

THE SARASOTA

Vol. 2, No. 21 — February 7, 2014

News Leader

FIRST, CODE VIOLATIONS; NOW RENTAL FRAUD

CHARTER BACKERS BAIL

HOTEL VOTE

Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.

Inside

GET TO KNOW US



swipe:
flip pages left or right



Single Tap:
show/hide on-screen controls



Double Tap:
zoom-in or zoom-out on a single page



Pinch: (Not supported on some Android devices)
Zoom-in or zoom-out on a single page



Rotate: (Not supported on some Android devices)
View different layouts for landscape/portrait



Move:
When zoomed-in, move around the page

Toolbar Options



Text Mode



Search by keywords



Open/close the mini carousel of pages



View the table of contents



View the archives of this publication



Email the current page to a friend



Social bookmark the current page

A.K.A. HELP

SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor and Publisher

Rachel@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

Cooper@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Stan Zimmerman

City Editor

Stan@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Roger Drouin

County Editor

Roger@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Norman Schimmel

Staff Photographer

NSchimmel@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Fran Palmeri

Contributing Writer

FPalmeri@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Harriet Cuthbert

Contributing Writer

HCuthbert@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Elinor Rogosin

A&E Writer

ERogosin@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

John Riley

Editorial Cartoonist

Riley@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Vicki Chatley

Copy Editor

Vicki@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Letters To the Editor

Letters@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Cleve Posey

Production Manager / Graphic Designer

Cleve@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Robert S. Hackney

Opinion Editor / General Manager

Robert@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Advertising Sales

Sales@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Subscription Services

Subs@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Press Releases & News Tips

News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com



Find us on:
facebook®



Welcome

A looming deal for prime property in downtown Sarasota, digging into the details of the latest city charter proposal and a review of some of the *bons mots*, if you will, of a former Republican congressman headed to town as a guest of the local party: That's just a glimpse of this week's lineup.

And while I normally am loathe to put myself in the spotlight, I could not help but think this week of much beloved *Miami Herald* columnist and author Carl Hiaasen. I believe he has talked on more than a few occasions about the vast fodder of material Florida serves up to inspire his literary creations — words along the lines of “You can't make this stuff up.” That is how I felt when I was working on my big story for this week.

Regular readers know I began writing last summer about a Sarasota chiropractor who became the object of Sarasota County legal action over a house he rents to visitors on Siesta Key. It is a long and complicated story. I believe Hiaasen could not help but love the twists and turns in it, including the latest ones, which involve a Sheriff's Office investigation into rental fraud. If we had twice the number of staff, it is doubtful we could uncover all the facets of this tale.

On the lighter side, not only do we have Associate Editor Cooper Levey-Baker's aforementioned article on that upcoming Republican event, but also a lovely review of Sarasota Ballet's latest program by Elinor Rogosin and Norman Schimmel's survey of “Moving Day” for the Baltimore Orioles.

Enjoy!

Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor and Publisher





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



NEWS & COMMENTARY

FIRST, CODE VIOLATIONS; NOW RENTAL FRAUD

8

People who rented a south Siesta Key house that has been the focus of a county lawsuit say the owner never told them he reduced the number of bedrooms from 12 to five — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

CHARTER BACKERS BAIL

15

Changes are sought in the list of names supporting a new city charter, and questions remain about whether state action is needed on the charter plan itself — *Stan Zimmerman*

HOTEL VOTE

21

The County Commission is expected to decide Feb. 12 on a U.S. 301/Main Street hotel proposal — *Roger Drouin*

TAKING IT TO THE COURTS

26

Bob's Boathouse has asked for an emergency court hearing to keep its doors open while the county pursues its own legal steps — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

A RELOCATION UNDER CONSIDERATION

35

County leaders and staff are weighing whether to move the downtown Sarasota SCAT station to a new site on Ringling Boulevard — *Roger Drouin*

PAYING FOR PARKING

41

City staff suggests ways to cover the State Street garage hole — *Stan Zimmerman*

A LOCAL \$50 MILLION BUSINESS

46

The Sarasota Police Department makes a 'historic' bust — *Stan Zimmerman*

THE 'ZERO-DISCHARGE ZONE'

50

The City of Sarasota is approaching a water and sewer system milestone — *Stan Zimmerman*



PHOTO CREDITS

Front cover: *Tangled Roots* - Robert Hackney

Sarasota Leisure: *A Stormy Beach* - Rachel Brown Hackney



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



PAY UP

54

Airbnb's popularity has exploded, and the Tax Collector's Office is watching closely — *Cooper Levey-Baker*

ANALYSIS: BEST WEEKS EVER

56

On the eve of his Sarasota appearance, a look back at some of Rep. Allen West's greatest hits — *Cooper Levey-Baker*

A THIRD VOICE

59

The Siesta Key Village Association concurs with two other island organizations in opposing the dredging of Big Pass, based on current information — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

A LOT OF PROGRESS

64

A committee's revised draft of the Siesta zoning ordinance governing outdoor displays nears its completion and then reviews by island groups — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

THE OTHER RENOURISHMENT PROJECT

68

The county is close to submitting its paperwork to the state for the upcoming \$11 million undertaking on southern Siesta Key — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

NEWS BRIEFS

72

CRIME BLOTTER

86

OPINION

EDITORIAL

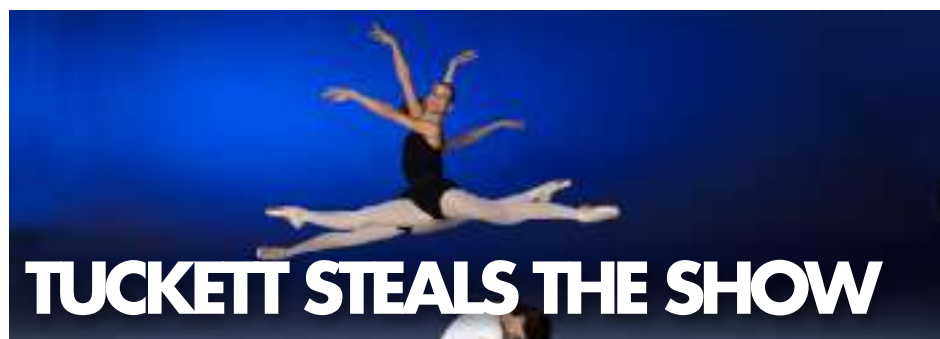
92

Sheriff Tom Knight delivers positive results

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

94

Reader suggests a different method of fracking — *Pete Theisen*



Click Any [Headline](#) To Go Directly To That Article



SARASOTA LEISURE

TUCKETT STEALS THE SHOW

A premiere by a British choreographer proves its place amid works by Balanchine and Ashton
— *Elinor Rogosin*

96

SURE SIGN SPRING IS NIGH

The Orioles mark Moving Day, with the 2014 Spring Training home opener just weeks away
— *Staff Reports*

103

SIESTA SEEN

Bay Island seawall work is mired in a legal morass; the streetlight issue finally may be resolved; and the Sheriff's Office is asking for help in identifying an island burglary suspect — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

107

A&E BRIEFS

113

RELIGION BRIEFS

130

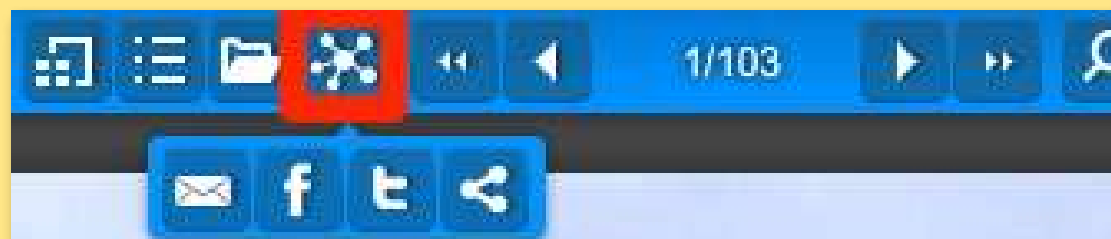
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

134

SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS

135

QUICK TIP



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

FIRST, CODE VIOLATIONS; NOW RENTAL FRAUD



To a person standing on the street, the house at 6537 Sabal Drive appeared no different on Dec. 3 than it did more than four months earlier, when the downstairs still had multiple bedrooms. File photo

PEOPLE WHO RENTED A SOUTH SIESTA KEY HOUSE THAT HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF A COUNTY LAWSUIT SAY THE OWNER NEVER TOLD THEM HE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF BEDROOMS FROM 12 TO FIVE

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

After reviewing information provided by *The Sarasota News Leader*, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has begun an investigation into whether fraud was perpetrated upon people who rented the same [Sabal Drive house](#) on Siesta Key that remains the focus of county legal action over previous building code violations.

Two people have contacted the *News Leader* in recent

weeks to say they rented the house with the understanding that it had about twice as many bedrooms as they later discovered it contained and that they were unable to get refunds.

“*Luckily I was able to find another property to accommodate all of us but it was \$9,600!!! I am so sick about this. I don't know where to turn but I want to get the story out there.*”

Sharon Thibodeau
Michigan

Late last summer, Sarasota chiropractor Dr. Craig Siegel — the purported owner of the house — hired a Bradenton firm to tear out construction in the lower level of the house to bring it back

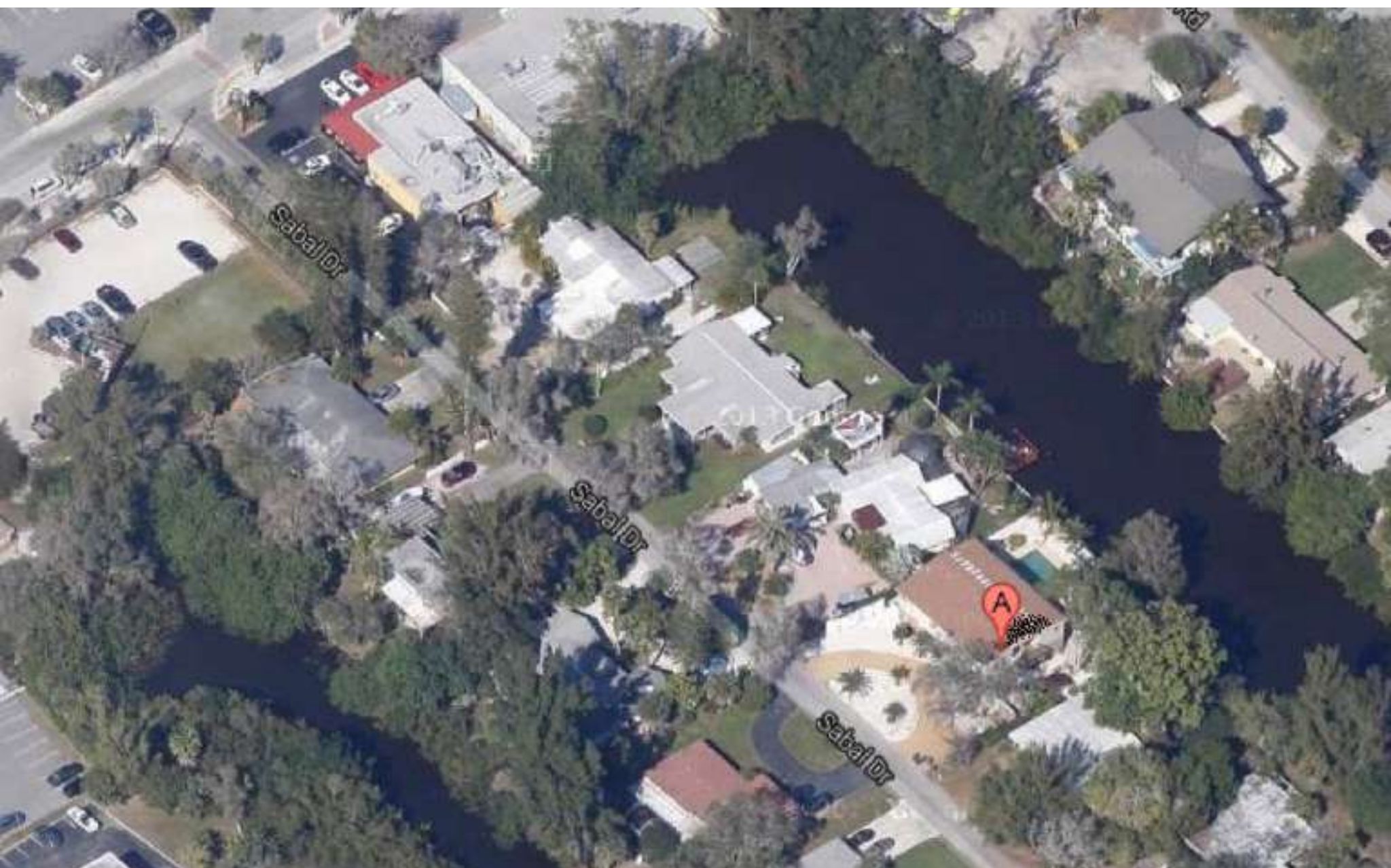
into compliance with the Sarasota County Building Code, including regulations regarding construction in a flood zone, county records showed.

In November 2012, when Julie Miller Jones of Arden Hills, MN, and members of her family walked into the house, which they had rented, Jones was alarmed by what she considered to be serious safety violations, according to county documents. In a formal statement prepared for Sarasota County Fire Safety Inspector Katelyn Qualey, Jones wrote, “None of the six rooms in the basement, billed as bedrooms, had windows, egress or sprinkler systems. For the entire space, there was only one door for egress and a plate glass window in the ‘kitchen’ which would need to

be broken in the event of a fire blocking the other door.”

When Jones invited Qualey into the house on Nov. 7, 2012, Qualey noted in a report that she saw “several areas of concern related to safety — improper exits, TVs hung on walls with wire ...”

The County Commission next week will hear an update on the July 2013 lawsuit the Office of the County Attorney filed against Siesta Resorts LLC — of which Siegel has been represented as the trustee — to force it to comply with the county building regulations, county spokesman Curt Preisser told the *News Leader* on Feb. 5. As of late December, no formal resolution had been announced regarding tens of thousands of dollars in



An aerial photo shows the Sabal Drive house on the southern part of Siesta Key. Image from Google Maps

liens Siesta Resorts owed the county for the period of time the house was in violation of the codes.

The *News Leader* has been unable to reach Siegel for comment.

RENTAL WOES

On Jan. 23, Sharon Thibodeau, a Michigan resident, emailed this reporter to say she had found *News Leader* articles in an online search about the Sabal Drive house. In subsequent correspondence, she included a timeline she had composed regarding her and her family's experience with Siegel.

In December 2012, she and her husband, Ken, began corresponding via email with Siegel regarding what Siegel represented as a 12-bedroom house on Siesta Key. "I saw his rental property both on [Vacation Rentals By Owner](#) and [Trip Advisor](#), which led us to his website, siestaresorts.com," Sharon wrote in the timeline. (The *News Leader* this week was unable to find that website, though this reporter found a YouTube link showing scenes of the 6537 Sabal Drive house: [youtube.com/watch?v=ELFcQMIAum8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELFcQMIAum8). The website says the video was posted by Craig Richard on Feb. 14, 2012. Siegel's middle name is Richard.)



In mid-July 2013, a number of cars were parked outside the house at 6537 Sabal Drive. File photo

deposit check and rental contract in the mail today.”

Sharon and Ken came to Florida in March 2013 to visit her parents, so they also made arrangements to tour the house. Again, it was just as described in the advertisements, she wrote in the timeline.

On Jan. 10 of this year, they emailed Siegel to ask if they could check into the property at 1 p.m. instead of 3 p.m. on March 8. He responded on Jan. 19 “that he had unfortunate news,” that the lower level of the home could no longer be rented. “He stated that the upper level could still be used (5 bedrooms, 2 baths). He also stated that due to ongoing litigation he could not tell us what happened. He also stated that he COULD NOT REFUND OUR MONEY. He said he could issue us a credit for a future stay,” Sharon’s timeline continued.

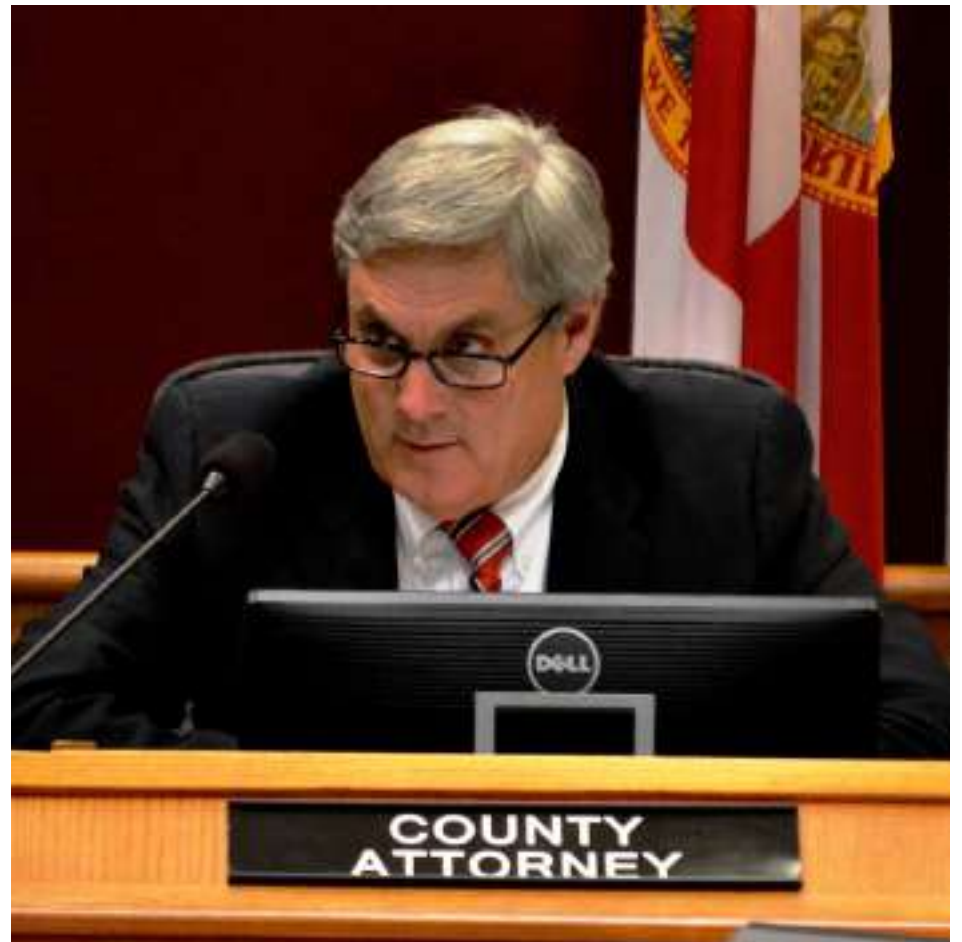
On Jan. 21, the timeline says, Sharon spoke on the phone with Siegel, who offered to “bring in lots of air mattresses for us to use.”

After the Thibodeaus agreed on Jan. 22 that that was unacceptable, they notified Siegel by email and demanded a refund of their money, the timeline says.

“On January 28, 2014 we had an attorney contact Dr. Craig Siegel,” the timeline continues. “Siegel told the attorney that he should

“I had to try to scramble to find places for people to stay. [This] has been a big nightmare.

Greg Mart
Iowa



Sarasota County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh is expected to bring up the Sabal House saga during a County Commission meeting next week. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Google [Siegel’s] name to see how many lawsuits were pending against him and ‘what’s one more.’”

After Sharon began researching the house’s address online, she wrote this reporter in a Jan. 23 email, “I saw that he was notified in November of 2012 that he could not occupy the lower level. And yet, he took my money in January 2013 after showing my parents the property and both levels.”

She added in her Jan. 23 email to the *News Leader*, “Luckily I was able to find another property to accommodate all of us but it was \$9,600!!! I am so sick about this. I don’t know where to turn but I want to get the story out there.”

On Jan. 21, this reporter received an email from Iowa resident Greg Mart, who wrote that he and his fiancée had rented the Sabal Drive

house for their wedding, adding that they considered the event ruined because Siegel did not let them know well ahead of time about the reduction in the number of bedrooms and bathrooms. Two weeks before the wedding, Mart said in his email, “I had to try to scramble to find places for people to stay. [This] has been a big nightmare ...”

Fortunately, Mart added, some people in the wedding party were able to stay in the house, “so [we were] only out about half the money. ... [W]e rented a couple other places and had no problems.”

The *News Leader* provided the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office with copies of email correspondence from Sharon and Ken Thibodeau and Greg Mart, with their permission.

On Feb. 4, Wendy Rose, community affairs manager for the Sheriff’s Office, told the *News Leader* a detective had confirmed for her that “we are investigating complaints from multiple [fraud] victims at this time.”

WHO IS CRAIG SIEGEL?

When the *News Leader* began reporting on the 6537 Sabal Drive house problems in July 2013, this reporter found Siegel listed as a practitioner at State Street Spine, located at 1379 Mcansh St. in Sarasota.

Each time this reporter called that practice this week, a recording said Siegel’s voice mailbox was full. The recording offered no other means to leave a message.

According to a Feb. 5 check of Florida health-care licenses, Siegel’s address is 1537 State St.; his license, which is current through March 31, 2014, was issued on Feb. 13, 1998.


A check of the Division of Corporations records on the Florida Department of State’s website indicates Siegel has been renting property for more than a decade. The most current company with which he is associated, Siesta Vacations Inc., lists 6537 Sabal Drive, Sarasota, as its principal address. The registered agent for Siesta Vacations is Siesta Resorts LLC. While Marni Larkin of Sarasota is listed as the owner, “C Siegel” is listed as the vice president. The address for Siegel also is listed as 6537 Sabal Drive, Sarasota.

The 2013 annual report for Siesta Vacations lists the same information. However, the 2012 and 2011 annual reports list Glen R. Lansky, Esq., of Brandon as the registered agent for Siesta Vacations LLC. Susan Siegel is named as the owner, and “C Siegel” of 6537 Sabal Drive is listed as the vice president.

In the 2010 annual report, Siegel is listed as the CEO with the address of 5174 Sandy Cove Ave., Sarasota, while Christopher Woods of Los Angeles is named as the vice president.

A year earlier, the report for Siesta Vacations listed Siegel as the owner and Lansky as the registered agent.

In 2008, the business was listed as Craig Siegel, P.A. Dr. Craig Siegel was listed as the owner with the Sarasota address of 5174 Sandy Cove Ave. on Siesta Key. However, Glen R. Lansky still was named as the registered agent. In May 2008, records show, Siegel changed the company name to Siesta Vacations Inc.

The first year an annual report shows up for Siegel is in 2001. At that time, he listed 5700 Midnight Pass Road as his address, but Glen Lansky still was the registered agent. 

Herrmann's Royal Lipizzan Stallions

Witness the beauty and grace of the Original Lipizzan Stallions of Austria.
See the rare and beautiful "Airs Above the Ground,"
as seen in Walt Disney's "Miracle of the White Stallions"

Rehearsal performances Thursday thru Saturday, thru May 3rd
(Thur. & Fri. at 3pm; Sat. at 10am; Call to reserve groups of 15 or more)

Weddings • Events & Clinics • Riding Lessons • Breeding



[Click To Watch The Video](#)



[Click For Interactive Map](#)

(941) 322-1501

32755 Singletary Road • Myakka City, Florida 34251
www.hlipizzans.com



CHARTER BACKERS BAIL

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

CHANGES ARE SOUGHT IN THE LIST OF NAMES SUPPORTING A NEW CITY CHARTER, AND QUESTIONS REMAIN ABOUT WHETHER STATE ACTION IS NEEDED ON THE CHARTER PLAN ITSELF

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

A list of people who support a change in the Sarasota City Charter to create an elected, managerial mayor is proving as controversial as the proposal itself. At least one person has been removed and another is asking to be removed from the list. Meanwhile, the Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations (CCNA) is suggesting the list is misleading and asking for changes.

The proposal in various forms has been put before city voters three times in the past, and it has been shot down each time. The ideological father of this fourth attempt is Sarasota City Commissioner Paul Caragiulo, who, on

July 15, 2012, wrote a letter to his colleagues asking for their support to put the issue on the ballot.

The City Commission has the power to put items up for referendum, including charter changes. Caragiulo's colleague at the time, Commissioner Terry Turner, dubbed the proposal the plan for "the imperial mayor" and urged that idea be killed. It was, by 3-2 vote with Caragiulo and then-Mayor Suzanne Atwell in the minority.

But the idea did not die. Instead, it was referred to Robert Martineau of Nokomis, a

MAYOR'S PROCLAMATION
NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION

A special election is hereby called to be held in the City of Sarasota, Florida, on Monday, the 5th day of November, A. D. 1945, for the purpose of voting on whether to ratify or reject Chapter 23529 of the Laws of Florida, Acts of 1945, which act provides, among other things, for the abolishment of the present municipal government of the City of Sarasota, Florida, and the creation, establishment and organization of a municipality with a "Commission-Manager Plan" form of government, which is more particularly set out in said act.

