$4.6 million. Those values take into account the expense of off-site stormwater retention. But Benderson representative

Larry Fineberg said the firm would put a stormwater retention facility on the property.

Additionally, Patterson, along with Commissioner Joe Barbetta, wanted to know what Goodsports Enterprise's track record was for similar projects. The developer did not submit materials to the county showing its past experience with similar projects.

"We don't know if this development will take place," Barbetta said.

Commissioners had further concerns about Goodsports' plans involving several buildings located on adjacent, privately owned property that the firm would have to purchase.

Barbetta and Commissioner Christine Robinson requested detailed information about the financial aspects of both projects



*The County Commission sits in session on Nov. 6. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



and a report on discussions the developers have had with adjacent landowners.

“They should somehow be involved,” Barbetta said of the five owners of property in the Fruitville Initiative area that surrounds the county parcel.

Robinson also pointed out another concern: The Goodsports plan shows construction on separate county land that is not included in the 42 acres.

## CONCURRENT PLANNING

The now vacant 42 areas at Fruitville Road and Colburn Road is the second piece of property that the county has been trying to sell as surplus land. The first is located at the corner of Main Street and U.S. 301 in Sarasota.

The Fruitville parcel is an important piece of the puzzle for how the area east of the interstate will look.

Interim Sarasota County Administrator Thomas Harmer said development of the 42 acres should happen concurrently with the Fruitville Initiative, a plan to rezone 320 acres of vacant land east of the interstate and create a mixed-use “gateway village.”

It would be beneficial at this stage in the planning process to have a development partner that is willing to invest in the county-owned property and begin to design a project that will be in harmony with the Fruitville Initiative, Harmer told the commissioners.

“That [Fruitville Initiative] project is moving forward, and we would want this project to mirror that,” Harmer said.



## Purchase Price

- Benderson Development Company, LLC \$2,500,000 cash due at closing – County to pay title insurance – no financing contingency
- Goodsports Enterprises Global, LLC Lease Price of \$1.00 per year for 50 years with two 25 year extensions. Proposal includes investment of approximately \$64.6 million – Financial contingency for construction to be solidified in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2013 – no financial obligation to be borne by the County




The 42 acres has been envisioned as the site of a catalyst project to kick off the Fruitville Initiative.

## THE PROPOSAL DETAILS

According to paperwork filed with the county, Benderson plans “[d]evelopment of a first class business park for light manufacturing, assembly warehousing, distribution, research and development and related offices. Project will include multiple buildings designed with car parking in front for employees and guests and wide truck courts in back to accommodate truck traffic. Building depths will range from 100 to 150 feet deep to accommodate small and large tenants. Initially they will construct 200,000 square feet of multi-tenant buildings with additional buildings to be constructed shortly thereafter.”

As far as economic impact, Benderson representatives claim the business park would create new jobs for the county. “These opportunities are currently going to neighboring counties,” the development firm’s representatives wrote in their submittal.

Goodsports’ plan says it will “Develop a full service athlete-centric hotel and [associated state-of-the-art] 60,000 [square foot] Fieldhouse to accommodate a variety of sports related activities [for basketball, volleyball, mixed martial arts, gymnastics, wrestling, soccer, cheerleading, etc.], a golf academy hotel and waterpark.”

The developer estimates a total economic impact of about \$63 million in the first year of operation, and \$105 million a year in the fifth year. Goodsports also expects 112 permanent full-time jobs would be created. 

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# CITY COMMISSION WRAP-UP

*An apparently homeless man takes a nap by the Sarasota County Area Transit station on Lemon Avenue in Sarasota. Photo by Stan Zimmerman*

## HEADS GET HOT OVER HOMELESSNESS AND THE SUNSHINE LAWS

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

During its regular meeting on Nov. 4, the Sarasota City Commission made progress on a couple of issues, grappled with the consequences of the most recent Government in the Sunshine lawsuit and suffered more heartburn over homelessness.

### EASY PROGRESS

It appears the City Commission, with the stroke of a pen, has the power to re-energize the Newtown Community Redevelopment Agency. The CRA is funded by the difference in

property taxes between a “base year” and subsequent years.

Because the Newtown CRA was formed, and the “base year” set, in 2008 at the peak of property values, the “difference” continues to be negative. That means the CRA is not generating any money; it depends on the Downtown CRA for funding.

The Downtown CRA may go out of existence in 2016. Some have wondered if the Newtown “base year” could be reset. State law says it cannot be

“*Maybe [homelessness consultant Robert] Marbut doesn’t know who he’s working for.*”

Willie Shaw  
Vice Mayor  
City of Sarasota





“back-dated,” but on Monday the city attorney said a new base year could be established. “We can do that by ordinance,” said Bob Fournier. “We could change it to 2014.”

Deputy City Manager Marlon Brown said he had checked with the Sarasota County Property Appraiser’s Office. “We could set the base to 2013,” Brown said, “and start collecting any increment in 2014.”

“Let’s get it done,” said Vice Mayor Willie Shaw.

## SALT IN THE WOUND

When a local newspaper editorial suggested a consultant hired by the city and county to examine the issue of homelessness and vagrancy has already made up his mind where

to put a new shelter, at least two city commissioners started a slow burn.

Vice Mayor Shaw and Commissioner Susan Chapman have been adamant they do not want such a facility in the city. Consultant Robert Marbut is scheduled to deliver his report on Nov. 25 — in Venice in the morning and in Sarasota in the afternoon. Chapman suggested he leaked an early version to the newspaper. “The editorial board seems to have a copy. And the editorial says north Sarasota has been picked for a triage center,” she said.

“Maybe Marbut doesn’t know who he’s working for,” replied Shaw, who holds a north Sarasota district seat. “Those I represent have not had the opportunity to state anything. I’m taking back from what we’re hearing [that]



*Homeless people sit on the sidewalk outside Five Points Park, which was undergoing improvements, in May. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



this is almost as if it's a done deal without any input. I'm mystified by the process."

Commissioner Paul Caragiulo tried to calm the waters. "I don't understand the pressure. This person was hired by the city and county to make some recommendations. Why get upset with what he might recommend?"

## MINUTES? WHO'S GOT THE MINUTES?

The "Sunshine lawsuit" filed last month after two city commissioners were invited to talk with business people about the homeless and vagrants downtown is starting to rile people in the neighborhoods.

At the Saturday, Nov. 2, Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations meeting, Chapman said, "This sets a precedent. Any meeting reasonably likely where a public issue will be presented, official minutes must be taken. I personally think that's an undue burden on public participation."

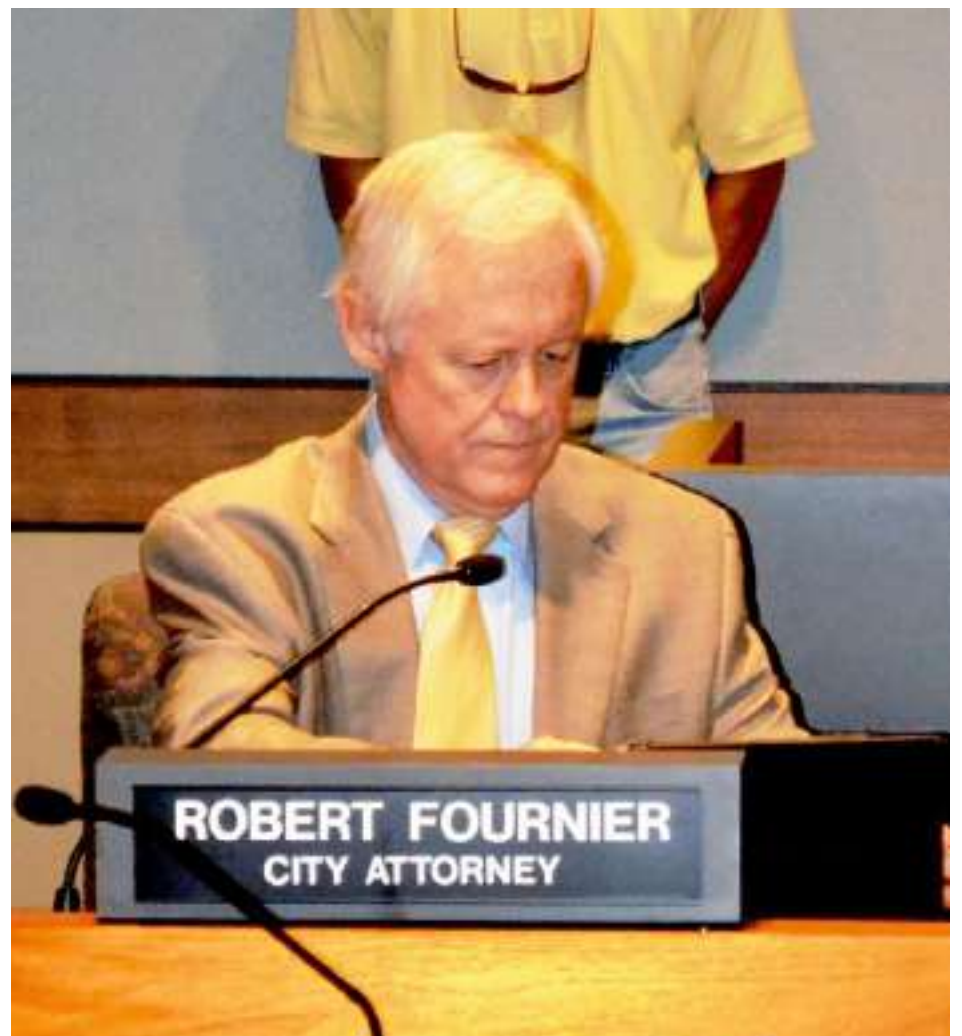
"If it's two or more [commissioners], then the city must take minutes. A neighborhood organization's minutes are not sufficient in my opinion," noted Gretchen Serrie with the Indian Beach Sapphire Shores neighborhood group.

Barbara Langston with Amaryllis Park added, "You invite them to a neighborhood association meeting, and then people say we want copies of your minutes. We're going into a very, very dangerous area if we're going to be held hostage at every meeting."

Meanwhile, City Auditor and Clerk Pam Nadalini has said she will not be taking minutes at every meeting where two or more city commissioners are in attendance.



*Homelessness consultant Robert Marbut is scheduled to deliver his report on Nov. 25. Photo by Roger Drouin*



*City Attorney Robert Fournier studies material during a meeting. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



On Monday, Langston addressed the commission about the issue: “You are supposed to be able to come to our meetings and get an education about how we feel about the issues. I’m getting very upset our commissioners are now afraid to come and listen to what the citizens have to say.”

The issue of notification and minutes is further compounded because every one of the city’s 36 advisory boards falls under the auspices of the public records and open meeting laws that comprise Florida’s Government in the Sunshine statutes. Those regulations ban two or more members of the same board from talking about issues that “foreseeably” could come to them later for a decision.


## SOUND OFF

As Florida Senate Bill 50 makes its way into the canon of Florida Sunshine regulations,

another barrier to public participation fell on Monday. In the past, people were not allowed to comment during the evaluation of the city’s three charter officials — the city manager, city attorney and city clerk and auditor.

However, by unanimous vote, the city commissioners abolished the old rule with little debate. The new state law based on SB 50 took effect Oct. 1; it opens parts of agendas previously closed to public comment.

“The law is too new, and there is no guidance,” said City Attorney Fournier. “Allowing public input does lie in the spirit of the law.”

Nonetheless, Fournier reminded the five commissioners, “It is still your evaluation. You are free to develop a process on how to set that up.” 



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# DOWNTOWN SARASOTA, IN BRIEF



*A new development plan for property on Washington Boulevard in Sarasota was submitted before the city's Laurel Park Overlay District went into effect. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **NEW DEVELOPMENT SQUEAKS THROUGH AHEAD OF THE LAUREL PARK OVERLAY DISTRICT; TWO DOWNTOWN TOWERS WILL START GOING UP; AND TWO ICONS ARE BEING GUTTED**

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

After years of deliberation among city staff and the City Commission, Laurel Park earlier this year was granted an overlay district that makes it necessary for developer consultation with the neighborhood association before any new buildings are constructed adjacent to that part of downtown Sarasota.

But a few days before the overlay district ordinance went into effect, a property owner filed plans for a two-story office and retail structure on Washington Boulevard between Morrill Street and Adams Lane. The property is across the street from the county parking lot for the Terrace Building.

“He filed just before the overlay was official,” said city Senior Planner Courtney Mendez after the Wednesday, Nov. 6, city Development Review Committee meeting.

The plan calls for two “connected buildings” north of the existing UPS Store, which will share the property with the new structure. The construction will total 8,295 square feet.

Administrative site plan approval was granted, although the developer must go before the Sarasota Planning Board to seek an adjustment before the building permit will be approved.





*A map shows the location of The UPS Store at 242 S. Washington Blvd. in downtown Sarasota. Image from Google Maps*



*The Golden Apple property has sat idle for months. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## RETURN OF THE DOWNTOWN CRANES

Two towers will be coming out of the ground soon. The Jewel condominium at Gulfstream and Main Street received its first building permit so construction can get started.

And the hotel complex planned for the northern corner of Ringling Boulevard and Palm Avenue has received its initial approval to get under way. The building is expected to be an Aloft hotel, with European business-class accommodations.

## BULLETS AND 'APPLES'

Two downtown commercial icons are undergoing radical rehab. The former Golden Apple Dinner Theater is being gutted. It will be rebuilt to the specifications of a new tenant.

And the go-to place downtown for handguns and ammo — the Bullet Hole — is in the same stage of indignity: being gutted before the next tenant moves in.

Both were long-standing downtown business anchors for decades. It is doubtful we will see their likes again. 



*The Jewel condominium complex soon will get under way. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



# RAMIREZ MAKES IT OFFICIAL



“*I really, really felt that I could not only do the job, I felt like I could work at it. I understand the basics of government, Sarasota County government, because of all the years I’ve been working on it, so I felt confident.*”

Lourdes Ramirez  
President  
Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations

*Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations President Lourdes Ramirez is a 2014 Republican County Commission candidate. Photo courtesy Lourdes Ramirez*



# THE SIESTA KEY RESIDENT AND PRESIDENT OF THE SARASOTA COUNTY COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS FORMALLY FILES FOR COUNTY COMMISSION

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

*You could call it the worst kept secret in local politics, except it wasn't even really a secret. Still, this Monday, Nov. 4, it became official: Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations President Lourdes Ramirez officially filed paperwork to run for the Sarasota County Commission seat being vacated by Nora Patterson next year.*

*Ramirez's opponent in the Republican primary is Al Maio, a vice president with the design consulting firm Kimley-Horn and Associates, who has declined repeated requests for an interview from The Sarasota News Leader. Maio will undoubtedly hold the fundraising edge in the race, having already socked away almost \$83,000, but Ramirez says her "grassroots" effort will offer stiff competition. She's already faced personal attacks, including an illegal one. Former Republican Party of Sarasota County Chairman Bob Waechter was arrested last year for allegedly making donations to Democratic candidates in Ramirez's name. We sat down with Ramirez to hear her thoughts on the commission, and the race.*

*The Sarasota News Leader: You've been active in politics for years. Why run now?*

**Lourdes Ramirez:** Last year in January I attended something called Candidate College. It was a one-day course, and the purpose for me going was to learn more about how to do campaigns, because I thought, "Why don't I learn about it, to be a campaign manager?"

When I walked out of there I thought, "I could do it." I started the process last January to ask people what they thought and of course talked to my husband because it's a huge undertaking.

I really, really felt that I could not only do the job, I felt like I could work at it. I understand the basics of government, Sarasota County government, because of all the years I've been working on it, so I felt confident. And when that whole Bob Waechter thing happened, I thought, "OK, now he's trying to bully me." Even though I spent the last year going back and forth, I really thought, "I'm going to do it. I'm going to put my neck on the line."



*News Leader: How do you build a local grassroots campaign?*

**Ramirez:** The good news is because I have developed a support system over the years anyway as a community activist and community advocate, I already had a basis. It's not that I'm coming into it without some support and encouragement. So that's my core, and with my core I have a team that I put together. We can work on building the grassroots.



*News Leader: What has changed on the commission that you feel the need to run?*

**Ramirez:** The Waechter thing didn't motivate me as much as made me firm in my decision.



We need long-term vision. The county has a lot of short-term solutions, like in economic development. Yes, they're providing some low-paying jobs now, which is needed. That's great, but they haven't set the stage for the higher-paying careers that people are looking for to keep families here. So there's a lack of long-term vision. In the meantime, all the things the last two years to spur economic development, well guess what? We're entering a deficit in 2016.

Part of that's got to do with fiscal accountability, like the [Siesta Public] Beach project. The beach needs some improvement, right? Bathrooms and parking: That's it. How much can that possibly cost — \$7 million? Twenty-one million dollars? I was brought up that if you don't have the money, you don't do it. Do what you need to do. The \$21 million is full of luxuries that we really don't need to do right now. They could have postponed it.



