THE SARASOTA Vol. 2, No. 39 – June 13, 2014 No. 2014 No. 2014 No. 2014 No. 39 – June 13, 2014

PLENTY OF SAND?

CONCESSIONS MADE ADDING UP

Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.

GETTO KIOWUS



swipe:

flip pages left or right



Single Tap:

show/hide on-screen controls



Double Tap:

zoom-in or zoom-out on a single page



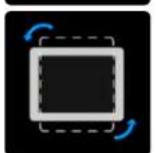
Pinch: (Not supported on some Android devices)

Zoom-in or zoom-out on a single

page

Toolbar Options

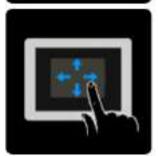
- Text Mode
- Search by keywords
- Open/close the mini carousel of pages
- ∀iew the table of contents
- View the archives of this publication
- Email the current page to a friend
 - Social bookmark the current page



Rotate: (Not supported on some

Android devices)

View different layouts for landscape/portrait



Move:

When zoomed-in, move around the page A.K.A.
HELP

SARASOJA NEWS LEADER

Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor and Publisher
Rachel@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Éditor
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



"The Sarasota News Leader" is a registered trademark of New Sheriff Publishing, Inc., which publishes The Sarasota News Leader. Copyright © 2014 Sarasota News Leader. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Member - National Digital Press Association • P.O. Box 5099 • Sarasota, FL 34277 • (941) 227-1080



Welcome

If last week seemed a tad dull, this week more than made up for it. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' release of its draft report on the Lido Beach Renourishment Project is just one of many big stories.

But if that article is not your cup of tea, you might try Associate Editor Cooper Levey-Baker's story about a tea party candidate who has filed to run against School Board incumbent Jane Goodwin. Cooper uncovered quite an interesting tidbit in his research for that piece.

And City Editor Stan Zimmerman was all over the place again this week — from learning that city water customers very likely will see their bills go up and up for years on end to covering a hearing in Circuit Court on Thursday about the "stingray" cellphone

monitoring matter involving the Sarasota Police Department to finding out the fate of the latest Jesse Biter project when it went before the city Planning Board on June 11.

County Editor Roger Drouin has a report from last week's Tiger Bay Club discussion of legislative actions (with special attention to the diverging diamond interchange at I-75 and University Parkway and Benderson Park), along with an update on the homeless initiatives and the county's proposed Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan. The latter's storm surge evacuation map is a must-see.

Add Warm Mineral Springs, Sanborn Studios and the Siesta trolley into the mix, and you will see we covered lots of territory.

Fortunately, along with that array of news, contributor Fran Palmeri has made it possible for us to add a wonderful new monthly feature called *It's a wild world*. Don't miss it!





CONTENTS





Click Any Headline To Go Directly To That Article

NEWS

PLENTY OF SAND? Mining the ebb shoal of Big Sarasota Pass should have no impact on the natural system that delivers sediment to Siesta Key, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says — Rachel Brown Hackney CONCESSIONS MADE The U.S. Attorney's Office yields to some requests in a case involving alleged cellphone monitoring through the Sarasota Police Department — Stan Zimmerman

ADDING UP	21
Legislators update community leaders on prospective funding for an Interstate 75 diverging	
diamond interchange and funding for Benderson Park — Roger Drouin	

LEGAL DRAMA	26
Sarasota County to sue Sanborn Studios to recoup at least some of its financial incentives —	
Cooper Levey-Baker	

MORE MONEY FOR WATER	28
With aging infrastructure to address, the City of Sarasota is facing the need for multiple	
increases in customer utility bills — <i>Stan Zimmerman</i>	

TEXTBOOKS AND TEA	31
Founder of Englewood tea party group joins Sarasota County School Board race — Cooper	
Levey-Baker	

26 to y Dane.	
CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND	33
Two hugely different long-term proposals for Warm Mineral Springs will go head-to-head June 24 — <i>Cooper Levey-Baker</i>	



COVER PHOTO CREDIT

The Beachcombers - Fran Palmeri

CRIME BLOTTER

CONTENTS





87

Click Any Headline To Go Directly To That Article

ABOUT THOSE SANCTIONING FEES ... 39 The County Commission agrees to cover certain expenses for the 2014 Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix but expresses dismay over being misled last year — Rachel Brown Hackney **SOME PROGRESS, SOME PROBLEMS** 44 Analysis of two homeless shelter sites continues, and a third possible site is on the market — Roger Drouin **GREEN LIGHTS FOR BITER, DUVAL'S** 49 The Planning Board sends three projects on to the City Commission, including plans for a onestory residential structure on Second Street — Stan Zimmerman **CONTRACT CLAUSE AND BOARD SEATS 52** Downtown bus station reversion and commissioner replacement on the June 16 agenda -Stan Zimmerman POST-STORM BLUEPRINT **57** The County Commission gets an update on planning for the aftermath of a major disaster — Roger Drouin ON TO MEDIATION **63** After being turned down twice on petitions to build a house on a Siesta Key lot fronting the Gulf of Mexico, the owners will enter into a dispute resolution process with the county — Rachel Brown Hackney SIESTA SEEN **67** Siesta trolley marketing planned; more parking woes aired at Siesta Key Association meeting; Stand-Up Paddleboard Race Series announced; and the beach gets international plaudits — Rachel Brown Hackney **78** NEWS BRIEFS





Click Any Headline To Go Directly To That Article



EDITORIAL 98 The best government money can buy

ALL THE REST ...

The Barred Owl — Anita West-Lewis

IT'S A WILD WORLD 102

COMMUNITY CALENDAR 103

SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS 105



A smile happens instantly, its memory lasts a lifetime.