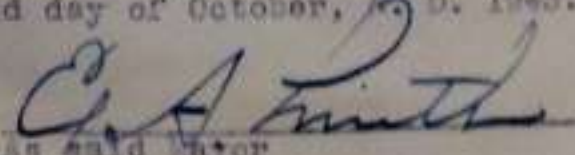
At said election, the entire City of Sarasota, Florida, shall constitute one election precinct, and the ^{F.I.A.B.} ~~First~~ Station on West Ninth Street, Sarasota, Florida, is hereby designated as the polling place of said election, and there shall be two voting booths at said polling place, one of said booths being designated as "A to L", and one of said booths being designated as "M to Z", and the polls on said election day shall be open at 7:00 A. M. Eastern Standard Time, and shall close at 7:00 o'clock P. M. Eastern Standard Time on the day of said election.

I hereby appoint the following as election officials to conduct said election: for booth "A to L", I hereby appoint E. A. Burt, as clerk, Nina B. Robinson, Jack Keer, and F. A. Campbell, as inspectors, and M. E. Bundy, as officer, and for booth "M to Z", I hereby appoint B. M. Williamson, as clerk, Bonnie A. Knight, Mary Scott and Claude Ginn, as inspectors, and John M. Richardson, as officer.

This proclamation shall be published in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Sarasota, Florida, one time not less than thirty days prior to the date of said election.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand as Mayor of Sarasota, Florida, on this the 2nd day of October, A. D. 1945.

Attest:


As said Mayor


As City Clerk

From the city's archives, this is the 'Mayor's Proclamation' for a referendum on the city's 1945 charter, which established the city-manager form of government by a vote of 1,499 in favor and 405 against. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

law professor emeritus from Cincinnati. He produced a document called a “Revised City Charter,” but that is not what appears on the backers’ website (itstimesarasota.com). On the website is a document simply called “City of Sarasota Charter.” Also on the website is a list of people who back the proposed charter change. At one point, Caragiulo’s name was there, but it is missing now.

Somebody else whose name is there but who requested it be removed is John Moran, the operations manager for the Downtown Improvement District. While the city has no local version of the federal Hatch Act, which prevents federal employees from engaging in electioneering activity, the practice is frowned upon locally. Even when a charter referendum could have dramatically changed the responsibilities of the Office of the City Auditor and



City Commissioner Paul Caragiulo is one of the supporters of the latest effort to change the city charter. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Clerk in 2012, employees of the clerk were noticeably absent from electioneering.

Moran has asked that his name be removed from the list, but by press time, it remained there. Nonetheless, his affiliation has been changed to “downtown roundtable.”

Meanwhile, the CCNA has voted — with only one contrary voice — to ask the webmaster for the charter change group to delete any mention of “neighborhood association” from the names on the list. The list now contains a disclaimer saying, “Note: individuals present were not representing organizations in an official capacity.” What they were “present” for is not.

At the CCNA meeting on Feb. 1, Kate Lowman made a motion to send a letter to It’s Time Sarasota, the group backing the new charter:

“The letter should say the neighborhoods have not taken a position and ask their names not be used on their website and in their documents.”

The motion passed with one opposing vote — from Linda Holland, chairwoman of the Gillespie Park Neighborhood Association and chairwoman of It’s Time Sarasota.

“We all have a different idea on this,” Holland told the other CCNA members. “If you’d like to send a letter, I’ll be more than happy to take your concerns back to our committee.”

LEGISLATIVE ACTION REQUIRED?

A charter is a grant of home-rule powers by the State of Florida. All cities have charters, and 16 of the 67 counties in the state have



Linda Holland is chairwoman of It's Time Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel

“home-rule charters.” The other counties are considered arms of state government.

Charters establish forms of government and delineate the various powers, duties and responsibilities. However, charters are not eternal. Charters can be revoked or replaced by the Legislature. Revocation is very rare, but replacement is not. Sarasota’s charter was replaced by the legislature in 1945, and then the new document was ratified by city voters. It created the current city-manager form of government Caragiulo, Holland and It’s Time Sarasota want to abolish.

The Legislature in 1973 revoked the 1945 charter and granted a new one, subsequently approved by city voters. And in 1996, yet another charter was approved. All retained the city-manager form of government. In between, the voters have approved and disapproved several proposals to amend the charter. For example, they have set more stringent rules on campaign donations in city races.

The difference between “amended” and “new” can have important consequences. Amendments can be put on the ballot either by the City Commission or by a petition drive that gathers the signatures of 10 percent of the city’s registered voters (today that number is about 3,500).

But a new charter — and that is what seems to appear on the It’s Time Sarasota website — must first be approved by a special act of the Legislature, if history is any guide. At what point a host of amendments create a “new” charter may be an issue for the courts, if, indeed, prior legislative approval is required.

In other words, does a proposal voted down three times in the past now need legislative


approval before local voters can see it again? What does the ballot language look like for an entirely new charter?

The questions are more than academic because once people start signing petitions, the proposal is frozen in time. Any changes would require a new petition drive. That means the “proposal” needs to be right the first time.

It’s Time Sarasota certainly has the horsepower to answer these questions. Instead of registering its political action committee with the City Auditor and Clerk’s Office in City Hall, it has retained the Ramba Consulting Group in Tallahassee as its registered agent. Thus, its financial disclosure forms will be filed in Tallahassee. None has been filed yet.

David Ramba, a principal in the group, opened his consultancy in 2009. The Florida Bar Association at that time reported, “A substantial portion of Ramba’s practice is devoted towards legislative representation and matters before state agencies.”

In an interview last year with *The Florida Current*, he identified his current clients as Internet sweepstakes cafés and special taxing districts. Co-located at his 120 S. Monroe St. address in Tallahassee is the Ramba Law Group. Among the law firm’s clients are the Nature Coast Conservative Coalition and Veterans for Conservative Principles. Former clients include Benderson Development and Neal Communities.

If local legislation is needed to replace the current city charter with a new one, It’s Time Sarasota needs to move fast because the legislative session begins next month. 

7th ANNUAL BMW of Sarasota

chillounge night®

the ultimate outdoor lounge party

MARCH 8th, 2014

**NEW VENUE!
AT WESTFIELD SOUTHGATE**

**PURCHASE TICKETS AT CHILLOUNGENIGHT.COM
NEW RESERVED SEATING OPTIONS AVAILABLE**



**FULL STAGE WITH CATWALK
DANCE FLOOR & DJs
LIVE BANDS
FASHION SHOW
VALET PARKING
FINE DINING
BEVERAGE SERVICE
SAMBA PARADE**

PRESENTED BY:

Westfield
Southgate

BENEFITING:

**girls
inc.®**

**FIREWORKS
PRESENTED BY:**



**DANIEL
MATUSIAK**
ACTION REALTY OF SARASOTA

Celebrity **X** Cruises®

PERONI





The county property at 20 N. Washington Blvd. in downtown Sarasota has served as a parking lot for people with business in the adjacent courthouses. Photo by Norman Schimmel

THE COUNTY COMMISSION IS EXPECTED TO DECIDE FEB. 12 ON A U.S. 301/MAIN STREET HOTEL PROPOSAL

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

The Sarasota County commissioners are scheduled to vote on a developer's hotel proposal on Wednesday, Feb. 12.

If the board approves the plans, a multi-story structure could go up on a visible acre at the northeast corner of U.S. 301 and Main Street in downtown Sarasota.

Developer Rod Connelly's venture, SDH Partners LLC, was chosen for the project in October after the county advertised an Invitation to

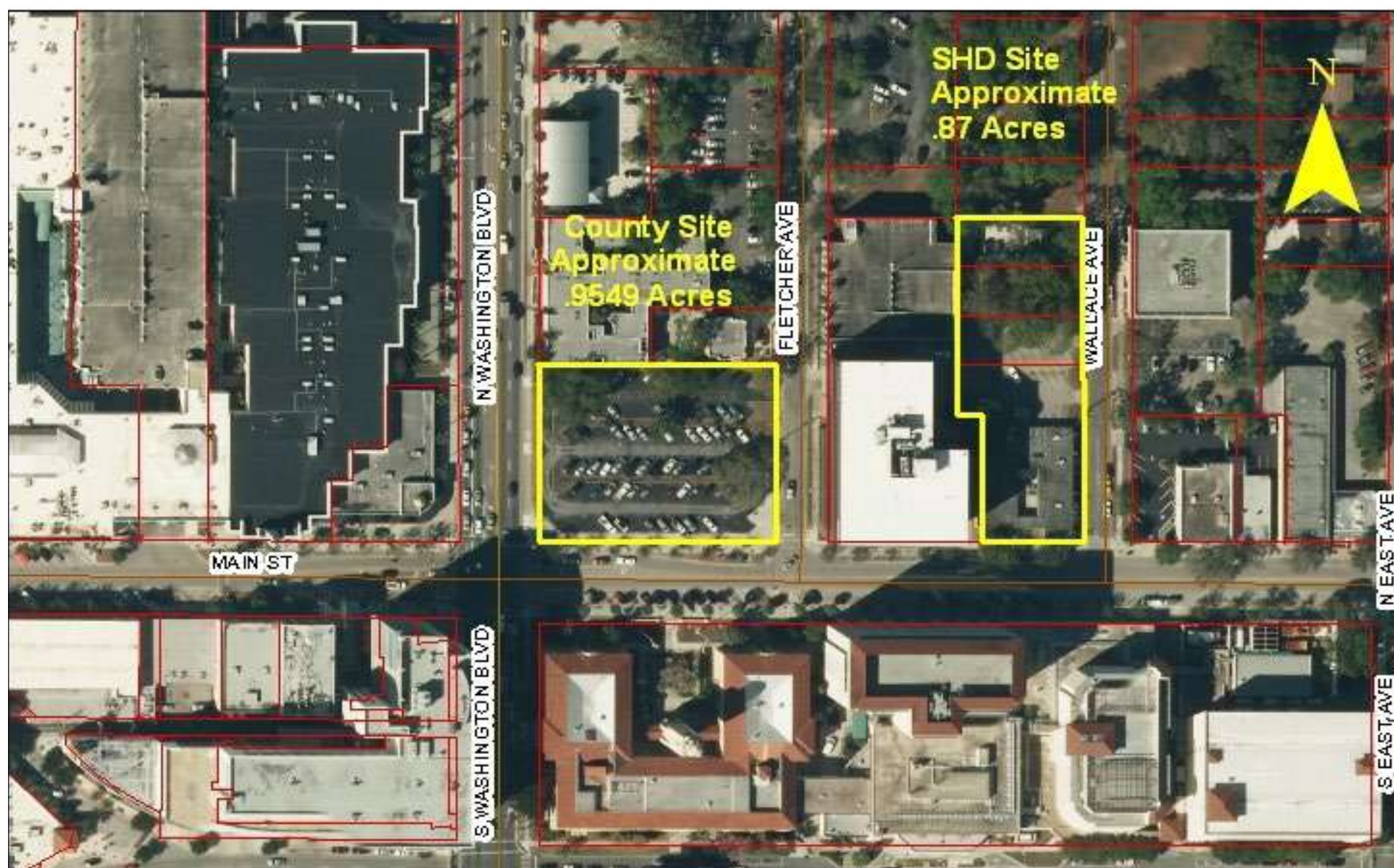
Negotiate for the parcel, which the county owns.

Connelly's project won out over a second proposal by developer Wayne Ruben's WMR Consulting, which called for the construction of a 10,000-square-foot headquarters for a national financial institution and 2,500 square feet of adjacent commercial space.

The most recent version of Connelly's plans was laid out in a contract that is expected to be signed

“*It's an important piece of property.*”

Christine Robinson
Vice Chairwoman
Sarasota County Commission



An aerial map shows the location and details about the proposed hotel site in downtown Sarasota. Image courtesy Sarasota County

before Feb. 12, according to county staff. In this concept, Connelly highlights a “9-to-10-story” hotel project at 20 N. Washington Blvd.

The tower would feature a 115,000-square-foot, 150-room Kimpton Hotel; lobby bar; terrace bar; swimming pool; 120-seat, full-service restaurant; and 6,000 square feet of meeting space.

Under Connelly’s initial proposal, presented at the Oct. 23, 2013 County Commission meeting, the developer said he would transfer to the county a separate parcel, located at 2051 Main St., to replace the parking spaces that will be eliminated by the hotel project. In addition to offering that separate lot, SHD Partners said it would pay the county \$662,567, due at closing.

That offer was expected to change. Recent discussions with the developer indicate he is now offering the county more money at closing, said Lin Kurant, the county’s real estate services manager. “The offering price went up,” noted Kurant. However, because the developer had not yet signed a contract, those figures had not been made public as of press time on Feb. 7.

The board will be presented with all the facets of the new proposal at Wednesday’s meeting, said county spokesman Curt Preisser.

SUPPORT AND SOME CONCERN

During the October meeting, then-Vice Chairman Charles Hines said he favored a hotel over Ruben’s proposal for a financial institution.



The parcel at 20 N. Washington Blvd. has a view of the Synovus Bank building on the southwest corner of the intersection. Photo by Norman Schimmel

"I think that is the best use for that property for the long term," Hines noted at the time. "What we need in my opinion is another hotel that can keep downtown going in its revitalization."

Commissioner Joe Barbetta has long supported development of the property that now serves as a county parking lot, primarily for people with business in the adjacent courthouses.

As of early this week, commissioners had not yet seen the latest version of Connelly's proposal. But Commissioner Christine Robinson said she was interested in learning the details.

"It's an important piece of property," Robinson said Wednesday.

Connelly has local development experience. His firm Civix built Midnight Cove I & II on Siesta Key, the Center Pointe Office Building on Main Street and MedEplex in Haines City.

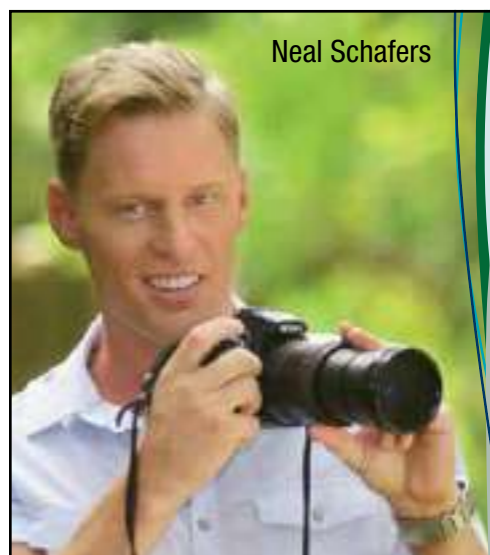
Nonetheless, there has been some concern about the SDH Partners' proposal to replace parking lost at U.S. 301 and Main Street with new surface parking at 2051 Main St.

During the October meeting, Commissioner Nora Patterson voiced concern that that would result in the demolition of a Sarasota School of Architecture building located at 2051 Main St.

According to the Sarasota Architectural Foundation, the 2051 Main St. building, which houses the Lawyers Professional Building, was designed in 1961 by architect Frank Folsom Smith, an original member of the Sarasota School of Architecture. It is one of the few Sarasota School buildings remaining in the city. The building is listed in the Florida Master Site File, a statewide database of potentially significant historic resources.

According to the Sarasota Architectural Foundation's [website](#), Sarasota Realtor Michael Saunders, owner of the building, offered to donate it to anyone interested in moving it.

SDH Partners has the property at 2051 Main St. under contract. If the commissioners approve the hotel project next week, the firm is expected to close on the deal before beginning design and construction of the hotel, Kurant said. 



Neal Schafers

Find joy in a picture-perfect smile.

My interest in photography reminded me about how my smile made me unhappy. A childhood accident caused my permanent teeth to come in askew. I had seen how Dr. Koval restored the smile of a friend's father. With Dr. Koval, we discovered I also had cracked fillings and a shifted jaw – all which she corrected.

I am 100% satisfied with Dr. Koval's meticulous work and sincere care to make my smile look natural and picture-perfect.

For a complimentary consultation call **941.923.5406**

To view our extensive smile gallery, visit **askdrkoval.com**

ENHANCE YOUR SMILE. ENHANCE YOUR LIFE.



Christine Koval, D.M.D.
Awarded 20 Gold Medals for Smile Makeovers by the Florida Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry.



**KOVAL
&
KOVAL**
dental associates

Neal Schafers

Find joy in a picture-perfect smile.



Awarded 20 Gold Medals
for Smile Makeovers by
the Florida Academy of
Cosmetic Dentistry.

My interest in photography reminded me about how my former smile made me uncomfortable to have my own picture taken.

A childhood accident resulted in lost teeth. When my permanent teeth came in they were askew and very small in proportion to my smile. I had seen how Dr. Koval perfectly restored the smile of my friend's father. Upon my own exam with Dr. Koval, we discovered that I also had worn and cracked fillings, and a shifted jaw - all which she corrected.

Dr. Koval sincerely cares about her patients and their smiles. I am 100% satisfied with her meticulous work to make my smile look natural and picture-perfect.

For a complimentary consultation call **941.923.5406**
To view our extensive smile gallery, visit **askdrkoval.com**

ENHANCE YOUR SMILE. ENHANCE YOUR LIFE.

Christine Koval, D.M.D. | Restorative, Cosmetic & Laser Dentistry | General Dentistry
2477 Stickney Point Road, Suite 216A | Sarasota, FL | 941.923.5406 | www.askdrkoval.com



TAKING IT TO THE COURTS

The Bob's Boathouse outdoor dining deck was empty mid-morning on Feb. 4. Photo by Rachel Hackney

BOB'S BOATHOUSE HAS ASKED FOR AN EMERGENCY COURT HEARING TO KEEP ITS DOORS OPEN WHILE THE COUNTY PURSUES ITS OWN LEGAL STEPS

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

A hearing tentatively has been set for 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 11, in the 12th Judicial Circuit Court in the latest effort by Bob's Boathouse to remain open while the owners try to complete a "punch list" Sarasota County has deemed necessary if the restaurant is to continue operating.

On Jan. 31, Sarasota County issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to Bob's Boathouse, located at 5515 S. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, after denying the restaurant a

further extension of its Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) a day earlier.

In an email sent at 5:21 p.m. on Jan. 30 to the county commissioners and staff members assisting with the issue, Assistant County Administrator Mark Cunningham wrote that "a determination

was made this afternoon to **not** extend the TCO for Bob's Boathouse due to the fact that the majority of the outstanding items identified for completion by today's

“*Actually, more work has been done on the site since the filing [of an emergency motion].*”

James Aker
Attorney
For Bob's Boathouse

deadline have not been done.” (The emphasis is in the email.)

The TCO previously was extended on Dec. 30.

The Notice of Violation means the owners have until Feb. 20 to complete the punch list or the county will issue an Affidavit of Violation that will result in the parties appearing before a Code Enforcement Special Magistrate, as well as the potential for fines, county spokesman Curt Preisser explained to *The Sarasota News Leader* on Jan. 31.

According to a document prepared by county Code Enforcement Officer Kevin Burns, the Special Magistrate can impose penalties up to \$250 per day for each day a violation exists and penalties up to \$500 per day for each repeat violation.

The court appearance could come within three to five days after the issuance of an Affidavit of Violation, Preisser pointed out. Altogether, Preisser said, it could take 30 to 60 days to go through that legal process.

In the meantime, the restaurant’s principals — The Best Restaurant on 41 LLC and Skipper Bobs LLC — are asking the court, in the Emergency Motion for Preliminary, Mandatory Injunction filed on Jan. 31, to require the county to issue a fourth extension of the TCO for another 30 days. They also seek an award “of Plaintiff’s costs” and “other such general and equitable relief as appropriate under the circumstances.”

The motion says, “There is a strong probability that Bob’s can complete the punch list items if given time to generate sufficient income from operation of the Restaurant,” emphasizing, “Completion of the punch list requires



On Dec. 3, the Bob's Boathouse sign advertised closing at 2 a.m. File photo



The sign for Bob's Boathouse at 5515 S. Tamiami Trail advertised breakfast, lunch and dinner on the morning of Feb. 4, plus entertainment for that night. Photo by Rachel Hackney

funds ... Funds cannot be generated from the Restaurant if Bob's is not permitted to operate its business" and "The punch list cannot be completed at a reasonable cost, and without substantial damages, unless Bob's is allowed to continue to operate while the punch list is being completed."

Bob's Boathouse attorney James E. Aker told *The Sarasota News Leader* on Feb. 5, "Actually, more work has been done on the site since the filing" of the emergency motion.

The motion also points out that the establishment's employees will lose their jobs if the restaurant is forced to close, and it adds that allowing Bob's to continue operating "will not cause substantial harm to others."

However, neighbors across Phillippi Creek from the establishment and on other nearby streets might take issue with that last statement, based on emails sent to the County Commission over the weekend.

THE NOISE

One woman who lives on Montclair Drive — right across the canal from Bob's — wrote on Feb. 1 that she and her husband were in bed reading at 9:30 the previous night "when the bass and loud, wall-penetrating music started. I had to leave the house. All I could think to do was drive downtown and walk around to get away from the music. I went alone because my husband refuses to give in to these harassers. I then came home at midnight hoping the



A sign points customers of Bob's Boathouse to the front door of the business, at the far end of the parking area beside South Tamiami Trail. Photo by Rachel Hackney

**SARASOTA COUNTY***"Dedicated to Quality Service"*

January 30, 2014

James E. Aker, Attorney and Certified Mediator
240 S. Pineapple, Suite 803
Sarasota, Florida 34236

SUBJECT: TCO# 13-943137 B4
Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for Building Permit # 10-039053(BC)
5515 S. Tamiami Trail (Bob's Boat House)

Dear Mr. Aker:

Your request to extend the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) for the subject property is not granted. This denial is based upon the lack of substantial completion of the items found on the attachment of my letter, dated December 31, 2013. As a result your current TCO will end tonight, January 30, 2014 at midnight.

Should you have any questions please contact this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gregory Yantorno', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gregory Yantorno, C.B.O.
Building Official

cc: David Pearce, Office of the County Attorney
Mark A. Cunningham, Deputy County Administrator
Thomas C. Polk, Director, Planning and Development Services
Kathleen Croteau, Deputy Building Official

**Bob's Boathouse Certificate of Occupancy Punch List
as of January 31, 2014**

Public Utility Department:

1. Fence needs to be installed at the Lift station.
2. Crushed concrete to be installed with weed barrier in lift station area.
3. Abandon the existing water service on back side of lift station.
4. Record drawing mylars and disk with AutoCAD files are required.
5. Seven (7) Utility Easements required:
 - a) Permanent Exclusive Lift Station Easement;
 - b) Public Utility Easement;
 - c) Utility Ingress/Egress Easement;
 - d) Nonexclusive Utility Easement;
 - e) Nonexclusive Utility Easement;
 - f) Nonexclusive Permanent Utility Easement; and
 - g) Nonexclusive Permanent Utility Easement.

Natural Resources:

1. Install all watercourse buffer plantings consistent with the approved watercourse buffer planting plan dated August 10, 2010.
2. Complete the removal of all nuisance and invasive vegetation on the property.

Land Development:

The following is our list of deficiencies required to be completed for the subject site in order to receive final certification. Items 1 – 5 and 7 are required to be completed prior to the Engineer of Record, Cavoli Engineering, and certification. The Final Land Development Inspection will be completed per the as-builts that are submitted.

1. All storm pipes must be flushed clean from sediment.
2. The fence around the storm basin must be replaced per code.
3. The storm basin must be certified by a structural engineer for integrity.
4. The storm basin must be cleaned of all organic debris as well as any other debris.

music had quieted or stopped but the music was still blasting. It is now 1:45 a.m. and I can finally go to bed now that the band just stopped.”

Another woman wrote Commissioner Nora Patterson at 3:20 p.m. Sunday to say she had planned to go out on her lanai to read in the sun, but she was unable to do so: “TOO MUCH NOISE!!!” the woman added.

A husband and wife on Lusitania Drive — just east of the rear part of the restaurant property — emailed the commissioners at 8:56 a.m. on Feb. 2 to say they could hear the music all the previous afternoon and into the evening. They added, “When we go for a walk in our neighborhood, the music can be heard all the way from Constitution [Avenue] to American Drive, not to mention it is EXTREMELY loud on Montclair Drive.”

At least one positive event has occurred in recent days, according to Michelle Lee, a McNair Drive resident. She told the *News Leader* on Feb. 5 that she had noticed the sign in front of Bob’s Boathouse is advertising music until midnight instead of 2 a.m., as it previously had. Lee added that she also had noticed DJs being listed only once in a while, whereas the restaurant used to feature bands performing most nights of the week.