*Lourdes Ramirez addresses the County Commission about an aspect of Sarasota 2050. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

There is a lot of disdain for what the public thinks, and that was proven with [Sarasota 2050](#) when they said, "Oh we got 450 emails, but they don't matter." They show disdain to the North Port [City] Commission. They showed disdain for the Sarasota City Commission when they were concerned about Sarasota 2050. And the biggest problem is they don't care. Why? Who knows. People like me speculate it's because they're only interested in helping their special interest friends. They're also term-limited, so they don't have to run again.

The third thing for me is having somebody who finally wants to serve the people, and that's what I want. I wasn't the chosen one, obviously, and so I don't have those connections — that I have to satisfy these contributors.



*News Leader:* How would you have handled the Warm Mineral Springs situation?

**Ramirez:** In the beginning, like everyone else, I read about it and thought, "What is wrong with North Port?" But then I started to attend some of the meetings and I also started talking to some of the North Port commissioners. I started to realize it's the County Commission that's been the hold-up. The North Port Commission wants to make it into a park. That's what I thought we bought it for, as a park. It has to be treated as one. And now it seems like the County Commission wants to make it into a resort. I think a resort would be nice but not necessarily on county lands.

When they do things like that, the county, I really have a suspicion they have somebody in mind for the property.







*Lourdes Ramirez makes public comments at a County Commission meeting on behalf of CONA. File photo*

**News Leader:** How would you make the commission and the county more transparent?

**Ramirez:** I was one of those people who said that all emails from the County Commission and the administrator should be online.

I would do a dedicated computer in [the] Board Records [office] on the second floor in [the] Ringling [Boulevard Administration Center], and down at [the R.L.] Anderson [Center in Venice] and maybe in every library, so people can go in there and search whatever they want in the county database, read-only. They can print; they can access for as many years as they want. Is it limited time? Yes. It's not 24/7, but it at least gives them a lot more access and they don't have to pay for it.



**News Leader:** What about charging for public records?

**Ramirez:** Let's say you went to a free concert in the park and they told you you have to buy

your drinks. OK, you buy your drinks. Then two months later you get a bill saying, "By the way, you owe the cost of two concert tickets." That's illegal! Whether you're a business or a corporation, you just can't do that.

They should not charge for public records. Printing, yes. If there's excessive staff time, yes.

They should do what they do for the development community to try to reduce the burden. You had staff more than once sit with developers, and the developers asked for it. Did you charge the developers for their time, listening to their concerns to make changes to Sarasota 2050? No. But I'm sitting in an office by myself and you want to charge me. They don't mind burdening the citizen.



**News Leader:** You don't support using tax dollars to subsidize development, but you do support using taxpayer dollars for the Benderson Park rowing facility. How is that not a similar situation?

**Ramirez:** Benderson Park is our park. I know it's called Benderson because they paid \$1 million for the naming rights, but it is our park. And does it help the University Town Center? Sure it does. But in the long run that project has a clear set of new visitors to Sarasota County, and the infrastructure exists. We have Cattlemen Road; we have Honore [Avenue]; we have I-75. The years of income coming in is going to generate a good benefit for Sarasota County. A lot of people think of it as giving money to Benderson. No they didn't. They gave money to our park. The reason why Benderson was good as part of it was because if Sarasota County wanted



to do a rowing facility, we'd still be talking about schematics right now. It would never be where it is today. That's government, right?



*News Leader:* How about other economic development grants?

**Ramirez:** If you're going to take money and really provide jobs, why don't we look at an industry? Talk to the colleges.

I worked in the semiconductor industry, and I went to Tempe, AZ. I lived there two years. And one thing I learned was how closely the businesses worked with the universities. They became the research arm of the businesses. They have bright minds, and the universities can get grants from different sources. The semiconductor companies have their own research firms, but they use this as an additional research arm at the same time and they don't have to pay for the benefits and the employees. It's just a win-win situation: The university benefits because they have the students going in there to work with the businesses, and the businesses benefit because they have these new employees they don't have to pay for. When you go to a place like Tempe, or Mesa, all around Phoenix, you have these hubs of high-tech semiconductor companies.



*News Leader:* Did you agree with the decision to offer county employees raises last year?

**Ramirez:** During the boom times, the county was putting money aside because they were

coining money. They put a bunch in reserves, which was a good thing they did.

They were also wasting a lot of money. They had two [Human Resource (H.R.)] departments. One H.R. department was a regular H.R. department: benefits, hiring and firing. The other was called Total Performance Management. The county wanted to act like a business, and a business is for-profit. The county is not. So they did performance metrics, workshops, and I had a tough time with that because it was my tax dollars. So they had daily workshops at lunchtime and included workshops on how to deal with difficult children, how to handle your aging parents and, my favorite, "mocktails," how you make fake alcoholic cocktails for the holidays. These were taxpayer-paid workshops.



*News Leader:* But doesn't the county have to work to attract the best employees like anybody else?

**Ramirez:** I think having a raise is important. That is different from mocktails workshops. This one department, which is now disbanded, wasn't necessary. Those are the kinds of benefits they have at Google and Facebook.



*News Leader:* Do you believe the claim that employee morale is low at the county?

**Ramirez:** The morale is low. The problem is, it was pointed to the wrong person, when you see a county commission not only attack each other. And look at how they went after the county administrator.



It was very hostile, but it was caused by the commissioners, not because of the administrator. Now [former Administrator Randall] Reid was a tough guy, blunt. The county he received was in shambles, and you can't be coddling and so soft. He wouldn't have accomplished as much as he did if he didn't have a firm line.



*News Leader:* What do you think was the red line that Reid crossed?

**Ramirez:** Sarasota 2050. He had the nerve to question and not do things exactly the developers' way, and thou shalt not cross a developer.



*News Leader:* How would you evaluate his tenure?

**Ramirez:** I've been doing this 11 years, going over what the county does, and the process he was putting in place to make what the county is doing more transparent was really good. It used to be that when you read a report or an agenda item, it was already planned what was said, it was geared, and everything was suppressed. I liked [what Reid did] because then we could make our own determination.

By putting the people in place that he did — outsiders, too — they were setting up the process really well. So I really felt he was going down the right path.

He could be blunt, but there are times in which you don't get to the bottom line till you ask a few questions. And there were times he was blunt. An occasional "Please" would be nice. Probably, because I grew up in New


York, I wasn't as offended as some might be by his bluntness. I worked on it myself over the years, trying not to sound too much like a New Yorker.



*News Leader:* Do you support the Domestic Partnership Registry and the proposed Human Rights Ordinance?

**Ramirez:** I'm really glad the county is turning into being more open-minded. As somebody who has friends who are gay and friends who are lesbians, they are lovely people, and I don't know why we have to be so hung up on this. I don't know enough about what the Domestic Partnership Registry does, but if it allows them to visit loved ones in a hospital, if it allows them a few things, leave them alone. All they want to do is love. I don't understand the hang-up.

There should never be discrimination. I'm Hispanic. My first time out of New York City, and it was Yonkers, not another country, I went to apply for an apartment. I was married to my first husband. We had the superintendent tell us, "The landlord will not accept you, because you're Hispanic." And you're talking about Yonkers, NY, not the Third World, the Deep South. So they said, "You have to use a different last name," and we had to pay by cashiers check, so we could have a decent apartment in a decent neighborhood not too far from the school. So discrimination? Yeah, I'm real sensitive to that.

That first experience was a real blow to me. And no, I don't believe anyone should be discriminated against, except developers. [Laughs.] That's terrible. 



# QUESTIONING FLEET PURCHASES



- **Existing County Fleet – Pinkney Ave. Complex**

Area shown: 21.56 Acres

- County
- SCAT
- Emergency Service

*Sarasota County's North County Fleet Services complex is located on Pinkney Avenue in Sarasota. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

## COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DEBATE THE IMMEDIATE NEED FOR NEW FLEET CARS AND TRUCKS AND THE WAY THE COUNTY PURCHASES THEM

**By Roger Drouin**

*County Editor*

Does Sarasota County need \$10 million worth of new fleet cars and trucks? And is the county getting the best deal when it buys those vehicles in bulk? A consent item on the Tuesday, Nov. 5, County Commission agenda turned lively when three commissioners raised those questions.

The discussion also spurred another concern: whether the county was returning to pre-recession spending habits that could lead to larger budget woes in the near future.

At the end of the discussion, the commissioners, in a unanimous vote, decided they wanted to hold a more in-depth conversation at an upcoming meeting about the county's methods of buying fleet vehicles and equipment.

Ed Gable, the county's director of general services, was asking the County Commission to approve a request to utilize the U.S. Government Services Administration and the Florida Sheriffs Association to seek bids for new vehicles and fleet equipment.

“*If we climb out of a fiscal conservative mode, we are going to be in the woods, and deeper in the woods.*”

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County





Commissioners Christine Robinson and Joe Barbetta, however, pulled the topic from the consent agenda to talk it over. Robinson wanted to know why the county was purchasing up to \$10.3 million in new vehicles in the upcoming year.

“I need to really understand why we are expanding our fleet in those areas,” Robinson said. “I am uncomfortable with this.”

Norm West, the county’s vehicle replacement coordinator, replied that after several years without regular vehicle replacement, part of the county’s fleet needs to be updated. From 2006 to 2012, the county increased the length of time it kept vehicles in its fleet, purchasing far fewer new vehicles than in years past.

“The decision to slow down purchasing and replacement was done by Mr. Ley,” West said, referring to former County Administrator Jim Ley.

But many of the county’s trucks and cars are getting older, racking up the miles and

requiring additional maintenance, West pointed out.

“Thirty-four percent [of the county’s fleet] is beyond the expected life cycle, which is costing us a lot more in maintenance costs,” West told the commissioners. “More and more vehicles are being what we call ‘pushed to the fence,’ which means it would cost more to make a repair than the market value of the equipment.”

Gable noted that some new vehicles were purchased last year.

“What we’re trying to do is get back on track with our vehicles and make sure they are safe, reliable and energy efficient,” Gable said. “There has not been an expansion of the fleet in several years. Last year, in [Fiscal Year] 2013, we did have some expansion.”

In the 2013 budget, \$9.7 million was spent on new vehicles. That included \$1.4 million for 70 slated for the Parks and Recreation and Development Services departments, to



*(From left) General Services Director Ed Gable, Information Technology Director Glenn Zimmerman and Interim County Administrator Tom Harmer listen to discussion in the county Think Tank. File photo*



provide vehicles necessary for new staffers approved by the County Commission, according to Gable.

Robinson said she thought a separate budget item already had been approved to set aside funding for all of the equipment necessary for the extra Parks and Recreation needs.

County staffers on Tuesday did not specify the benchmarks for determining when to replace vehicles.

West's and Gable's answers did not alleviate several commission concerns. The first was whether the county is "getting the cheapest deal" when it comes to buying new vehicles, as noted by Commissioner Nora Patterson.

Chairwoman Carolyn Mason and Barbetta also wanted to ensure that the county is considering all local bids to see if there are less expensive vehicles available, something that did not appear clear in paperwork highlighting the purchasing process.

## ANOTHER CONCERN

Voicing a second concern, Robinson said she is worried the county is rushing to return to previous pre-recession spending habits.

"Part of the heartburn I've had in the last budget cycle was [the term] 'restoring services,'" Robinson pointed out. "I don't believe in that term. I believe we should be smarter, instead of going back to the old ways."

Robinson was not the sole commissioner to voice this worry about spending.

"This isn't the first time we've had such a discussion at the board," Patterson noted. "It's almost as if the staff and administration have decided we're out of the woods and it's time to, quote-unquote, restore things we had to take out of the budget."

"But we're not out of the woods," Patterson added. "If we climb out of a fiscal conservative



*Commissioners Joe Barbetta and Christine Robinson study budget material during a workshop. File photo*



mode, we are going to be in the woods, and deeper in the woods.”

Patterson said she is fretful the fleet expansion could be indicative of a move away from “a glide path” that aligns county income and revenue.

However, Patterson was reluctant to delay approval of changes that could clear the way for the county to seek lower prices on new vehicles by seeking bids from additional vendors. Still, she agreed with Robinson that the commission should be taking a broader look at fleet purchases.

Barbetta also said he does not want to see a return to previous levels of pre-recession spending.

“I think we were fat before, and we needed to streamline,” Barbetta noted. “Coming out of the recession, we are streamlined and better able to perform.”

Hines commended Robinson for bringing the issue to the forefront.

“It’s a little concerning that we just went through a budget process, and we hear there is already — before the next budget — a budget amendment of several million [dollars],” Hines said.

It will cost roughly \$10.3 million to purchase 300 new vehicles, Gable pointed out. That works out to an average of \$34,333 for each new vehicle.

## SECOND GO-ROUND

This is not the first time in recent months that the topic of county fleet vehicle replacement has proved controversial. In July, commissioners voiced frustration that county staffers were recommending automatic contract renewals for vehicle purchases and not checking to see if better deals could be found. At the time, Barbetta said he was upset that staff proposed renewing a Charlotte County


Ford contract, without checking with Sarasota Ford and Matthews Currie Ford to determine whether either or both could offer lower prices.

On Tuesday, Gable told the commissioners that their approval

of purchase policies that day would clear the way for the county to seek bids from three additional vendors.

“We have used them in the past,” Gable said of the companies. “Their prices are very good, and their selection is very diverse.”

That also could clear the way for finding lower prices.

Robinson made the motion to hold a more in-depth conversation on fleet replacement — noting that the topic was discussed in July. “I think it’s worthy of a second go-around. I think we need to understand where we are getting these vehicles from and are we getting them the best way,” Robinson said. 

“Thirty-four percent [of the county’s fleet] is beyond the expected life cycle, which is costing us a lot more in maintenance costs.”

Norm West  
Vehicle Replacement Coordinator  
Sarasota County



# MORE MONEY, MORE EVENTS



*David Rovine, vice president of the Orioles operation in Sarasota, welcomes visitors to Ed Smith Stadium for the first Arts in the Park event, held Oct. 26. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN EXPECTED, THE NEW LIGHTING SYSTEM AT ED SMITH STADIUM WILL MAKE THE FACILITY MORE DESIRABLE FOR EVENTS OTHER THAN BASEBALL**

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

They were not happy about the extra expense, but they sure seemed happy about the prospect that new lighting will mean far more events.

On a unanimous vote Nov. 5, the Sarasota County Commission authorized a new not-to-exceed total for the replacement of lighting at Ed Smith Stadium: \$1,170,730.

Not quite two weeks earlier — on Oct. 23 — the commissioners approved an expense of \$903,683. However, Pat Calhoon, the coun-

ty's manager of sports development and athletics, appeared before them again this week to explain that bids for the project showed "it is going to cost more than we originally thought it would."

“*It is my goal, it is my passion, to bring very special events to [Ed Smith] Stadium, so that the venue ... is exposed to a wide variety of citizens ...*”

David Rovine  
Vice President  
Orioles-Sarasota





That extra amount is \$267,047.

At the same time, he stressed, “It’s obviously a very time-sensitive project,” with the first Orioles Spring Training night game set for March 8 against the 2013 World Series champs, the Boston Red Sox.

The first home game for the team is March 1, and the new lighting has to be in by then, Calhoon has also pointed out.

A Nov. 5 memo to the County Commission, provided as agenda back-up material, notes the two bids for the work were opened on Oct. 28. The lower bid was from Himes Electric Co. Inc. in Lutz for \$1,170,730.

The memo points out that when interested contractors looked into the project, they discovered “that there would be additional costs

... to access the existing underground conduit routes. This late realization was due to the fact that the ‘as-built’ plans for the stadium did not reflect what was actually installed in 1989.”

Further, the memo says, “The as-built plans of the stadium renovation [completed a couple of years ago] did not reflect the actual conditions of the underground electrical conduit systems, and damage was discovered during the due diligence of prospective bidders. Consequently, the apparent low bidder scheduled costs to provide for the establishment of a new conduit system for five of the six existing light towers.”

After the county and the Orioles advance their 2014 contributions to the fund set up for stadium maintenance, that fund will have



*Play Arts! events draw adults and children to Ed Smith Stadium on Oct. 26. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



\$700,000, Calhoon reiterated from his Oct. 23 appearance before the board. The Tourist Development Tax revenue fund dedicated to stadium expenses will cover the rest of the lighting cost, he added.

“We will get the project done,” Calhoon told the board. “We will have night baseball in the spring, and we will have the ability to have many, many events going forward ...”

Additionally, Calhoon explained — as he had on Oct. 23 — thanks to the use of a new metering system, users of the stadium for private or public events at night no longer will have to pay a flat fee of \$5,000, regardless of whether they have the lights on for 15 minutes or 15 hours. They will be billed only for the amount of electricity they use, he noted.

Further, the new lighting system will be more energy-efficient, he said.

After Calhoon completed his remarks, no comment was made for a few minutes. Then Commissioner Christine Robinson explained that the lack of immediate response was not to indicate “we’re happy to be paying this.” Instead, she said, Calhoon had met individually with all of the commissioners in advance to tell them about the situation.

“Some of it was a bit troubling,” Robinson added, but “there is not much we can do about it, with Spring Training quickly approaching.”