"After a terrible accident I required surgery. Tonya shared with me that Dr. Koval was responsible for her beautiful smile. She gave me hope and direction. I'm so grateful to Dr, Koval. Now I have a smile that I love to share with everyone."

For a complimentary consultation call 941.923.5406 Christine Koval, D.M.D. | www.askdrkoval.com

SHARE

dental associates











Tonya Herschberger & Linda Keefe

A smile happens instantly, its memory lasts a lifetime.



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

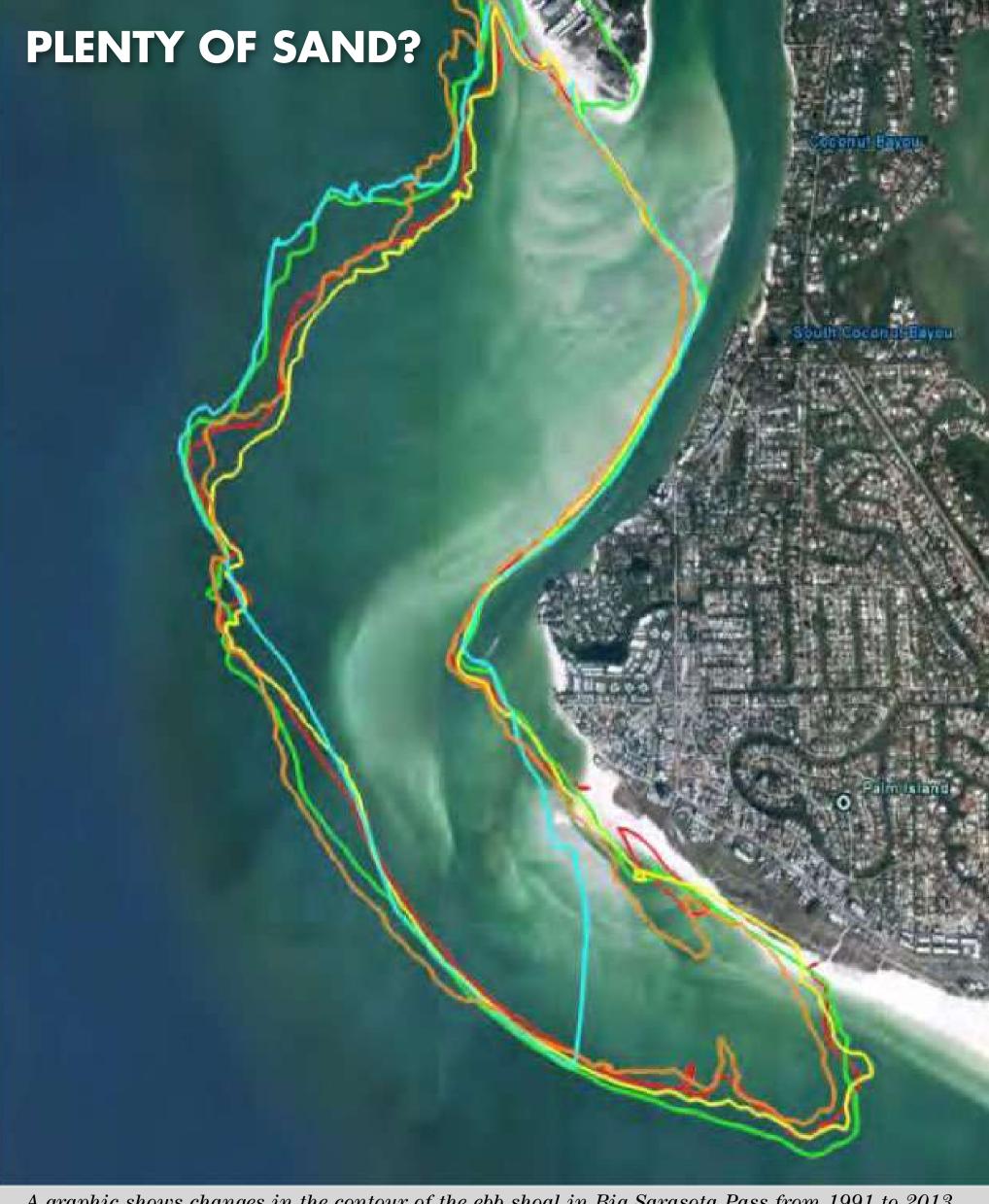
Tonya was the nurse who prepped Linda for surgery after she was hit by a drunk driver while walking with her husband and their dog. In spite of her pain and the anxiety that precedes any surgical procedure, Linda gazed up at the nurse and immediately felt at ease. "You have a beautiful smile," she said. That's when Tonya shared with Linda the person responsible for her beautiful smile, Dr. Christine Koval.

For over 25 years, Dr. Koval has been one of the area's most trusted experts in creating beautiful, natural smiles using the latest advances in restorative, cosmetic, laser and general dentistry. Most new patients come to her based on referrals from people who just can't stop smiling.

Linda turned to Dr. Koval to repair her smile and jaw which was so misaligned she couldn't chew her food properly. "Tonya's comforting smile and advice gave me hope and direction," she says. "I'm so grateful to her, and of course to Dr. Koval. Now I have a smile that I love to share with everyone I meet."

For a complimentary consultation call 941.923.5406 or for a more extensive smile gallery viewing visit askdrkoval.com

ENHANCE YOUR SMILE. ENHANCE YOUR LIFE.