THE PUNCH LIST

As of Jan. 31, 18 items remained to be completed on the punch list provided by county staff to the owners of Bob’s Boathouse. Among them are a requirement for seven utility easements to the county, the installation of watercourse buffer plantings “consistent with the approved ... plan dated August 10, 2010,” the completion of the removal of all



““ *I don't see anything being done that he is supposed to take care of.*

Michelle Lee
Neighbor of Bob's Boathouse

””

An aerial view shows Montclair Drive across Phillippi Creek from Bob's Boathouse, which is at the rear of the former car dealership property. Image from Google Maps

nuisance and invasive vegetation on the property, the flushing of sediment from all storm pipes, a certification of the integrity of the storm basin by a structural engineer, compliance of landscaping with the permitted plans and submittal of a photometric lighting plan to the zoning administrator for review and approval.

Lee, the McNair Drive resident, told the *News Leader* on Feb. 5, “I don’t see anything being done that he is supposed to take care of” on the punch list, referring to Bob’s Boathouse owner Tom LeFevre. On the other hand, she said, a crew came in earlier in the week “and just ‘weed-eated’ everything” on the creek bank instead of removing invasive plants.

THE LEGAL BATTLE, AMENDED

In December, county staff gave the owners of Bob’s Boathouse until Dec. 30 to pay \$77,063.44 in water and sewer capacity fees the business owed; if the funds were not paid by then, the establishment’s water and sewer service would be cut off, Planning and Development Services Director Tom Polk told the commissioners on Dec. 10.

On Dec. 27, Aker, the attorney for Bob’s Boathouse, filed suit against the county, contending that the operations manager for Sarasota County Utilities, Tony Gipe, told the owners of Bob’s Boathouse on Oct. 23, 2013, that the water and sewer capacity fees would



A home with a screened-in lanai sits on McNair Drive, right across Phillippi Creek from Bob’s Boathouse. Photo by Rachel Hackney

be deferred until after the establishment was awarded its Certificate of Occupancy (CO).

An amended suit filed on Jan. 31 says that on Oct. 23, counsels for the plaintiffs and Michael M. Mehan, a professional engineer and the county's regulatory manager, "had a phone conversation in which Plaintiffs requested, through their counsels, that the water and sewer capacity fees be deferred until the CO was issued and not collected at issuance of the [TCO]." Mehan said the request would have to be made to Gipe, so "counsels asked that Mr. Mehan advise Mr. Gipe of Plaintiffs' request," the complaint continues. Later that day, it says, plaintiff's counsel made the request to Gipe in a phone conversation "and [Gipe] ... agreed on the County's behalf" that the fees would not be collected until the CO was issued. That was confirmed by an email Gipe sent to the plaintiff's counsel on Oct. 23, the complaint adds.

The county issued a TCO for Bob's on Oct. 31, 2013, the complaint says. On Nov. 26, 2013, Bob's Boathouse requested an extension of the TCO through its general contractor, D.E. Murphy Constructors Inc., whose representative told county staff "he anticipated that the punch list items could be completed by January 31, 2014 ..."

On Nov. 27, the county extended the TCO until Dec. 30, the complaint points out.

Then, on Dec. 10, Polk, the county's director of planning and development services, told the County Commission that the TCO never should have been issued without the payment of the water and sewer capacity fees. The mistake grew out of confusion over the multiple entities that had filed paperwork related to the business, Polk indicated.


The amended complaint references Polk's statement and says, "The County's response for its mistake was to send letters to Best Restaurant [and its general counsel] ... reneging on its agreement made by Tony Gipe and by attempting to immediately rectify on a post-haste basis the County's alleged mistake and error in judgment" by denying an extension of the TCO beyond Dec. 30 unless the business paid the \$77,063.44.

The fact that the county gave the owners 14 business days to raise the money, the complaint says, was "impractical and ... only in the pecuniary interest of the County and/or in its political interest to placate [Bob's Boathouse's] neighbors, who had frequently complained ... about the alleged loudness of the restaurant's music."

With "season and good weather ... just starting to arrive," the complaint adds, the restaurant should secure the additional revenue to complete the punch list.

Montclair Drive resident Michelle Lee questions that last point. At 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 5, she told the *News Leader*, she did not see one customer on the premises. "It's been like that for a few days now."

Four waiters were seated outside, smoking, she added.

When a *News Leader* reporter stopped by the premises on Feb. 4, a woman was standing at the entrance on U.S. 41, waving what appeared to be a homemade sign. With simple black lettering on a white background, the sign advertised that the restaurant was open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. 

AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD, CARE IS MUCH MORE THAN THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE; IT'S THE WAY WE APPROACH OUR WORLD.

WE CARE.

DEEPLY. WITH RESPECT. WITHOUT JUDGMENT.

WE ARE UNWAVERING IN OUR BELIEF THAT ALL PEOPLE DESERVE HIGH QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE. WE ARE TIRELESS IN OUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SO PEOPLE CAN MAKE THEIR OWN HEALTH DECISIONS. WE PROUDLY FIGHT FOR WOMEN TO BE ABLE TO GET THE REPRODUCTIVE SERVICES THEY NEED. WE DO ALL OF THIS BECAUSE

WE CARE PASSIONATELY ABOUT HELPING WOMEN, MEN, AND YOUNG PEOPLE
LEAD HEALTHY LIVES.

NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE. NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE. WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO GET THEM THE CARE THEY NEED. BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN PEOPLE ARE TRULY CARED FOR, THEY WILL MAKE THEIR LIVES, THEIR FAMILIES – AND EVEN THE WORLD – BETTER AND HEALTHIER.
PLANNED PARENTHOOD. CARE. NO MATTER WHAT.



**Planned Parenthood Of
Southwest And Central Florida**

**941-953-4060
MyPlannedParenthood.org**



A RELOCATION UNDER CONSIDERATION



The Sarasota County Area Transit station in downtown Sarasota is on Lemon Avenue, just east of Whole Foods. Photo by Norman Schimmel

COUNTY LEADERS AND STAFF ARE WEIGHING WHETHER TO MOVE THE DOWNTOWN SARASOTA SCAT STATION TO NEW SITE ON RINGLING BOULEVARD

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

The Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) station in downtown Sarasota seems to function well enough. Buses arrive, drop off riders, pick up more riders and leave again. Customers can easily walk to a variety of shops and restaurants from the site at the intersection of Lemon Avenue and First Street.

But some downtown advocates say the station is not the best use of the prime property across from the Whole Foods market and City Hall. The facility also is near Pineapple Square's relatively new retail shops on

Lemon Avenue. A number of observers further point out that the bus transfer station has been getting a little congested lately.

The Downtown Improvement District (DID) board members recently were discussing ways to increase economic vibrancy and the tax base in the heart of the city when they began focusing on the bus station, which has been controversial since it was built.

“ I don't like the word 'can't.' We have to make it happen, if we can. ”

Joe Barbetta
Commissioner
Sarasota County

“We start looking around and here sits a piece of property owned by the county, and it is not producing

income and has outgrown its use,” said Ernie Ritz, chairman of the city’s DID.

Last month, Ritz contacted then-County Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Mason about his proposal for moving the station a mile east to a county parcel near Ringling Boulevard and School Avenue and then selling the downtown parcel to a developer who could build on it. The County Commission had already directed staff to look into the possibility of undertaking the move.

Ritz, who lives across from the station, said he has seen it become more crowded with buses. In its place, he envisions a project that could generate new energy and business in the center of downtown Sarasota. Ritz talks of a four- or five-story structure with retail on the first floor. “It could be anything on the

floors above,” Ritz said. “It could be condos, could be rental apartments, could be office space or could be another proposed hotel.”

Right now, the 18,000-square-foot (.41 acre) parcel is “prime property just sitting there” without bringing in ad valorem tax revenue, Ritz told *The Sarasota News Leader*. At just under half an acre and zoned Downtown Core, it is a good size for a project that would not be a “mega development,” Ritz pointed out.

During the Jan. 22 County Commission meeting, Commissioner Joe Barbetta agreed, saying the site is prime for economic development — if the county can move the bus station to the edge of downtown.

“It’s getting more crowded with buses,” Barbetta added, concurring with Ritz’s point.



Homeless people commonly gather at the bus station on Lemon Avenue in Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel

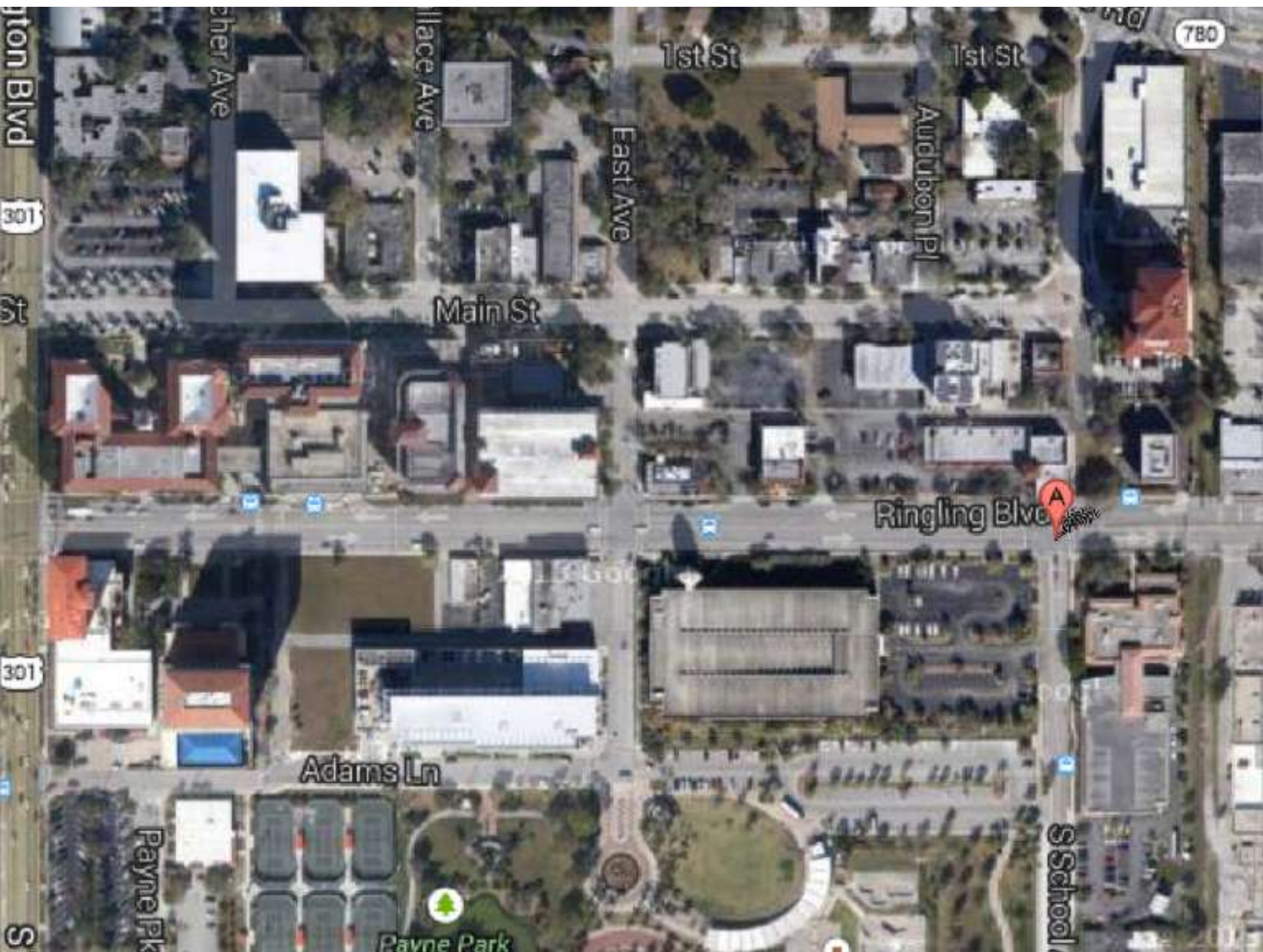
After Interim County Administrator Tom Harmer noted that a staff report completed in December found four potential problems with such a move, Barbetta said, “I don’t like the word ‘can’t.’ We have to make it happen, if we can.”

THE ISSUES

The Ringling Boulevard/School Avenue parcel initially was proposed as the site for the bus transfer station before the facility was constructed on First Street in 2002. At the time,

residents expressed concerns about locating the station on Ringling — near the county’s Health Department — because of anticipated bus traffic in the neighborhood, as well as an expected increase in pedestrians and the loss of 103 parking spaces.

A county staff report says that in 2002, city staff identified several problems with the Ringling site that persist today: impacts to land use and access, parcel size and a parking shortage in that area. Funding is another issue. The plan for a new station would likely



An aerial view shows the Ringling Boulevard/School Avenue intersection in downtown Sarasota. Image from Google Maps

be ineligible for state transportation grants because \$2.83 million in Florida Department of Transportation funding was awarded for the construction of the station at First Street and Lemon Avenue.

Revenue from the sale of the Downtown Core-zoned land could be used to help pay for a new station, the report states.

Necessary changes to bus routes, however, would add another expense, the report adds: "The distance between the current site at 1st Street and the potential site at Ringling Boulevard/School Avenue is one mile. While this may not seem like a great distance, it impacts bus operations because many routes have zero slack time at either end of their trip ... Routes would need to be restricted due to relocating the transfer station. There could be additional recurring operating expenses not currently in the SCAT budget to add additional vehicles and operators for a restricted system."

Yet another expense might be the need to replace the parking area lost if the station were built on Ringling Boulevard. The proposed site contains 103 surface spaces.

However, if the station were moved east, its new home would be close to adjacent county services, such as those provided by the Health Department, which would be across the street.

Commissioner Nora Patterson was initially opposed to building the transfer station on First Street. "At the time, I was part of a fairly

small and not terribly organized group that felt it shouldn't be where it is," Patterson told the *News Leader*.

"This is one I'd like to support, but I don't know if there will be the money."

Nora Patterson
Commissioner
Sarasota County



But she is concerned about the cost of relocating the facility. "This is one [plan] I'd like to support, but I don't know if there will be the money,"

Patterson said, adding that the facility seems to be functioning all right where it is.

In 2002, the downtown station cost \$3.17 million, including the purchase of the property from the city.

Patterson's budgetary focus is on upgrading the county's emergency services communications system, necessary expansions at the county Tax Collector's and Supervisor of Elections offices, a relocation of Sheriff's Office facilities that already is under discussion and paying for new services at the Benderson Park rowing venue off University Parkway, she pointed out.

An extension of the Downtown Sarasota Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) after it expires in 2016 would mean a certain amount of county tax revenue would have to continue to flow into the City of Sarasota, she also noted, making a bus station relocation even more of a financial difficulty.


"The idea of going back now and spending \$3 million or so to put the station somewhere else and several million to enlarge parking, I guess my reaction is that is probably not at the top of the list of things," Patterson said.

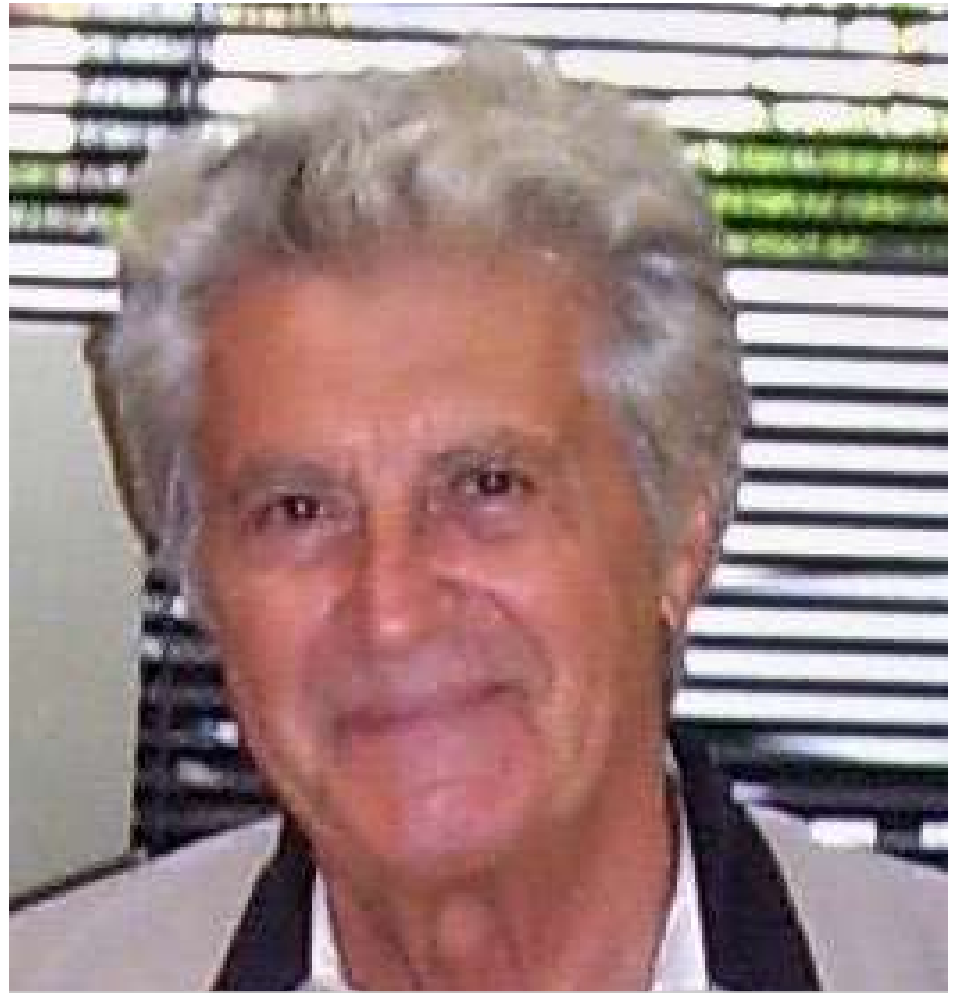
FURTHER STUDY?

Ritz, the DID chairman, would like to see the County Commission discuss whether to hire a consultant to consider his proposal. A consultant could provide direction on “whether it is a good idea or not,” he added.

“What economic impact is there?” would be one of the big questions, Ritz said. Another would be whether the move would be feasible.

County Commissioner Christine Robinson wants to hear more from her fellow commissioners about the prospect, especially from those who were around in 2002 and therefore know some of the background regarding the reasons the First Street location was chosen.

“I am looking forward to a discussion on it,” Robinson said on Feb. 5. “I haven’t formed an opinion on it one way or another.” 



Ernie Ritz is chairman of the Downtown Improvement District. Photo courtesy City of Sarasota



The Whole Foods market is just west of the SCAT station on Lemon Avenue. Photo by Norman Schimmel



**Open:
Mon-Sat
11:30am
to
9:00pm**

nancy'sTM **BAR-B-Q**

**Catering
Across
The
Suncoast
Since
2005**

Pulled Pork • Ribs • Chicken • Beef Brisket

Sides Made Fresh From Scratch

Big salad • Chilled Salmon

Beer & Wine • Homemade Desserts • Kid Friendly

301 S Pineapple Ave • Sarasota, FL



**Click For Driving
Directions**

**Click To View Our
Video Online**

941-366-2271 (BBQ1) • nancysbarbq.com

PAYING FOR PARKING



One artist's rendering of the State Street garage shows where vehicles would enter the facility. Image courtesy City of Sarasota

CITY STAFF SUGGESTS WAYS TO COVER THE STATE STREET GARAGE HOLE

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

The Sarasota City Commission meeting on Feb. 3 was short but not very sweet. The commissioners remained divided over the fate and future of the State Street parking garage, and they were daunted by its \$4.1 million cost increase. Design work will move forward, but only thanks to a 3-2 vote (Commissioner Paul Caragiulo and Mayor Shannon Snyder in the minority).

Bearer of the bad tidings was Senior Planner Steve Stancel, who has tried to shepherd this process through a political minefield for years now. The garage is part of an ambitious downtown redevelopment plan called Pineapple Square. Under terms of a contract with the

developers, the city is responsible for finishing the garage by next February.

If absolutely every little thing goes perfectly between now and then, the city will be about one week late.

EXPLAINING THE OVERAGE

The rise in the garage expense lies in the cost per square foot now versus that cost in 2009, when the original estimate was produced. In the intervening years, much has changed. Costs for labor and concrete are up, for example. And the design changes for the structure itself between then and now have been significant — one story higher, two multi-story firewalls, a disguised facade, cast-in-place

versus precast concrete, and inefficient space on the designated site for a parking garage because the parcel is so narrow.

Add to that the fact that the City Commission dithered for months between a variety of designs, reminiscent of previous dithering over the installation and removal of parking meters downtown. The commission's final decisions necessitated an extra story of parking to meet the space goals, adding another significant cost.

The original cost estimate was not pulled from the air. It was based on a \$16,000 per-space expense at the Palm Avenue parking garage. "We used that figure for the 300 to 500 spaces for State Street," said Stancel. "This was a national median between \$14,000 and \$16,000 per space. So we used \$18,000 per space [for the estimate]."



City staff has pointed to the cost differences between the Palm Avenue garage project and the plans for the new State Street garage. Image City of Sarasota



An artist's rendering shows how the new State Street parking garage would appear. Image courtesy City of Sarasota

By the time all other factors were applied to the design, the cost was up to \$28,500 per space. “The extra deck required \$1.2 million; the firewalls on the east and west ends [are] \$230,000,” added Stancel. “The escalation of materials and labor is 13 percent, or \$900,000. And these are all still estimates.”

Using another metric, the expenses do not appear totally out of line. “Nationally, the costs now are \$52.51 per square foot. State Street is at \$52.88,” said Stancel. But the total square footage produces fewer actual spots in the State Street design because the building is too narrow to accommodate four aisles of parking per floor.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Stancel and the city’s financial staff poured over the city budget to find cash to fill the hole. Some municipal infrastructure projects use bonds, but this one is pay-as-you-go. To cover the \$4.1 million gap, Stancel explained a scheme more like rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul. Some cash is

“

I’m as shocked as anybody else.

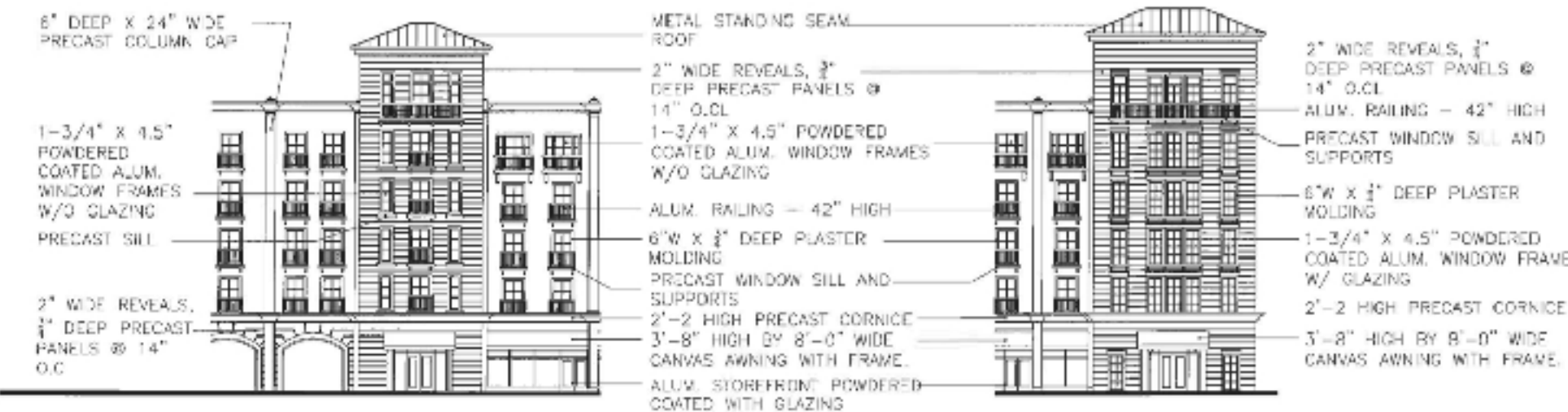
Steve Stancel
Senior Planner
City of Sarasota

”

available in the Community Redevelopment Agency budget — about \$880,000. And \$300,000 is lying in the fund for the downtown redevelopment plan. So about \$1.2 million in loose change is there for the taking. But that still leaves \$2.9 million to go.

Stancel then suggested several projects in the budget be deferred this year. In budgetary language, this is called “sliding to the right, into the out-years.” Ready to be plucked is the budget for wayfinding, the \$630,000 set aside for a signage initiative in downtown Sarasota to help people find their way more easily from point to point. There is \$465,000 available for “downtown transportation” that could be harvested. And “enhanced maintenance” is a low-hanging fruit worth \$50,000. Add this harvest to the loose change and it totals \$2.3 million.