## MORE THAN BASEBALL

Commissioner Joe Barbetta also took the opportunity during the Nov. 5 discussion to point out “that the stadium is not just used for 16 games of baseball.”

Barbetta asked David Rovine, vice president of the Orioles’ operations in Sarasota,



*A group representing Any Given Child gathers at Ed Smith Stadium during the Play Arts! event on Oct 26. The organization was marking the culmination of Any Given Child Month, as proclaimed Oct. 1 by the Sarasota City Commission. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



to provide some details about those other events.

Rovine told the board he was hired in January of this year “to not only run Spring Training in an exemplary fashion to make sure that customer service is well taken care of and that the guests and fans and tourists ... that come to see the games have a very pleasurable and positive experience.” He also was hired to make sure the venue was utilized more in the community.

For the seven years prior to his joining the Orioles, he said, he was with SMG, “one of the largest venue management companies in the world”; it operates stadiums, arenas, theaters and convention centers, all functioning under the aegis of local government.

“I fully understand the desire and need [for Ed Smith Stadium] to be occupied on a year-round basis,” Rovine added. “It is my goal, it is my passion, to bring very special events to the stadium, so that the venue ... is exposed to a wide variety of citizens ...”

The Orioles this fall announced a preliminary schedule for Arts in the Park. That will include a number of outdoor performances under the lights, Rovine said, including a holiday ice skating show on Friday, Dec. 20.

Prices have been kept family-friendly, Rovine added.

Because of the existing lighting charge Calhoon mentioned earlier, Rovine pointed out, the stadium lost opportunities in the past to hold a number of events. The new



*The Baltimore Orioles play the Pittsburgh Pirates in a night game. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



lighting system “will make us much more competitive.”

In response to a question from Barbetta, Rovine also said the Orioles have worked with the Circus Arts Conservatory — formerly Circus Sarasota — to allow it to hold three months of shows this season instead of the usual two. Those performances will begin in December, Rovine said, and continue through February.

Chairwoman Carolyn Mason noted that she had attended two events at the stadium in the past months, a veterans employment fair and the Oct. 26 *Play Arts!* event, which was held in partnership with the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Any Given Child Sarasota, the Sarasota County Schools and The Kennedy Center.


“Things are starting to pop over there,” Mason added.

“And I assure you, you ain’t seen nothing yet,” Rovine replied.

Commissioner Nora Patterson asked Rovine to provide her a complete schedule of events scheduled for the stadium, other than Spring Training games.

“We’ll be happy to,” he told her, adding that the venue is the site of many private events, too, such as weddings and bar mitzvahs.

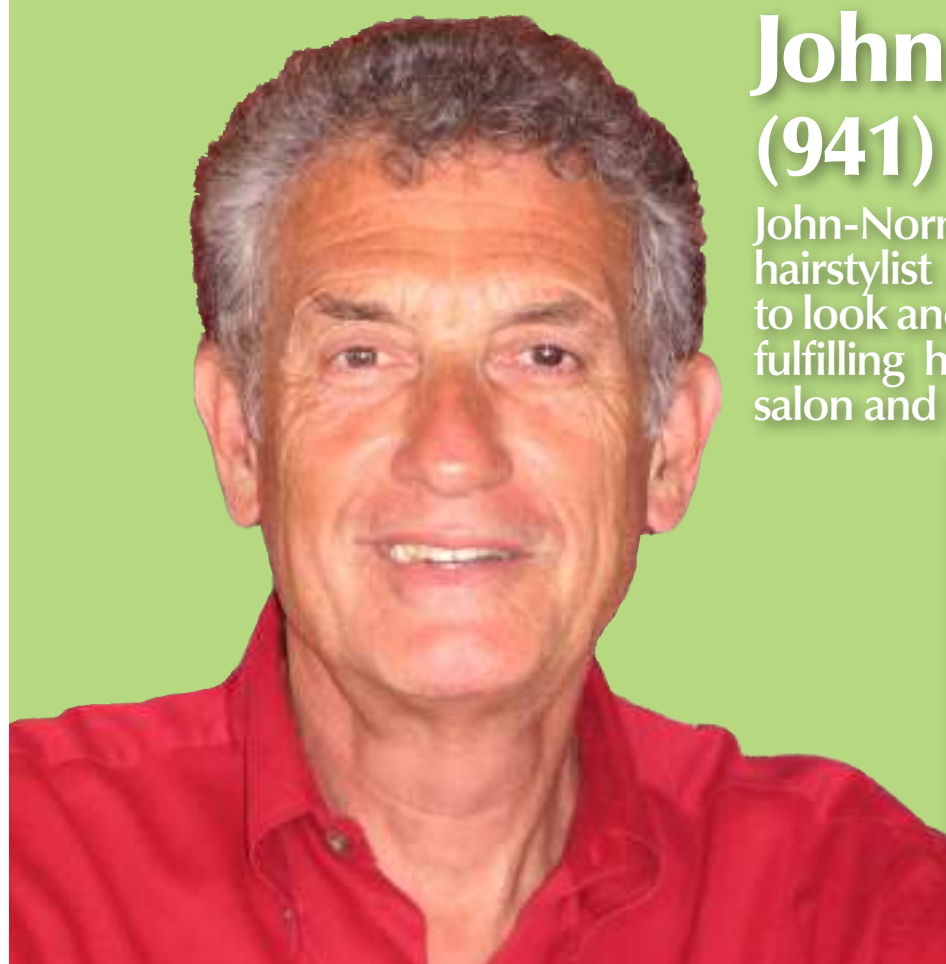
Mason made the motion to approve the increase in the not-to-exceed amount for the new lights.

Calhoon noted that the Orioles would have final approval of the bid award. 

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*Goodwill will host Bookapalooza on Nov. 9. Photo by Leon Brooks via Wikimedia Commons*

## **BOOKAPALOOZA TO RETURN TO GOODWILL'S CENTERGATE BOOKSTORE**

Goodwill Manasota will host its annual Bookapalooza book sale and silent auction on Saturday, Nov. 9, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Centergate Bookstore, located at 5880 Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota, the organization has announced.

The sale will feature thousands of books, including rare, out-of-print, fiction, children's, travel, cookbooks, history and specialty books, all at 25 percent off regular Goodwill prices, a news release notes. The event will be free and open to the public, "and this year's silent auction will feature a book signed by Julie Andrews and a rare Florida history book," the release adds. "There will also be special \$1 books, a children's coloring contest and a chance for customers to win Goodwill gift certificates."

"This sale is a great opportunity for people to shop for rare and unique books that they

might never find in a traditional bookstore," says Bob Rosinsky, CEO and president of Goodwill Manasota, in the release. "Valuable books, which might otherwise have been discarded or dumped in our landfills will be offered at a fantastic value, making this sale a win-win for both our customers and the environment."

"Goodwill has been steadfast in its commitment to recycling," priding itself on being 86 percent waste-free in 2012, with a goal of being 100 percent waste-free by 2014, the release continues.

Proceeds from the book sale go to support Goodwill's mission of providing career services and job placement and training to members of the community with a focus on those who have disabilities and other barriers to employment, the release notes.



## CYD TO HOLD PET FOOD AND SUPPLY DRIVE FOR HUMANE SOCIETY

**Community Youth Development's** STAR students will be holding a pet food and pet supply drive for the Suncoast Humane Society on Saturday, Nov. 9, the organization has announced.

Students will be at Pet Supermarket, located at 4270 Bee Ridge Road, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and at petco, located at 131 N. Cattlemen Road, from 9 a.m. to noon, a news release says.

STAR, which stands for Students Taking Active Roles in Sarasota County, is an intensive 75-hour leadership program designed for high school students, the release notes.

"STAR students learn skills such as team building, communication, problem solving and civic engagement," it adds. This session, students identified abused and neglected animals as an important issue in the community and designed a service project to support the Suncoast Humane Society, a nonprofit in Sarasota County that provides shelter for the community's homeless, abandoned and abused animals, the release points out.

"Donations of needed items and pet food help offset the cost of caring for thousands of animals each year," said Phillip Snyder, executive director of the Suncoast Humane Society, in the release.



*Community Youth Development's STAR students will hold a pet food and supply drive on Nov. 9. Photo by Orlovic via Wikimedia Commons*



## VETERANS DAY PARADE AND CEREMONY SET FOR NOV. 11

The City of Sarasota, in conjunction with the Sarasota Patriotic Observance Committee, will host the annual Veterans Day parade in downtown Sarasota on Veterans Day, Monday, Nov. 11, starting at 10 a.m., the city has announced.

The annual event will begin at the intersection of Main Street and Osprey Avenue “and will continue Sarasota’s longstanding history of honoring military personnel,” a news release says. At the conclusion of the parade, a ceremony will be held at Chaplain J.D. Hamel Park at the intersection of Main Street and Gulfstream Avenue. It is expected to begin at approximately 11 a.m. The public is encouraged to attend.

The keynote speaker for the ceremony will be state Rep. Greg Steube of District 73, which includes Sarasota and Manatee counties, the release notes.

“The parade and ceremony are opportunities for the citizens of Sarasota to honor not only veterans of the Armed Services but police officers, sheriff’s deputies, firefighters and emergency medical personnel,” said Dan Kunkel, the Patriotic Observance Committee president, in the news release.

The theme for the 2013 Veterans Day ceremony is *Service and Sacrifice*, the release notes. Among the units appearing in the parade will be those representing veterans service organizations, law enforcement agencies and fire departments, as well as color guards, marching bands, local high school Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps units, civic organizations and historical military equipment.

In observance of Veterans Day, the City of Sarasota administration offices will be closed on Nov. 11. Along with City Hall, the Federal Building and the Public Works Department will be closed. However, solid waste and recycling collection will not be impacted.



*Veterans win applause from the crowd as the 2012 Veterans Day Parade heads down Main Street in Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## CITY OF SARASOTA ANNOUNCES EVENTS FOR VETERANS TRIBUTE WEEK

Sarasota Vice Mayor Willie Shaw, a military veteran, will help kick off Veterans Tribute Week with a ceremony on Veterans Day, Monday, Nov. 11, at 1 p.m. at the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex (RLTCC), located at 1834 34th St. in Sarasota.

The event will be free and open to the public, a news release points out.

A keynote address will be delivered by former Tuskegee Airman George Hardy, a retired lieutenant colonel in the Air Force. Following the program, the documentary *Veterans of Color*, which features Shaw, will be shown, the release adds.

“As a veteran and the District 1 City Commissioner, I’m proud to have these exhibits on display at the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex,” said Shaw in the release. “There will be many different ways to learn about the courage and sacrifice of military veterans, including the vast contributions of minorities. I look forward to a week of remembrance, education and enlightenment for the community.”

Shaw served in the Air Force during the Vietnam era, from 1967-1971.

A variety of free activities will take place Nov. 11-15 at RLTCC, the release continues. Among them are the following:

- *Red Tail Squadron Exhibit*: Step inside a traveling immersion exhibit featuring the original film *Rise Above* on an 160-degree panoramic screen in a 30-seat, temperature-controlled theatre. The *Rise Above* exhibit highlights the courage and determination of the Tuskegee Airmen, who overcame obstacles to train and fight as Army Air Corps pilots (Nov. 11-15).



*Vice Mayor Willie Shaw will help kick off Veterans Tribute Week on Nov. 11. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

- *Veterans of Color*: Enjoy this documentary, the result of collaboration between the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and the Veterans History Project (Nov. 11-15). Meet the filmmaker and featured veterans on Nov. 11.
- *Take our Stand — the African American Military Experience in the Age of Jim Crow*: On loan from the American Civil War Center, this film tells the stories of nearly 2 million men and women who served from the time of the Spanish-American War’s outbreak in 1898 until the military’s integration in 1948 (Nov. 11-15).
- *Wall of Gratitude*: Post a sentiment on a free-standing, interactive chalkboard, where the public can salute hometown heroes with words of appreciation and support (Nov. 11-15).

The RLTCC exhibits will be open at 2 p.m. Nov. 11; from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Nov. 12; from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Nov. 13-14; and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 15.

For more information about Veterans Tribute Week at the Taylor Complex, call 954-4182.



## CONA MEETING TO FOCUS ON URBAN SERVICE, URBAN REALITIES

The Monday, Nov. 11, meeting of the Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) will feature a discussion of *Urban Services, Urban Realities*, in the context of [Sarasota 2050](#), the organization has announced.

President Lourdes Ramirez and Vice President Cathy Antunes will make a presentation on the Sarasota County Commission efforts under way to modify the 2050 Plan. Then, a panel discussion on the subject will feature downtown Sarasota advocates — including entrepreneur Jesse Biter and Downtown

Improvement District board member Eileen Hampshire — along with David Brain, New College professor of urban sociology, planning and design, a news release says.

The CONA session will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a meeting and greeting of neighbors, followed by the program at 7 p.m. The organization holds its gatherings at the Sarasota Garden Club, located at 1131 Boulevard of the Arts, near the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall.

For more information, visit [www.conasarasota.org](http://www.conasarasota.org).

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## OLDER ADULTS URGED TO GET SHINGLES VACCINE

Even as health officials urge flu vaccinations, residents and seasonal visitors are also encouraged to get vaccinated against shingles, the county Health Department has announced. “Caused by the same virus associated with chickenpox, shingles is more common and serious in older adults,” a news release says.

Health officials estimate that one in three people in the United States will develop shingles during his or her lifetime, the release adds. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shingles most commonly occurs in people age 50 or older, people who have medical conditions that keep their immune systems from working properly and people who receive immunosuppressive drugs.

“For some, the blistering skin rash can lead to severe pain that can last for months or even years,” the release points out. Other

complications of shingles include eye problems and, less often, pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness and brain swelling (encephalitis), the release continues. In rare instances, shingles also can lead to death.

“After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays in the body in a dormant state,” said Dr. William Heymann, medical executive director of the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, in the release. “For reasons that are not fully known, the virus can reactivate many years later, causing shingles.”

He added, “The likelihood of getting shingles or experiencing severe and lasting complications is greatly reduced in those who get the shingles vaccine. Shingles vaccine is only needed once. You can get shingles more than once, so it is advisable to get the vaccine even if you have had the disease. Those who have been vaccinated and then later get shingles usually have a much milder experience.”



The vaccine, which is 60-percent effective in preventing shingles, has few, if any, side effects, the release notes.

“Those who receive the shingles vaccine at the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County may only be required to pay their co-pay if they have coverage for the vaccine through Medicare Part D. Be sure to bring your card with you so we can file the appropriate claim for payment,” said the Sarasota

County Health Department’s immunization program director, Donna Keith, in the release.

The Department of Health-Sarasota offers adult vaccinations, including the one for shingles, on a daily basis at its two Sarasota County locations.

For information or to make an appointment for a shingles vaccination, call 861-2900 in Sarasota or 861-3864 in North Port.



*The shingles vaccine is recommended for older adults. Photo by Win Henderson via Wikimedia Commons*



## COUNTY OFFICES TO BE CLOSED FOR VETERANS DAY

All Sarasota County government offices, including libraries, recreation centers and the Sarasota County History Center, will be closed Monday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day.

The following Sarasota County Parks and Recreation facilities will be open that day, a news release says:

- Arlington Park, from noon to 5 p.m.
- Payne Park, from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Knight Trail Park Pistol and Rifle Range and the Englewood Sports Complex will be closed, the release notes.

Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) bus service, including paratransit service, will operate on the regular schedule Nov. 11.

For Veterans Bus information and operating hours, call 861-1018.

Residential garbage will be collected as regularly scheduled Nov. 11.

Both landfills — the facility at 4000 Knights Trail Road and the Citizens' Convenience Center at 4010 Knights Trail Road in Nokomis — will be open Monday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Landfill Administration Office will be closed.

The Chemical Collection centers located at 8750 Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota and on Jackson Road in Venice — along with the ReUzIt Shop on Bee Ridge Road — will be closed Monday, the release adds.

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

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## PUBLIC COMMENTS WELCOMED ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The public is invited to comment on a proposed amendment to the City of Sarasota Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plans, the City of Sarasota has announced.

The Action Plans designate how federal funds will be appropriated, a news release says. The city is proposing to eliminate two projects:

- Newtown Resource Center (\$100,000): This project is no longer necessary since a city-owned facility was converted into a business resource center at a lower cost, the release explains.
- Robert L. Taylor All-Purpose Field (\$408,178): The project is proposed to move forward through the use of Tax Increment Funds instead of CDBG funds.

A total of five new projects would be added:

- Drainage Improvements (\$150,000) at two locations: Goodrich Avenue between 32nd and 35th streets; and Maple Avenue between 27th and 31st streets. Both projects would exceed Sarasota County's current level of service.
- Streetscape/Landscaping (\$158,178): Selected bulb-outs along Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way would be removed to improve traffic flow; new landscaping would be installed along Dr. MLK Jr. Way between Cocoanut Avenue and Pershing Avenue; a roundabout at Dr. MLK Jr. Way and Osprey Avenue also would be designed (a different funding source would be used for construction).