A graphic shows changes in the contour of the ebb shoal in Big Sarasota Pass from 1991 to 2013. Image courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

MINING THE EBB SHOAL OF BIG SARASOTA PASS SHOULD HAVE NO IMPACT ON THE NATURAL SYSTEM THAT DELIVERS SEDIMENT TO SIESTA KEY, THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS SAYS

By Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor

Modeling by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers shows it is possible to mine the ebb shoal of Big Sarasota Pass to renourish Lido Beach without a negative effect on the natural system that delivers sediment to Siesta Key, the Corps of Engineers says in its long-awaited report on the proposed \$22 million Lido Beach Renourishment Project.

The report's executive summary adds that the modeling demonstrated that the volume of sediment transported to the downdrift beaches "will not be affected because additional sediment is brought into the system that had been immobile within the ebb shoal at Big Sarasota Pass."

Further, the draft report released by the Corps of Engineers late on the morning of June 11 says Big Pass' ebb shoal has 23.3 million cubic yards of sand. The Corps of Engineers proposes to mine 1.3 million cubic yards, or about 6 percent, of the sediment from that shoal for the first renourishment in a 50-year-long project on which the agency is working with the City of Sarasota.

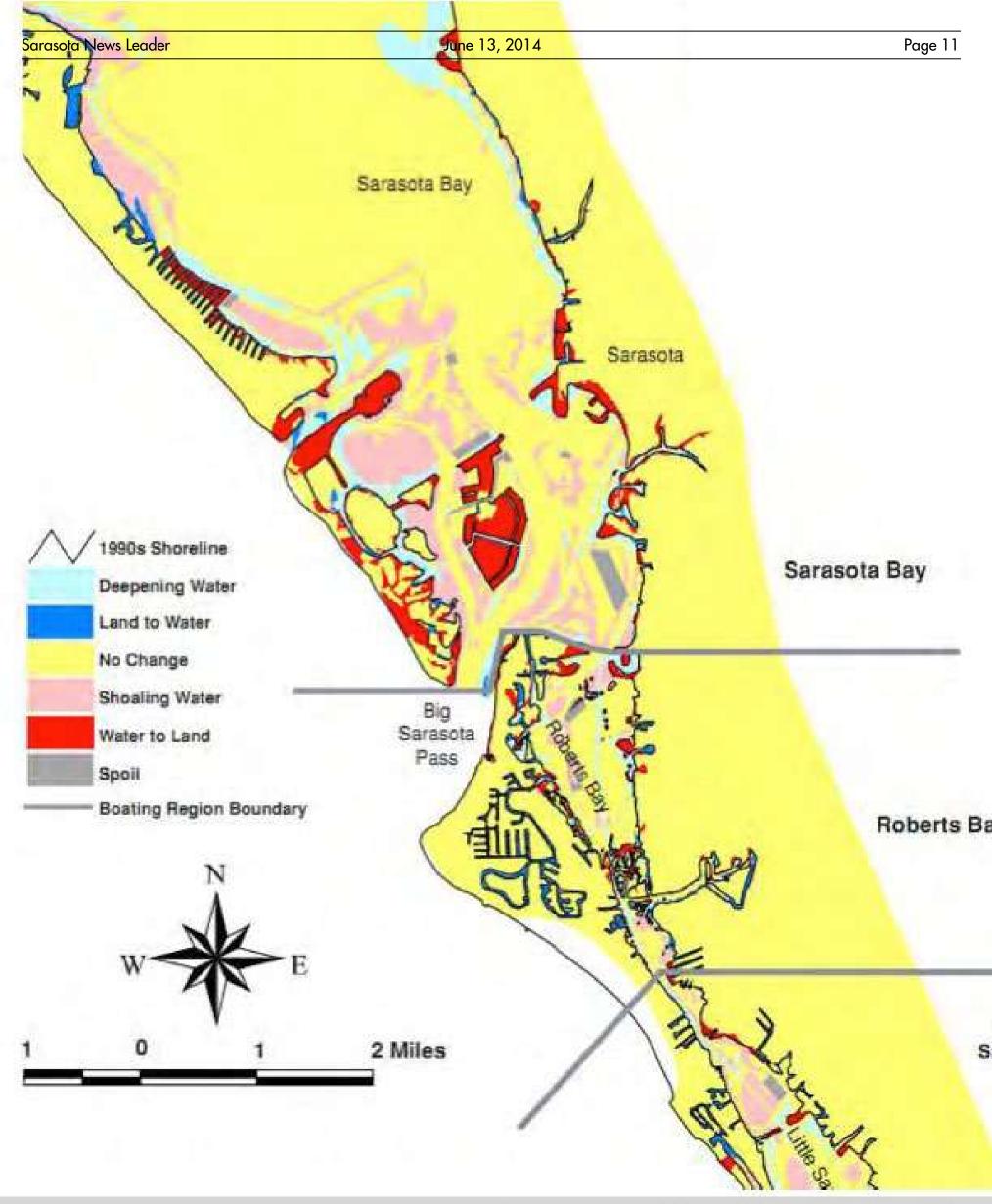
The ebb shoal grew about 2.3 million cubic yards between 2004 and 2013, the report continues. The yearly accretional average between 1991 and 2013, it notes, was 113,000 cubic yards per year.

The report explains that the Corps of Engineers staff in Jacksonville undertook multiple 1.5-year model runs to understand better how mining the Big Pass ebb shoal would potentially change the structure of the shoal over a longer period. Limitations in computer memory, processing speed and model capability meant the maximum model duration was less than two years, the report points out. "Results became less detailed and smoothed over time," it says, making them of "limited use for understanding fine-scale [structural] change and heterogeneity within the shoal."

The Corps of Engineers' Jacksonville staff also examined the renourishment history of Lido Key and the introduction of sediment from offshore sources into the system to determine whether any correlation existed between the renourishment volume and ebb shoal growth, the report points out. The results showed the ebb shoal is accreting at a greater volume than represented just by the volume of sand placed on Lido Key. Therefore, the report says, "[N] ourishment volumes at Lido Key alone cannot explain the growth of the ebb shoal."