For the remaining \$1.7 million needed, Stancel suggested “inter-fund borrowing.” In essence, the city would borrow money from funds set aside for fleet replacement and workers



BUILDING MATERIALS

A diagram shows details about the building materials for the State Street garage. Image courtesy City of Sarasota

compensation. For this year and the next, the city could borrow (from itself) \$870,000 each year and pay 3 percent interest.

Repaying these two \$870,000 loans (the \$1.7 million needed) requires a leap of faith. The first floor of the State Street building will sold to a retailer or restaurateur. And the western end of the building will be sold to the same developer or another one for retail, office or residential space. How much is all that worth? Stancel said that space is appraised at \$2 million “conservatively.”

And in case nobody steps forward to buy the space (which is what happened on Palm Avenue), Stancel says he expects there will be more money in the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) account before the agency officially goes out of business in 2016. How much? He says perhaps \$1.5 million in the two remaining years.

He concluded his presentation by saying no conclusion on funding was required that Monday afternoon. That decision will come in April, along with a final design review. And while he said staff will look for cost savings through “value engineering,” he did not expect any huge savings to materialize.

Vice Mayor Willie Shaw noted the obvious: “We have no room or window for any other choices.” Shaw then moved to proceed. Caragiulo said he would not support the

motion. “This is a crisis of process,” he added. “I don’t know how anyone gets past a 60 percent overage. I, in good conscience, cannot support this.”

He was joined by Snyder, who offered no rationale for his vote to stop the project. But they were outvoted 3-2, with Commissioners Suzanne Atwell and Susan Chapman siding with Shaw.

THE NEXT DAY

The following morning, Stancel was in front of the Downtown Improvement District board members, who have been virtually silent on the State Street project. He filled them in on the funding plan and the timeline. “The garage could be open in February (2015), about one week beyond the Pineapple Square deadline,” he said. “Without a doubt, this is an expensive garage. I’m as shocked as everybody else.”

Stancel mentioned one more possible source to repay the inter-fund loans. “Parking fund revenues, if they are created and approved, could be used to pay back the two-year loans,” he said. “You’ll probably see some recommendation to require payment for the parking garage.”

The parking fund now runs a \$500,000 annual deficit, covered by property tax revenue. That works out to be about \$10 per city resident per year to keep parking “free.” 

The Sarasota News Leader

No-Nonsense Reporting



This may take a while.

Some things are just hard to resist. Like *The Sarasota News Leader*. It's a feast of in-depth local news, delightful and entertaining features, and a community calendar that highlights the best upcoming events in the area.


The first impulse is just to gobble it all up.

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

You have a whole week.

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

A LOCAL \$50 MILLION BUSINESS

A close-up portrait of a man with short, dark hair, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a plaid shirt with blue, white, and red patterns. The background is a solid, muted blue-grey color.

“ *These are people who grew up together.*

Lt. Pat Ledwith
Sarasota Police Department

”

THE SARASOTA POLICE DEPARTMENT MAKES A 'HISTORIC' BUST

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

Almuta Muhammad Shabazz Hawks and Roderick Vernard Shannon were the Sarasota cocaine kingpins, police allege in court documents. "Intercepted phone calls and multiple forms of investigative surveillance have revealed the defendant purchasing kilogram quantities of cocaine from his source of supply ..." both Hawks' and Shannon's probable cause affidavits say, with identical language.

On Jan. 22, Sarasota Police personnel swooped down to scoop up 10 defendants and nearly 12 kilos of white powder that tested positive for cocaine. Other affidavits indicate Hawks' and Shannon's confederates would take the powder cocaine and manufacture crack for retail

sales on the streets of Sarasota and Manatee counties. They were moving at least 10 kilos a week, police say.

Senior city police officers call the bust "historic," adding that the amount of drugs seized is the biggest ever within the city limits. While larger quantities have been taken in Sarasota County, those drugs were en route to other locations and usually discovered following traffic stops on the interstate. This batch was the local supply. Lt. Pat Ledwith, commander of the Criminal Investigations Bureau of the Sarasota Police Department, said, "We believe all the narcotics seized was for local consumption."



*Almuta Muhammad Shabazz Hawks/
Contributed photo*



Roderick Shannon/Contributed photo

The department held a Feb. 4 news conference to reveal the results of the investigation.

Ledwith estimated the 12 kilos (26.4 pounds) of powder cocaine was worth about \$500,000 wholesale, with a retail value on the street of \$1 million. He also said the seizure represented “one week’s supply.” Assuming Ledwith’s cost and supply estimates are correct, that cocaine network represented about a \$50 million per year retail industry in Sarasota.

Six of Hawks’ and Shannon’s alleged confederates have prior criminal histories, with charges including fraud, robbery, aggravated battery, burglary, weapons counts, fleeing to elude, crack cocaine sales within 1,000 feet of public housing and conspiracy to traffic in cocaine. Two others charged did not have prior criminal histories. All were African-American males between the ages of 26 and 44.

A Miami-based supplier was also rolled up in the investigation. Alex Hernando Gomez, a 46-year-old Hispanic male, is accused of conspiracy to traffic more than 400 grams (roughly one pound) of cocaine. “Intercepted phone calls and multiple forms of investigative surveillance have revealed the defendant selling kilogram quantities of cocaine to his buyers, Almuta Hawks and Roderick Shannon,” says Gomez’ probable cause affidavit. “Based on this investigation, the defendant is a significant source of cocaine supply in the Sarasota/Manatee County area.”

A senior investigator told *The Sarasota News Leader* the investigation did not actually tap any wires. “It was cellphone intercepts,” the officer said. The Tampa office of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) provided assistance.



The residence at 2412 Pershing Ave. in Sarasota, near Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, reportedly was the scene of local cocaine sales. Image from Google Maps

DEA Assistant Special Agent in Charge James DiCaprio confirmed a money laundering investigation is continuing. Officers seized \$115,000 in cash; the inclusion of \$5 and \$10 bills in the seizure is a reflection of the retail nature of this drug organization.

The Bradenton Police and the Sheriff's Offices in Manatee and Sarasota counties also assisted in the operation. The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (the old AFT) was "called in at the last minute," said AFT Special Agent Deland Reid, assistant special agent in charge of the Tampa office. "We focused on the arrest of violent, repeat firearms violators," he said.

It took investigators 18 months to penetrate the organization. "These are people who grew up together," said Ledwith.

Hawks, who is 36, was on probation for federal firearms charges. Shannon is 44.

Gomez has already served one prison sentence for trafficking in cocaine.

As the date of Gomez' alleged delivery drew near, detectives signed the probable cause affidavits in December and January in preparation for a series of arrests the week of Jan. 20. Street-level drug sales were primarily in north Sarasota, including sites along Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, the 4900 block of North Tamiami Trail, the 3500 block of Old Bradenton Road, the 1100 block of 32nd Street, 2412 Pershing Ave., the 1500 block of 23rd Street and other locations identified only as "City of Sarasota."

Those arrested follow:

- Irwin Donte Brown, 26, of 1349 20th St., Sarasota.
- Roderick Shannon, 44, of 5000 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota (the Rodeway Inn Motel).
- Almuta Muhammad Shabazz Hawks, 36, of 2030 29th St., Sarasota.
- Alex Hernando Gomez, 46, of 2352 NW 34th St., Miami.
- Kewarren Lamar Jones, 43, of 3039 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota.
- Reginald Eugene Brown, 36, of 821 Mecca Drive, Sarasota.
- Shane Kendall Phillips Austin, 28, of 1506 23rd St., Sarasota.
- Reginald Maurice Williams, 38, of 4990 Baraldi Circle, Unit 101, Sarasota.
- Demond Williams, 40, of 1958 24th St., Sarasota (no prior criminal history).
- Guss Jackson Jr., 43, of 2412 Pershing Ave., Sarasota (no prior criminal history).

To view the Feb. 4 press conference, visit youtu.be/8Mn4RN19cLw. 



Editors' note: Stan Zimmerman is no stranger to drug trafficking organizations or money laundering, having covered both in his book [A History of Smuggling in Florida](#).

THE 'ZERO-DISCHARGE ZONE'



Sarasota Bay is popular spot with boaters as well as fishermen. Photo by Norman Schimmel

THE CITY OF SARASOTA IS APPROACHING A WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM MILESTONE

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

Less than one year from now, the City of Sarasota will achieve a dream decades in the making.

In about 330 days, a politician will cut a ribbon, an engineer will throw a switch and the city will stop discharging anything into Sarasota Bay — no treated sewage, no reclaimed wastewater, no brine from the

reverse osmosis plant, no byproducts of the city's drinking water and sanitary sewer utilities. Nada.

“*Our biggest problem is to whip our wastewater system into line; especially the sewer pipes so they don't overflow when we have heavy rains.*”

Ken Thompson
Longtime Sarasota City Manager
In *The Rise of Sarasota*
By Jeff LaHurd

Since Ken Thompson started work as city manager in 1950, officials have been dreaming, plotting and planning how to reduce the bay discharge. In what could be a gigantic Christmas gift for the

bay this year, the dream is close to becoming a reality, thanks to a green light given by the City Commission on Monday, Feb. 3.

The reality will be the culmination of miles of digging, millions of dollars spent on engineering and multiple city votes cast on bond issues, ordinances, rates and other necessary minutia. But oddly, during the Feb. 3 meeting, not a single city commissioner seemed to recognize the historic nature of the unanimous vote marking more than a century of municipal cleanup.

What is this final project? It is a hole in the ground into which the city will pump excess treated wastewater and brine from the municipal reverse osmosis drinking water plant. The hole is there, east of Osprey Avenue and north of 12th Street. The Feb. 3 vote authorizes a \$3.9 million contract to build the pipes, pumps and ditches necessary to connect the treatment plant with the 1,400-foot-deep well that will accept the brine and excess treated wastewater.

THE LONG STRUGGLE

In 1911, the citizens of Sarasota grew tired of the city's stench. A \$20,000 bond issue was proposed to build a water and sewer system. "It was a no-quarter fight between the do-nothing element and the men who were determined to make Sarasota a modern town. The fight was bitter," wrote Karl Grissmer in his 1945 book, *The Story of Sarasota*.

Only men could vote in those days, and the vote was close: 57 in favor of the bond issue; 35 opposed. By the end of the year, the downtown and nearby residential area had both water and sewer service. Instead of sewage



Finding better ways to handle water and sewer issues long has been the focus of City of Sarasota leaders. Photo by Norman Schimmel

running in the streets, it was piped 400 feet out into Sarasota Bay.

The following year, another bond issue was proposed to extend the system, and that was approved by a margin of 10-to-one. "Pouring the town's sewage into the bay polluted the once crystal clear waters and was the direct cause of one of Sarasota's most acute civic headaches in years to come," wrote Grissmer.

As the decades reeled by, voters continued to support the engineering and construction necessary to reduce dumping into the bay. One of the first duties of Sarasota's nearly legendary city manager, Ken Thompson, was a 1951 expansion of the sewers to serve 4,000 homes.

Another Thompson-era project came in 1966, when the Verna freshwater well field came

online to supply 10 million gallons per day to the city's burgeoning population. To guarantee the city's freshwater future cost \$3.75 million.

Verna ensured the city would retain control of its freshwater supply. This was in marked contrast to Sarasota County, which has reeled from one scheme to another over the decades to maintain freshwater sources.

To provide a further guarantee of ongoing supply, Thompson also oversaw the installation of a state-of-the-art reverse osmosis water treatment system, using salty water from coastal wells. With very high pressure and permeable membranes to eliminate the salt, the "RO Plant" now contributes about half the city's fresh water. But it comes with two costs.

The reverse osmosis process is energy-intensive: For every gallon of fresh water, it produces a quart of very salty water ("brine") that is corrosive and must go somewhere. For now, that "somewhere" is a discharge into Hog Creek and eventually Sarasota Bay.

EVER DECREASING IMPACT

The city's utility users pay significantly less than those in other Florida coastal communities, in part because Sarasota has kept "ahead of the curve." The deep-well injection disposal of brine from the RO plant will eliminate the need for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection "consent order" the city currently requires for the Hog Creek discharge.



A recently approved City of Sarasota project should lead to a cleaner Sarasota Bay. Photo by Norman Schimmel


The second fluid headed “down the hole” will be excess treated wastewater from the sewage plant. This water is commonly used for irrigation, and it is an increasingly valuable resource.

However, during the normal summer rainy season, there is less need for irrigation. Then the city sends the treated wastewater east for so-called “spray-field irrigation.” But sometimes the fields out east are inundated and unable to accept more water. When that is the case, the treated wastewater is routed into the bay.

That marks a full-circle return to the “1911 solution” — dump it into the bay. However, the new deep-well injection system has been designed with sufficient capacity to accept the summertime overflow of treated wastewater,

thus ending all discharge into Sarasota Bay from the city’s utilities.

It puts an end to what Thompson considered his biggest municipal challenge, although more than a decade after he died. Thompson is quoted in Sarasota County historian Jeff LaHurd’s *The Rise of Sarasota*: “Our biggest problem is to whip our wastewater system into line; especially the sewer pipes so they don’t overflow when we have heavy rains.” In 330 days, that problem should be solved.

All will not be perfect, though. Sarasota County is responsible for stormwater, and none of that receives treatment; what does not soak into the soil ends up in the bay. The county is now trying “low-impact development” along ditches and swales to create a natural impoundment of pollutants before they reach the bay. 

Manuel R. Chopote, LUTCF
Chopote Insurance Inc.
1300 Main Street • Sarasota, Florida
(941) 366-0100
Serving Sarasota & Manatee Counties

Auto • Home • Life
Renters • Motorcycles
Flood • Business • Annuities
Financial Services



agents.allstate.com/manuel-r-chopote-sarasota-fl.html

Find a place to stay.

Rent from people in over 34,000 cities and 192 countries.



PAY UP

Neighborhood Guides

Not sure where to stay? We've created neighborhood guides for cities all around the world.



London



Mexico City



New York



Paris



San Francisco



Tokyo

A recent screenshot shows the Airbnb homepage. Image Courtesy [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com)

AIRBNB'S POPULARITY HAS EXPLODED, AND THE TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE IS WATCHING CLOSELY

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

"Find a place to stay," the website promises. Type in "Sarasota," pick your dates and name the number of people in your party. Up pops a map, with pinpoints marking different properties on the left while on the right, the screen is populated with photos of all types of Sarasota properties. No hotels, but there's a downtown penthouse within "walking distance from everything you need," a

"honeymoon cottage" in the neighborhood around the Ringling Museum, even a "river-front cottage" far inland — all those among many other destinations, priced all over the map, from \$59 a night to \$600.



We want people to know we're out there.

Liz Klaber
Chief Deputy Tax Collector
Sarasota County



The site: [Airbnb](https://www.airbnb.com) — launched in 2008 and billed as a "community marketplace" for travelers looking for good deals and property owners hoping to

keep their places full. It's also a big piece of the burgeoning market many have called the "share economy." According to *Forbes*, in 2009 Airbnb helped 100,000 guests book rooms; in 2010, that number grew to 750,000. Its website now boasts that it has helped more than 9 million travelers find a bed.

What makes Airbnb more attractive than, say, Craigslist? For one, you can see the face of the person renting your temporary abode. The site offers photos and other info about the owner, and it allows direct communication. Hosts are also able to see potential renters' profiles and message with them before their stays.

But the site has also generated controversy. The *Savannah Morning News* reported just this week that the city has sent cease-and-desist letters to hosts, accusing them of operating commercial businesses in neighborhoods zoned as residential. In New York City, meanwhile, lawmakers have charged hosts with violating rules that prohibit residents from "letting their apartments for fewer than thirty days if they are not present," according to *The New Yorker*.


As reported by the city's *Chronicle*, another major complaint in San Francisco, Airbnb's hometown, has been that hosts are not paying hotel occupancy taxes.

That last charge may apply to Sarasota, too. Sarasota County Tax Collector Barbara

Ford-Coates collects a 5 percent Tourist Development Tax levied on revenue from rentals shorter than six months, and no, rentals booked through sites like Airbnb are not exempt.

"I've got a staff member who's working the site," confirms Chief Deputy Tax Collector Liz Klaber. Her office has a full-time employee responsible for surfing websites — in addition to Airbnb, there are older sites offering vacation rentals, including [Flipkey](#) and [VRBO](#). The office also hires an additional employee to cover the high-traffic months of season.

Klaber credits Airbnb for including wording on its site encouraging hosts to pay any applicable local taxes. The Tax Collector's Office can't share specific information about violators its staff has identified online, but Klaber says monitoring the media to make sure taxes are being paid is a longtime strategy. Employees used to scour newspapers' classified sections for rental ads. Now that business has mostly gone online. "It's nothing new," Klaber emphasizes.

The major difference between Airbnb and its predecessors is that many of the properties being rented out are not investment homes or vacation condos. They're spare bedrooms, detached cottages, sometimes even just an unoccupied bedroom. But regardless of what the place looks like, whether it's fancy or not, Klaber has one message for hosts: "We want people to know we're out there." 

ANALYSIS: BEST WEEKS EVER



Former Republican Congressman Allen West is paying a visit to Sarasota. Photo by Gage Skidmore, via Flickr

ON THE EVE OF HIS SARASOTA APPEARANCE, A LOOK BACK AT SOME OF REP. ALLEN WEST'S GREATEST HITS

By Cooper Levey-Baker
Associate Editor

It's a busy couple of weeks in local conservative politics, with three major events on the books. Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner hits town next Saturday to raise money alongside National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Rep. Greg Walden, Rep. Vern Buchanan and, in the words of an email promoting the event, assorted "Members of Republican House Leadership." That fundraiser, tickets for which run from \$500 to \$52,600, will be hosted by Rick Santorum's former Florida campaign chief, Jesse Biter, and his wife, Katie, in their Marina Tower penthouse.

Not quite ready to drop those kinds of ducats? Never fear. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas will be in Sarasota shortly thereafter to accept the Republican Party of Sarasota County's Statesman of the Year award, joining the ranks of birther Donald Trump and others. Cruz will attend a \$15 rally before leaving for a \$500 reception and a \$5,000 private dinner.

And if you just can't wait, don't worry: Allen West will be in Sarasota to headline the Republican Party's annual Lincoln Day Dinner, for the low, low price of \$125 to \$250. West was elected to Congress in 2010 as part

of the original tea party wave, and he quickly earned the attention of cable news thanks to his propensity for over-the-top rhetoric. That rhetoric didn't help his reelection chances, and he lost to Democrat Patrick Murphy after just one term.

But given his appearance this week, and having announced he will “definitely” run for office again in 2016, let's take a nostalgic trip back for some of West's greatest hits during his brief time in office (emphasis added throughout):

- **West says up to 80 House Democrats are communists:** “U.S. Rep. Allen West told about 90 largely supportive Palm City voters Tuesday that locally prioritized federal projects — such as the St. Lucie Inlet dredging — aren't going to matter if Washington

officials don't address a mounting deficit. ... West said Obama was ‘scared’ to have a discussion with him. He later said ‘he's heard’ up to 80 U.S. House Democrats are Communist Party members, but wouldn't name names.” ([The Palm Beach Post](#))

- **West compares Democratic strategists to Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels:** “If Joseph Goebbels was around, he'd be very proud of the Democrat Party because they have an incredible propaganda machine,’ West told reporters in the Capitol. ‘I think that you have, and let's be honest, you know, some of the people in the media are complicit in this, in enabling them to get that type of message out.’ West was responding to a question about Congress's low poll numbers and the fact that public blame is centered more on the Republicans.” ([Politico](#))



Former Republican Congressman Allen West makes a point. Photo by Gage Skidmore via Flickr

• **West says allowing openly gay and lesbian personnel to serve will “break down the military”:** “West, a former U.S. Army colonel, asked by an audience member about the abolition of the ban on openly gay people serving in the armed forces, said he opposed the move but it’s too late to change. He said new recruits must conform to military standards. ‘When you take the military and you tell it they must conform to the individual’s behavior, then it’s just a matter of time until you break down the military,’ he said.” ([The Tampa Tribune](#))

• **West calls Obama supporters a “threat to the gene pool”:** “Are there REALLY 80% of Americans who want higher taxes? I must confess, when I see anyone with an Obama 2012 bumper sticker, I recognize them as a threat to the gene pool.” ([The Florida Independent](#))

• **West accuses liberal women of “neutering men,” causing federal debt to grow:** “We need you to come in and lock shields, and strengthen up the men who are going to the fight for you. To let these other women know, on the other side — these Planned Parenthood women, the Code Pink women, and all of these women that have been neutering American men and bringing us to the point of this incredible weakness — to let them know that we are not going to have our men become subservient. That’s what we need you to do. Because if you don’t, then the debt will continue to grow.” ([The Florida Independent](#))

• **West says Muslim congressman represents the “antithesis of the principles upon which this country was established”:** “Rep. Allen West, R-Fort Lauderdale, appeared recently on the South Florida-based


program *The Shalom Show* and said that Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., the first Muslim member of Congress, represents the ‘antithesis of the principles upon which this country was established.’” ([The Florida Independent](#))

• **West calls for “censoring” news organizations publishing material obtained from Wikileaks:** “I think that we also should be censoring the American news agencies which enabled [Julian Assange] to do this and also supported him and applauding him for the efforts. So that’s kind of aiding and abetting of a serious crime.” ([The Florida Independent](#))

Then, of course, there’s the company he keeps. Shortly after winning office, he hired right wing radio host Joyce Kaufman as his chief of staff. Some of her most memorable statements (emphasis added):

• “In August 2007, when discussing illegal immigrants, she said on her show, ‘If you commit a crime while you’re here, **we should hang you** and send your body back to where you came from, and your family should pay for it.’” ([The Florida Independent](#))

• “Among the Kaufman clips ricocheting around the Internet is [one] in which she says ... : ‘I don’t care how this gets painted by the mainstream media, I don’t care if this shows up on YouTube, because I am convinced the most important thing the Founding Fathers did to ensure me my First Amendment rights was they gave me a Second Amendment. And **if ballots don’t work, bullets will.**’” ([The Palm Beach Post](#))

Kaufman quickly resigned after many of her incendiary remarks came to light. West blamed the reaction on “sexism and misogynist behavior,” as well as the “racism” of his opponents. 



A THIRD VOICE

The 1994 report on the proposed dredging of Big Pass by David G. Aubrey and Robert Dolan included this aerial view of the pass. Contributed image.

THE SIESTA KEY VILLAGE ASSOCIATION CONCURS WITH TWO OTHER ISLAND ORGANIZATIONS IN OPPOSING THE DREDGING OF BIG PASS, BASED ON CURRENT INFORMATION

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

With no dissension among the approximately 25 members present on the morning of Feb. 4, the Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) passed a motion saying it will notify the Sarasota County Commission of its opposition to any dredging of the ebb shoal of Big Pass or the waterway — based on the information at hand — to supply sand for the proposed \$22 million renourishment plan for Lido Beach.

The SKVA joined its voice to those of the Siesta Key Association (SKA) and the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce (SKCC), which passed similar motions on unanimous votes in January. The SKA acted on Jan. 9, while the SKCC board took its vote on Jan. 16.

Maria Bankemper, immediate past chairwoman of the Siesta Key Chamber, pointed out during the Feb. 4 SKVA meeting,

“You don’t dig a gigantic hole in the shoal, put in two channels and then not have an effect on anything.”

Peter van Roekens
Secretary
Siesta Key Association



“We have said that we’re all in agreement that there are certain areas within Lido Beach that need sand. I don’t think anybody’s arguing that.”

However, she continued, “There are plenty of other sources [for that sand]. ... There’s no reason for [the Corps] to be putting a hole in our shoal” and potentially damaging the north end of Siesta Key as well as the public beach.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, working out of its Jacksonville district office, has collaborated with the City of Sarasota on a 50-year plan to renourish Lido every five years,

with the bulk of the sand coming first from Big Pass. The project manager for the Corps, which is expected to pay for about 65 percent of the cost, has told Sarasota elected officials and the public over the past few months that no funds so far have been appropriated for the project by Congress. Additionally, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will have to sign off on permits for the work, although Lido has state designation as a critically eroded beach, Sarasota City Engineer Alexandria DavisShaw has pointed out to *The Sarasota News Leader*.