- **Playground Improvements (\$50,000)** for Mary Dean Park, located at 15th Street and Central Avenue: New play equipment and a new rubber mulch surface would be installed to increase the safety of children at play.
- **Playground Improvements (\$100,000)** for Orange Avenue Park, located at Carver Street and Orange Avenue: New play equipment for children ages 2 to 5 would be installed, along with a new rubber mulch surface to increase the safety of children at play.
- **Brick Crosswalks (\$50,000):** New brick crosswalks would be installed at selected intersections in the Newtown Community Redevelopment Area.

Public comments on the above projects must be received by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 27, the release points out. Written comments may be mailed to Donald Hadsell, Director, Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development, 111 S. Orange Ave., Sarasota, FL 34236.



*City of Sarasota leaders are seeking public comments on projects proposed for federal funding. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## OAK PARK TEACHER HONORED FOR LEADERSHIP IN ARTS EDUCATION

An art teacher and fine arts specialist at [Oak Park School](#) has received the 2013 Cindy Balistreri Distinguished Arts Educator Award for Leadership in Arts Education from the Community/Schools Partnership for the Arts (C/SPA), the school district has announced.

The annual award, which honors “outstanding teacher/leaders” and is named for the Sarasota County School District’s former fine arts curriculum specialist, was presented to Patrice Kennedy. Along with the honor, Kennedy received a \$1,000 grant for a personal educational experience or classroom resources, a news release says.

Oak Park, located on Proctor Road in Sarasota, is a Sarasota County public school for K-12 students with special needs, the release explains.

In addition to her work as an art educator, Kennedy is a professional writer and book illustrator. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a certificate in Art and Healing from Ringling College of Art and Design, where she has served on the faculty of Continuing Studies and Special Programs, the release notes. She taught in Booker High School’s Visual and Performing Arts program before moving to Oak Park School in 2004.

“In collaboration with her fellow teachers, Kennedy has been a principal project coordinator for numerous grant programs, including a four-year Weller Grant award from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County to create the Garden of Art in the central courtyard at Oak Park,” the release points out. “For Angels Dream in Color, a community art outreach program she established, Kennedy



*Patrice Kennedy/Contributed photo*

conducts painting studios and art exhibits with older developmentally challenged students and senior residents of assisted living facilities.”

Kennedy has collaborated on several projects with students from Ringling College through Youth Experiencing Art (YEA Arts) and has mentored a number of student interns from Riverview High School, the release continues.

Most recently, the release adds, Kennedy and her students at Oak Park School worked with art teachers and students from Lakeview Elementary School in Sarasota to decorate a bridge between Oak Park’s students with special needs and Lakeview’s mainstream students. The initiative was made possible by a grant from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the VSA and MetLife Foundation Arts Connect All Project. The grant was facilitated by the Van Wezel Performing Arts Center.



## HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION PROGRAM RECEIVES STATE AWARD

The Sarasota County Hazardous Waste Department has been recognized “for its highly successful hazardous waste collection program,” a county news release notes.

The 2013 North America Hazardous Materials Management Association (NAHMMA) Longstanding Program Excellence Award recognizes programs with more than 20 years of service, the release adds. The award was presented at the 2013 NAHMMA Florida Chapter Workshop in Daytona Beach earlier this year.

“Obviously it’s very gratifying to be recognized by your peers,” said Brian Usher, operations manager for the Sarasota County Solid Waste Department, in the release. “By keeping hazardous materials out of our landfill and making sure they are properly disposed of, we are not only protecting the environment, but also giving residents a safe alternative for disposing of these types of products.”

Sarasota County Hazardous Waste held its first amnesty day collection in 1985, the

release notes. “Twenty-eight years later, the program has flourished into three permanent facilities that accept materials,” it continues. Examples of hazardous materials collected are electronics, used oil, batteries, paint, fluorescent light bulbs, solvents, aerosols, pesticides, pool chemicals and hypodermic needles (“sharps”). The facilities are located at 8750 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota; 4010 Knights Trail Road, Nokomis; and 250 S. Jackson Road, Venice.

In 2012, Sarasota County Solid Waste staff hosted 29 different mobile events with more than 1,300 participants, the release adds. “The successful campaigns resulted in more than 950 tons of material being diverted from the landfill and more than 90 percent of the materials either recycled or used for alternative-fuels processing. In addition, through a partnership with the Sarasota County Health Department, the program collected more than 5,000 pounds of sharps and lancets.”



*The Sarasota County Chemical Collection Center is located on Bee Ridge Road. Photo courtesy Sarasota County*



## SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS GOODBYE TO A 'SPECIAL' MEMBER

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office said goodbye on Nov. 1 to Special, a Mounted Patrol horse that was retiring after 17 years of service.

Special was donated to the agency in 1996, a news release points out. At the time, the 5-year-old Thoroughbred was a retired racehorse. "Special stood out immediately for her unique spirit," the release continues. "She has worked every major event including the Sarasota County Fair, spring breaks on the beaches and mall details during the holiday season." She has also worked the Super Bowl in Tampa and college football games. Her last large event was the Republican National Convention in Tampa in 2012, the release notes.

Until last year, she was the first mount for every new rider because of her tolerance and her abilities as a law enforcement horse, the release adds.

Seven years ago, Special was diagnosed with Lymphangitis, a condition that caused her left rear leg to swell, the release says. "Although she was able to work and her health was monitored closely, it was recently decided that it was best for her to retire.



*Special/Contributed photo*

Special will live out her years at Mill Creek Retirement Home for Horses in Alachua County (<http://millcreekfarm.org/>), the release continues. The farm's "beautiful pastures are exactly what Special needs for her condition," the release adds. "She will be missed by everyone in the Mounted Patrol Unit."

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## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE RAISES \$20,000 FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

The Venice Area Board of Realtors has announced that its Scholarship Committee has raised \$20,220.00 for 2014 local graduating high school seniors.

The committee was chaired by Tony Moore, a news release notes. The board has raised

more than \$260,000 since it started the program more than 20 years ago.

A bonus this year will be a matching donation from state Sen. Nancy Detert (R-Venice) of up to \$20,000, the release adds. The senator made the announcement at the board's recent membership meeting.



## SISTER CITIES ASSOCIATION SEEKS AWARD NOMINATIONS

As the Sister Cities Association of Sarasota (SCAS) celebrates 50 years of citizen diplomacy, nominations are being accepted to honor an exceptional individual or organization as the recipient of the annual SCAS One World Award, the organization has announced.

The One World Award is presented to a person or organization that, through work, volunteer efforts or philanthropy in Sarasota, “has enhanced understanding and respect among people throughout the world,” a news release explains.

Members of the public are encouraged “to contemplate and submit the names of those who should be recognized for their exceptional work in the international arena — perhaps a neighbor, co-worker, church member or an organization actively engaged in international relationships,” the release adds. Nominations, including an explanation of why the person/organization should be considered for the One World Award, should be submitted to [walljb@comcast.net](mailto:walljb@comcast.net). The deadline is Friday, Nov. 15.

Previous One World Award winners include Robert Roskamp of Roskamp Institute, “a worldwide leader in finding cures for

Alzheimer’s disease and mental disorders,” the release continues, “Nicholas Bolletieri, who has developed gifted tennis players worldwide; ORT, an exceptional Jewish global educational organization; former Mayor Lou Ann Palmer, who visited and personally enhanced relationships with five of the SCAS sister cities”; and the Sarasota Christian School, which has classroom ties with 12 cities around the world.

The award reflects the vision of U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s person-to-person diplomacy initiative, which forged the beginning of the international Sister Cities program as a means for individual citizens to strengthen shared interests around the globe and lessen the possibility of world conflicts, the release continues.

The Sister Cities Association of Sarasota is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization with more than 200 members, known as “Citizen Diplomats,” who create personal face-to-face exchanges across the world in the arts, business, education, civic activities, sports and government,” the release points out.

For more information about SCAS visit [www.SarasotaSisterCities.org](http://www.SarasotaSisterCities.org). 

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*The Silvertooth Judicial Center is in downtown Sarasota. File photo*

## **FORMER COAST GUARD OFFICER SENTENCED FOR SEX CRIMES**

On Tuesday, Nov. 4, a 46-year-old former lieutenant commander in the U.S. Coast Guard was sentenced to 12 years in prison on sex offense charges resulting from an undercover operation conducted by the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies arrested Shawn Connelly Gray, a former Miami resident, on May 12, 2012, and charged him with two felony counts: Use of a Computer to Solicit a Parent to Commit Sex with a Minor and Travel to Solicit a Child to Commit Sex Acts. He was sentenced in the 12th Judicial Circuit Court in Sarasota.

According to the report, from May 7 to May 12, 2012, Gray communicated via the Internet with a person he thought was a parent or legal guardian of a person under the age of 18. Utilizing the screen name "jdsf18c," the report says, he "knowingly and willingly engaged in

communication with an undercover agent to solicit sexual activity with a child believed to be 8 years of age." The report adds that he sent numerous emails and chat messages "describing various sexual acts that he wanted to perform" with the child.

On May 12, he traveled from Miami to Sarasota County "with the intent to engage in sexual activity with a person he believed to be a minor," the report continues.

Gray's prison time will be followed by 18 years of sex offender probation, according to the sentence. He also was ordered to have no contact with children and to undergo a mental health evaluation.

He is designated a sex offender and is now a five-time convicted felon, according to the Sheriff's Office.



## BICYCLIST KILLED IN TRAFFIC CRASH LATE WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

Victor Harley Foreman, 20, of Sarasota, was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 5, when the bicycle he was riding collided with a van at the intersection of Central Avenue and 10th Street in Sarasota about 4:30 p.m., the Sarasota Police Department has reported.

Officers believe the van was traveling east-bound on 10th Street when it approached the intersection with Central Avenue, a news release says. "The van had the right of way and was proceeding into the intersection," the release adds.

Foreman, on his bicycle, failed to stop for the red light and collided with the van, the release continues. He was taken to Blake Medical Center in Bradenton with serious injuries and was later pronounced dead at the hospital, the release adds.

The driver of the van, Eric Goretcki, 61, of Sarasota, was not injured. "Drugs and alcohol do not appear to be a factor in the crash," the release notes.

The crash remains under investigation, the release adds.



*An aerial map shows the intersection of Central Avenue and 10th Street in Sarasota. Image from Google Maps*



## 27 DUI ARRESTS MADE DURING OCTOBER SATURATION PATROLS

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office conducted a special department-wide Halloween saturation patrol from Oct. 25 through Nov. 1 that resulted in 27 DUI arrests, 43 seatbelt citations, 37 suspended license citations, 104 citations for not having proof of insurance, 301 speeding citations and 17 citations for reckless driving, the office has announced.

Deputies conduct monthly saturation patrols "to remove dangerous, uninsured or impaired drivers from local roadways to keep motorists safe," a news release notes.

"Because of our commitment to keep the public aware of these ongoing education and enforcement efforts, results are provided at the end of each month and dates for the next month's activity are announced," the release adds.

This month, saturation patrols will be conducted Nov. 9, 15, 16, 23, 27 and 30, the release notes. This initiative is conducted in partnership with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and supported through a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation.

## CAREGIVER ARRESTED FOR STEALING FROM DISABLED CLIENTS

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a woman entrusted with caring for disabled clients after she was found transferring money from their bank accounts to hers, the office has announced.

Lutheran Services contacted detectives after noticing money was missing from the accounts of two women, ages 42 and 68, "for whom Lutheran Services is guardian, since both are declared mentally incompetent and have other medical issues," a news release says.

Linda Baughman Flores, 56, of 1228 S. Shade Ave., Sarasota, was co-owner of John Bird Community Supports, a company that assists the disabled with daily activities, the release continues. Flores was listed as trustee on the victims' accounts and was responsible for paying their bills, the release adds. However, between December 2012 and May 2013, "detectives found Flores electronically transferred their money into her own personal account, made ATM withdrawals from their accounts and paid her electric bill from one victim's account," the release notes.



*Linda Flores/Contributed photo*

Flores was arrested Nov. 5 and charged with two felony counts of Exploitation of a Disabled Person for stealing more than \$4,400 from the victims.



## FIGHT OVER FISHING SPOT ENDS WITH ONE VICTIM, ONE ARREST

The Sarasota Police Department has charged a 58-year-old Sarasota man with Aggravated Battery following a stabbing over a fishing location, the department has announced.

About 9 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 2, Sarasota Police Department officers were dispatched to the 1400 block of Siesta Drive in reference to a stabbing, a news release says. When officers arrived, a man was lying at the base of the bridge master's building, located in the middle of the north Siesta bridge, the report says. The victim told officers he had an argument with another man about where the victim had parked his vehicle while he was fishing. The argument turned into a fight, with both the suspect and the victim hitting each other, the report adds.

The suspect grabbed an "ice pick" type of weapon and stabbed the victim twice, the report continues. The victim was taken to Blake Medical Center in Bradenton, via the Bayflight helicopter, for treatment of his injuries, the report notes. One stab wound was on the right side of the victim's body, while the other was on the victim's back, according to the report. The victim was able to get the attention of the bridge master, asking him to call for help, before the victim collapsed to the road, the report adds. The wounds necessitated the victim's receiving a blood transfusion and immediate surgery, it notes.

The victim was able to give officers a description of the suspect's vehicle. Two officers arrested David Christner of 2822 Olympic St., Sarasota, and charged him with a felony count of Aggravated Battery with a Deadly Weapon.



*David Christner/Contributed photo*



*The bridge master's building is visible (left) as the north Siesta bridge opens for boat traffic. File photo*



## SARASOTA FUGITIVE CAPTURED IN GLADES COUNTY

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Fugitive Apprehension Unit has captured a man who has been on the run since May to avoid being arrested for a sex offense against a child, the office has announced.

Six months ago, detectives obtained a warrant for Robert Hahn, 42, whose last known address was 3918 115th St. Court West in Bradenton, after the victim reported that Hahn repeatedly molested her when she was between nine and 11 years old, a news release says. "The victim had submitted a paper to her school in Indiana about having the courage to push Hahn away when he came into her room at night and touched her," the release adds. Indiana officials interviewed her and forwarded the information to Sarasota County Sheriff's detectives, "since the crime occurred when the victim lived here," the release notes.

"Hahn fled when detectives contacted him in May and has been on the run ever since," it adds.



*Robert Hahn/Contributed photo*

Deputies working with the U.S. Marshals Florida Regional Fugitive Task Force located Hahn in Okeechobee on the morning of Nov. 4 and took him into custody. He is charged with Lewd or Lascivious Molestation of a Child Under 12 and is being held in the Sarasota County Jail without bond.

## TRIO ARRESTED FOR USE OF STOLEN CREDIT CARDS

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested three people who allegedly used credit cards stolen from an Osprey home to make fraudulent purchases at area stores, the office has announced.

The victim reported her credit cards stolen in late September, a news release says. On Oct. 15, the Sheriff's Office issued a press release asking for help identifying suspects in the case. Pictures were released showing a woman using the cards at three 7-Eleven locations and two men using the cards at Family Dollar, Walgreens and Dollar General, the news release notes.

"Deputies who had previously encountered the three while investigating a battery complaint were able to identify them to detectives as Travis Howard, Charlie Wilson and Christina Gabriel," who live at 2554 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Sarasota, the release notes.

Howard, 26, is charged with nine counts of Criminal Use of Personal Identification Information; Wilson, 32, is charged with six counts of Criminal Use of Personal Identification Information; and Gabriel, 46, is charged with five counts of Criminal Use of Personal Identification Information.





*Christina Gabriel/Contributed photo*



*Travis Howard/Contributed photo*



*Charlie Wilson/Contributed photo*



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## MAN CHARGED WITH STEALING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS FROM HIS MOM

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested Michael Dion, 50, of Sarasota "for draining his mother's bank accounts" to fund his \$600-a-day addiction to pain pills, the office has announced.

On Oct. 17, Dion took his 72-year-old mother to the bank and asked to withdraw more than \$12,954.72 from her IRA, according to the report. "His mother appeared confused but told bank staff to do whatever her son said," a news release says. "She admitted she did not understand what was going on."


The Department of Children and Families worked with detectives who determined Dion had also made withdrawals from his mother's certificate of deposit and put the money in her account. "He has been withdrawing \$600 each day since Aug. 15 for a total of \$22,800, nearly draining his mother's accounts," the release notes. As of Oct. 24, the mother had just \$8,742.33 left in her account, according to the report.

Dion admitted he buys and uses more than a dozen Oxycontin and Xanax pills a day and acknowledged that his mother has dementia



*Michael Dion/Contributed photo*

and does not know about his addiction, the release continues. "He advised that he's unemployed and has zero income himself," the report notes.

Dion, of 2728 Forest Knoll Drive in Sarasota, is charged with Exploitation of an Elderly Person. He was jailed under a \$7,500 bond. 



Proceeds benefit Mote Marine's Sea Turtle Conservation Program.

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# OPINION



## GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE IS NON-NEGOTIABLE IN FLORIDA

### EDITORIAL

The City of Sarasota is being sued — again — for a violation of Florida's Government in the Sunshine laws. The latest suit stems from a private meeting among two commissioners, the city manager and other city staffers with downtown merchants to discuss the presence of the homeless in downtown Sarasota.