Nonetheless, the report does note that the renourishment projects on Lido contributed to the growth of the ebb shoal over the past decade.

The executive summary also points out that modifications of Lido Key in the 1920s led to many of the present issues involving the island, "including the accelerated erosion from the southern shoreline," as well as "channel pressure on the northern interior shoreline of Siesta Key" and "ensuing erosion of the northwestern beaches of Siesta Key."



A graphic shows the changes in land and water configuration from 1890 to 1990. Image courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Sarasota County Commission is scheduled to hold a limited discussion of the report during its budget workshop on July 1, Matt Osterhoudt, acting director of the county's Natural Resources Department, told members of the Siesta Key Association on June 5. County staff members will review the material, he added, so they can facilitate that session.

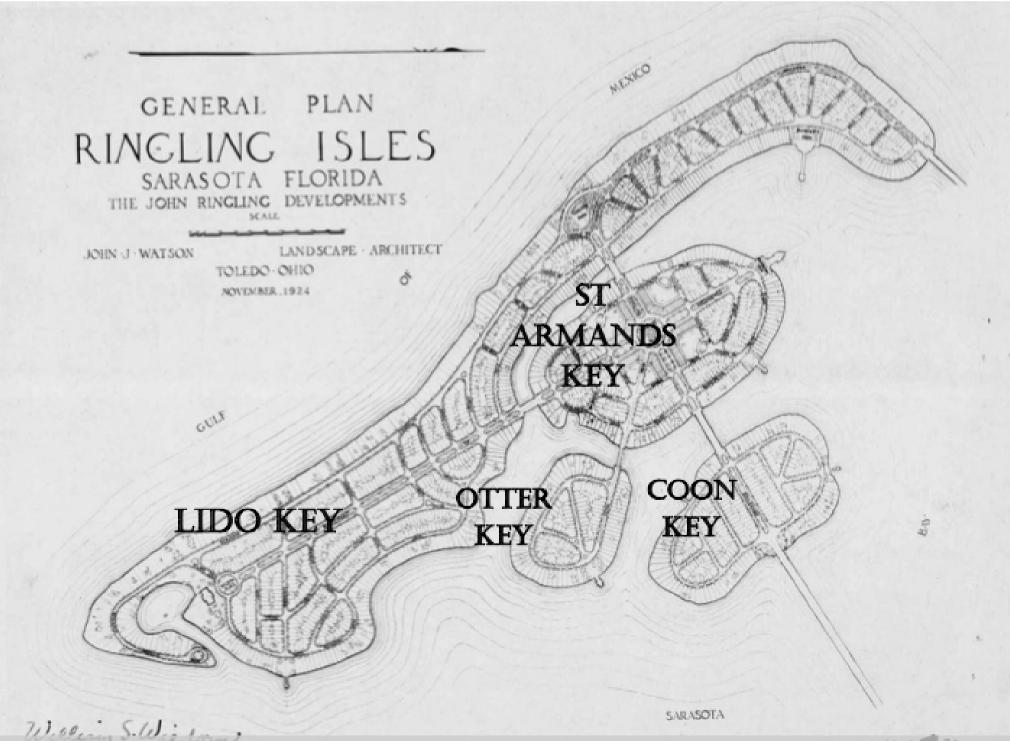
A longer agenda item is planned for Sept. 19, he said.

The full report is available on the county website.

STUDYING BIG PASS

During its work on the modeling, the Corps of Engineers examined the structural features of Big Pass from 1883 to the present day, the report says. While the pass has maintained the same orientation and similar structure for the past 100 years, the report says, dredges since the 1920s "have caused significant changes in the orientation of the south lobe of the inlet complex."

In 1943, the report points out, the main ebb channel of the pass ran along the northern shoreline of Siesta Key and the ebb shoal was



An historic map shows the plan for the Ringling Isles created early in the 20th century by John Ringling and Owen Burns. Image courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Figure 6: Big Sarasota Pass and Lido Key 1920's



Figure 7: Big Sarasota Pass and Lido Key 2013 (Google Earth)

This oblique aerial shows Big Sarasota Pass and Lido Key in the late-1920's and 2013, respectively (Figure 6 and Figure 7). Bird Key was originally only region (a). Ringling dredged and filled an extension from Bird Key (b) to connect the causeway (region c) that came from the mainland. Coon Key (d) and Lido Key (e) were still not yet extensively developed. The dredged channel that provided access to Bird Key is denoted by (f) and area (g) was habitat for sea grass. Big Sarasota Pass (h) is in the background.

The report includes these photos comparing the area of Big Pass and Bird and Lido keys in the 1920s to their status in 2013. Image courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

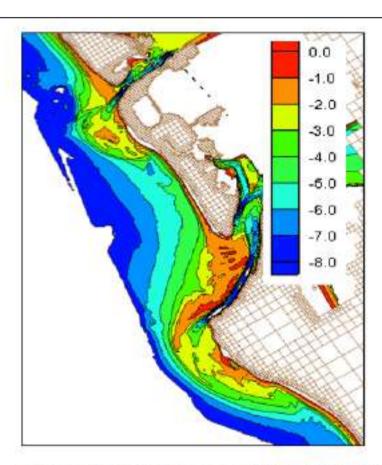


Figure 12: New Pass and Big Sarasota Pass Ebb Shoals LIDAR 2004 – Depths in METERS