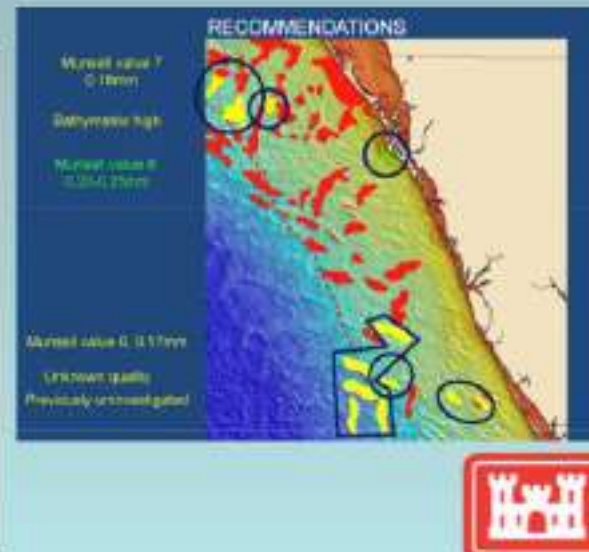
SAND SOURCES

2010 Offshore of Longboat Key Sand Sources Search:

- Based on City of Sarasota Recommendations
- Negative results at areas 9 & 12 miles away
- Potential minimal amounts of sand at area 15 miles away

Remaining Potential areas:

- Big Sarasota Pass (3,200,000 cy)
- New Pass (300,000 cy)



A graphic from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers produced for a June 2013 presentation on the Lido Renourishment Project shows the potential sand sources relative to Big Sarasota Pass. Image courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Although the Corps' estimate for the amount of sand it will need for the first renourishment has been cited alternately as 1.3 million and 1.2 million cubic yards of sand, the original plan called for all the material to be dredged from Big Pass for the first initiative to fill in a 1.6-mile stretch of Lido from just north of John Ringling Boulevard to Lido Key Park.

Last week, Laird Wreford, coastal resources manager for Sarasota County, told the *News Leader* the Corps recently had informed him it is looking now at taking perhaps 200,000 cubic yards of sand from New Pass during that first renourishment effort, instead of removing the entire amount from Big Pass. That was a reaction to fears raised by Siesta Key residents and organizations such as the SKA and SKCC, Wreford pointed out.

THE HISTORY

Bankemper explained that 20 years ago, when the City of Venice and the City of Sarasota eyed sand from Big Pass for renourishment projects, independent scientific analysis showed cause for concern.

A report released in January 1994 by David G. Aubrey, a senior scientist at [Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution](#), and Robert Dolan, a member of the Department of Environmental Sciences faculty at the University of Virginia, said, "Siesta Key's stability and low erosion rates are linked, both directly and indirectly, to the Big Sarasota Pass ebb shoal's capacity to shelter the key from high wave and storm forces, as well as to the sand transport that occurs in conjunction with the shoal, the pass, and the key. If the dredging planned by



During the Feb. 4 Siesta Key Village Association meeting, Jeff Madden of Beach Bites (left), Wendall Jacobson of Beach Bazaar (second from right) and architect Mark Smith (right) listen as Maria Bankemper of Best Western Plus-Siesta Key explains the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce's opposition to the dredging of Big Pass. Photo by Rachel Hackney

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is carried out, this will modify the wave and storm protection and alter the sediment supply to the onshore beaches.”

That report also noted that Big Pass has been open at least since 1888, based on historical charts of the region. It further pointed out, “The morphology [or structure] of [Lido and Siesta] keys [is] distinct, since Lido Key was formed from artificial fill of small mangrove islands, and Siesta Key was formed from successive beach ridge growth. ... The offset and the relative stability of the north side of Siesta Key create conditions favoring development of a large ebb tide shoal.”

The report continues, “The offset of Siesta Key protects or shelters sand entering the pass from waves approaching along the south, so the sand can accrete in this ‘offset’ more easily than along an open, straight coast served by an inlet. ... Aerial photographs spanning the period from 1940 to 1990 show very clearly

the movement of sand from the shoal to the beaches of Siesta Key.”

It also says, “Shoal geometry will change once the dredging takes place because the shoal will adjust to the void imposed by the dredging.”

SKVA MEMBER CONCERNS

Peter van Roekens, the SKA secretary, a member of the Boaters’ Coalition in the county and a Terrace East condominium complex representative at SKVA meetings, pointed out that the Corps probably would release its latest modeling studies of the Lido project late this month, a fact Wreford also noted in the interview last week with the *News Leader*.

“We can pretty much guarantee — I would say 99.9 percent — that those will [show] no harm to anything,” van Roekens added. “No harm to Siesta beaches or navigation.”

For years, van Roekens has surveyed Big Pass to provide information about the channel



The accretion of sand on Siesta Public Beach has been attributed to the natural downdrift of sand from north to south on the west coast of Florida. File photo

depth and markers on the website of the [Sarasota Yacht Club](#).

“You don’t dig a gigantic hole in the shoal, put in two channels and then not have an effect on anything,” van Roekens told the SKVA members. “It just doesn’t make sense ...”

Van Roekens added that he has asked the Corps project manager, Milan Mora, whether sand is available from any other source for the Lido Renourishment Project. Mora told him that about half a million cubic yards of sand is off the shore of Longboat Key, van Roekens said, “which is more than enough to renourish the sand in front of those two [most threatened condominium complexes] on Lido.”

In a Jan. 18 email to van Roekens, which Mora shared with the *News Leader*, Mora explained why recent state regulations for dredging have limited sand sources: “DEP Offshore Sand Search Guidelines for sediment source delineation states, ‘a minimum of two-foot buffer above non-compatible material should exist below the maximum dredge depth.’ ... The horizontal buffers applied ... around hard

bottoms can be variable, but the State’s common regulatory standard is a [400-foot] hard bottom buffer.”

SKA Vice President Michael Shay told the SKVA group that his organization also had voted to request a peer review of the Corps’ modeling and studies by “a completely independent group.” Referencing a comment on the project made by County Commissioner Nora Patterson during an address to the Siesta Key Condominium Council on Jan. 21, Shay said the preference is for the peer review to be undertaken by someone with no financial stake in Corps or other renourishment projects.

Additionally, he said, the SKA has requested the county to hold a public hearing on the project.

Patterson told the Condo Council members on Jan. 21 that she would be in favor of a public hearing.

When Gaddie called for a motion on Feb. 4, past SKVA and SKCC President Mark Smith offered it. Glen Cappetta of Sun Ride Pedicab seconded it. 



Beach Access 1 on the northern end of Siesta Key looks out over Big Pass. File photo



Le Grand Bisou and Siesta Key Outfitters, both in Siesta Center, were cited in June for having illegal outdoor displays in Siesta Village. File photo

A COMMITTEE'S REVISED DRAFT OF THE SIESTA ZONING ORDINANCE GOVERNING OUTDOOR DISPLAYS NEARS ITS COMPLETION AND THEN REVIEW BY ISLAND GROUPS

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Thanks to the efforts of a steering committee and assistance from architect Mark Smith, Siesta Key business owners are close to completing a draft revised ordinance that would allow some outdoor displays on the island.

Smith explained during the Feb. 4 meeting of the [Siesta Key Village Association](#) that the proposed ordinance would entail a permit application process. “We wouldn’t have a property owner or tenant say, ‘I didn’t know [about it].”

Smith is a past SKVA president and past chairman of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce.

The lack of knowledge that outdoor displays are not allowed under the current ordinance, the Siesta Key Overlay District (SKOD), led to a number of Village mer-

chants being cited by county Code Enforcement staff in June 2013 for violations. Merchants complained to the SKVA in June that they had seen their revenue drop

“*We don’t want it to become [like] a yard sale; we want it to be done tastefully.*”

Ray Lizotte
Owner
Comfort Shoes
Siesta Village



dramatically after they had to cease all forms of outdoor display.

Since then, business members have been working on a plan that would allow some merchandise to be kept outside.

During the Dec. 3 SKVA meeting, Mark Toomey, owner of [Robin Hood Rentals](#) and a member of the steering committee working on the latest revision, told members the group was close to finalizing its recommendations.

Mark Smith explained on Feb. 4 that he had met with county Code Enforcement and Zoning departments staff, as well as with representatives of the Office of the County Attorney, to craft a revised version of the SKOD that includes measurable constraints,

as recommended by county staff, so the facets of the ordinance could be enforced.

For example, Smith said, the outdoor display area would be limited to 240 square feet instead of an area measuring 12 feet by 20 feet. With some business properties, he pointed out, that area “may not be a nice rectangle,” so the maximum square footage was proposed.

A business owner would submit to the county a site plan, with the store or shop’s parking requirements, showing how the display space would be utilized, he continued. The only way a parking space could be used for display area, he added, would be if the business had an excess of parking spaces as required by the county code.



A couple of mannequins stood outside Le Grand Bisou Caribbean Boutique in early October after county Code Enforcement staff was told not to cite people for such displays while work continued on a revised zoning ordinance. File photo

Additionally, a business would have to pay \$25 when submitting the application for outdoor displays. He fashioned the permit process after the City of Sarasota's sidewalk café revocable provisional use application, Smith noted.

A retail business also would have to show that handicapped people would have clear access to the front door and that the area from the parking spaces to the front door would be clear. Further, if the business is in a plaza, it would not be able to block its neighbors through use of outdoor display space.

A Code Enforcement officer would be able to call up a business' site plan on a laptop

computer and check that the establishment was in compliance, Smith added. If the business owners are "not playing by the rules, they lose the permit and are no longer able to display outside."

THE PARAMETERS

Committee member Rick Lizotte, owner of [Comfort Shoes in Siesta Village](#), said of the new SKOD draft, "I kept trying to keep it to two sentences, but the county doesn't like that."

Still, Lizotte said, the latest version is only about two pages. County staff members have suggested they might propose that it be put into effect for the entire county, he added.



Past Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) President Russell Matthes (left) and SKVA Treasurer Roz Hyman (right) listen as President Cheryl Gaddie makes a point during the Feb. 4 meeting. Photo by Rachel Hackney

(SKVA President Cheryl Gaddie had noted at the outset of the discussion that outdoor displays are not allowed anywhere in Sarasota County.)

“What the key’s known for is its friendliness,” Lizotte said. “We’ve all learned we have to keep our doors open to make it a welcoming environment.”

As far as displays go, he continued, “We don’t want it to become [like] a yard sale; we want it to be done tastefully” as a “calling card” to draw attention. He added that business owners do not want the Village to look “cartoonish.”

Getting county approval for the revised ordinance is critical, he told the approximately 25 people present, because business owners recorded losses of “upwards of 30 to 40 percent in revenue” over six weeks after Code Enforcement staff made them stop putting displays outside last summer. “And that hurts,” Lizotte said.

Displays allow potential customers “to at least look without that commitment” of having to go inside a rental business or a retail shop, he added.

For another example, Lizotte noted, he and Toomey also have heard from customers that if they see only one or two bikes outside a rental shop, “their opinion is there is not enough [supply] available” to meet demand.

Because Smith just finished the latest revision the previous night, Gaddie explained, the committee members will need to review the new draft to see if they concur with it. Once they give their approval, SKVA will provide the document to the Siesta Key Chamber of



Ray Lizotte, owner of Comfort Shoes in Siesta Village, discusses the draft of the revised zoning ordinance in regard to outdoor displays. Photo by Rachel Hackney


Commerce and the Siesta Key Association (SKA), she added.

She planned to attend the SKA’s regular meeting on Feb. 6, Gaddie said, so she was hopeful the committee members would have given the document their stamp of approval by then. That would clear the way for the document to be discussed that evening.

“When everyone’s in agreement with this,” she continued, “then the committee itself will go back to the county” and seek County Commission approval for the revision to go into effect.

She said she was hopeful the SKA and the Chamber members would be impressed with the draft. “I think it’s laid out really, really well.”

Past SKVA President Russell Matthes added, “I think SKA recognizes how important our retail is.”

“I think everybody does,” Gaddie pointed out. 



THE OTHER RENOURISHMENT PROJECT

Tropical Storm Debby caused considerable erosion on Turtle Beach in June 2012. Photo courtesy of Ron Flynn

THE COUNTY IS CLOSE TO SUBMITTING ITS PAPERWORK TO THE STATE FOR THE UPCOMING \$11 MILLION UNDERTAKING ON SOUTHERN SIESTA KEY

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Sarasota County staff is “very, very close to completing an application submittal” for the planned renourishment of southern Siesta Key — including Turtle Beach — the county’s coastal resources manager has told *The Sarasota News Leader*.

During an interview last week, Laird Wreford said final tweaking of the design was under way, with the worst-case scenario calling for the work to start no later than Nov. 1, 2015. Right now, he pointed

out, plans call for it to begin in November of this year.

The estimated cost is about \$11 million, with about \$5.5 million of that coming from a Tourist Development Tax (TDT) fund allocated solely for beach renourishment. The rest of the money is expected to come from a state grant and assessments of adjoining property owners.

“If we are lucky, that means we get the state money that we need to supplement our

“ *We did find some excellent sand deposits.*

Laird Wreford
Manager
Coastal Resources
Sarasota County





Aerial Imagery Provided by: Aerial Cartographers of America, Inc.
Sarasota County, FL
March 2012
1" Resolution
NAD83, 1983 NAD83 Mass Plane Florida West FIPS 2002 (U.S. Survey Feet)

A county graphic shows the area for the South Siesta Key (Turtle Beach) Beach Restoration Project Phase II. Photo courtesy of Sarasota County

local dollars,” Commissioner Nora Patterson — who lives on the island — told about 70 members of the Siesta Key Condominium Council during their Jan. 21 meeting.

She did express concern that the permitting process with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) could delay the start of the work, reminding the audience that it took almost three years to get DEP approval for the first restoration of the southern Siesta beach.

Wreford explained that “there has been an active conscious effort at least on the part of the state ... to make things quicker, easier, more streamlined” in terms of permitting since the first Turtle Beach project was undertaken in 2006-07.

One other facet in the county’s favor this time, he added, is the fact that staff is “not really proposing drastic changes” from that first effort.

“We are adopting this hopeful optimism,” he said of the permit process.

The work cannot be undertaken during turtle nesting season, Patterson pointed out, which runs May 1 to Nov. 1 each year. Even if the project was delayed until February 2015, Wreford said, it could be completed before May 1.

And while the sand source has been the crux of controversy surrounding the City of Sarasota’s plans to renourish Lido Beach (see the related story in this issue), that is not a



Helen Clifford, secretary of the Siesta Key Condominium Council, and Frank Jurenka, the organization’s vice president, listen to Commissioner Nora Patterson speak on Jan. 21. Photo by Rachel Hackney

problem for the Turtle Beach project, Wreford pointed out.

Sufficient sand has been found offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, he said. "We did find some excellent sand deposits." However, it is about 8 to 9 miles out, whereas the source for the first project was only about 7 miles offshore.

Wreford acknowledged, "There will come a time when it is going to become extremely challenging to find offshore sand sources. ... There's no question about it."

The number and types of renourishment projects "have been ever increasing," Wreford continued.

For any renourishment project, sand of suitable grain size and color is a necessity, he noted.

This project will require a range of 700,000 to 900,000 cubic yards, he said.

Nonetheless, the source located for the upcoming renourishment probably also will have sufficient sand of adequate quality for use in one more project at Turtle Beach.


The central portion of the first nourishment "performed very well," he pointed out, both on the beach and in the system near the shore. That means Mother Nature continues to push sand up on that part of the beach, he said.

A July 9, 2013 memo to the County Commission reported that the South Siesta Key Beach Restoration Project from Dec. 20, 2006 to April 30, 2007 "consisted of the placement of about 922,300 cubic yards of dredged sand along approximately 2 miles of open shoreline fronting the Gulf of Mexico, from just



Beach-goers take advantage of a quieter Turtle Beach on a July 2013 afternoon. File photo

north of the former Midnight Pass, to about 300 feet south of Point of Rocks."

Regarding the cost of the next Turtle Beach project, Patterson explained during the Condominium Council meeting that while abutting property owners will be assessed part of the expense, the amount should be about the same as it was for that first undertaking. Just as they complete their initial payments, she pointed out, they probably will start getting billed for the next set. 

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS TO BEGIN MAILING ABSENTEE BALLOTS FEB. 7

The Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections Office will begin mailing absentee ballots for the March 25 elections to overseas military and civilian voters on Feb. 7, Supervisor of Elections Kathy Dent has announced.

Ballots to stateside voters will be mailed beginning Feb. 18, a news release says.

The March 25 elections include the Special County School District Election, the Holiday Park Park & Recreation District Election, a

City of Venice referendum and the Town of Longboat Key General Election, the release notes.

To request a mail ballot, a voter may call 861-8618, email absentee@SarasotaVotes.com or request one online at the supervisor of elections website at SarasotaVotes.com.

Requests for ballots to be mailed must be received by the Supervisor of Elections Office no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19,

the release points out. To be counted, voted absentee ballots must be returned to the Supervisor of Elections Office no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day. Absentee ballots may *not* be left at an early voting site or precinct, the release adds.

Because of changes in Florida election law, as of Jan. 1, a voter — with the exception of uniformed service and civilian voters living overseas — who requests a ballot be mailed

to an address other than the address on file in the Florida Voter Registration System must submit a signed written request.

Dent reminds voters that the signature on the absentee ballot certificate must match the voter's signature on file in the elections office to be counted, the release notes. Voters may update their signatures by submitting a Florida Voter Registration Application to the Supervisor of Elections Office.

COUNTY OUTREACH RAMPS UP FOR HEALTH INSURANCE ENROLLMENT

With open enrollment for the Health Insurance Marketplace ending Monday, March 31, Sarasota County has ramped up its efforts to assist the public in getting affordable health insurance, the county has announced.

Additional Certified Application Counselors have been hired to provide personal assistance as individuals go through the process of applying for and choosing new coverage options in the federal Health Insurance Marketplace, a news release says.

“The counselors are not affiliated with any insurance companies,” it adds. “Their role is to guide and provide unbiased information to help individuals make informed choices about coverage options based on their health care needs.”

Because so much of the process is Internet-driven, the release notes, the counselors have been assisting anyone who requests assistance, including those who do not have access to a computer.

“The counselors are gratified by the success stories,” it continues. “Many involve people for whom health insurance was out of reach

due to pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes. A 54-year-old woman living with diabetes and ongoing health issues had no insurance for more than a decade. She was able to enroll in a silver-level plan for just \$49 per month. In early January, she was able to use her new insurance plan to get the medical care she needed,” the release adds.

“Although we are mostly interfacing with middle-age adults, we are also equipped to assist those under age 30 who may be waiting to enroll,” said Shawnta Zackery, program coordinator, in the release.

The counselors hope to reach younger people through upcoming health fair events at State College of Florida (SCF) and at New College of Florida, which will also reach students from the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee (USFSM), the release notes.

This effort is the result of additional funding that Sarasota County's Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA), the release says. According to local health officials, chronic medical conditions

such as diabetes, high blood pressure — as well as anxiety and depression — can be effectively managed when individuals have health insurance, which enables them to access affordable primary health care, health promotion and prevention services, case management and other behavioral health services, the release points out. “This ultimately improves health outcomes among those living with complex health concerns” while helping to lower healthcare costs, it adds.

For information and the most recent version of the schedule of events, visit SarasotaHealthInsuranceMarketplace.com or call 866-547-2793.

CORRECTION

The original published version of the Jan. 31 article *A shocking estimate and an evaluation* included incorrect information about the City of Sarasota estimate for the planned State Street parking garage.

The estimate released in backup agenda material for the Feb. 3 City Commission meeting said the cost would be \$11.4 million, or about \$4 million more than city staff originally budgeted for the structure in 2009. The new figure is roughly 50 percent higher than the original estimate of \$7.3 million.



The public is welcome to work with counselors on an individual basis to learn about the new federal affordable healthcare options, county Health Department staff says. Photo from the National Cancer Institute via Wikimedia Commons

REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR WINNERS ANNOUNCED, WITH PROJECTS TO BE ON VIEW AT THE SARASOTA COUNTY FAIR IN MARCH

“The finest young scientific minds in Sarasota County will be honored with prizes, scholarships, cash awards and — for two gifted high school students — a chance to shine in international competition,” thanks to the 2014 Regional Science, Engineering and Technology Fair, the Education Foundation of Sarasota County has announced.

Science Fair Director Brad Porinchak released the names of the winners by grade level and research category this week. First-place projects will be on display at the Sarasota County Fair March 14 to 23, a news release notes.

The two overall winners of the high school contest will go on to compete internationally



(From left) Cardinal Mooney's Courtney Alexander Astore with judges Dr. Cathy Walsh and Kathy Seiders on Jan. 30 at Robarts Arena. Contributed photo

this spring. Sarasota High School's Rebecca Elsishans and Cardinal Mooney's Courtney Alexander Astore will represent the county at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF) in Los Angeles May 11 to 16, the release adds.

Elsishans' experiment, *Optimization of CO₂ calcination reaction using a nickel catalyst*, captured top honors in the environmental science division, the release notes. Astore's project, *Linking the Severity of One's Autism Diagnosis with Symptoms and Causations*, won in the behavioral and social science category. All expenses for their trip to the Intel ISEF will be paid for by the Education

Foundation of Sarasota County, the release points out.

Susan Scott, executive director of the Education Foundation, said in the release that 822 Sarasota County students from 49 public, private and home schools submitted 657 individual and team projects to the regional competition. More than 160 volunteer judges evaluated submissions and interviewed students from the third through fifth grades on Jan. 28 and from the sixth through 12th grades on Jan. 30. Their scores determined the overall winners and winners in each of the categories, the release explains.

The Sarasota County School District collaborates with the Education Foundation



Rebecca Elsishans (left) received accolades for her research during the competition, including the Faulhaber Foundation Prize for the Scientific Exploration of Nature. Elsishans is shown at the April 2013 awards ceremony with Education Foundation executive director Susan Scott. Contributed photo

and the Sarasota County Agricultural Fair Association to present the fair each year. Students participate by completing research in science, engineering, math or technology, using the scientific or engineering method, and then submit their projects for judging at Robarts Arena in late January, the release adds. The Education Foundation underwrites the regional fair, the county's participation in international competition "and cash prizes provided through the generosity of community sponsors," the release says.

The Intel ISEF has been called the "Olympics, the World Cup, and the World Series of science competitions," the release points out. Now in its 63rd year, "the Intel ISEF is the world's largest pre-college science competition and the only science project competition for students in grades 9-12," it notes. The Intel ISEF brings together students, teachers, corporate

executives and government officials from around the world. This year, more than 1,600 students from 70 countries will compete for more than \$4 million in scholarships, tuition grants, scientific equipment and scientific trips, the release continues.

Local sponsors support the Regional Science Fair at various levels. Leading sponsors are the Dart Foundation and The Faulhaber Foundation, the release says.

The Faulhaber Foundation Prize for the Scientific Exploration of Nature will be awarded to two students for their accomplishments. The Dart Foundation Award for Medicine & Health, the Dart Foundation Inspiration Award and two Omar Y. Cooper Student Achievement Awards will also be presented at the annual awards celebration scheduled for April 10.

SHIRLEY WINS 2013-14 PRINCIPAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

On Feb. 3, Florida Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart presented Barbara Shirley, principal of Alta Vista Elementary School, with the 2013-14 Principal Achievement Award for Outstanding Leadership, the State Department of Education has announced.

Jeannie Inagawa, assistant principal at Cracker Trail Elementary School in the Highlands County School District, received the 2013-2014 Outstanding Assistant Principal Achievement Award.

"Principals and assistant principals are the unsung heroes of our education system," said Stewart. "School leaders set the tone and determine the school's path to success. Dr. Shirley and Ms. Inagawa both display extraordinary leadership and dedication to their students, teachers and parents. They both truly deserve this honor."

In recognition of her honor Shirley received from Disney Youth Programs an exclusive

overnight stay at the Cinderella Castle Suite inside the Magic Kingdom Park along with theme park admission for her and her guests, a news release says. She will also receive a cash prize of \$5,000.

Three state finalists were chosen by the Department of Education from district nominees, the release notes. The principals and assistant principals were selected "because of their ability to foster cultures that increase student performance, promote safe learning environments, and establish partnerships with parents and community members," it adds.

The ceremony this week in Orlando closed out the ninth annual Commissioner's Summit for Principals, which brings together outstanding school leaders to share best practices and receive recognition for their accomplishments, the release says.



Barbara Shirley (left) accepts the award from Florida Education Commissioner Pam Stewart. Contributed photo

SUNRISE BEACH WALKS HAVE BEGUN AGAIN IN TWO LOCATIONS

Sarasota County Parks and Recreation's Sunrise Beach Walks began again Feb. 5 on the Siesta and Nokomis beaches, the county has announced.

Every Wednesday through the end of March, residents and visitors are invited to join in these community walks along the shore. After a walker has participated in four Sunrise Beach Walks, he or she will earn an event T-shirt, a news release notes.

There is a one-time \$1 registration fee to participate. Registration and check-in is from 8

to 9:30 a.m. every Wednesday. Each walker will receive a punch card, the release adds.

Check-in at Siesta Public Beach will be near the main concession area at the pavilion. Check-in at Nokomis Beach will be located near the beach plaza classroom.

For more information, visit scgov.net or contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 and ask about the Sunrise Beach Walks.