This is the fifth such lawsuit against the city since Tom Barwin became city manager. Before his appointment, such suits were a relatively rare occurrence.

That would lead one to speculate that the problem might be that the city's top executive is not a fan of our open meetings laws and has been steadfastly pushing against those constraints to gain as much leeway as possible to conduct city affairs more discreetly.

If so, the City Commission has much more to ponder than a proposed settlement to the current lawsuit, a case that some legal experts knowledgeable about Florida's Sunshine laws think is unwinnable for the city.

The commission must also consider the underlying cause of this rash of litigation over legal requirements so simple that a third-grader would have no difficulty understanding the limitations imposed by Government in the Sunshine.

The Florida attorney general has offered an opinion that clearly states that the law applies to "any gathering, whether formal or casual, of two or more members of the same board or commission to discuss some matter on which foreseeable action will be taken."



# OPINION

Our concern is that Barwin does not like the Sunshine laws and is refusing to comply with them. One lawsuit stemmed from his organizing an *ad hoc* committee, against the advice of the city attorney, which held private meetings in violation of the law. Settlement of that case cost the city taxpayers more than \$20,000.

The most recent violation got around ignoring legal advice, because Barwin simply did not consult City Attorney Robert Fournier when making plans for commissioners and staff to meet with downtown businessmen. Fournier only learned of the meeting a week later, just days before the lawsuit was filed.

At least Barwin has a defender in the current imbroglio: Commissioner Susan Chapman. Chapman, along with Commissioner Suzanne Atwell, was in attendance at the private meeting in question. She subsequently wrote an email praising the meeting and urging more like it. Perhaps that is why Chapman and Atwell were individually named as co-defendants in the suit, which asks that the court require them to pay any penalties for their violations out of their personal funds, not city tax revenue.

Chapman has vociferously defended her actions, claiming at one point that, if

*The commission must consider the underlying cause of this rash of litigation over legal requirements so simple that a third-grader would have no difficulty understanding the limitations imposed by Government in the Sunshine.*

Government in the Sunshine was meant to prevent elected officials from meeting in private to discuss important matters without public notice or the keeping of minutes, then the Sunshine laws were wrong. That was a rather disingenuous statement for one who is also a licensed attorney in the State of Florida.

Since then she has backtracked on that claim and offered a variety of dissembling rationalizations for her personal role in the city's latest Sunshine misstep. Unfortunately, her public remarks have called into question her legal expertise at best, and her veracity and qualifications as a city commissioner at worst. Her continued denials insult the intelligence of all Sarasotans.

We realize that Government in the Sunshine laws apply not only to the City Commission but to all of the many advisory boards and committees, which makes compliance more difficult. Frankly, we believe there are too many of these boards, and much of their work is ignored by the powers that be ... but that is a discussion for another time. Regardless, the city and all of its subsidiary deliberative bodies *must* adhere to the law.

We also realize that Barwin came to us from Illinois, a state with a reputation for




# OPINION

eschewing doing the people's business in the light of day. The expectations — nay, the demands — of governmental transparency might seem foreign to one from such an indulgent environment.

Despite any personal objections Barwin might have, the City of Sarasota must conduct its business while complying with Government

in the Sunshine, the law of our land. And it is the responsibility of the city manager to ensure that the commission and its delegates, along with his entire staff, adhere to that law.

If he will not lead his administration along that proper path, then the city might be better served if he simply left. 



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SHAY DESERVING OF VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR HONORS

To the Editor:

I, too, applaud the nomination for Michael Shay's Volunteer of the Year award from Keep Sarasota Beautiful (*Siesta Seen*, Nov. 1), but he does more than just coordinate the Siesta Key Association/Siesta Key Village Association Adopt a Road program.

Michael has also worked hard to help the Siesta Key Village Association choose the correct program to bring recycling trash receptacles to the village. In addition, he can be seen in the early morning darkness picking up trash along Ocean Boulevard and in the Village. To think I used to be puzzled by the strange cans and bottles that found their way into my recycling bin on trash mornings. Thank you, Michael.

*Anne Johnson  
Siesta Key*



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



# Sarasota Leisure

**SECOND CHANCES**

**MIX AND MINGLE**

**A PREVIEW OF COMING ATTRACTIONS**

*Inside*

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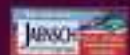
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# SECOND CHANCES

*Dustin Magner (front) rows with instruction from Jason Moskowitz. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

## FOR WOUNDED VETERANS, BENDERSON PARK MAY PLAY A KEY ROLE IN FOSTERING A NEW LEVEL OF NORMALCY IN LIFE

**By Rachel Brown Hackney**

*Editor*

Amid the bustle of athletes preparing for competition and the white tents dotting the shore, this particular group, at first pass, seemed no different than any other.

With a closer look, though, it was clear these men and women were not in the typical Lycra “uniform” seen on many of the other people striding purposely past rowing vessels. These men and women were present at Nathan Benderson Park because of the uniforms they wore months or years past — as soldiers and Marines in service to their country.

With some injuries obvious and others not so much in evidence, they were guests of USRowing for the 2013 Masters National Championships held at the Sarasota County park Aug. 15-18.

The “mission” of the volunteers with them, if you will, was to help initiate an adaptive rowing program through coordination with a national organization called [Operation Second Chance](#).

“*It's about making them feel normal.*”

Paul Blacketter  
President  
SunCoast Aquatic Nature Center Association



On Aug. 15, as the championships were about to get under way, Maj. Kevin Kenney, a 26-year veteran of the



Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, thanked Gov. Rick Scott for his support of the park. Scott, who had come to watch some of the opening day events of the championships, had stopped to meet the veterans. While Kenney referenced the rowing venue's growing importance to Sarasota and Manatee counties' economies in terms of filling hotel rooms, Kenney was looking well beyond that, zeroing in on a far more critical facet of the facility.

Benderson Park is 40 miles from the busiest hospital in the Veterans Administration system, Kenney pointed out — James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa, whose poly-trauma center deals "with the worst of the worst." The state of Florida has 1.6 million

veterans, Kenney continued. "We have literally *thousands* in the Sarasota area that will be able to take advantage of [Benderson Park] and what it's going to ... offer for adaptive sports."

Kenney is convinced, he says, that sports are key to helping wounded veterans work past the horrors that remain with them from the battlefield.

## THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Two days later, 23-year-old Nicholas Thom sat on a floating dock at the park and took in the activities around him. Just two days earlier, he had been on Benderson Lake for the first time in a rowing vessel.



*Nicholas Thom watches activity around him as he sits on a floating dock at Benderson Park. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



Although he and his wife, Samantha Chambers, live outside Washington, D.C., now, Thom spent most of his life “next to the beach,” he says. He grew up as a military brat in the Philippines; Okinawa, Japan; and California. Later, as a Marine himself, he lived in the coastal area of Sneads Ferry, NC.

Asked about the rowing, he responds, “It’s definitely more demanding than I thought. ... I was out there for about 20 minutes, and I almost jumped out of the boat. ... It was like the ground was breathing, it was so hot [that day].”

Thom’s broad smiles and laughs punctuate the conversation. It is easy for a reporter to overlook the fact that he has lost both legs above the knee, the result of an Improvised

Explosive Device (IED) explosion in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

This is not Thom’s first visit to Sarasota. He marked that event about two years ago, he added, thanks to Operation Second Chance.

Referring to Kenney, Thom adds with another laugh, “He always asks me, so I can’t say, ‘No.’”

And Thom remembers his first visit to Benderson Park. “It was all dirt mounds.”

Kenney and another Operation Second Chance volunteer drove Thom and other wounded veterans around the same area where the USRowing Masters events were under way that morning. “At the time, [Kenney] was telling us what it would be ... and I thought that was pretty cool.”



*Maj. Kevin Kenney (left) helps steady a rowing vessel as other volunteers prepare to help Dustin Magner (second from right) get aboard. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



But Thom did not even consider he would be rowing there at some not-too-distant point in the future.

## PASSION AND PURPOSE

About two years ago, Sheriff Tom Knight was unable to make a planned presentation to a group of Operation Second Chance veterans visiting Sarasota, Kenny says. He asked Kenney to take his place.

Kenney did not just fill in for those remarks. He took the opportunity to talk with the vice president of the national organization at that time — a double amputee — and he chatted with the veterans. The group was there on a retreat.

Operation Second Chance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was founded in 2004 after a woman named Cindy McGrew developed

life-long bonds with three injured soldiers who received treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

The organization's mission statement says, "We are patriotic citizens committed to serving our wounded, injured and ill combat veterans. We support Veterans and their families while they recover in military hospitals, by building relationships and identifying and supporting immediate needs and interests. We are dedicated to promoting public awareness of the many sacrifices made by our Armed Forces."

Among the many responsibilities Operation Second Chance has taken on, it offers retreats for wounded veterans — just like the one in Sarasota where Kenney first learned about the program. That trip was coordinated by Col. Ben Knisely, the Sarasota County Sheriff's



*Volunteers and veterans gather under the Operation Second Chance tent at Benderson Park. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



Office's military liaison and the southeastern regional director for Operation Second Chance.

In the course of conversation at that gathering, Kenney says, he asked how he could help. Knisely told him, "Just get the word out."

Kenney's response: "I told him I could do better than that."

Kenny learned that Operation Second Chance — unlike a number of organizations that present themselves as a means of helping veterans — has very little overhead. Almost all of its resources, he says, go to helping people.

An Army veteran himself with a son who served two tours of duty as a Marine in Iraq, Kenney went to work on arranging another

retreat to Florida about four months after that one.

Since then, he has brought in groups probably 13 or 14 times. Generally, four to five participants come for each retreat, and they stay three to five days. All travel and room expenses are paid, generally by Operation Second Chance, he points out. Local businesses and private donations pick up everything else. Restaurants provide all the meals, for example.

"We've had such an outpouring from the community," he points out.

Any wounded veteran, with physical and/or emotional trauma, is welcome to come, he says, noting that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) "is a big thing these days."



*Veterans join volunteers in a big rowing vessel provided by Sarasota Crew at Benderson Park. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



A number of the participants come directly from a hospital environment — Walter Reed, [Brooke Army Medical Center](#) in San Antonio, TX; and Haley in Tampa. Some of them already have been discharged.

“The retreats are designed to give them a respite, a break,” and help them reintegrate into society, Kenney continues. “I really like to have the veterans that have significant injuries,” he adds. “A lot of things we do are activities that a lot of them feel like they can’t do anymore, and we’ve been pretty successful.”

Paul Blackketter, the former Benderson Development executive who is president of the organization that oversees events at Benderson Park, understands only too well what Kenney means. “It’s about making them feel normal,” Blackketter says of the veterans; not special, he stresses, but normal. And that is one of the biggest goals of the adaptive rowing program at the park, Blackketter points out.

An Army veteran who remains in the Army Reserve, Blackketter joined the Army National Guard in 1984 and was commissioned in the Army in 1990. He was deployed to Iraq twice, in 2002 and in 2004. He readily acknowledges he had PTSD problems himself, and “I have a lot of friends who aren’t doing as well as me.”

“The biggest thing [for the veterans visiting the area through Operation Second Chance]

is they just want to be treated like human beings,” Blackketter points out.

“In an effort to not have their disability define them,” he says, “we try to expose them to things they feel like they can’t do,” Moreover, he adds, “We don’t set out to do any therapy conspicuously. We hope that the therapy happens seamlessly.”

*“Their reality was my worst nightmare. ... My opportunity to give back is ... what drives me.”*

Maj. Kevin Kenney  
Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office

Many of the early retreats in Sarasota involved hunting, fishing and golf, he adds. Other, family retreats organized by Operation Second Chance allowed veterans and their loved ones to visit

Universal Studios, for example, or take sailing excursions.

When Thom came to Sarasota on his first retreat, he says, “I was the worst [Kenney] had seen. He took that as a baseline.”

With another of his hearty laughs, Thom describes how Kenny had him up early and out all day, day after day, for wild hog hunting. Finally, Thom says, he had to tell Kenney, “I am wore out.”

Kenney’s response? “I’m so glad you said that, because I feel the same way,” Thom recalls.

Thom also met Kenney’s son, Lyle, who was helping coordinate the activities. “It was just a really good trip,” Thom adds.

The second time he and his wife, Samantha, came to Sarasota, Kenney had arranged for the veterans to take a charter boat excursion to fish for tarpon.



“He actually hooked the largest tarpon of the day,” Chambers points out of her husband, and Thom broke the reel in the process.

That laugh erupts again as Thom describes how volunteers were trying to hold his wheelchair down on the deck as the tarpon put up a tremendous fight, towing the boat behind it.

Finally, the tarpon snapped the line. “They felt so bad when it happened,” Thom adds of the volunteers. His view, he says, was to acknowledge to the fish, “You won your life; you can go.”

## THE ROWING

With plans under way for the USRowing Masters National Championships at

Benderson Park in August, Kenney explains that all the veterans selected for this latest retreat had expressed an interest in adaptive rowing. Any who decided to take up the sport afterward would be directed to adaptive rowing clubs in their communities, he says.

Blackketter and his boss, Randy Benderson — president of Benderson Development — “are deeply invested in the adaptive rowing program,” Kenney points out, “especially for our military veterans.

They have “made no bones about the fact that a big part of the facility [at Benderson Park] will be for adaptive rowing,” Kenney adds. As for Kenney: “I tell people I don’t know anything about rowing, but I do know veterans.”



*Nicholas Thom (second from right) fishes for tarpon during an earlier visit to Sarasota. Contributed photo*



And rowing is just one of the athletic pursuits he envisions for wounded veterans at the park, based on his discussions with Blacketter. Opportunities lie ahead for competitive hand cycling and kayaking as well. The adaptive sports “will be a big part of the program,” Kenney adds.

“This is really his passion,” Blacketter says of Kenney. “We’re really thankful that we’re able to team up with him.”

## AT THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

With a weather front having cooled down the temperatures on Aug. 17 — and some breezes and intermittent clouds keeping them there

— Jason Moskowitz, head coach of [Sarasota Crew’s](#) Masters program, was coordinating excursions on the lake for the veterans in the group at Benderson Park.

“This is exciting,” he says. “They’re inspiring,” he adds of the veterans. “These guys are fearless. ... They’re tough, too; they’re strong.”

One person at the park that day who was especially excited about the adaptive rowing program was Laura Schwanger, 54. An Army veteran and cancer survivor, the St. Petersburg resident was there with a Row for the Cure group when she heard — “totally by chance” — about Kenney’s Operation Second Chance adaptive rowing initiative.



*Nicholas Thom stands in the center of the front row of an earlier group that visited Sarasota County through Operation Second Chance. Contributed photo*



Schwanger, who uses a wheelchair, began rowing after her cancer diagnosis, she points out, when she was living in Philadelphia. “[The sport] got me back from all the treatments,” and, she admits, “I was in the right place at the right time.” She made the US Paralympic Rowing Team and won a Bronze medal the first year adaptive rowing was part of the Paralympic Games, in Beijing in 2008.

“It’s a great sport,” she adds with a smile as broad as one of Thom’s. “A lot of fun; an awful lot of fun.”

Schwanger adds, “There are so many great adaptive sports organized down here [in Florida], and to find an accessible dock! I just can’t describe how excited I am.”

Another participant of the Operation Second Chance group, a veteran of the Army Infantry, was Dustin Magner, 36. Like Schwanger, he has to use a wheelchair on dry land, but he readily gave adaptive rowing a try.

“It’s appealing because there is growth,” Magner says. “You can see where the sport’s going. ... If you catch it at the right time, you can expand with it.”

Magner continues, “I went from a lifestyle of physical fitness. I want that, and it’s hard to achieve.”

Being out on the water, he continues, is “a smoker. I wasn’t even doing that good a job. I’m exhausted.”

But he is eager for the challenge, he adds. “I want to see what potential is there. ... I definitely hope to be able to be part of it as time and physical ability permit.”

While the “aura of competition” is a big attraction, he explains, he would be happy in

the role of challenger, encouraging others to try adaptive rowing. “Even if that’s my role, that’s OK.”

## THE COMMITMENT

Like Thom, Magner has warm praise for Kenney and the other volunteers with Operation Second Chance. “It’s probably the best part of all,” Magner notes. “Everybody’s just ultra generous. ... How can you not want to be part of that.”

A Lutz resident, Magner was in Sarasota for his second retreat.


“Kevin is fricking awesome,” Magner adds. “[He goes] back to that whole leading by example thing.”

“You rarely see this amount of support in any state,” Thom points out. “Kevin’s a really good guy.”

In some places, Thom continues, wounded veterans “are paraded around.” That does not happen in Sarasota, he says.

Chambers emphasizes what Blacketter pointed out, that the Operation Second Chance volunteers in Sarasota “don’t treat [the veterans] any differently” than they would a person without a disability.

Kenney makes regular trips to Walter Reed and other military hospitals.

“It was a life-changing experience for me to have a son in war,” Kenney explains. Referring to the wounded veterans, he adds, “Their reality was my worst nightmare. ... My opportunity to give back is ... what drives me.” 