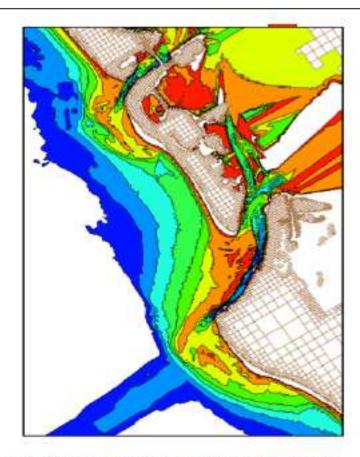


Figure 13: New Pass and Big Sarasota Pass Ebb Shoals LIDAR 2010 – Depth in METERS

Graphics compare the depths in New Pass and Big Pass from LIDAR surveys. Images courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Table 4: Nourishment History: Longboat and Lido Keys from Offshore Sources

Nourishment History:	Longboat and Lido Ke	eys from Offshore Sources
-----------------------------	----------------------	---------------------------

Date	CY Nourishment	Cumulative CY	Source
Aug-93	2,329,000	2,329,000	Longboat Key (800,000 of 3,219,000 from New Pass)
Feb-97	891,000	3,220,000	Longboat Key from
			Offshore
May-98	285,000	3,505,000	Lido Key from Offshore
Apr-01	360,000	3,865,000	Lido Key Interim Nourishment from Offshore
May-01	105,000	3,970,000	Longboat Key from
			Offshore
Jul-06	1,388,000	5,358,000	Longboat Key from
			Offshore

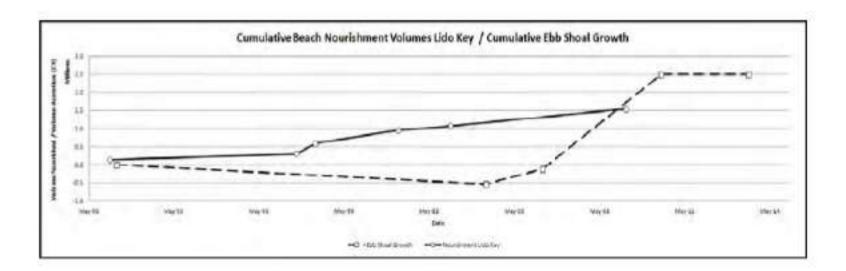


Figure 25: Cumulative Nourishment Volumes for Lido Key and Cumulative Ebb Shoal Growth

more symmetrical than it has been since then. As early as 1952, it continues, the southern channel bank of Big Pass was being hardened as a result of construction of revetments along the embankment. That construction also added to the increase in local tidal currents "and further defined the channel."

A Corps of Engineers report issued in 1962 says the inlet channel of Big Pass "has steadily migrated southward for years and that the channel has cut into the south bank of the inlet severely along Siesta Key."

The material eroded from Lido Key and downdrift sediment have combined to produce the "rather large shoal that reinforces the location of the inlet channel against the south bank of the inlet," the report continues.

THE GROINS

The Corps of Engineers report focuses as well on modeling regarding the proposal to erect three groins on south Lido Key to help keep the renourished sand in place. "The model was run for the most conservative alternative," defined as the one expected to have the most impact in the region, the report says.

If the groins are put in place without renourishment, a greater amount of sediment will accrete in the vicinity of the groin field, the report notes. "However," it points out, "if there is no beach nourishment, the accretion in this region is at the expense of the most southerly part of Lido Key, where accretion is decreased and erosion is increased, which is an undesirable effect."

A run of the model with renourishment factored in and the groins in place shows the accretion of sediment in the vicinity of the groin field would be greater, especially in the region fronting the condominiums on the beach, the report continues. "Most important," it says, "if the nourishment project is in place, the most southerly part of Lido Key is stable, neither increasing in accretion, nor erosion" as long as the beach continues to be renourished.

HISTORY OF LIDO KEY

The report explains that the study and analysis would be incomplete if the history of Lido Key were not understood. "Neither Lido Key nor St. Armands Key existed 100 years ago," it points out. They were part of a grouping of small islands called the Cerol Isles.

During the 1920s, circus entrepreneur John Ringling filled in the shallows separating the Cerol Isles, creating the new island of Lido Key. (SNI)

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.





Weddings • Events & Clinics • Riding Lessons • Breeding





(941) 322-1501

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



The Judge Lynn Silvertooth Judicial Center is in downtown Sarasota. File photo

THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE YIELDS TO SOME REQUESTS IN A CASE **INVOLVING ALLEGED CELLPHONE MONITORING**

By Stan Zimmerman

City Editor

On Thursday morning, June 12, Sarasota attorney Andrea Mogensen wrangled two important concessions during a hearing on release of Sarasota Police Department records involving cellphone intercepts. There will be an emergency hearing to prevent destruction of any documents by either local or federal agencies. And the documents now in possession

of the U.S. Marshals Service will be segregated into federal and state documents, with the state documents returned to the issuing jurisdiction.

But it does seem curious that a federal marshal went to the 12th Judicial Circuit, not a federal judge. Process is what's important here.

> Greg Thomas Attorney

Mogensen, representing the American Civil Liberties Union, was joined in court by Greg Thomas, representing a second plaintiff, Michael Barfield of Sarasota. They were requesting public documents concerning the use of "stingray" devices to monitor cellphone transmissions in Sarasota. The surveillance involved the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S.-

Caribbean Fugitive Apprehension Task Force, Sarasota Police Detective Michael Jackson, who is also a sworn deputy U.S. marshal, is a member of the task force.

On May 19, Mogensen and Schultz filed a public records request for documents regarding the "stingray" efforts under Florida's so-called Sunshine Law. Eight days later, federal agents swooped into the city and physically removed the records to federal custody.

The Thursday hearing before Circuit Judge Charles Williams was held to determine who had jurisdiction in the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Sean Flynn represented the U.S. Justice Department's interests. "Does the Sunshine Law apply to agents of the federal government?" asked Williams. "And why would this court have jurisdiction?"