Early morning walkers are common on Siesta Public Beach. Photo courtesy Sarasota County

COUNTY LIBRARIES AND AARP OFFER FREE TAX RETURN ASSISTANCE

Sarasota County libraries and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) are offering free assistance with the preparation of 2013 tax returns through April 15, the county has announced.

AARP Tax-Aide volunteers are available to assist with filing federal returns at the following locations, a county news release says:

- Elsie Quirk Library, 100 West Dearborn St., Englewood: Mondays, 1 to 4:30 p.m.; Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to noon; and Saturdays, 1 to 4:30 p.m.

- Fruitville Library, 100 Coburn Road, Sarasota; Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Jacaranda Library, 4143 Woodmere Park Blvd., Venice: Mondays, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Selby Library, 1331 First St., Sarasota: Monday through Thursday, 2 to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 or visit the libraries' website at scgov.net/library, and click on "Tax Help."



The Fruitville Library is easily visible to passersby, thanks to its distinctive sculpture. Photo by Norman Schimmel

CONA TO PRESENT DISCUSSION ON INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

On Monday, Feb. 10, at 6:30 p.m., the Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) will present a discussion titled *Round or Square: World Class or Antiquated Intersections and Roads?*

The meeting will be held at the Sarasota Garden Club, located at 1131 Boulevard of the Arts in Sarasota.

The speakers will be Mike Lasche, representing bicycle and pedestrian advocates; Rod Warner, known informally in the community as “Mr. Roundabout”; and Alexandria DavisShaw, the City of Sarasota engineer.

For more information, visit conasarasota.org.

CYD ANNOUNCES FEBRUARY AND MARCH ACTIVITIES FOR TEENS

Community Youth Development (CYD) and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota County will present *Club Scene* for teens in grades 6-8 on a number of days this month and in March, the organization has announced.

Teens will be able to dance to a DJ, play in the game room or just hang out with their friends on the select dates. Refreshments will be served, a news release says. Following are the dates and places:

- Friday, Feb. 14, and Friday, March 14, from 7 to 11 p.m. at the Lee Wetherington Club, 3100 Fruitville Road, Sarasota. For more information call 366-7940.
- Saturday, Feb. 22, and Saturday, March 22, from 7 to 11 p.m. at the Roy McBean Club, 1790 21st St., Sarasota. For more information call 953-9549.
- Friday, Feb. 7, and Friday, March 21, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Gene Matthews Club, located at 6851 S. Biscayne Blvd. in North Port. For more information about North Port events, call 423-4545.

Community Youth Development and the Sarasota Young Professionals Group also invite high school teens to a Career Mixer, when teens will have a chance to discuss with a young professional what it is like to live and work in Sarasota, the release continues. Those events will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 11, and Tuesday, March 18, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., with the locations to be announced. For more information or to RSVP, call 922-5126.

Additionally, CYD and the Venice Area Young Professionals will host Career Mixers for high school teens, the release notes. Those events are planned for Tuesday, March 25, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Venice Area Chamber of Commerce, located at 597 S. Tamiami Trail in Venice. For more information or to RSVP, call 922-5126.

To get into any CYD event, youth are advised to be sure to bring their CYD ID cards. A young person who does not have one may sign up for one at an event, the release points out.

CYD is funded in part by the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners to provide social drug-free activities for youth.



For The Best Reading Experience
Try Reading *The Sarasota News Leader*
On Your Tablet

SarasotaNewsLeader.com/webapp

ORIOLES PARTNER AGAIN WITH SARASOTA COUNTY ON READING PROGRAM

Sarasota County is stepping up to the plate once again with the Big League Reader Program to encourage youth readership, the county has announced.

The program, which is in its fourth consecutive year, is a collaborative effort between the county's public libraries and the Baltimore Orioles.

Children who sign up at a county library and then read three or more books during this month will earn a free reserved grandstand ticket to a Baltimore Orioles Spring Training game, a county news release points out.

During the month of February, children ages 6 and older may go to any Sarasota County Library and pick up a Big League Reader scorecard to participate.

After finishing three books, a youngster must return to the library to get his or her scorecard stamped and signed by a library staff member. The scorecard will entitle the child to a free ticket to the Orioles' game against the Pittsburgh Pirates on Sunday, March 9, at 1:05 p.m. at Ed Smith in Sarasota, the release continues.

All books must be read and scorecards stamped by Friday, Feb. 28, the release stresses. "Companion tickets will be available at a reduced rate," it adds. "Seating is limited."

Big League Readers will also have the opportunity to enter their names into a drawing for the chance to throw out the first pitch of the game, the release notes.

"It's a great program that kids love," said Sarabeth Kalajian, director of Sarasota County



Libraries, in the release. "Most start out with the intention of reading the books so they can get a ticket to the game, and in the end, they win not only a great day at the ballpark but also a lifetime of discovery through reading."

Last season, nearly 100 Sarasota-area children completed the program and were eligible to receive a free ticket to an Orioles Spring Training game. March 9 is also Kids Run the Bases Day, the release says. Following the game, all youngsters 14 and younger will be invited onto the field to take their turn running the bases.

"The Baltimore Orioles are proud to team with Sarasota County's libraries to encourage youngsters to read," said David Rovine, vice president of the Orioles-Sarasota, in the release. "Youth literacy is a key community initiative supported by the Orioles, and we are excited to reward Big League Readers with a day at Ed Smith Stadium."

For more information, visit scgov.net or contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000.

SARASOTA WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL'S INAUGURAL LECTURE TO FEATURE JUDGE NEWMAN

A federal judge with experience in prominent terrorism cases will speak at the inaugural event of the new Sarasota World Affairs Council, the organization has announced.

Jon Newman, senior judge of the Second District Court of Appeals in New York City, will speak on *The Federal Courts Confront the War on Terror* at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Mildred Sainer Pavilion of New College of Florida, a news release says. A reception will follow from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at College Hall on the New College bayfront.

Newman was the presiding judge in the case of Omar Abdel-Rahman, the "Blind Sheik," convicted of conspiracy in a terrorism plot, the release explains. Newman is now involved in the case of four alleged terrorists indicted in New York City.

"The Sarasota World Affairs Council, or SWAC, is a member of the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization in the United States dedicated to educating and engaging U.S. residents on global issues," the release continues. "It joins nearly 100 councils across 40 states that reach more than half a million people yearly." SWAC, which is hosted by the New College Foundation, is a 501(c)(3) organization.

SWAC plans two more lectures this spring by distinguished international speakers, the release adds. In addition, the council is supporting The Great Decisions Program, which is sponsored by the World Affairs Councils. Interested SWAC members meet weekly with an experienced facilitator for small-group discussions of readings, the release notes.



New College of Florida students enjoy the bayfront view. Photo courtesy of New College

This year's issues include defense technology, Israel, Turkey, the Islamic awakening, energy independence, food security and climate change, China's foreign policy and U.S. trade policy, the release says.

Because the Newman lecture is an inaugural event, SWAC is offering it free to the public as well as to SWAC members, the release points out. College and university students in Sarasota and Manatee counties will have free admission to all of SWAC's programs. Seating is limited; call 487-4603 or email info@sarasotawac.org for reservations.

Information about membership may be found at sarasotawac.org.

COMMUNITY INVITED TO NOMINATE THE 2014 BOUNDARY CROSSER

SCOPE, a nonprofit community engagement organization, invites residents of Sarasota County to participate in the nomination process for its annual Boundary Crosser Award.

“Each year **SCOPE** recognizes an outstanding citizen who resides and builds community in Sarasota County,” said John McCarthy, executive director of SCOPE, in a news release. “This year, the board of directors has decided to expand the nomination by seeking suggestions from citizens as well as input from former Boundary Crossers.”

The Boundary Crosser Award is unique in the region, the release notes. It “recognizes an individual who forges connections by crossing traditional barriers to create a better community.”

SCOPE has developed a simple online survey for nominations, which will be open for submissions through Feb. 14, the release points out. SCOPE invites the public to nominate an individual who does the following:

- Is engaged in non-traditional partnerships and relationships that are making a positive difference in the community.
- Builds collaborations without a personal agenda.
- Inspires others to get involved in the community.
- Creates positive change in the community while demonstrating integrity, fairness and open-mindedness.

Nominations for the 2014 Boundary Crosser Award may be submitted at the following link: scopexcel.org/boundary-crosser-award.



John McCarthy is the executive director of SCOPE. Photo by Norman Schimmel

[html](http://scopexcel.org). A committee will review all of the nominations and select the 2014 SCOPE Boundary Crosser, who will be recognized at SCOPE’s 2014 Annual Celebration in September, the release says.

For more information about previous Boundary Crosser recipients and to view videos featuring past honorees, visit scopexcel.org.

For more information about SCOPE, visit scopexcel.org.

PART OF DATURA STREET CLOSED FOR REPAIRS IN SARASOTA

The City of Sarasota's Public Works Department started repairs near 1873 Datura St. on Feb. 4, with the work expected to take up to 10 days, the city has reported.

The road will be open to local traffic only.

The work will include repairs to water, sewer and gas lines; the sidewalk; the pavement; the curb; and a sanitary sewer manhole, a news release explains. A brief interruption in water, sewer and gas service will be required for the installation of a temporary bypass system for utilities, the release adds.

The repairs are necessary because of tree root growth under the pavement and into utility lines, the release says.

"Commuters are encouraged to be patient while driving safely around roadwork," it notes. 



An aerial map shows the location of 1873 Datura St. in Sarasota. Image from Google Maps

AFFORDABLE ACUPUNCTURE FOR EVERYONE

Our Mission

To provide our community with high quality and affordable acupuncture and herbal medicine and to create a treatment space that connects people and builds community.

- Gene Burgess and Melonie Burgess, licensed acupuncture physicians
- Serving Sarasota since 2008
- Treatment rates are on a sliding scale, from \$15-\$35; new patients pay a one-time additional fee of \$10

[Click To Schedule An Appointment Online](#)

3615 Webber St • Sarasota, FL 34232
(941) 922-4611
SarasotaCommunityAcupuncture.com



MENTION
THIS AD TO
RECEIVE
\$5 OFF THE NEW
PATIENT FEE



[Click for larger map and driving directions](#)

Open Tuesday
through Saturday



Images show two views of how Jane Doe would have appeared. Images courtesy Sheriff's Office

NEW IMAGES RELEASED OF SHERIFF'S OFFICE'S 'JANE DOE'

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has released new computer-generated images of a woman, known only as Jane Doe, who was found dead on Feb. 6, 2007.

At that time, bones were discovered in a wooded area 50 yards south of 5438 Ashton Court in Sarasota, a news release explains. "The subsequent investigation determined the human remains were that of a woman who was buried in a shallow grave. She had been dead for up to a year. The manner or cause of death has not been released," the release adds.

The new images were created by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office with the use of craniofacial reconstruction software, the release continues. The victim was a white female in her 30s or 40s, 5 feet 4 inches to 5

feet 9 inches tall, weighing 145 to 165 pounds, with long brown hair that had blonde streaks. Her eye color could not be determined and may be different from that depicted, the release notes.

The skeletal analysis indicated the victim might have fractured her nose and right wrist at some point in her life, it says. "She had breast implants that were manufactured before the issuance of serial numbers," the release continues. Additionally, she was wearing a shirt "Made in Italy" and a skirt with a leather belt made by "Spice Wear."

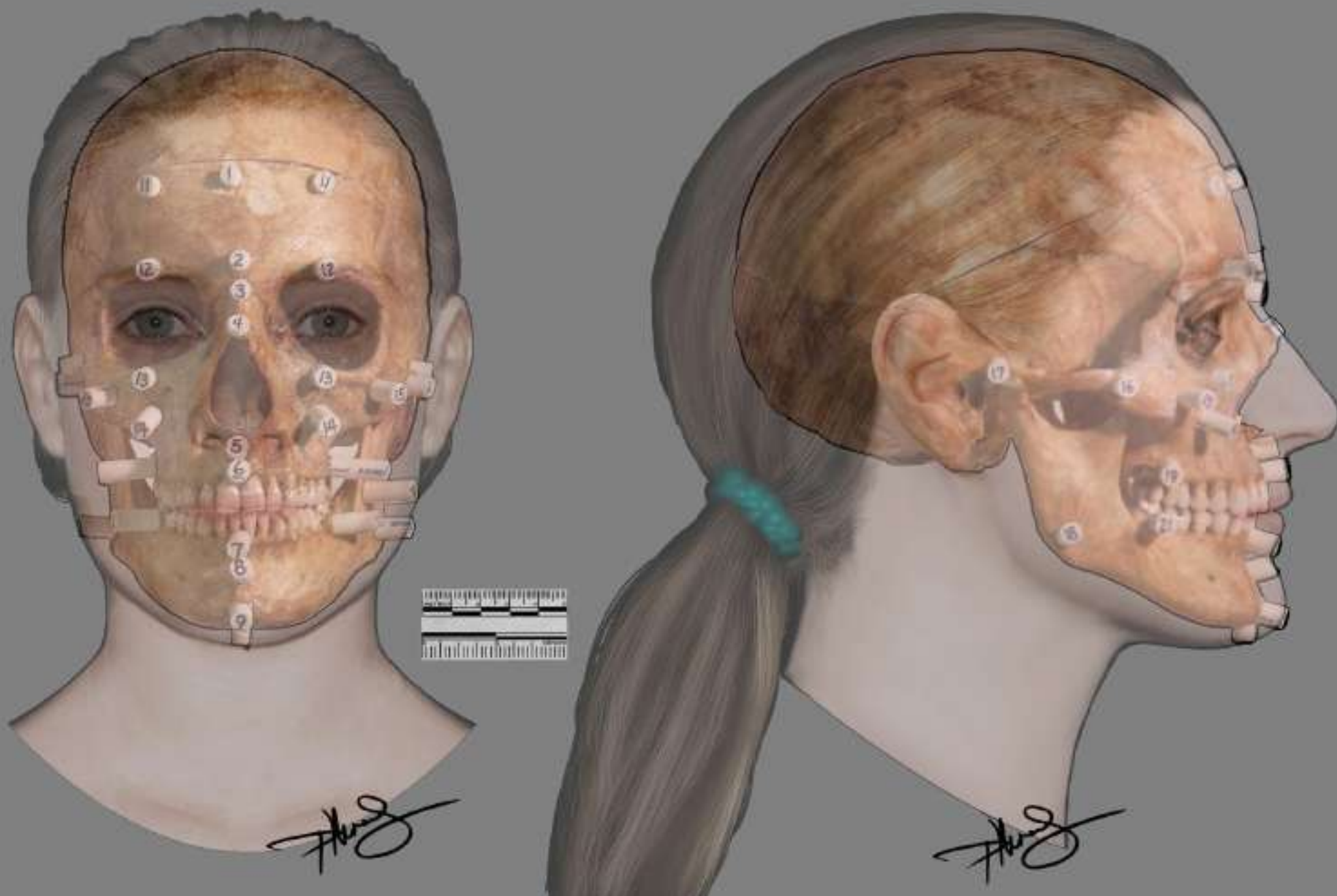
A Stable Isotope Analysis of the victim's teeth, bone and hair is being performed to try to determine her water consumption and diet in the effort to pinpoint in which areas of the country she lived. "Tooth enamel will

help determine where a person was raised,” the release points out. “A bone sample will determine where someone lived in the last seven to ten years before they died. Hair provides information about where the person lived in the few months prior to death,” the release says. All of this information will be synthesized by staff at the University of South Florida with the hope of determining what region of the country she was from and where she lived in her final years, to further assist efforts to identify her, the release explains.

Detectives and crime scene investigators have used many resources to try to identify this woman for the past seven years to no avail, the release notes. Her DNA profile is in

the [CODIS](#) database, and her dental profile is in the National Crime Information Center/Florida Crime Information Center database, the release points out. An earlier sketch based on FBI facial reconstruction has been distributed internationally, and her information is in state and national missing persons databases and websites, it adds.

Anyone with information on this case, or anyone who knows someone who disappeared prior to February 2007 who matches this physical description, is asked to call Criminal Investigations at 861-4900, contact Crime Stoppers at 366-TIPS (8477) or go online at sarasotacrimestoppers.com.



Images show how the craniofacial reconstruction was undertaken. Image courtesy Sheriff's Office



This image shows a front view of Jane Doe. Photo courtesy Sheriff's Office

TWO TEENS ARRESTED IN STRING OF VEHICLE BURGLARIES

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested two 17-year-olds for burglarizing 11 vehicles near Bee Ridge and McIntosh roads early Thursday morning, Jan. 30, the office has reported.

Deputies investigating the alleged crimes on Parnell Drive, North and South Taggart Cay and Busti Drive located a cell phone that did not belong to any of the victims, a news release says. They determined the phone belonged to Cody Salmon and made contact with him and Mackenzie Dailing outside Dailing's home at 4828 Lahania Drive in Sarasota, the release adds.

Salmon was carrying a backpack with two camouflage Ghillie suits, the release notes.

Both teens admitted to the burglaries, and Dailing's mother directed deputies to numerous car audio components and other electronics that she had found in the teen's room, the release says.

All stolen property was recovered and returned to the victims, it notes.

Dailing was charged with 11 counts of Burglary of an Unoccupied Vehicle, while Salmon, whose address is 1010 Bacon Ave., Sarasota, was charged with 11 counts of Burglary to an Unoccupied Conveyance.

Dailing also was charged with Violation of Probation, because he was on probation for a charge of Grand Theft when the burglaries occurred, the report says.



Mackenzie Dailing/Contributed photo



Cody Salmon/Contributed photo

NORTH PORT WOMAN CHARGED IN CHILD-NEGLECT CASE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a North Port woman for Child Neglect after her 2-year-old son suffered severe burns, the office has announced.

Devon Rowand, 24, of 425 Granada Blvd., A1, North Port, called the victim's father on Jan. 25 and told him there had been a "little accident," according to the report. Rowand said she was blow-drying the boy's hair after bathing him, but she left him in the tub briefly while she went to check on her two-month-old in the home, the report continues. She said the boy burned himself but she did not want to take him to the emergency room because she would be reported to the Department of Children and Families, the report continues.

When Rowand returned the boy to his father on Jan. 29, the man saw the burns on the child's left thigh and genitals and immediately took him to the Sarasota Memorial Hospital (SMH) satellite unit in North Port for treatment, the report says. Doctors determined the boy had first- and second-degree burns, a news release notes.

An SMH physician told officers the burns "appeared to be consistent with an accident," the report says.

Later, Rowand admitted that the bathtub had not drained completely when she left the older child to check on the younger one, the report



Devon Rowand/Contributed photo

continues. She added that she left the blow dryer on the closed toilet seat next to the tub, according to the report. The dryer "stays hot for so long after it's turned off that she never puts it back in the closet until at least 30 minutes has elapsed," the report adds.

Rowand is charged with Child Neglect for knowingly leaving her unclothed toddler unsupervised, next to a defective hot hair dryer that was still plugged in, and next to a bathtub containing water, the release says. She is being held without bond.



Simply put, Crime Stoppers relies upon the cooperation between the police the media and the community to provide a flow of information about crime and criminals. All submitted tips are secure and anonymous.

(941) 366-TIPS (8477) • SarasotaCrimeStoppers.com

349 CITATIONS RESULT FROM JANUARY SATURATION PATROLS

In January, saturation patrols by the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office resulted in 18 DUI arrests and 349 citations for other traffic offenses, the office reported this week.

The Sheriff's Office "conducts monthly saturation patrols to remove dangerous, uninsured or impaired drivers from local roadways to keep motorists safe," a news release explains. The latest numbers do not include DUI arrests made during the month outside these specific initiatives, the release points out.

Saturation patrols are conducted instead of what is referred to as a "DUI Checkpoint," the release adds. The patrols include a number

of Patrol and Traffic unit deputies working targeted zones at the same time to monitor driving activity, it says. "Because of their design," the release notes, "saturation patrols are mobile and take place in different areas of the county."

This month, the release continues, patrols began on Feb. 1 and 2 and will subsequently be held on Feb. 8, 15, 16 and 22.

This initiative is conducted in partnership with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and supported through a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation, the release adds. 

"Happiness resides not in possessions, and not in gold, happiness dwells in the soul." — *Democritus*

7th ANNUAL BMW of Sarasota

chillounge night

the ultimate outdoor lounge party

NEW RESERVED SEATING OPTIONS AVAILABLE

VISIT CHILLOUNGENIGHT.COM

TO PURCHASE TICKETS

 **/CHILLOUNGENIGHT**



MARCH 8th, 2014

NEW VENUE!

AT WESTFIELD SOUTHGATE

FULL STAGE WITH CATWALK
DANCE FLOOR & DJs
LIVE BANDS
FASHION SHOW
VALET PARKING
FINE DINING
BEVERAGE SERVICE
SAMBA PARADE



PRESENTED BY:

BENEFITING:

FIREWORKS PRESENTED BY:

Westfield
Southgate

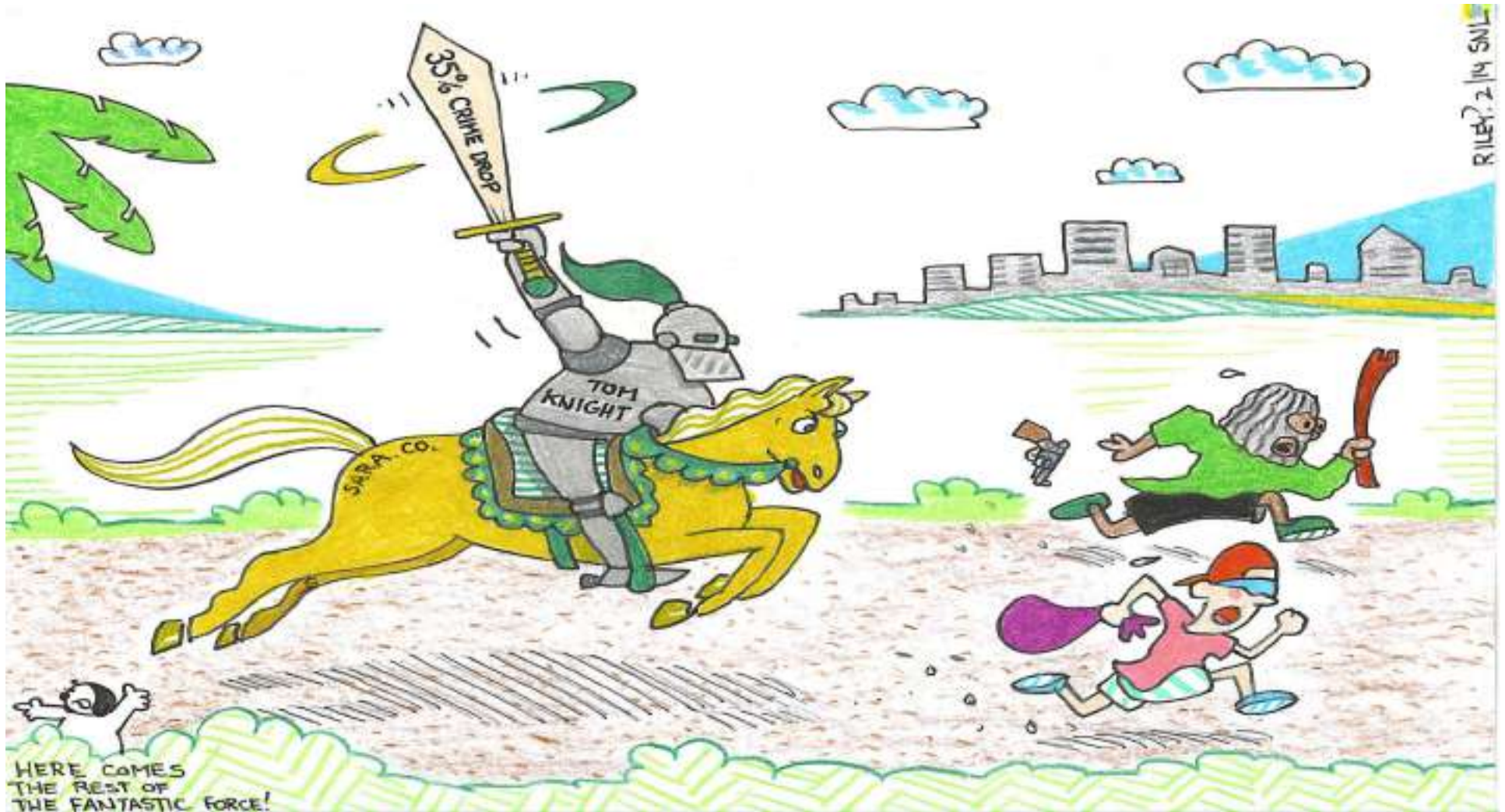
girls inc.


DANIEL MATUSIAK
artistry & design

Celebrity X Cruises

PERONI

OPINION



SHERIFF TOM KNIGHT DELIVERS POSITIVE RESULTS

EDITORIAL

One of the delights of living in Sarasota County is how liberating the warm climate is. Being out of doors, walking instead of driving, basking in the sunny days and balmy nights ... all add a special dimension to life here on the Suncoast.