## MIX AND MINGLE

*Guests mingle at the first Sarasota Singles Society reception, held on Nov. 1 at the Chart House. Photo by Vicki Chatley*



## NEW GROUP ARRIVES ON THE SARASOTA SOCIAL SCENE

By Vicki Chatley

Contributing Writer

Last Friday, Nov. 1, I put on my reporter hat and went in search of a story. What I found was a group of friendly, interesting people — along with some good food and drink, and a very pleasant evening — at the first event of a new singles group, Sarasota Singles Society.

Sherry Janes, an attractive, charming former interior designer, experienced what many discover on moving to a new area: It can be difficult to meet potential friends and dates.

So, as noted in a news release, she set about establishing “an elegant ... yet comfortable social group that not only helps area singles meet people but develop life-long friendships while enjoying the best in area dining and culture plus fabulous travel opportunities.”

This concept has been successful in other areas, including Chicago, where Janes’ friend, Carol Erickson, was president of The Single Gourmet. According to the release, Erickson



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METHODS FOR MEETING SINGLES

An alternative to online dating, members gather comfortably at exclusive, elegant private clubs, the area's top restaurants, and at a diverse array of exciting special events. A wonderful way to make new friends, enjoy an active and fulfilling social life, find compatible travel companions, or network for your business, even if not interested in meeting a romantic interest.

The **SARASOTA SINGLES SOCIETY** takes the process of meeting singles to a new level by providing a means for quality single men and women from Sarasota and the surrounding area to meet through socializing with other singles while savoring the pleasures of fine dining, extraordinary special events and amazing travel opportunities.

Famed novelist Charlotte Bronte wisely wrote "*Happiness quite unshared can scarcely be called happiness; it has no taste.*" If you are looking for a way to share some happiness with friends who, like you, enjoy the things that make life fun and



provided inspiration and guidance in establishing Sarasota Singles Society.

The approximately 75 attendees at the inaugural event at the Chart House on Longboat Key included newcomers and seasonal Sarasota residents, as well as those who have lived in the area longer. Strangely, most seem to lead active lives, but are interested in expanding their friendship circles. As one person put it, “It’s more fun to share the opera or a ballet with a companion than going alone.”


There were no wallflowers among this crowd. From the cocktail reception through dinner, everyone seemed to be engaged in conversation. And did they ever cover a wide range of topics! Travel. The arts. Theatre. Restaurants. The health benefits of a vegan versus a carnivore diet. Auto racing, boating and other sports. Daylight Saving Time, preferred to plain old Standard Time. Shopping. Current



*Sherry Janes/Contributed photo*

events. Not much time spent on “where are you from, what do you do” among this group.

Janes told *The Sarasota News Leader* that before the inaugural event, she lined up activities (approximately one a week) to the end of the year so potential members can become actively involved immediately. These are listed on the website, [www.sarasotasingles-society.com](http://www.sarasotasingles-society.com). Especially intriguing is the visit to the King Family Farm on Wednesday, Nov. 20, for a Thanksgiving celebration.

The next event will be dinner Friday, Nov. 8, at the popular Caragiulo’s restaurant, 69 S. Palm Ave., in downtown Sarasota. While reservations are required, Janes assured me she will try to accommodate last-minute sign-ups. 



*The Chart House terrace was the scene of the Sarasota Singles Society reception on Nov. 1. Photo by Vicki Chatley*





# 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.*

**SarasotaNewsLeader.com • Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.**



# A PREVIEW OF COMING ATTRACTIONS



*Heinz Aeschlimann's Composer gleams in the Florida sunlight.*



# THE INSTALLATION OF THE NEXT SEASON OF SCULPTURE GETS UNDER WAY ON THE BAYFRONT

## *Staff Reports*

Season of Sculpture VII will not be unveiled officially on the city's bayfront until Nov. 16. That point, however, did not stop Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel from taking a sneak peek at the artwork as it was being delivered — and installed — this week on the bayfront.

For more information, see this week's *A&E Briefs* — or, even better, visit Sarasota's

bayfront from Nov. 16 through May, right off U.S. 41 in downtown Sarasota.

We suspect more than a few motorists on the Tamiami Trail will find their eyes drawn to the collection of sculptures in this latest show as they swing past it, especially those heading south. 



*The packing crates hold hidden treasures. All photos by Norman Schimmel*





*The parts of this sculpture await their final destination.*





*The uncrating is under way.*





*The positioning is a delicate art in its own right.*



*At least it is all present and accounted for, by the looks of it.*





*Even fine artwork has to rely on pedestrian means of transportation*



*'Fine-tuning' and one more piece are needed for Boaz Vaadia's Asa & Yehoshafat with Dog at at this point.*





*Richard Herzog's It's all about electricity seems to stretch with relief after it has been put in place.*



# A NEW GAME AFOOT



*Although known for its pool, Arlington Park has a gym where pickleball has become a new passion. Photo courtesy Sarasota County. (Inset) A pickleball game is under way in the Arlington Park gym. Photo by Harriet Cuthbert*

## A TENNIS BUFF GETS AN INTRODUCTION TO PICKLEBALL

**By Harriet Cuthbert**

*Contributing Writer*

There is a new game in town. Some might call it a sport, but I am not ready to make that leap yet.

It is played with a large paddle, either wooden or man-made, on a court, and it uses Wiffle balls. It is usually played by four people at a time. The name of this wild and crazy game is pickleball.

Pickleball was invented in 1965 by three male friends who lived on Bainbridge Island, WA. The real reason they came up with this pastime was to amuse their teenage children who were bored during a vacation and wanted a little more excitement. One of the men took

charge of carving out the paddles from leftover wood in his storage area. He created two similar styles, and both resembled racquetball paddles.

In addition, for marketing their new product, the men designed a large cardboard box that contained the equipment, and they put beautiful color photos of themselves and their wives on the box covers. Most importantly, they named their game after one of the men's dogs — Pickles.

I “discovered” pickleball by accident. My longtime tennis friend, Ellendar, emailed me one day that she was giving up our favorite



sport and switching over to pickleball, mainly because her new game would be much less stressful on her knees and hips.

A very condensed version of the game follows:

Two people play against two other people across a net. One person serves the Wiffle ball — always underhand and below the waist — and off they go. As in volleyball, only the server can win a point. A game goes to the first team to reach 11 points.

I cannot possibly understand the scoring, but I am assuming one picks it up with time on the court.

Whack, whack goes the Wiffle ball as it bounces with a thud a mere 2 feet up from the court surface. Pickleball looks like way more fun than tennis. As I watch the players, I notice a lot of intensity but not as much stress as in a tennis match.

The “Swinging Seniors of Sarasota” have taken to, and taken on, pickleball with a frenzy. I am engrossed in their game at the Arlington Park gym, which has been transformed into a pickleball court through someone’s putting up a net in the middle of an area that has been outlined by bright yellow tape.

Many of the players are former tennis people who, for various reasons, can no longer subject their bodies to the hard courts of tennis and the frenetic stop-and-go action when chasing a tennis ball. The court here is much smaller and the surface seems more user-friendly than the hard courts of tennis. And, best of all, most of the games are played indoors in the comfort of air conditioning.



*Pickleball paddles await players. Photo by Harriet Cuthbert*



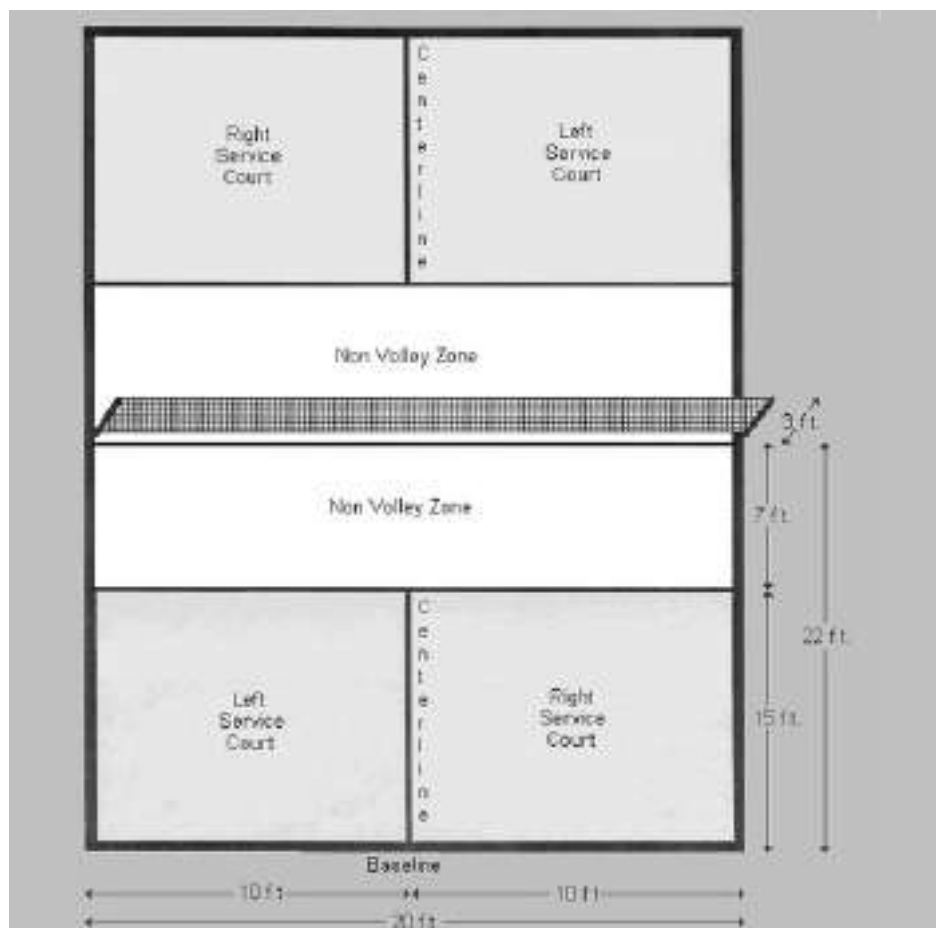
*Pickleball is not as stressful on the body as tennis. Photo by Harriet Cuthbert*



I asked Ellendar a few questions about the game to help familiarize myself with the basics. She first learned about pickleball from a friend at ping-pong. Holding the paddle and using wrist action to control a shot is very similar to the play in ping-pong.

Her top reasons for recommending pickleball are that it is usually played inside, and — even though it is a fast game — it does not require a lot of running. It is also available for a minimal fee of \$2 at many local gyms and at The Salvation Army.

I did hear that up at Lakewood Ranch, the game is being expanded to the outdoors, with construction of a pickleball court under way. Once again, sports addicts can be outside in the hot and sunny weather of Sarasota and hit a small ball over a net. 



*An illustration shows the dimensions of a pickleball court. Image from Wikipedia Commons*





# CALLING ALL GHOSTS, GOBLINS — AND ELVIS



## **SIESTA NEIGHBORHOOD MAKES HALLOWEEN A FRIGHTFULLY FUN EVENT**

*Staff Reports*

Siesta resident Peter van Roekens has a gift for photography, and he has been quite generous in sharing the results of his labors. This week, he has provided absolutely adorable photos of children and adults who participated in a Halloween tradition in one of the neighborhoods near St. Michael the

Archangel Catholic Church on Midnight Pass Road.

We are told youngsters come from all over the Key for trick-or-treating in that neighborhood. Certainly, as Peter's photos make clear, a wealth of imagination went into costumes for the occasion.

























# ***Siesta Seen***

## **A SECOND MEETING ON THE SIESTA KEY ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT'S PROVISIONS HAS BEEN SET FOR NOV. 12; ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND WELCOME SIGNS DO NOT MIX WELL; AND DEWATERING BEGINS AT THE STORMWATER SITE**



**By Rachel Brown Hackney**  
*Editor*

For the second time in less than six months — and with help from other organizations — the Siesta Key Village Association will host a meeting for business owners and managers to educate them about the provisions of the Siesta Key Overlay District (SKOD), the county zoning ordinance that governs activities on Siesta Key.

This time, however, the focus will be on outdoor merchandise displays, and the SKVA officers are encouraging all property owners as well as business owners to attend.

The meeting will be held at 3:45 p.m. on Nov. 12 at St. Boniface Episcopal Church, located at 5615 Midnight Pass Road.



*Siesta Key Village Association Vice President Kay Kouvatsos (left) and President Cheryl Gaddie listen to discussion during the Nov. 5 meeting. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



# Siesta Seen

The Siesta Key Association (SKA) and the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce are collaborating with the SKVA on this session, SKVA President Cheryl Gaddie told the approximately 20 people gathered at her organization's monthly meeting on Nov. 5.

The first meeting on the SKOD, conducted by county staff on May 21, was organized to educate business owners and managers — especially new ones — what the ordinance does and does not allow. In its aftermath, several business owners complained that Sarasota County Code Enforcement staff had

cited them for outdoor merchandise displays, which the SKOD does not permit. A couple of those merchants — Martha Smith of [Le Grand Bisou Caribbean Style Chic Boutique](#) and James Ritter of [Siesta Key Outfitters](#) — both on Ocean Boulevard in the heart of Siesta Village — showed up at the June SKVA meeting to complain about the drastic drops in sales they had experienced as a result of losing the ability to utilize those outdoor displays.

During the Nov. 5 meeting, Gaddie referenced the misunderstandings about what the SKOD allows. “Unfortunately, we don’t have



*Mannequins stand just beyond the door of [Le Grand Bisou](#) in Siesta Village on the evening of Oct. 3. In spite of past county Code Enforcement citations, some businesses still are displaying their wares outside. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



# ***Siesta Seen***

a lot of code enforcement [in the Village],” she added. “We have John Lally [the primary Code Enforcement Department officer on the island], who works very hard, but he has to take care of the entire Key.”

Outdoor merchandise displays are just one matter among many that demand his attention, Gaddie continued.

Although discussion ensued over the summer about modifying the SKOD to allow some types of displays, she said, “Nothing has happened on that at this point.”

All the business and property owners, as well as residents, she stressed, need to be involved in any revision of the zoning code.

“If you want to do something so that outdoor display is legal,” Gaddie added, attendance at the Nov. 12 meeting will be critical.

“This is very much a democracy,” Gaddie pointed out. “We all need to agree on something before it can be done.”

In the meantime, she said she hopes that if business owners and managers have sufficient information about what the SKOD allows, “People will begin to comply with [it] ...”

Vice President Kay Kouvatsos emphasized that while the SKOD is a county ordinance, Siesta business and property owners have the ability to request the County Commission to make changes in it — once consensus has been achieved on what those changes should be.

## **THE SIGN**

Word spread last week that a driver had knocked down the Siesta Village welcome sign at the intersection of Beach Road and Ocean Boulevard. More details emerged during the SKVA meeting this week. As President Cheryl Gaddie put it, “Alcohol was involved.”

Thanks to Wendy Rose, community affairs manager for the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office, I was able to learn details from the incident report. Cameron Charles Thompson, 40, of Largo was charged with Driving Under the Influence With Property Damage — a misdemeanor — and two felony counts: Possession of a Controlled Substance Without Prescription ([Alprazolam](#)) and Possession of a Controlled Substance Without a Prescription (hydrocodone).

The accident was reported just after midnight on Oct. 28 — 12:48 a.m., to be exact. Prior to a deputy’s arrival on the scene, the report says, Thompson refused medical treatment twice. When the deputy arrived, Thompson’s vehicle, with a Texas tag, was sitting partly on the grass and partly on the sidewalk on the right side of Beach Road just north of the Ocean Boulevard intersection. Thompson had run over the Village sign, “a large palm tree, and other shrubbery,” according to the report.

The vehicle had damage to its front end “consistent with striking the sign and tree,” the



# ***Siesta Seen***

report continues. “The right front tire was damaged and the car was immovable.”

The deputy noted that Thompson “had a small cut with dried blood on the left side of his mouth near his lower lip” and that he was “unsteady on his feet.” The deputy added that he could “smell the odor of alcohol coming from [Thompson’s] breath” and that Thompson’s “speech was slow and slurred at times.”

The arrest was logged at 1:30 a.m. on Oct. 28.

Architect Mark Smith, who heads up the Siesta Key Village Maintenance Corp. — the organization that oversees the Village upkeep — told SKVA members on Nov. 5, “Strangely enough, the sign itself flew off the backing and is intact.”

Russell Matthes, past SKVA president and co-owner of the Daiquiri Deck Raw Bar, has it in safekeeping, Smith added.

Workers with Championship Landscape Maintenance Professionals of Fort Myers, which handles the Village maintenance, will pick up the sign from Matthes and put it back up, Smith noted.

“The silver lining is we need to trim the bushes anyway” in front of area where the sign stands, Smith pointed out.

Although Siesta Key Association Vice President Michael Shay did inquire about the state of the driver’s health, Smith offered no

sympathy. “If you run through our sign, you deserve a little pain in life,” he said, to ripples of laughter among the members.

Smith also noted that the palm tree “that got snapped” will be replaced.

## **SAFE TREATS**

At the outset of the SKVA meeting, Gaddie was very pleased to report what a great success the Siesta Village Halloween observance had been: “Safe Treats was *huge*.”