STATE OR FEDERAL?

"I suggest this court does not have jurisdiction," Flynn said in his opening remarks. "The United States and its officers have sovereign immunity. Florida's Sunshine Laws have been preempted by federal statute."

The attorney for the City of Sarasota, Tom Schultz, told the court, "If these are records of the Florida judicial system, they are [governed by] the Rules of Judicial Administration that were thoroughly revised in 2013. There would be no jurisdiction under [Florida Statute] 119



Cellphone monitoring is at the center of American Civil Liberties Union legal action in Sarasota.

Photo by Alvimann via MorgueFile

[the Public Records Law]. Chapter 119 does not apply to federal criminal investigations."

Thomas then opened a line of argument through which Mogensen drove a proverbial bulldozer. "But it does seem curious that a federal marshal went to the 12th Judicial Circuit, not a federal judge. Process is what's important here."

Mogensen followed that up by saying, "The primary issue is to maintain the status quo. There needs to be judicial oversight. It may be true some records are exempt ... but this court needs to maintain jurisdiction to determine that."

"We know some of the documents are signed by 12th Circuit judges," she added. "If state court judges are signing orders, it is likely the documents come under 119. We need to protect these documents."

She suggested Williams review the documents in secret. "Nobody knows the status of these documents," added Mogensen. "We'd like you to preserve the status quo and exercise judicial oversight."

Schultz said the city has already provided 1,900 documents "and continues going through the records. We are in the process of producing the records in possession of the city."

Flynn told the court the Marshals Service has the duty to pursue the apprehension of non-federal fugitives, which requires the use of state courts. "There is no need to enjoin us to protect the records," he said.

Mogensen replied, "I can't imagine they would object to an injunction to protect records. We are entitled to an emergency hearing and accelerated treatment on the injunction."

Flynn then made a major concession, agreeing to surrender the non-federal documents. "We will file the state documents with the issuing courts," he said. Williams asked if that could be done within the next 10 days, and Flynn agreed it could.

But the assistant U.S. attorney dug in his heels regarding production of the task force's material. "The only records we are interested in are the records of the task force. We are only saying that documents created and maintained by the task force are withheld," said Flynn.

The state records he will release in the next 10 days are not automatically open to the public. Instead, judicial records come under the Rules of Judicial Administration. Depending on when and where the Marshals Task Force sought judicial action, the records could be scattered across several circuits.

However, their release from federal custody, and Williams' agreement to hold an emergency hearing to consider an injunction to protect the documents, were major victories for the plaintiffs. Under state law, an emergency hearing to prevent destruction of public documents receives "accelerated treatment" and rises to the top of the docket before the next available judge.

At the close of the hearing, Williams admitted he has another tricky decision to make. "I have to make the determination on the status of Detective Jackson," he said. SNL



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

RAR-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



941-366-2271 (BBQ1) • nancysbarbq.com



(From left) Former state Sen. Mike Bennett introduces state Sen. Nancy Detert and state Reps. Darryl Rouson, Ray Pilon and Greg Steube. Photo by Roger Drouin

LEGISLATORS UPDATE COMMUNITY LEADERS ON PROSPECTIVE FUNDING FOR AN INTERSTATE 75 DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE AND FUNDING FOR BENDERSON PARK

By Roger Drouin

County Editor

State Sen. Nancy Detert and State Reps. Darryl Rouson, Ray Pilon and Greg Steube shared a few laughs at the Sarasota Tiger Bay Club luncheon last Thursday, June 5. One of those lighter moments erupted when Detert, R-Venice, referred to Rouson, Pilon and Steube as her backup band, "The House Boys."

But there was plenty of serious discussion about a range of legislative priorities, accomplishments and issues, including Gov. Rick Scott's veto of funding for Sarasota's Circus Arts Conservatory and prospective money for a new diverging diamond interchange at Interstate 75 and University Parkway. The legislators also discussed the increasingly controversial use of state and local funding for Benderson Park's rowing venue, with Detert saying the project was

beginning to look like a matter of "corporate welfare."

State Sen. Nancy Detert
Commenting
On the Benderson Park rowing venue

too much corporate welfare to me.

This is just starting to look like

Pilon said he hopes that during the next legislative session, the \$1 million Scott vetoed for The Circus Arts Conservatory will be part of the final budget. "We'll work on it next year," Pilon told the audience, "and make sure the governor understands it a little better."

As for the new I-75 interchange, even though funding was not earmarked in the budget, state money is available, along with some funding for improvements at Interstate 75 and Fruitville Road, said Pilon, R-Sarasota.

Steube, R-Sarasota, who has been a proponent of those improvements, noted that the interchange originally was included in a \$100-million allocation for transportation projects for the coming year, but that package did not make it into the final budget.

Steube said that Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Ananth Prasad has been working on securing alternative means of state financing. One option is to use money left over as a result of big road construction projects coming in under estimated costs. Prasad told Steube that those "underbids" could be used to pay for the \$60 million diverging diamond and other improvements.

"I feel very confident we will have [the diverging diamond] funded by the end of the year," Steube said.

Earlier in the week, during a legislative briefing for members of the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, Steube voiced confidence about "shovels in the dirt" for the project before the beginning of 2015.

Steube told the Tiger Bay Club audience that traffic congestion is a serious problem that will only worsen at the site of the planned interchange after the Mall at University Town Center opens in October, new developments become a reality in that area and the neighboring Benderson Park begins holding more major rowing events.