The fear of becoming a victim of criminal activity definitely would detract from that, but Sarasota County is also blessed with a rather low crime rate. And, thanks to Sheriff Tom Knight and his staff, it keeps getting lower and lower.

Recently, Knight and other members of his team reported to the County Commission on crime statistics for 2013. Crime in the unincorporated county dropped by more than

8 percent over 2012, but it was down even more in terms of serious offenses: Violent crime was down almost 16 percent, and total major crimes were down 11 percent. Forcible sex offenses were down 29 percent. Robberies were down by a third.

But two statistics Knight presented paint an especially rosy picture of his tenure as sheriff. In the almost five years he has been on the job, crime has fallen about 35 percent in the county.

Moreover, Sarasota County continues to lead the state's most populous counties — those with populations of 100,000 or more — in crime reduction.

As residents, we can take comfort in how this makes everyday life safer for all of us. But

OPINION

as taxpayers, we also can be grateful for how economically Knight has accomplished all of this.

For example, by skillful management of sworn deputies, the Sheriff's Office has kept costs quite low. Since 2011, 26 deputies have been reassigned to put those resources where they were most needed. If the Sheriff's Office had had to hire 26 additional deputies, it could have cost taxpayers more than \$3.2 million. Yet, by careful analysis of existing resources and allocation of personnel to those areas of greatest need, the cost to the county has been less than \$320,000.

The Sheriff's Office has made recruitment of quality applicants, and their retention once on the job, a top priority. In addition to superior salaries and benefits, equipment and training opportunities also are attractive to prospective deputies. Most recent applicants already have Florida law enforcement certification.

With a total staff of approximately 1,000 sworn officers and support personnel, the Sheriff's Office is an efficient organization working to make the county safer.

Knight told the commissioners, "They are probably the best law enforcement workforce I've ever been around."

Growth in the county will continue to place a greater demand on the Sheriff's Office in the future. One focus is the area around University Parkway and Interstate 75. The increasing number of major sporting events that will be held at Nathan Benderson Park, along with the planned opening of The Mall at University Town Center, will increase considerably the number of deputies needed in that vicinity.

The Sheriff's Office had Maj. Kevin Kenney research the impact of large malls in Orlando on staffing requirements for the Orange County Sheriff's Office, since the larger malls there will be similar in size to the new mall here. While the sher-

iff expects to have to add as many as six deputies to meet increased demand in the University Parkway/I-75 area, Knight told the commissioners he was trying to delay making a decision on personnel and new equipment until he could be more certain of exact needs.

Since Knight took office as sheriff in 2009, many changes have been made in the department. The effect of those changes has been to create a highly qualified, professional force that has significantly reduced crime and made the county a safer place to live and work.

It is an excellent complement to the sun, sea and warm temperatures. 

Sarasota County continues to lead the state's most populous counties — those with populations of 100,000 or more — in crime reduction.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

READER SUGGESTS A DIFFERENT METHOD OF FRACKING

To the Editor:

There is a best practice in fracking that involves recovering the water and chemicals used to fracture the rock and shale and reusing it to frack again. Thus, the cost of the water is recovered, as well as the cost of the chemicals.

The financial savings of doing this would provide some incentive, and a little government pressure might provide some more incentive. Maybe a tax on the water and chemicals *not* recovered?

Pete Theisen
Sarasota

Editor's note: The use of the term "best practice" has become a popular misnomer when applied to practices that are not "good" at the outset. There is virtually nothing about fracking that could be termed a good practice. Thus, it would seem that the only appropriate application of "best practice" would be the avoidance of pumping millions of gallons of toxic brine into the ground in the first place.

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference" — *Robert Frost*



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Sarasota News Leader welcomes letters to the editor from its readers. Letters should be no more than 300 words in length, and include the name, street address and telephone number of the writer. Letters should be emailed to

Letters@SarasotaNewsLeader.com, with "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line. Letters actually printed will be selected based on space available, subject matter and other factors. We reserve the right to edit any letters submitted for length, grammar, spelling, etc. All letters submitted become the property of *The Sarasota News Leader*.

Press Releases & News Tips

News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Sarasota Leisure

TUCKETT STEALS THE SHOW

SURE SIGN SPRING IS HIGH

SIESTA SEEN

Your Lifestyle Guide To The Suncoast

Inside

TUCKETT STEALS THE SHOW



Ricardo Rhodes and Amy Wood in Balanchine's Four Temperaments. Contributed photo by Frank Atura

A PREMIERE BY A BRITISH CHOREOGRAPHER PROVES ITS PLACE AMID WORKS BY BALANCHINE AND ASHTON

By Elinor Rogosin

A&E Writer

I believe the Sarasota Ballet has reached a new level of sophistication with its latest program of three emotionally profound abstract ballets. Instead of plot-driven story ballets that are easy to follow, Iain Webb programmed an evening that challenged both the dancers and the audience.

While George Balanchine's *Four Temperaments* and Sir Frederick Ashton's *Sinfonietta* pushed the boundaries of abstract, or non-literal, ballets in the mid-20th century, it was *Lux Aeterna*, the beautiful lyrical ballet just created by Will Tuckett for

the Sarasota Ballet that plucked everyone's heartstrings, including mine, for he was able to communicate a strong anti-war message without being didactic or maudlin.

Tuckett has stated that the 100th anniversary of World War I was the motivation for *Lux Aeterna* (eternal light), and the ballet is a tribute or requiem for the soldiers who gave their lives in the war "that was going to end all wars." American composer Morten Lauridsen's powerful non-liturgical choral requiem dominated the emotional center of the ballet, intensifying the connection between the force of the



Logan Learned danced the Melancholic role on Jan. 31. Contributed photo by Frank Atura

music and the choreography. The gray unitards of the male dancers and the soft gray chiffon skirts of the women (costumes by Bill Fenner) added a visual softness to the sculptural architectural choreography.

Danielle Brown and Ricardo Graziano were the lead couple, but this was primarily a work about groups of people. The dramatic opening scene with men in silhouette crouching as if ready to fire their guns, hiding as if in a foxhole and then falling as if killed, defined the ballet's theme and purpose. Throughout *Lux Aeterna*, the entire cast of 23 dancers moved in unison and then broke apart in twos and threes, came together in small groups and regrouped — all in a slow deliberate way

that exemplified the emotional choral music. There were lifts that mutated into poses and stopped time for a moment in counterpoint to the constantly shifting spatial patterns that covered every inch of the small stage. At times, when the women hovered over the bodies of the men, I wondered were they angels, nurses or lovers.

In the final section, light flooded the scene as if the sun had emerged. The choreography of the earlier sections was repeated, but there was a different group dynamic, as if the turns and leaps and poses no longer reflected feelings of grief and fear but now expressed feelings of hope.



Will Tuckett debuted his Lux Aeterna during this latest Sarasota Ballet program. Contributed photo



Victoria Hulland is a principal of Sarasota Ballet. Contributed photo by Barbara Banks

Still, as Danielle Brown offered her hand to Ricardo Graziano and led him in a slow walk towards the light in the final minutes of the ballet, I wondered if they were walking towards peace ... heaven ... love. I am not sure. Instead, I was left with the feeling that an individual is only a small part of a gigantic puzzle when war is declared. But given the success of *Lux Aeterna*, hopefully, Will Tuckett will continue to create new ballets for Sarasota.

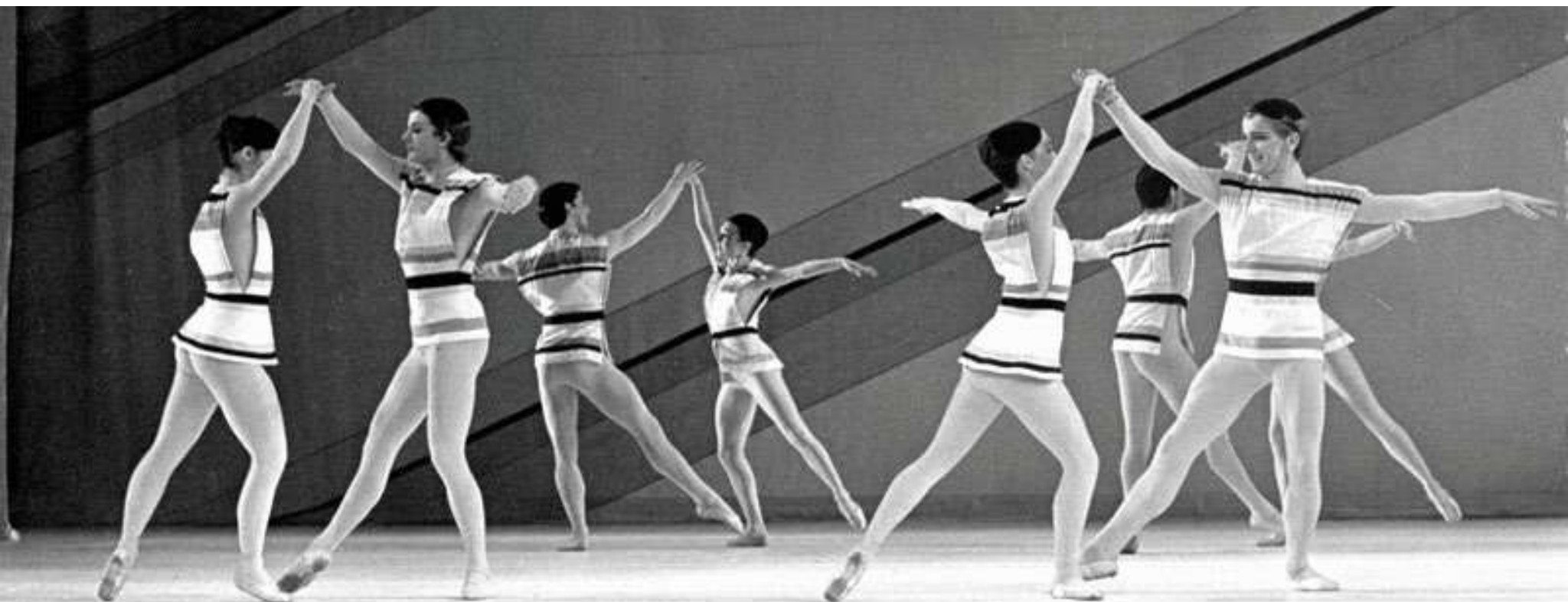
BALANCHINE

Though Tuckett's new ballet was the focus of the evening, the program opened with a look to the past. *Four Temperaments*, George Balanchine's stunning neo-classical ballet set to Paul Hindemith's haunting score for piano and string orchestra, has been a major influence on both 20th and 21st century choreographers since its first performance in 1946. It is a stark devilishly difficult ballet with subtle musicality and strong complex choreography that suggests medieval ideas about human nature. Though the ballet uses each of the temperaments as a motivating

impulse, *Four Temperaments* is essentially a ballet about the ways the human body can respond in time and space to music, and the choreography both reflects and comments on the music.

As the ballet opens, a woman (Ellen Overstreet) and a man (Daniel Pratt) stand side-by-side on an empty stage. She carefully points her foot and then they take each other's hands and he supports her *arabesque*, as the first theme responds to a hint of the score's beautiful music. In the second *pas de deux* of this leotard ballet — which reveals every gesture and every step of the dancers' bodies — Kristianne Kleine was ably partnered by Daniel Rodriguez. And in the final and third theme, Victoria Hulland, partnered by Jamie Carter, used her feet like a cat pawing the floor.

The choreography in *Four Temperaments* is fast and intricate, with thrusting hips, flexed wrists and legs that punch the air like weapons. However, the secret to Balanchine's world goes beyond the steps, and Logan Learned in the sad *Melancholic* variation embodied the



The original cast performs Sir Frederick Ashton's *Sinfonietta*. Contributed photo



Ricardo Graziano was especially strong in The Four Temperaments. Contributed photo by Barbara Banks

intensity in the choreography, his body arching and folding as if being pulled and stretched by an invisible force. The chorus of girls who accompanied Learned stabbed at the floor in a way that reminded me of the Furies in ancient Greek plays. In fact, the ballet has a stark mythic quality like an ancient forgotten ritual.

In the second, *Sanguinic*, variation, the usually light-footed Rhodes danced with a stiff attitude as if he were not comfortable in the role. But Ricardo Graziano's passionate interpretation of the *Phlegmatic* variation was a surprise, as he usually dances the role of a debonair cavalier. Alone at first, he responded to the sad haunting melody with his whole body, arms outstretched and reaching for the unknown in desperation. Four girls echoed his movements, and when both the music and his mood lightened, they joined him in a line dance, their legs and arms folding in and out in unison to a syncopated melody that suggested an ancient folk dance.

After *Choleric* (Danielle Brown) — the last variation — the entire cast returned to the stage and, like a group of giant centipedes, moved forward, legs striking, thrusting through space, while a series of high lifts punctuated the musical crescendos.

It seemed to me that the dancers needed more space to stretch out the fast sophisticated, continuously moving choreography of *Four Temperaments*; and perhaps when this ballet is repeated, it will be performed on a larger stage. Also, with repetition, the dancers will use their musicality to go beyond the steps and understand that movements, like words in a sentence, have a way of connecting in order to provide meaning.


ASHTON

Sir Frederick Ashton's *Sinfonietta* is a delightful and quirky ballet in three movements that correspond to Sir Malcolm Williamson's score. The opening *Toccata* is a busy *pas de deux*, with fast footwork for two couples: Kate Honea and Alex Harrison and Nicole Padilla and Juan Gil.

The costumes — striking multi-colored, striped tunics and jackets over white tights — hint at the overall happy mood of the ballet.

Elegy, the second movement, was a complete turnaround of mood. Victoria Hulland and Ricardo Rhodes, the central couple, wore tight sparkly white jackets and tights that could have come from a catalogue of the latest fashions on a far away planet, because in this odd acrobatic variation, Hulland is carried aloft by four men. She remained calm, like a high priestess, while twisting and turning and being carried and pulled like a ball of taffy as she “danced” in mid air. However, I was beginning to be annoyed, for Hulland is one of the strongest, loveliest dancers in the company, as she showed when she was finally able to put her feet on the ground and join Ricardo Rhodes in a slow sculptural *pas de deux*. He danced with a verve that was missing earlier in the evening.

The *Tarantella*, the final movement, brought together the entire cast — including many young dancers — in an explosive return of the first movement's hopping jumps and shoulder rolls.

It took me awhile to find a way into the ballet, but I have to admit it somehow grew on me after the first movement, as it gained in fascination, energy and high-spirited dancing. Altogether, this was a special evening of gorgeous music and impressive dancing. 

SURE SIGN SPRING IS HIGH



Ed Smith Stadium peers out of the morning fog on Moving Day for the Baltimore Orioles. All photos by Norman Schimmel

THE ORIOLES MARK MOVING DAY, WITH THE 2014 SPRING TRAINING HOME OPENER JUST WEEKS AWAY

Staff Reports

For about two hours on the morning of Monday, Feb. 3, the Baseball Operations Center for Ed Smith Stadium — located at 1090 Euclid Ave. in Sarasota — was the setting for a major methodical moving process: The Baltimore Orioles equipment arrived for the 2014 Spring Training season.

Trucks from the Von Paris firm — official movers of the Orioles since 1991— completed a 1,000-mile drive from Baltimore that began Jan. 31.

Although fog enveloped the grounds early, the skies cleared in a welcoming gesture for

all the basics the Birds will need to make Sarasota home.

The Orioles will play their first of 15 home Spring Training games on Saturday, March 1, at 1:05 p.m. against the Toronto Blue Jays.

This year marks the fifth consecutive Spring Training season for the team in Sarasota and the fourth in the renovated Ed Smith Stadium, an Orioles news release points out. (For ticket information, visit this [website](#).)

Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel was present to record all the activity. 



David Rovine, vice president-Sarasota for the Orioles, keeps a watchful eye on the process.







Siesta Seen

BAY ISLAND SEAWALL WORK IS MIRED IN A LEGAL MORASS; THE STREETLIGHT ISSUE FINALLY MAY BE RESOLVED; AND THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE IS ASKING FOR HELP IN IDENTIFYING AN ISLAND BURGLARY SUSPECT



By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

On Aug. 27, 2013, Sarasota County staff learned of the death of the owner of the construction company that was handling the Bay Island Park seawall construction project.

The man's body was found on a sandbar in Big Pass, and the death was later determined to have resulted from natural causes.

However, the project has been on hold since then.

Sarasota County spokesman Curt Preisser told me this week that county staff worked with the company that held the bond on the project, encouraging it to find another contractor to take over the work. Ultimately,



A section of Bay Island Park has been closed to the public since the seawall construction project came to a halt in late August 2013. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

Preisser said, the firm chose not to pursue that path.

Now the county is tackling the matter through the legal arena, Preisser said.

On March 5, 2013, the County Commission voted unanimously to award a \$997,379 bid to CB Construction Services Corp. of Fort Myers to build the new seawall. The work was scheduled to be completed before Sept. 30. About 82 percent of the cost was to be covered by a West Coast Inland Navigation District grant, according to a memo provided to the County Commission, and that grant

expired on Sept. 30. That was the reason it was important to adhere to the timeline as it was set out.

The seawall, which was more than 40 years old, clearly was in need of replacement, as evidenced by its physical state.

With the project still on hold, Preisser said this week, county staff is monitoring Bay Island regularly to make certain the construction materials remaining on the site are secured.

Preisser added that he had no indication about when the legal matters might be resolved.



*Construction materials sit in one section of Bay Island Park just south of the Siesta Drive bridge.
Photo by Rachel Hackney*

Siesta Seen

ABOUT THAT LIGHT POLE ...

It has become a bit of a running joke at Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) meetings: A light pole knocked down by a drunken driver in early September 2012 near Siesta Beach Resort & Suites — located at 5311 Ocean Blvd. in Siesta Village — never has been replaced.

Mark Smith — who oversees the village upkeep on behalf of the Siesta Key Village Maintenance Corp. — was scheduled for a Feb. 5 “walk-through” with Lisa Cece, the new county employee charged with the same job

on the county’s behalf, he told SKVA members at their Feb. 4 meeting.

Cece’s formal title is business professional and special district coordinator in the county’s Transportation and Real Estate Department.

“We don’t have our streetlight yet,” Smith noted again during the meeting. In fact, a number of matters that needed addressing, which he went over with county staff in late October 2013, never have been seen to, including the removal of paint on one area of Village sidewalk.



Work continued Feb. 4 on the site of the new stormwater pond, just east of Siesta Public Beach. Excavation of the pond to the necessary depth and configuration has been completed, county staff reported this week, and the stormwater lift station that operated on the site has been removed. The project completion still is set for April 13. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

With Cece taking on the Village oversight for the county, Smith added, “Hopefully, we’re going to get some things resolved.”

During the Jan. 7 SKVA meeting, when Smith reported that the new streetlight still was not up, Siesta Key Association Vice President Michael Shay responded that it had been more than a year since the pole was leveled.

SKVA and SKA members are not the only ones wondering about that streetlight. On the morning of Feb. 1, a man who lives on Ocean Boulevard emailed Commissioner Nora Patterson, a Siesta resident, to say, “[T]here is an item that has been bothering me for some time. The streetlight in the Village in front of the motel and across from Terrace East on Ocean Blvd. was knocked down by a car almost two years ago. When I asked about it with a member of the Siesta Key Association, I was told that the streetlight had been delivered, but that no one from the County would install it. Would you please check into this, and see if the streetlight can be installed. It is very dark there early in the morning.”

Patterson replied on Feb. 4, copying County Administrator Tom Harmer: “I will certainly check on this or rather request that it be checked. Tom — who would be responsible for this?”

Harmer responded to Patterson a couple of hours later: “I copied our County Engineer Jim Harriott so he can follow up on the status and report back.”

Perhaps the new streetlight finally will go up.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE NEAR FOR *I DO AGAIN*

Registration ends on Monday, Feb. 10, for Sarasota County Parks and Recreation’s popular *Say I Do Again* wedding vow-renewal event at Siesta Public Beach. It is always held on Valentine’s Day, which falls this year on Friday, Feb. 14.

The ceremony will begin at 6 p.m.

Registration may be completed online at parksonline.scgov.net or by calling 861-9930. No on-site registration is offered. The cost is \$5 per couple.

Couples arriving early will enjoy music provided by WCTQ-FM/106.5 CTQ beginning at 5 p.m., a county news release says.

Following the ceremony, each couple will receive a commemorative certificate and enjoy wedding-themed refreshments.

BURGLARY SUSPECT SOUGHT

The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office is asking the public to help detectives identify a person of interest seen in surveillance images near the scenes of recent residential burglaries on Siesta Key.

The crimes have occurred at condominiums on the south end of the island, the office has reported. “The burglarized units show no sign of forced entry, and the suspect takes jewelry and cash without disturbing anything else so when residents return they don’t immediately realize anything’s missing,” a news release

Siesta Seen

says. The crimes have occurred during the daytime and early evening.

“As a reminder of our routine crime prevention tips, residents should lock their doors and windows every time they leave their homes,” the release adds.

Anyone with information on these crimes or this person of interest should call Criminal Investigations at 861-4900 or leave an anonymous tip with Crime Stoppers by calling 366-TIPS (8477) or going online at www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com.

Additional images of the suspect are posted on the agency Facebook page, www.facebook.com/SarasotaCountySheriff.



A third surveillance photo shows a Siesta burglary suspect without sunglasses. Image courtesy Sheriff's Office.



Another surveillance image shows the suspect in recent Siesta burglaries. Image courtesy Sheriff's Office

Siesta Seen

CLARIFICATION

The Jan. 31 *News Leader* article about three transient units that will be built on the second floor of Gidget's Coastal Provisions in Siesta Village was not clear on how long each unit would be rented. Mark Smith, the architect for the project, explained that the plan is to rent the units for no more than 30 days at a time, similar to hotel and motel accommodations. **SNL**



The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office is looking for this suspect in connection with several burglaries at condominiums on Siesta Key. Image courtesy Sheriff's Office



On Feb. 4, workers were painting the Siesta Village building that will be home to Gidget's Coastal Provisions and three transient units. Gidget's co-owner Brian Wigelsworth says it may be March 1 before he and his wife, Trudy, have a certificate of occupancy to open the business. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Penny McNamee/Contributed photo

FST ANNOUNCES FLORIDA PREMIERE OF *DADDY LONG LEGS*

Florida Studio Theatre will open the third show of its Mainstage Season, *Daddy Long Legs*, Friday, Feb. 7, the theatre has announced.

The musical is based on a 1912 book by the same name, written by Jean Webster. The story is centered around a young orphan, Jerusha Abbot, “who gains an education at the hands of an unknown philanthropist” whom she affectionately names “Daddy Long Legs,” a news release says.

“It is an enchanting journey, one that showcases a girl’s path to independence as she navigates through classes at a prestigious college and makes unexpected discoveries about life and love,” the release continues.

Tickets may be purchased by calling the FST box office at 399-9000 or visiting

floridastudiotheatre.org. Tickets range from \$18 to \$36.

A dozen interpretations of this story have been developed through the years, the release points out, including a 1952 British musical *Love From Judy*; American films in 1919, 1931, 1935 and 1955; and a Korean movie adaptation in 2005. The new musical “is an organic interpretation of the source material, using charming chamber music, an intimate two-person cast and an epistolary storyline told mostly through letters from Jerusha to her ‘Daddy Long Legs,’” the release adds.

The show, directed by John Caird, will feature Penny McNamee as Jerusha Abbot and Kevin Earley as Jervis Pendleton. Nell Balaban will serve as the associate director of FST’s production.

This will be McNamee's first time performing the role of Jerusha, and she is quite enthusiastic about it, the release notes. "[Jerusha's] humor, stubbornness, love of life and perseverance against all odds [place] her alongside the great female literary characters of Jo March and Anne of Green Gables," McNamee says in the release.

Earley is a seasoned veteran of *Daddy Long Legs*, having performed the role of Jervis three times prior to FST's production, the release adds.

This will be the musical's Florida premiere, after successful productions in California, Ohio, Illinois, Arizona, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin, the release points out.