Glenn Cappetta, owner of Sun Ride Pedicab, pointed out, “People were running out of candy by 4:30.”

The event — in its 28th year — began at 3 p.m.

Matthes added that merchant participation was the best he had seen in years.

Businesses were given the opportunity to fly orange and black balloons supplied by the SKVA; then, they were asked to give out candy to youngsters, creating a safe trick-or-treat environment.

## **OVER ON SABAL DRIVE ...**

Regular readers know the continuing saga of the [rental house at 6537 Sabal Drive](#), off Old Stickney Point Road. In my Oct. 25 column, I reported that Assistant County Attorney David M. Pearce had postponed a temporary injunction hearing against the owner from Oct. 21 to



# ***Siesta Seen***

Dec. 18, to allow time for a remodeling firm to bring the house into compliance with the county zoning code and Federal Emergency Management Agency flood regulations.

On Nov. 5, a construction trailer was parked in the driveway of the house, and a copy of the county permit for the approved work was posted on a tree in the yard. Although the trailer appeared to be full of odds and ends of materials, I saw no sign of significant work under way.

Still, this was a step beyond what was visible in late October, when the house still appeared in use by tourists, in spite of its being called a “firetrap” by a Minnesota visitor whose



*The Sarasota County permit for remodeling at the 6537 Sabal Drive house is posted on a tree in the yard. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



*On Nov. 5, a construction trailer sits in the yard of the house at 6537 Sabal Drive. Photo by Rachel Hackney*



# Siesta Seen

family had paid to stay there almost a year ago and county Fire Department and Code Enforcement staff, to whose attention that Minnesotan brought the situation.


## PUMPING UNDER WAY

Good news came this week from Isaac R. Brownman, the county's director of capital projects. He alerted the County Commission that off-site pumping began on Nov. 5 at the stormwater site next to Siesta Public Beach.

Final electrical preparations took place (installation of cables and switches) on Nov. 4, he noted. "Depending on the speed in which the site surface water is removed, contractor will begin digging the 'Rim Ditch,' (a sump

necessary to remove ground water), which will be followed in a few days by the pond excavation."

Thanks to a rainy summer and a very rainy September, the 1-acre site of the new stormwater pond has been too full of water for the excavation to get under way, putting completion of the project months behind schedule.

Brownman continued, "Staff expects to receive an updated work schedule from the contractor this week that will take this project through final completion. ... At this time we do not expect that the delays we have had to date will significantly impact the [Siesta Public] Beach [improvements] project. 



*Some of the heavy equipment that had been idle at the site of the stormwater project, next to Siesta Public Beach, was in action again at last on Nov. 5. Photo by Rachel Hackney*





*Dragon Fruit by Susan Covert. Contributed photo*

## **WOMEN CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS TO PRESENT JURIED FALL SHOW**

Women Contemporary Artists will present the WCA Members Juried Fall Exhibition at the Venice Art Center from Nov. 8 to Dec. 13, the organization has announced.

The public is invited to the free opening reception to meet the artists. It will be held on Friday, Nov. 8, from 5 to 7 p.m. The Venice Art Center is located at 390 Nokomis Ave. South in Venice.

This exhibit will showcase the work of Women Contemporary Artists, whose membership includes painters, sculptors, printmakers, collage artists, fabric artists and more, a news

release notes. "The media will be varied and diverse," selected by juror Judith Powers, a working artist in St. Petersburg who comes highly recommended, it adds. "The Venice Art Center guests are sure to enjoy the variety and quality that this exhibition will present."

Women Contemporary Artists (WCA) is a group of more than 100 women artists "committed to the goal of encouraging each other and promoting each other's work," the release explains. Its mission is to provide visibility, encouragement and inspiration to women artists. For more information, visit [www.womencontemporaryartists.com](http://www.womencontemporaryartists.com).





*Skyline Bridge by Jill Krasner. Contributed photo*



## TONY-WINNER *HAIRSPRAY* TO OPEN NOV. 12 AT VENICE THEATRE

Venice Theatre is bringing eight-time Tony Award winner *Hairspray* to its MainStage.

The high-energy musical comedy will open on Tuesday, Nov. 12, and runs through Sunday, Dec. 8.

*"Hairspray, winner of the 2003 Tony Award for Best Musical, tells the story of the lovable plus-size teen Tracy Turnblad,"* a news release explains. *"She has only one desire — to dance on the popular Corny Collins Show. When that dream comes true, Tracy is transformed from social outcast to sudden star. She uses her newfound power to dethrone the reigning Teen Queen, win the affections of heartthrob Link Larkin and integrate a TV network."*

The plot, originally depicted in John Waters' 1988 non-musical film, is loosely based on Baltimore's *Buddy Deane Show*, which ran on local television from 1957 until 1964, the release continues.

Brad Wages is directing and choreographing the show, which will star local musical theater actress Alyssa Goudy in her first appearance at Venice Theatre. Wages says in the release, *"Alyssa is Tracy. Her positive energy is infectious and she can effortlessly belt out the songs to last row of the balcony."*

*"Keeping with the tradition of having a male in drag play Edna Turnblad, popular local actor Tim Fitzgerald is tackling the role of Tracy's mom,"* the release notes. *"He follows in the high-heeled footsteps of Divine, who originated the role in the 1988 movie; Harvey Fierstein, who brought Edna to Broadway; and John Travolta, who added star appeal to the 2007 musical film."*



*Alyssa Goudy as Tracy (left) and Tim Fitzgerald as Edna are excited that Tracy's newfound fame has led to an offer to endorse Mr. Pinky's plus-sized dress shop. Contributed photo by Renee McVety*

Goudy and Fitzgerald are joined by a large cast of experienced performers including Syreeta Banks as Motormouth Mabel, Dick Baker as Link Larkin, David Brown as Corny Collins, Joseph Giglia as Wilbur Turnblad and Jabriel Sheldon as Seaweed Scrubs, the release points out.

Performances are Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are on sale (\$13 to \$15 for students; \$25 to \$28 for adults) at [www.venicestage.com](http://www.venicestage.com), by contacting the box office at 488-1115 or by visiting the box office at 140 W. Tampa Ave. on the island in Venice.



## PIRATES AND PIONEERS DAY TO CELEBRATE FLORIDA HISTORY

The Historical Society of Sarasota County will turn its Annual Pioneer Day into a Viva Florida 500 calendar event, called Pirates and Pioneers Day, the organization has announced.

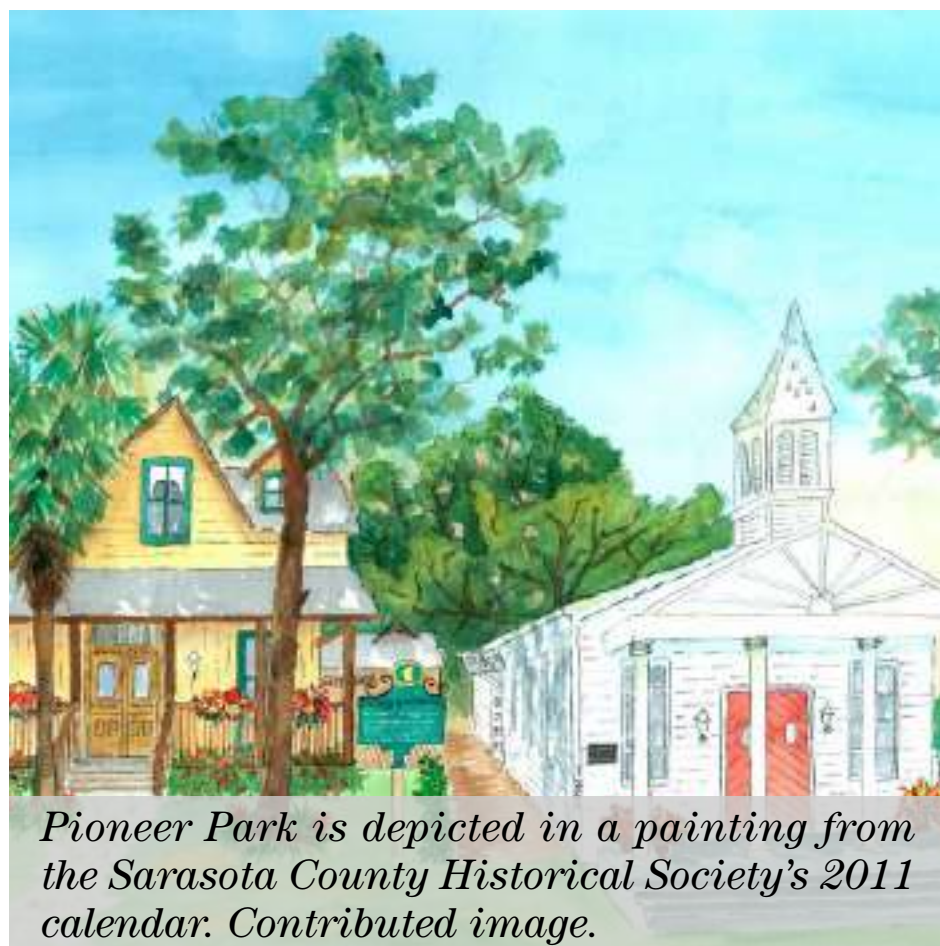
The event will be held on Saturday, Nov. 16, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Pioneer Park, located at 1260 12th St. (between the North Trail and Cocoanut Avenue) in Sarasota.

With the day geared mainly towards families, “there will be something for everyone throughout the day,” a news release points out, beginning with Sue Blue’s narrated Trolley Tour of Historic Downtown Sarasota from 10 a.m. to noon. Interested persons are encouraged to call for ticket reservations in advance: 364-9076.

Artists, craftsmen and other vendors will fill the Thieves Market with a wide array of items, the release continues. Local authors will be on hand for book signings throughout the day.

Children will be entertained and educated in the historic Crocker Memorial Church by “America’s troubadour,” Bill Schustik, and Rosemary Dilgard, the release notes. Additionally, arts and crafts projects will be pursued on the Back Porch, and the event will feature “Krisztina’s Games of Skill and Balance for the whole family.”

Members of the Sarasota chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will conduct tours of the Whitaker Pioneer Cemetery during their open house adjacent to Pioneer Park, the release adds.



*Pioneer Park is depicted in a painting from the Sarasota County Historical Society's 2011 calendar. Contributed image.*

In anticipation of our Pirates and Pioneers Day for the whole family on Saturday November 16th we invite you to come aboard to celebrate

### Pirates Eve

Friday  
November 15, 2013  
5:30pm

HSOSC  
Bidwell-Wood House  
1260 12th Street  
Pioneer Park

PIRATE GRUB AND GROG  
on the Back Porch  
Cruise our SILENT AUCTION  
on the Front Porch



### Entertainment for All

At 7:00 do not tarry or you'll miss "PIRATES, ROGUES AND BROADSIDES", a musical adventure in the Crocker Memorial Church, starring "America's Troubadour" BILL SCHUSTIK, along with Sarasota's own, SHARON SCOTT, ROB & J. DAVIS and GARY REINSTROM

### Grub for All

The historic BROADWAY BAR and Paradise Pops are providing the GRUB AND GROG!

Be sure to wear yer Pirate Costumes Mateys



\$30.00 per person  
\$25.00 per HSOSC member  
Limited Seating!  
Call early for reservations:  
941-364-9076





The Humane Society of Sarasota will have its Mobile Adoption Center on site till 2 p.m., and “pirate grub” will be available from Nealski’s Bar-B-Que, the release continues.

Admission is a donation of canned goods for the Mayors Feed the Hungry Campaign, the release points out. “Pirate or Pioneer costumes are encouraged for all.”

On the eve of the event — Friday, Nov. 15, Troubadour Bill Schustik and Friends will

perform a musical history of pirates — *Pirates, Rogues and Broadships* — at the Crocker Church beginning at 7 p.m. Schustik, who has performed for three different presidents at the White House, calls this “the adult version of the ‘Pirates’ Tales,” the release adds. Reservations are required for that event.

For more information and tickets, call the Historical Society office at 364-9076 or visit the website: [www.HSOSC.com](http://www.HSOSC.com).

## THEATRE ODYSSEY ISSUES CALL FOR 10-MINUTE PLAYS

Theatre Odyssey has announced a call for 10-minute plays for the Ninth Annual Ten-Minute Play Festival to be held this year at a new location, the Cook Theatre at the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts May 1-4.

“It’s hard to believe this is our ninth festival season,” said Dan Higgs, president of Theatre Odyssey’s board of directors, in a news release. “Our selection committee is looking forward to reading submissions and selecting the finalists that will make this the best Ten-Minute Play Festival yet!”

“The play selection process begins with qualified readers, who remain anonymous, as do the playwrights whose submissions they are evaluating,” the release points out. “An independent scoring system using a uniform matrix guides the readers in choosing the

most worthy plays for production. As many as eight plays are selected each year.”

The release notes that three highly respected judges choose the best play at each annual Ten-Minute Play Festival.

All interested playwrights should consult the Theatre Odyssey website, [www.TheatreOdyssey.org](http://www.TheatreOdyssey.org), for a complete list of rules and regulations. All submissions must be received by Jan. 15, the release continues. They should be mailed to Theatre Odyssey, PO Box 1383, Sarasota, FL 34230-1383.

Theatre Odyssey, founded in 2006 to encourage and promote the efforts of local playwrights and actors, has premiered nearly 70 plays written, directed and performed by Gulf Coast playwrights, actors and directors, the release adds.



THEATRE  
ODYSSEY

Nonprofit 501(c)(3)

photos (l-r) Solange Vieira, Tam Apasporas, Cliff Roles





## SEASON OF SCULPTURE VII TO MAKE ITS DEBUT NOV. 16

Season of Sculpture will present Season VII's *Shared Ground: Eight Artists, Eighteen Installations*, which will open Nov. 16 and continue through May.

This curated, biennial bayfront exhibition featuring 18 large-scale works “by eight highly acclaimed artists of regional, national and international renown” will be installed at Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota, adjacent to U.S. 41, a news release notes.

*Shared Ground* will feature sculptures by Heinz Aeschlimann, Hans Van de Bovenkamp, Robert Chambers, Richard Herzog, Linda Howard, Jun Kaneko, Jae-Hyo Lee and Boaz Vaadia. The curators are Fayanne Hayes and Andrew Maass, the release adds.

“Visitors will have six months to view and interact with these monumental outdoor installations in a spectacular waterfront setting,” the release adds. The exhibition will be



*Composer by Heinz Aeschlimann. Contributed photo*



free and open to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Public educational programs and docent-led tours will be offered.

A satellite exhibition of the artists' smaller works will be exhibited at the Sarasota Herald-Tribune building, located at 1741 Main St. in downtown Sarasota, from Jan. 7 through May 2014, the release points out.

For further information, visit the [website](#).

## Season of Sculpture



*Ah'av by Boaz Vaadia. Contributed photo*



*Elephant Heart by Hans Van de Bovenkamp. Contributed photo*



## 1913 ARMORY SHOW TO BE TOPIC OF PLYMOUTH HARBOR LECTURE

The 1913 Armory Show will be the focus of a lecture on Tuesday, Nov. 12, at Plymouth Harbor near St. Armands Circle, organizers have announced.

“One hundred years ago, Americans saw the first, major exhibition of modern European art in the United States,” a news release notes. The International Exhibition of Modern Art opened in New York City on Feb. 17, 1913 and became known as The Armory Show. “Fauvism, Cubism, and Dada sent them into a tailspin! However, the public sensation and

the polemical critical responses to the show represented a watershed in the history of art,” the release adds.

The Armory Show set records in attendance and in sales of art works, it notes. Within two decades, New York became the capital of the art world — “a title it still holds today,” the release says.

The complimentary presentation will be from 2:30 to 4 p.m. on Nov. 12. Plymouth Harbor is located at 700 John Ringling Blvd. in Sarasota.



*The 1913 Armory Show in New York City introduced Americans to modern European art. Contributed photo*



## HAVANA NIGHTS TO SIZZLE AT HISTORIC SPANISH POINT

Get ready to rumba the night away as Historic Spanish Point transforms into a Havana-style nightclub, on Saturday, Nov. 16. *Havana Nights and White Lights*, an evening of dining, dancing and cigar rolling will begin at 6 p.m. on the museum's White Cottage lawn, pergola and sunken Garden, a news release announces.

Proceeds of the event will benefit the museum.

From the moment guests arrive, they will be wrapped in Cuban flair, "as they have their photos taken in colorful, island-style automobiles," the release continues. "An authentic cigar roller will display this Cuban art at the cigar bar."

The release continues, "Sip a mojito or Cuba libre while munching on a selection of scrumptious hors d'oeuvres by Michael's On East and anticipating the main course — a traditional, Cuban-style roast pig. Treat your feet to the beat of the much-heralded seven-piece tropical band, Big Night Out.

"As if that weren't enough, guests will have the opportunity to bid on several exciting auction items, including a week at a luxurious condo

in Italy, a lavish home in Long Island's famous Hamptons and a spectacular North Carolina vacation home," the release notes.

A silent auction will be held for such items as fine champagne, gourmet dinners and custom-designed private events.