Construction progress at the Mall at University Town Center was documented by Sarasota County staff in early May. Photo courtesy Sarasota County



State Sen. Greg Steube (right) discusses plans to secure funding for \$60 million in improvements to the Interstate-75/University Parkway interchange. Photo by Roger Drouin



State Reps. Darryl Rouson (center) and Ray Pilon share a laugh over a comment made by state Sen. Nancy Detert. Photo by Roger Drouin.

FDOT officials have made the diverging diamond interchange a priority. Although this type of interchange has been built elsewhere — including Missouri, where the first U.S. version appeared in 2009 — and it is part of a new initiative to transform interstate traffic patterns, the I-75 diverging diamond would be the first of its kind in Florida.

'CORPORATE WELFARE'

The high-profile rowing park made the most waves June 5.

Detert said that when she helped secure \$5 million for Benderson Park facilities in 2013, she did not anticipate boosters returning this year to seek \$11 million more. "I didn't expect to see you back — ever," Detert recalled telling Benderson Park representatives.

Legislators nixed the 2014 request. Overall, the park has received \$19.5 in county funding and \$10 million in state grants, and it has yet to show evidence it is pulling in private donations, as Paul Blackketter, president of the nonprofit management organization, has been promising Sarasota and Manatee county officials since early 2013.

"This is just starting to look like too much corporate welfare to me," Detert added.

One reason for local legislators' waning support of the project, Detert pointed out, is the fact that the nonprofit — Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates Inc. (SANCA) — failed earlier this spring to file the necessary paperwork with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to retain its 501(c)(3) status. It quickly corrected that oversight after the matter became public.

Detert said there is still "soft support" for the facility among legislators, but she believes the project has to show more "accountability," and SANCA "needs to get its act together."

Rouson, D-St. Petersburg, told the audience he supports Benderson's rowing park plans. "It will bring an economic impact felt for decades to come."

But he pointed out that, having observed a lack of diversity among participants when he recently attended an event at the park, he would like to see that situation reversed. He suggested an outreach effort to enable young black men and women in the area to learn about programs at the park.

"When we went to the rowing center, we didn't see any of us," said Rouson, who is black. SNL



An illustration shows how a diverging diamond interchange would be created for University Parkway at Interstate 75. Image courtesy Sarasota County



One of my favorite things to do is spend all day Sunday relaxing with the Sunday newspaper, reading it from cover to cover. Unfortunately, my old Sunday paper is mostly classified ads, real estate ads, ad inserts and very little in the way of real, informative news.

That's why I love the award-winning Sarasota News Leader. It is so full of news and features that relate to Sarasota County that I need a whole day to read it all ... perfect for a lazy Sunday afternoon. And reading it on my iPad means no trip to the recycling bin.

The Sarasota News Leader access e-mail is delivered to my inbox every Friday morning. Of course, I'm tempted to read some of it right away. Who could resist? But I know I have all day Sunday - in fact, all week - to read the No. 1 digital news weekly in Sarasota County.

The Sarasota News Leader - Your New Sunday Treat

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



SARASOTA COUNTY TO SUE SANBORN STUDIOS TO RECOUP AT LEAST SOME OF ITS FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

In 2010, Sarasota County Commissioner Joe Barbetta called Sanborn Studios' decision to build a film and TV production studio in Lakewood Ranch a "breakthrough achieve-

ment in our effort to diversify our economic base." This week, he and four other county commissioners voted unanimously to sue Sanborn, hoping to recover at least some of the \$650,000 in

financial incentives the county has given the company.

The financial incentive agreement between Sarasota County and Sanborn, approved in

The County is sending a very clear message to all businesses that Sarasota is a dangerous place to do business.

Ken Sanborn CEO Sanborn Studios 2010, called for the studio to create 117 new jobs by Sept. 2, 2013, with the average salary for those positions to be no less than \$72,000. The contract stipulated that if all the jobs were not created

by that deadline, the company is required to reimburse the county \$2,992 for each of the 117 positions that has not materialized.

And so, on Sept. 10 of last year, Jeff Maultsby, the director of the county's Office of Business and Economic Development, contacted Sanborn to request documentation that the company had indeed created the positions it had promised. He received no answer. "To this date Sanborn Studios has not provided any evidence or documentation that it has created the jobs required," says a memo from County Attorney Steve DeMarsh.

In its suit, the exact total the county will be seeking remains unclear. Neither DeMarsh nor county spokesperson Curt Preisser could confirm a monetary figure. If the county seeks to be reimbursed for each of the 117 jobs in question, the total would be \$350,000, just 54 percent of the county's overall grant.

But Sanborn is disputing the charge that it hasn't shown proof of the jobs it has created. According to a statement posted on the Sanborn website after the county's lawsuit vote, "in 2013, Sanborn Studios provided evidence to the County that the studio had directly created approximately 200 full-time positions and indirectly created hundreds of others," "more than enough" to meet the requirements of its deal with the county.

That statement was written by Scott Sobel, president of the Washington, D.C., public relations firm Media & Communications Strategies.

Sobel tells *The Sarasota News Leader* there was a meeting between Sanborn representatives and county officials last Aug. 9, before the job creation deadline. He can't say what "evidence" Sanborn presented to the county, but he emphasizes that "Sanborn was not required to divulge information" and that the county received the material it is "entitled to."

"It's not a matter of speculation," Sobel says.

"It's a matter of absolutely irrefutable facts."

Sobel also charges that the contract itself is not "enforceable." Calls to Sanborn Studios itself went unanswered.

Sobel's statement on the website lists a number of projects Sanborn has worked on and argues that the county has "sniped at and slandered" the company since 2011. "The County is sending a very clear message to all businesses that Sarasota is a dangerous place to do business," said company CEO Ken Sanborn, according to the statement. The press release calls the county's actions "ethically and morally reprehensible."