Kevin Earley/Contributed photo

GALLUP GALLERY PRESENTS *FIELD OF THE HEART* AND *FACE TO FACE*

Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art gallery will present *Field of the Heart*, featuring “Mike Solomon’s luminous constructions,” and *Face to Face*, “showcasing Alain Huin’s acrylic and

gouache portrait assemblages,” in shows running concurrently from Feb. 5 to March 1, the gallery has announced in a news release. A reception with the artists has been set for



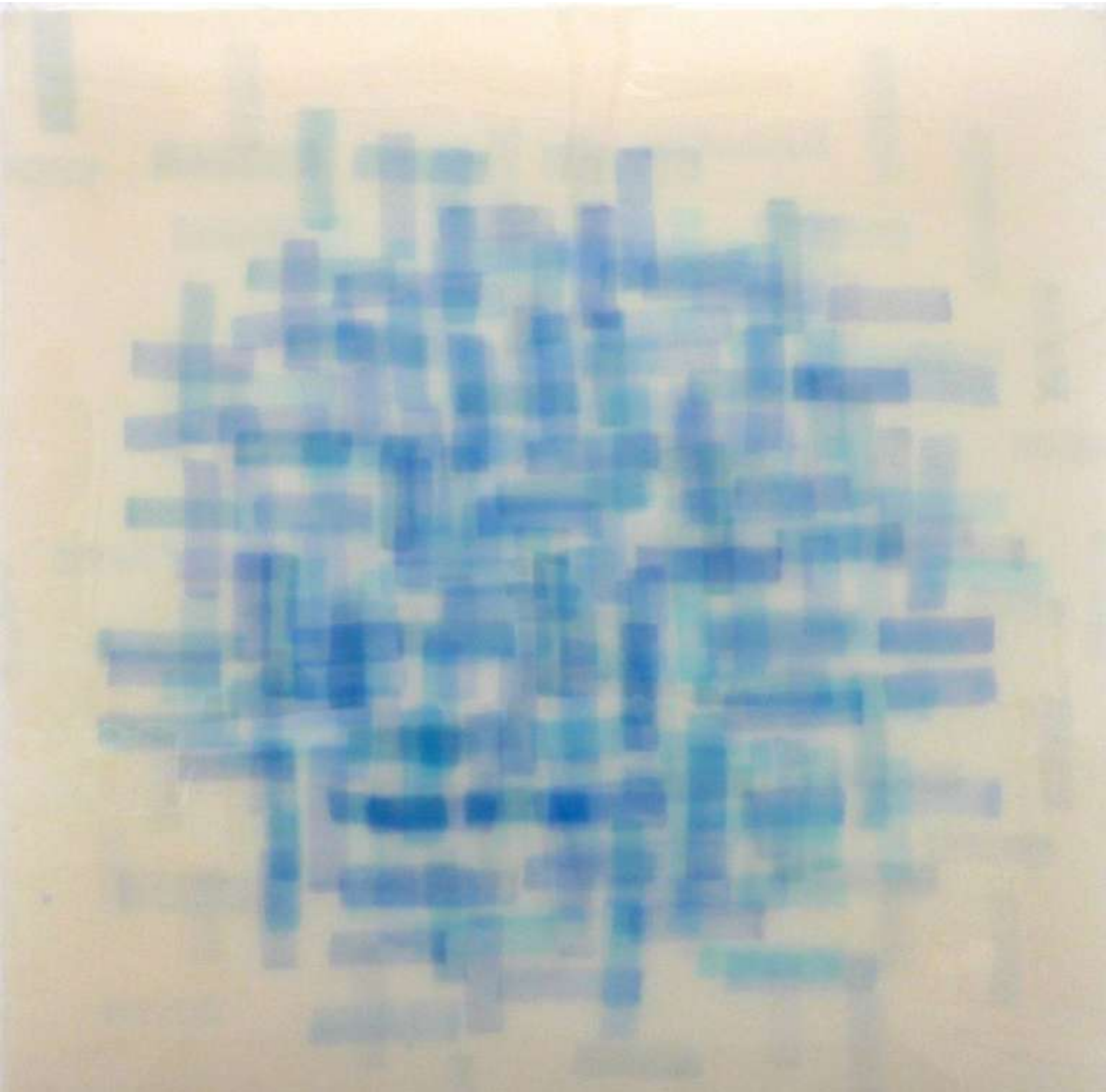
Lingering by Mike Solomon. Contributed image



Untitled by Alain Huin. Contributed image

Friday, Feb. 7, from 6 to 8 p.m., with the artists' remarks and a Q&A at 7 p.m. For more information about this exhibit, call 366-2454 or visit allyngallup.com. The gallery is located at 1288 N. Palm Ave. in Sarasota.

Field of the Heart invites viewers into Solomon's "floating world of color and form," the release continues. "Water is a recurrent theme in Solomon's work," it notes. According to Allyn Gallup, the gallery's director, the



Engender by Mike Solomon. Contributed image

artist's liquid imagery evokes the flow of time. "Water is ever changing," Gallup says in the release. "Mike's work has the same mutability. He captures the translucent, reflective quality of light on water in a way that speaks to our experience of time; it's quite literally dazzling. His overlapping color fields evoke the persistence of vision, where an image lingers in the eye after the reality is gone."

The source of Solomon's vision? According to Gallup, it is both nature and nurture, the release explains. The artist is the son of celebrated abstract expressionist Syd Solomon (1917-2004). Mike was raised in the art world of the 1960s; he launched his own artistic career at the age of 15 after winning a national printmaking award.

"Solomon's fascination with the life aquatic is not surprising; he's been a surfer since he was a child," the release points out. "In addition to riding the waves, he mastered the painstaking art of crafting surfboards," it notes. "As an artist, he applies the same attention to detail creating his abstract constructions. Such works comprise many layers of transparent tints; each layer remains visible as he adds more layers on top."

Solomon created the series of constructions showcased in this exhibit in 2012, the release

adds. Some works employ multiple layers of rice paper imbued with watercolor and embedded in epoxy; others feature layers of acrylic on wood panel.

Face to Face puts the spotlight on Huin's "graphically bold portrait assemblages," the release continues. The exhibit will feature "hundreds of individual portraits assembled to create mosaics of color and strong graphic images."

Huin works in gouache or acrylic on cardboard and fiberboard, but all his art reflects his fascination with the human face, the release notes.

"I was recently in Miami for Art Basel," says Huin in the release. "While I was there, I looked at as many faces as I did paintings. I've always loved observing and sketching people at random. In doing so, I've developed my own 'people vocabulary.' My last exhibit was called *In Your Face*. This exhibit is really a continuity of my obsession with facial characters."

Area art lovers may be more familiar with Huin's work as a furniture designer, the release points out.

JAZZ TRIO TO PERFORM AT FIRST CHURCH ON FEB. 9

The First United Methodist Church in downtown Sarasota invites the public to its next jazz program, which will feature the Jazz Trio on Sunday, Feb. 9.

The church is located at 104 S. Pineapple Ave.

This traditional jazz concert will put the spotlight on Johnny Moore on drums, Dominic Mancini on bass and Tommy Goodman on piano, a news release says.

They will join special guest Terry Myers on saxophone and clarinet. Two identical concerts are scheduled — from 4 to 5 p.m. and from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., the release points out. A freewill offering will be taken at each, the release notes.

For more information, call the First United Methodist Church at 955-0935.

ART CENTER TO PRESENT READING OF *WALTER CRONKITE IS DEAD*

Art Center Sarasota will present a staged reading of *Walter Cronkite is Dead* by Joe Calarco on Feb. 9 at 4 p.m., the gallery has announced.

Art Center Sarasota is located at 707 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. A donation of \$10 is requested. For more information, call 365-2032 or visit artsarasota.org/theatermind.

Walter Cronkite is Dead, featuring Janet Davies and Emilie Robinson, “is a warm and insightful comedy about two very different women who are stranded in an airport,” a news release explains. Patty is a chatty Southerner with a blue-collar job; Margaret is a reserved,

educated and liberal Washingtonian. “To pass the time, they begin a conversation, slowly revealing profound truths about each other’s lives,” the release adds. “Their conversation leads them to a place of kinship that neither could have imagined. The play examines what might be possible if people from opposite sides of the political aisle would stop shouting and take even one night to listen,” the release notes.

Theater of the Mind, established in 2010 by Robinson and Davies, presents play readings and staged performances at Art Center Sarasota. All proceeds benefit the gallery, the release points out.



*Janet Davies and Emilie Robinson star in Theater of the Mind’s staged reading of Joe Calarco’s play, *Walter Cronkite is Dead*. Contributed photo*

PILOBOLUS TO SHOWCASE ITS CHALLENGING CHOREOGRAPHY

Founded by a group of Dartmouth University students in 1971, Pilobolus “brings exceptional creativity intertwined with versatility and physically challenging choreography” to the stage, as it seeks to test the way in which audience members view dance, a Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall announcement says.

“Witness it for yourself at the Van Wezel” on Feb. 12 at 8 p.m., a news release adds.

“Pilobolus will open your eyes to the state of the art” with its leaping, flying, mirrors, poles, chains and platforms, the release notes. The company provides “one example after another of how the human body can be seen as so much more than what it is,” as *The New Yorker* put it.

“More than just a dance company, Pilobolus strives to inspire and engage audiences around the world through performance, education and consultation,” the release continues. It has been honored with the Berlin Critic’s Prize, the Scotsman Award, the Brandeis Award, a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Cultural Programming, the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement in Choreography, a TED Fellowship and a Grammy nomination.

Tickets are priced from \$40 to \$60. For more information, call the box office at 953-3368 or visit VanWezel.org.



Pilobolus will bring its distinctive choreography to the Van Wezel stage on Feb. 12. Contributed photo

HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLANS 23RD HISTORICAL TOUR OF SARASOTA BAY

The Historical Society of Sarasota County will host its 23rd Cruise and Tour of Sarasota Bay on the LeBarge on Sunday, March 9, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the organization has announced.

The cruise will feature narration by Harold Bubil, real estate editor of the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* and a Sarasotan for the past 56 years, a news release says. “He will focus on waterfront real estate history, famous homes, what’s for sale, construction issues, flood zones, dredging and filling and related yammering!” the release adds. A complimentary continental breakfast buffet with coffee will be provided, along with a cash bar.

“The cruise tour has been a favorite outing for residents as well as tourists who want to learn more about the interesting adventures of Sarasota’s early settlers and the characters who helped make Sarasota the vibrant, cultural city that it is today,” the release explains.

Tickets are \$40 per person. A \$50 VIP pass provides early boarding privileges and a complimentary beverage from the bar (limited to beer, wine, soda and bottled water), the release notes. Reservations are limited; they are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please send checks with the names of all guests to the Historical Society of Sarasota County, PO Box 1632, Sarasota, FL 34230. For VISA/MasterCard or Discover purchases or for questions, contact the Historical Society at 364-9076 or visit hsosc.com.

All proceeds from the tour benefit the Historical Society of Sarasota County for maintenance and upkeep for the Bidwell-Wood House (1882) and the Crocker Memorial Church (1901), the release notes.

Those going on the tour are asked to check in at the LeBarge slip, south of Marina Jack in Sarasota’s Bayfront Park, by 10:15 a.m., rain or shine.



The LeBarge will ‘set sail’ for the next Historical Society of Sarasota County history cruise on March 9. Photo by Norman Schimmel

BAXTER AND RUBADOUX WORKS AT CENTER OF NEW SHOW

Nouveaux Deux Déjà-vu will open on Friday, Feb. 7, at the Dabbert Gallery in downtown Sarasota, featuring the works of Robert Baxter and Craig Rubadoux.

The gallery is located at 76 S. Palm Ave.

A reception for the artists will be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Feb. 7, a news release notes, in conjunction with the Palm Avenue art galleries' open houses that evening.

The exhibit will run through March 3, the release adds.

[Robert Baxter's](#) sophisticated patterns of rich color create a milieu for the fascinating faces that populate his world of art," the release says.

"[Craig Rubadoux](#) mixes magnificent color harmonies with fluid lyrical line to create extraordinary expressionistic works of art," it adds.

For more information, call 955-1315 or visit dabbertgallery.com.



Bar de la Fontaine by Robert Baxter. Contributed image



Fugue Flamingo by Craig Rubadoux. Contributed image



Golden by Craig Rubadoux. Contributed image

JURIED STUDENT ART EXHIBITION AT ISERMANN GALLERY

More than three dozen works from New College of Florida's arts program are on display in the sixth annual New College of Florida Juried Student Art Exhibition, which runs through March 14, the college has announced.

The exhibition is in the Isermann Gallery in the College's Caples Fine Arts Complex, located at 5313 Bayshore Road in Sarasota, behind Sainer Pavilion and just south of The Ringling Museum complex, a news release notes. The exhibition is open to the public from noon to 5 p.m. daily.

"The exhibition features a wide selection of work by 16 artists, celebrating the scope and

talent of students' most recent creative pursuits," the release says. The show includes several installations, various sculptures (in metal and found objects), large graphite and pastel drawings and oil and acrylic paintings as well as fabric pieces.

"New College students have gone on to study at some of the most prestigious national and international graduate programs for the arts," including California College of the Arts, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Virginia Commonwealth University, Temple Tyler School of the Arts and Goldsmiths at University of London, the release points out.



New College of Florida welcomes the public to a juried exhibit of student artwork. Photo courtesy New College

CHORUS OF THE KEYS TO *SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL* ON FEB. 22

The award-winning Sarasota Chorus of the Keys has announced its 64th annual show, *Shake, Rattle and Roll*, will be presented in two performances at 2:30 and 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Riverview Performing Arts Center (1 Ram Way) in Sarasota.

This year's show will feature '50s and '60s favorites such as *Shake, Rattle and Roll*, *Rock Around the Clock*, *Jailhouse Rock*, and *Sh-boom*. Tickets range from \$20 to \$35 and are available by phone at 484-7589 or online at chorusofthekeys.org, a news release says.

"It's clear we have 45 guys who refuse to act their age," said Bob Amer, vice president of marketing for the Chorus, in the release. "Not only will the Chorus sing songs you wouldn't expect, they will be dressed in colorful '50s

garb and present an energetic, fast-paced show. It will really be a sight and a sound to behold!"

Under the direction of Byron Poore, the Chorus will welcome back Sarasota personality Kent Perry as emcee, the release adds. Both shows will also feature internationally acclaimed quartet Acoustix, which has toured worldwide for more than 18 years and has appeared on CNN and NBC. A local quartet, The Best of Times, based in Sarasota, will also perform, the release notes.

The Chorus recently announced a younger leadership team with Poore, 35, as its director and Patrick Kilbane, 34, as president. "This year's annual show will demonstrate their new direction and spirit," the release adds.



The Chorus of the Keys will perform at Riverview High School on Feb. 22. Contributed photo by Daniel Perales

IRISH ROVERS TO APPEAR AT VAN WEZEL DURING LAST TOUR

After five decades of touring, the members of the Irish Rovers are on one last tour “packed with that Irish charm and wit that has captivated audiences since 1964,” a Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall news release says.

The group will appear on the Van Wezel stage in Sarasota on Feb. 13, the news release adds.

“Throughout the years, these international ambassadors of Irish music have maintained their ... ability to deliver a rollicking, rousing performance of good cheer — one that will soon have you singing and clapping along,” the release adds. “Their songs have become anthems of revelry and joy among generation

after generation of fans,” the *Belfast Telegraph* has written.

The members of the Irish/Canadian folk group became Canadian citizens at the request of then-Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. By 1989, they had represented Canada at five world Expos, the release notes.

Recent YouTube videos of the group’s *Drunken Sailor* recording have scored a total of more than 10 million hits, “securing their newest generation of fans,” the release points out.

Tickets are priced from \$30 to \$50. For more information, call the box office at 953-3368 or visit VanWezel.org.



The Irish Rovers will appear at the Van Wezel on Feb. 13. Contributed photo

HERBICIDE BAND TO CELEBRATE MARDI GRAS EARLY IN SARASOTA

Mardi Gras will arrive early in Sarasota when trombonist Herb Bruce and the Herbicide Jazz Band present a concert of Dixieland, ragtime, blues, jazz and more in *Let the Good Times Roll: A Mardi Gras Celebration* on Feb. 16 at 4 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, located at 3975 Fruitville Road.

“If you can’t get to New Orleans this year for Mardi Gras, the Herbicide Jazz Band will bring a rollicking and raucous New Orleans-style Mardi Gras to you,” says Don DeMaio, concert coordinator, in a news release.

Tickets are \$15. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 371-4974 or visit uusarasota.org/concerts.

Bruce played with The Dukes of Dixieland on Bourbon Street and was the leader of the Main Street Rhythm Rascals in the Magic Kingdom at Disney World for more than 10

years, the news release points out. He also spent many years in Nashville, where he worked with numerous stars, and he toured the world with Spiritual to the Bone and the premiere Salvation Army brass bands, the release adds. He has performed with Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gormé, Bob Hope, Nelson Riddle, Jimmy Dorsey, Liza Minnelli, The Four Freshmen, The Four Tops and Burt Bacharach.

The Herbicide Jazz Band includes drummer and arranger Terry Waddell; Jim Snyder on clarinet; Don Johnson on trumpet; Jeff Phillips on piano and tuba; William Pillucere on bass; Patricia Dean, vocalist and drums; and Bob Leary on guitar, banjos and vocals.

DeMaio adds in the release, “This band is bound to get you up on your feet and into the Mardi Gras groove.”



Herb Bruce and the Herbicide Jazz Band/Contributed photo

BABCOCK TO DISCUSS AMERICA'S OLDEST CONTINUING BOOK CLUB


On Sunday, Feb. 9, Sherra Babcock, vice president of education at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York state, will discuss 2014's selections for the oldest continuing book club in America, the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, during a presentation at Bookstore1Sarasota.

According to [Goodreads](#), the Circle was founded in 1878 and "has remained a leader in adult education through quality programming."

The session will begin at 2 p.m. the store has announced. Bookstore1 is located at 1359 Main St. in downtown Sarasota.

On Feb. 16, the shop will feature its next "edition" of Poetry LocalMic, which will begin at 2 p.m., a news release notes.

Local poets Ernesto Epistola and Roberta Beary will present their work.

More information is available at bookstore1sarasota.com or 365-7900. 



Sherra Babcock/Contributed photo

Press Releases & News Tips
News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

FREE SUBSCRIPTION

Don't have your own subscription to *The Sarasota News Leader*?

Subscribe for FREE and receive a weekly notification when the latest issue is available online.

SUBSCRIBE



The Unitarian Universalist Church is located at 3975 Fruitville Road in Sarasota. File photo

UUCS FREETHINKERS TO PRESENT *EAT TO HEAL* PROGRAM

Eat to Heal: Chronic Disease and a Plant-based Diet will be the focus of a Feb. 7 program presented by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota (UUCS) Freethinkers.

The guest speaker will be Jill Edwards, a clinical exercise physiologist and nutrition educator, a news release says. The program will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at 11:30 a.m. at the UUCS, located at 3975 Fruitville Road in Sarasota. Admission is free.

This Freethinkers' Briefing will consider that, all too often, "disease treatments focus only on the symptoms, not the causes," the release points out. "Changing what we eat can reduce the risks associated with chronic disease and bring about significant improvements in our health," according to Edwards, the release adds.

Edwards received her Bachelor of Arts in education from the University of Michigan and her Master of Science in exercise science from Oakland University, the release continues. In addition to her being a nutrition educator, she is also an exercise physiologist in cardiopulmonary rehabilitation at Sarasota Memorial Hospital and a public speaker, the release notes.

Edwards is enrolled in the University of South Florida's Public Health Graduate Certificate Program. She is a certified clinical exercise specialist through the American College for Sports Medicine, and she holds a certificate in plant-based nutrition from the [Center for Nutrition Studies](#), the release continues. She has attended Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn's Heart Disease Reversal Program at the Cleveland Clinic and works under the supervision of

[Dr. T. Colin Campbell](#) as an instructor for a nutrition course offered by Cornell University.

“Plant-based foods and exercise are powerful healers,” Edwards says in the release. “I am on a mission to share with people how food and movement can heal their body, mind and spirit. Unfortunately, many people suffering from these diseases do not realize that their wrong dietary choices since childhood have caused these serious problems,” she adds in the release. “People need to learn that their

health is in their own hands. The fact is, they can be free of illness and brilliantly healthy if they choose a plant-based diet and lead an active lifestyle.”

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota is a Welcoming Congregation serving Sarasota and Manatee counties, the release points out. More information can be found at: uusarasota.org or by calling David Ryan at 365-4027 or via email at d2mryan@verizon.net.

NEW COLLEGE PROFESSOR TO DISCUSS *FIRST CAME MARRIAGE*

Susan Marks, associate professor of religion at New College of Florida, will discuss her book, *First Came Marriage*, during a program at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 21, hosted by the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism (CHJ).

Marks learned through her research “that in the early days of Judaism, most weddings did not include familiar rituals, let alone a rabbi,” a news release points out. The book combines ritual and historical perspectives “to examine the process by which early Jews married and the ways rabbis minimized, elaborated or codified the practices,” the release adds.

CHJ meets at Unity, located at 3023 Proctor Road in Sarasota. The program is free to CHJ members. Non-members are asked to pay a \$5 donation.

For more information visit chj-sarasota.org or call 929-7771.



Susan Marks/Contributed photo

Take Your Time

You Have All Week

Enjoy The News Leader Anytime - Day or Night

SISTERHOOD MITZVAH KNITTING GROUP CONTINUES FEB. 11

The monthly gatherings of Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood's Mitzvah Knitting Group will continue on Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 10 a.m. at Temple Emanu-El, located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota, the Temple has announced.

"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 says. "Participants socialize together while crafting blankets, caps and booties for babies; these handmade creations are donated

to local groups serving needy families and expectant mothers," the release points out.

Mitzvah Knitting Group participants are asked to bring their own knitting needles or crochet hooks and — if desired — a favorite pattern and yarn. Patterns and yarn will also be provided.

The Mitzvah Knitting Group will meet monthly on the second Tuesday of each month. For more information or to receive monthly reminders about these gatherings, call 379-1997.



Temple Emanu-El is located on McIntosh Road in Sarasota. File photo

TEMPLE EMANU-EL TO WELCOME PRINZ FOR CHOCOLATE SHABBAT

Going to synagogue might not seem like the most romantic way to spend Valentine's Day, but Temple Emanu-El will tempt the public with a special *Chocolate Shabbat* service on Friday, Feb. 14, at 7:30 p.m.

"The service will feature author and scholar Rabbi Deborah Prinz talking about that most important staple of Valentine's Day: chocolate!" a news release notes.

The Temple is located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota.

Prinz will share wisdom and stories from her book *On the Chocolate Trail: A Delicious Adventure Connecting Jews, Religions,*

History, Travel, Rituals and Recipes to the Magic of Cacao (Jewish Lights, 2012). A sought-after speaker who has lectured throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Europe and Israel, Prinz will discuss "the Jews' little-known role in the chocolate trade and the Jewish influence on the chocolate we know and love today," the release adds.

A special *oneg*, or dessert reception, "featuring sumptuous chocolate treats" will follow the service and Prinz's talk, the release says. All members of the community are welcome.

For more information, call 371-2788. 



**ANGELIC
VOICES**

The Church of the Redeemer, located at 222 S. Palm Ave. in Sarasota, warmly invites members of the community to a Solemn Evensong featuring the voices of the Canterbury Girls Choir. It will be held on Sunday, Feb. 16, at 5:15 p.m. The anthem will be Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis* in d minor, with the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* in G., by Sumsion. For more information, visit redeemersarasota.org or call 955-4263. Contributed photo



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

07+
FEBRUARY

Dabbert Gallery presents *Nouveaux Deux Déjà Vu*

Through March 3; times vary. 76 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Free admission. Information: 955-1315 or DabbertGallery.com.

07+
FEBRUARY

FST presents *Thurgood*

Through March 8; times vary; Keating Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$36 to 39. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

09+
FEBRUARY

Siesta Village Craft Show

Feb. 8-9, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Ocean Boulevard, Siesta Key, featuring more than 100 artists and craftsmen. For more information, visit siestakeyvillage.org.

10
FEBRUARY

WSLR presents *Songwriters in the Round*, featuring Danny Schmidt, Carrie Elkin and Tim Grimm

Feb. 10, 8 p.m., Fogartyville Community Media & Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota. Tickets: \$10 in advance/\$12 at door. Information: 894-6469 or WSLR.org.

18+
FEBRUARY

FSU/Asolo Conservatory presents *How I Learned To Drive*

Feb. 18 to March 9; times vary; Jane B. Cook Theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets: \$27 to 29. Information: 351-8000 or AsoloRep.org.

19
FEBRUARY

Sarasota Concert Association presents the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, conducted by Nikolai Alexeev

Feb. 19, 8 p.m., Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets: \$45 to 75. Information: 955-0040 or SCASarasota.org.

19+
FEBRUARY

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe presents *Harry and Lena*

Feb. 19 to March 23; times vary; 1646 10th Way, Sarasota. Tickets: \$29.50. Information: 366-1505 or wbtsrq.org.

YOUR LIFESTYLE GUIDE TO THE SUNCOAST

THE PERFECT PASTORAL SCENE, IF YOU LOVE HORSES

PRESS



Norman Schimmel
Photographer

The Sarasota News Leader
BRIAN SCHIMMEL
Creative 1015/2000

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.