Tickets begin at \$150 for members of the museum and \$175 for non-members. For tickets and more information, visit the website at [www.historicspanishpoint.org](http://www.historicspanishpoint.org) or call 966-5214, Ext. 295.



*The pergola is one of the landmarks at Historic Spanish Point. Image courtesy Historic Spanish Point*

**SAVE the Date**  
Saturday November 16, 2013



Historic  
Spanish  
Point

Havana Nights and White Lights



## KEYBOARD CONVERSATIONS WITH JEFFREY SIEGEL SET FOR NOV. 18

The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee will present its second annual *Keyboard Conversations*® series with internationally acclaimed pianist Jeffrey Siegel on Nov. 18, Jan. 21 and April 1, the Federation has announced.

*Keyboard Conversations* “is a brilliantly polished concert-with-commentary format in which captivating comments precede dynamic performances of beloved piano masterpieces,” a news release points out. A Q&A concludes the concert. All concerts are at 8 p.m. at The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, located at 582 McIntosh Road in Sarasota. Tickets start at \$36 per concert.

*Popular Piano Classics* on Nov. 18 will feature “beloved gems of the piano repertoire by some of the world’s best loved composers,” including music of Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Gershwin and Rachmaninoff, the release notes.

*Bach and the Romantics* on Jan. 21 will include the “exhilarating *Chromatic Fantasy* of Bach,” followed by works of later composers he inspired — Mendelssohn, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Mozart among them, the release continues.

*Mistresses and Masterpieces* on April 1 will feature “love-inspired music by ‘significant others’” in composers’ personal lives, the release says, including works by Brahms, Schumann, Chopin and Liszt.

“This is an inspired series,” says Howard Tevlowitz, executive director of The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, in the release. “New listeners discover an informal,



Jeffrey Siegel/Contributed photo

entertaining and accessible introduction to great music. Seasoned music-lovers enjoy a deeply enriched, more focused listening experience.”

“In this robotic age, I believe the transcendent dimension music adds to our lives is more necessary than ever,” adds Siegel in the release.

Siegel has been a soloist with the world’s great orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic; London Symphony; Moscow State Symphony; and the Amsterdam, Oslo and Stockholm philharmonics, the release notes.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call 552-6304 or visit [www.jfedsrq.org/events.aspx](http://www.jfedsrq.org/events.aspx).



## DOCUMENTARY ON KENTUCKY MILITARY INSTITUTE TO BE SHOWN

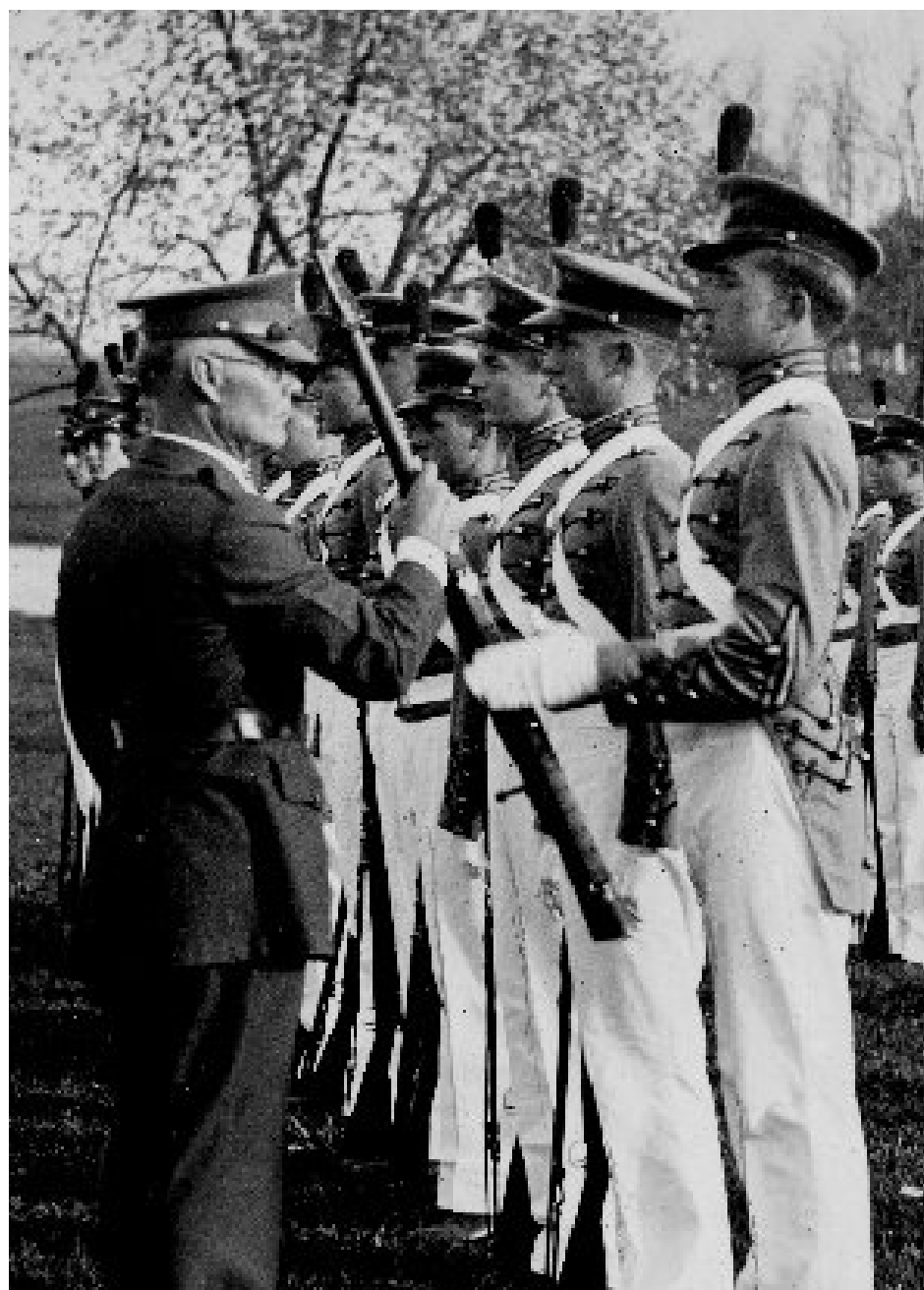
On Sunday, Nov. 17, at 7 p.m., *Character Makes the Man — The Story of the Kentucky Military Institute: 1845-1971* will premiere at Venice Theatre in Venice, followed by a Q&A session with the filmmakers and KMI alumni, the theatre has announced.

The 60-minute film is narrated by Nick Clooney; it was produced by ParkerLane LLC, in association with Kentucky Educational Television (KET), a news release notes. Tickets, which are \$20, are available through the Venice Theatre box office at 488-1115 or online at [www.venicestage.com](http://www.venicestage.com). Proceeds will benefit the collection of KMI memorabilia maintained by the Venice Museum & Archives, the release points out.

“KMI is a historical treasure that affected the lives of thousands,” said writer and producer Kiley Lane Parker in the release. “It is an institution that the alumni remember fondly, and we immediately felt that this was a story that needed to be told and one that we wanted to tell.”


He added in the release, “This is a piece that is historically relevant to the world and residents of Kentucky and Florida. History buffs and military veterans will also enjoy this story.”

The Kentucky Military Institute was founded in 1845 by Col. T.P. Allen, the release points out. Over its 126-year history, “it graduated men who became military and political leaders, famous actors, NASCAR drivers and entrepreneurs,” the release continues.



*The Kentucky Military Institute will be the subject of a documentary shown at Venice Theatre on Nov. 17. Image courtesy of Kentucky Military Institute [Facebook page](#)*

The school maintained a winter quarters in downtown Venice from 1932 until 1970. “These historical buildings are still in existence today and one is the home of the Venice Theatre,” the release notes.

“The men who graduated from KMI were all men of character. It was ingrained in them,” said George Parker Jr., director and producer, in the release. “The experience to speak with so many of the alumni during filming was incredible.” He added, “We think this is a film that surpasses generations; it’s timeless.” 





*The Church of the Redeemer is located at 222 S. Palm Ave. in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## VETERANS SUNDAY PLANNED AT CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

On Sunday, Nov. 10, the Church of the Redeemer in downtown Sarasota invites members of the community to join the parish as it honors veterans of American wars and U.S. military personnel.

As part of the day's events, Capt. Kenneth A. Niederberger, Navy special warfare officer and director of Afghanistan Operations, U.S. Special Operations Command, will speak in the church's Gillespie Hall at 10:15 a.m., a news release says. Preaching that day at the 7:30, 9, and 11 a.m. Masses will be Redeemer's

associate rector, the Rev. Richard C. Marsden, a commissioned officer with the rank of captain in the U.S. Army (1974 to 1982). Marsden served the U.S. as a helicopter pilot, flight section leader and staff officer.

Niederberger, who serves directly under Admiral William H. McRaven, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, will speak during the special Veterans Sunday observance, which will take place between the 9 and 11 a.m. worship services. Niederberger



will be introduced by Redeemer's Capt. Jim Holds, U.S. Navy (retired), "who reached out to the Special Warfare community at Special Operations Command in Tampa to locate one of our nation's finest warriors," the release notes. "Niederberger responded that it would be his "pleasure and an honor" to be a part of Redeemer's 2013 Veterans Recognition Program."

During all services that day veterans in the congregation and military personnel in service throughout the world will be acknowledged and thanked. Parishioner Brig. Gen. Charly Shugg, U.S. Air Force (retired) will present information about ways members of the congregation can assist local veterans groups; and between services, children in the congregation will be given special opportunities to meet, thank and talk with veterans.

Niederberger was born in Queens, NY, and grew up in Long Island, NY, the release continues. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis in 1990 and was designated a SEAL in 1991. "Assigned to a number of SEAL teams, he served as an element leader for a maritime mobility element and was deployed to Bosnia in support of a Joint Task Force," the release adds.

Niederberger's awards include the Silver Star, five Bronze Stars (three with Combat V), two Meritorious Service Medals, two Defense Meritorious Service medals, the Joint Service Commendation, Navy Commendation and two Navy Achievement Medals, plus several combat action and campaign ribbons, the



*Capt. Kenneth A. Niederberger is a Navy special warfare officer and director of Afghanistan Operations, U.S. Special Operations Command. Contributed photo*

release notes. He and his wife, Christine (née Morgan) Niederberger, have four children: Alex, 9; Keely, 4; Andrew, 2; and Keira Grace, eight months.

The Church of the Redeemer is located at 222 S. Palm Ave. in downtown Sarasota. Call 955.4263 for more information or visit [redeemersarasota.com](http://redeemersarasota.com).



## SISTERHOOD MITZVAH KNITTING GROUP CONTINUES NOV. 12

Monthly gatherings of Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood's Mitzvah Knitting Group will begin again on Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 10 a.m. at Temple Emanu-El, located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota.

"Welcoming all knitters and crocheters, the Mitzvah Knitting Group enables attendees to use their talents to brighten the lives of others while making new friends," a news release explains. Participants socialize together while crafting blankets, caps and booties for babies; these handmade creations are donated to

local organizations serving needy families and expectant mothers, the release adds.

Mitzvah Knitting Group participants are asked to bring their own knitting needles or crochet hooks and — if desired — favorite patterns and yarn. Patterns and yarn will also be provided, the release notes.

The Mitzvah Knitting Group will meet the second Tuesday of each month. For more information or to receive regular reminders about these gatherings, call 379-1997.



*Temple Emanu-El Mitzvah Knitting Group members Margie Rosenthal and Joan Zaroff work on their new projects. Contributed photo*



## VETERANS SHABBAT WILL RETURN TO TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Temple Emanu-El “is proud to announce its fourth annual Veterans Shabbat honoring Jewish servicemen and servicewomen,” a news release says.

In conjunction with Veterans Day, Veterans Shabbat will be held on Friday evening, Nov. 15, at 7:30 p.m. in the Temple sanctuary, the release adds.

Among the service’s special features will be the reading of a mayoral proclamation officially declaring Nov. 15 as Veterans Shabbat

and a blessing offered to all veterans by Rabbi Brenner J. Glickman, the release continues.

Jewish veterans from the entire Sarasota-Manatee community are cordially invited to be recognized during Veterans Shabbat; those who served in the Israel Defense Forces are also welcome. Members of the community are warmly invited to attend.

Temple Emanu-El is located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota. For more information about Veterans Shabbat, contact Ethel Gross at 388-7899.



*Jewish veterans will be recognized once again at Temple Emanu-El's fourth annual Veterans Shabbat. Contributed photo*



## GIRLS CHOIR AND STRING QUARTET TO HIGHLIGHT YOUTH EVENSONG

The Church of the Redeemer invites the public to a special Solemn Evensong on Sunday, Nov. 17, at 5:15 p.m., honoring and celebrating Sarasota's young people.

The Evensong will feature a collaborative performance with Redeemer's Canterbury Girls choir and a string quartet composed of Sarasota Youth Philharmonic members. The Anthem will be Handel's *And the Glory of the*

*Lord*; the Service will be Archer's *Berkshire Service in d*. Evensong performances are always complimentary and open to the public, a news release points out.

The church is located at 222 S. Palm Ave. in downtown Sarasota.

"Youth choirs throughout our community provide the opportunity for young people to receive not just a religious education, but



Members of the Canterbury Girls Choir gather in front of the Church of the Redeemer: (From left, seated, front row) Merrill Garlington, Ivy Morton, Michaela Porcelli, Christina Brush; (kneeling, middle row) Katherine Koach; (standing, back row) Jennifer Porcelli, Elinor Garlington, Samantha Wulfsohn, Choirmaster/Organist Ann Stephenson-Moe, Carroll Forbes and Caroline Devitt. Contributed photo




a broad exposure to choral literature, language and context for a lifelong appreciation of and involvement in history and art,” said Redeemer Organist/Choirmaster Dr. Ann Stephenson-Moe in the release. “Evensong is an Anglican tradition originating in the 16th century and is enjoyed by many music lovers regardless of their religious affiliation. Our annual Youth Evensong is Redeemer’s expression of profound gratitude for the youth of our parish and community, as well as for the blessings of music.”

Redeemer’s all-girls Canterbury choir includes students from Sarasota middle and high schools as well as St. Stephen’s Episcopal School in Bradenton, the release notes. “In addition to learning to read music,

the Canterbury girls become acquainted with classical choral literature and learn to sing in Latin, French, Spanish, German and Russian,” the release adds. Throughout the year, during Sunday morning Masses at Redeemer, “this special choir sings anthems specifically written for female voices,” the release says.

The Youth Philharmonic comprises “outstanding players between the ages of 13 and 19 who rehearse with the full Sarasota Orchestra and work with professional coaches and private teachers,” the release continues. “The ensemble is dedicated to performing the finest works in the full symphonic repertoire.”

For more information, visit [redeemersarasota.org](http://redeemersarasota.org) or call 955-4263. 



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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**08****NOVEMBER**

**Jazz Club of Sarasota presents *Jazz at Two*, featuring the Patricia Dean Trio**

Nov. 8, 2 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota. Tickets: \$7 (\$12 for non-members). Information: 366-1552 or [JazzClubSarasota.org](http://JazzClubSarasota.org).

**08+****NOVEMBER**

**FSU/Asolo Conservatory presents *The School for Lies***

Through Nov. 17; times vary. FSU Center for the Performing Arts, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Admission: \$27 to 29. Information: 351-8000 or [AsoloRep.org](http://AsoloRep.org).

**08+****NOVEMBER**

**Dabbert Gallery presents *Season of Color***

Through Nov. 29, 76 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Free admission. Information: 955-1315 or [DabbertGallery.com](http://DabbertGallery.com).

**15****NOVEMBER**

**Planned Parenthood presents *High Tide at High Noon***

Nov. 15, noon. Sarasota Yacht Club, 1100 John Ringling Blvd. Tickets: \$65. Information: 365-3913, Ext. 1024, or [MyPlannedParenthood.org](http://MyPlannedParenthood.org).

**15****NOVEMBER**

**Jazz Club of Sarasota presents *Jazz at Two*, featuring Tony Castellano Jr.**

Nov. 15, 2 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota. Tickets: \$7 (\$12 for non-members). Information: 366-1552 or [JazzClubSarasota.org](http://JazzClubSarasota.org).

**15+****NOVEMBER**

**Florida Studio Theatre presents *Monty Python's Spamalot***

Nov. 15 through Jan. 5; times vary. Gompertz Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$18 to 49. Information: 366-9000 or [FloridaStudioTheatre.org](http://FloridaStudioTheatre.org).

**16+****NOVEMBER**

**Artist Series Concerts presents *Crossover* with the Rastrelli Cello Quartet**

Nov. 16 & 17, 7:30 p.m. Historic Asolo Theater, 5401 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota. Tickets: \$25 to 45. Information: 306-1202 or [ArtistSeriesConcerts.org](http://ArtistSeriesConcerts.org).

## YOUR LIFESTYLE GUIDE TO THE SUNCOAST



# BLASTS FROM THE PAST IN THE PRESENT



## 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.*