The Sanborn website now also hosts a 2013 letter written by Dori Sperko, a producer with Bradenton's Sweet Tomato Films. In it, Sperko tells Sanborn her company can no longer work with Sanborn because doing so might "jeopardize any chance" Sweet Tomato might have at "a Sarasota incentive." Sperko did not respond to a *News Leader* voicemail.

The county could not confirm when its lawsuit will be filed, other than "soon." SNL

The Sarasota News Leader No-Nonsense Reporting



City Utilities Director Mitt Tidwell brought this bolt to the 'State of the Utilities' workshop this week to demonstrate the need for action on the pipeline to the city's source of drinking water. This piece of hardware had been holding together a flange for 50 years. It sits on a reporter's notebook for scale. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

WITH AGING INFRASTRUCTURE TO ADDRESS, THE CITY OF SARASOTA IS FACING THE NEED FOR MULTIPLE INCREASES IN CUSTOMER UTILITY BILLS

By Stan Zimmerman

City Editor

Sarasota utility bills may be headed higher, with no end in sight. On Monday, June 9, Utilities Director Mitt Tidwell briefed the city commissioners about the state of the city's water, sewer and reclaimed water systems. Keeping them running is going to cost more.

The commissioners heard a broad-ranging briefing about their 275 miles of pipeline and 89 operating lift stations and about best practices for bio-solids management (send the

material to Manatee County), emergency response times and "smart" manhole covers.

But everything has a bottom line, and for the Utilities Department to make ends meet, it is asking for a 6 percent increase in rates start-

Five days before a [customer] shut-off, we have an employee hang a red tag. We're going to 14,000 houses each year. That's how many red tags we hang a year.

Mitt Tidwell Utilities Director City of Sarasota ing in October and another 6 percent the following year, followed by a 4 percent increase for each of the following eight years.

The city commissioners will be asked a

week after their briefing, during their June 16 regular meeting, to advertise a public hearing to consider the rate hike. A chart presented by the Utility Department shows the current typical monthly bill is \$71.24, but that would jump to \$75.52 in October and \$80.05 the next year.

Why a 12 percent jump in two years? Half the increase is necessitated by utilities work demanded by the creation of 14 traffic roundabouts. Tidwell said he wanted to run new pipes under all 14 intersections while the opportunity presents itself. The prior utilities capital improvement program did not include the roundabout re-dos. The utilities effort is estimated to cost \$7.7 million. "The [Florida Department of Transportation] demands the money be available upfront before they begin the projects," said Tidwell.

The city commissioners earlier asked the Utilities Department to fund its maintenance and capital improvements without resorting to bond issues or other borrowing. In the long term, paying cash saves the finance costs, which can — as with a home mortgage — lead to a total expense being twice as much as the cost originally would have been.

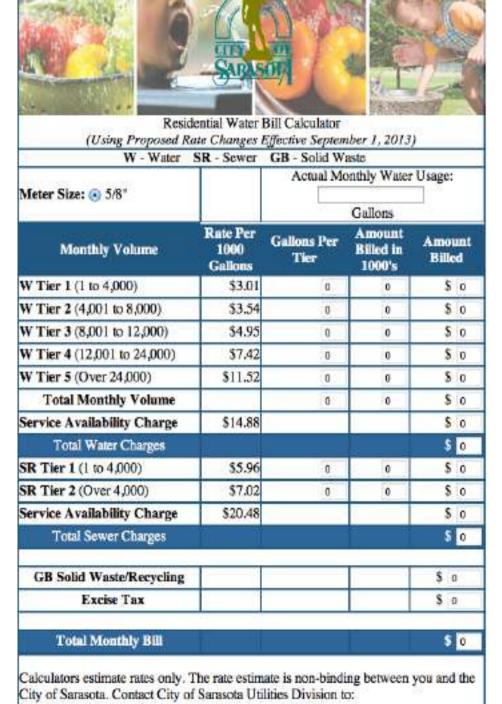
While the roundabout re-dos might be considered optional, replacement of the 20-mile-long pipeline to the city's Verna well field in central Sarasota County is not. The well field served as the city's primary source of drinking water for decades; it has been supplemented by a reverse-osmosis plant on 12th Street.

The pipeline is now a half-century old and needs replacement. That will account for \$10 million in the future spending plan. "It's starting to experience problems," said Tidwell of the structure. He displayed a heavily corroded flange bolt to show the age of the system.

LOOKING FOR SAVINGS

Tidwell manipulated the old capital improvement plan to push some projects off for a decade or more. Several planned extensions to the water reuse system will be deferred, saving \$2 million. Rehabilitation planned for the wastewater treatment plan will also be delayed, saving \$1 million.

Other projects will proceed but with reduced funding. Rehabilitation plans for water and



The City of Sarasota enables customers to calculate their water bills online. Image from sarasotagov.com

wastewater mains in the 2016-17 fiscal year will be reduced, saving \$5 million.

Tidwell told the commissioners he has had preliminary talks with Florida Power & Light (FPL) about installing solar cells on city utility property to cut power bills. He said FPL "is interested in evaluating [that proposal]."

The Utilities Department writes off about \$250,000 in bad debt every year. Right now customers' utility deposits are returned after one year of on-time payments. "Do we want to retain the deposits until the account is closed?" Tidwell asked. "Maybe we should ask for higher deposits."

Slow payment of bills is costing the city \$300,000. "Five days before a [customer] shutoff, we have an employee hang a red tag," said Tidwell. "We're going to 14,000 houses each year. That's how many red tags we hang a year."

MONEY USED UP

The \$20 million the city received from the sale of the spray fields used for discharge of

wastewater was set aside for utility upgrades. Tidwell pointed out that that money is gone, with \$15 million spent on projects and \$5 million put into reserves.

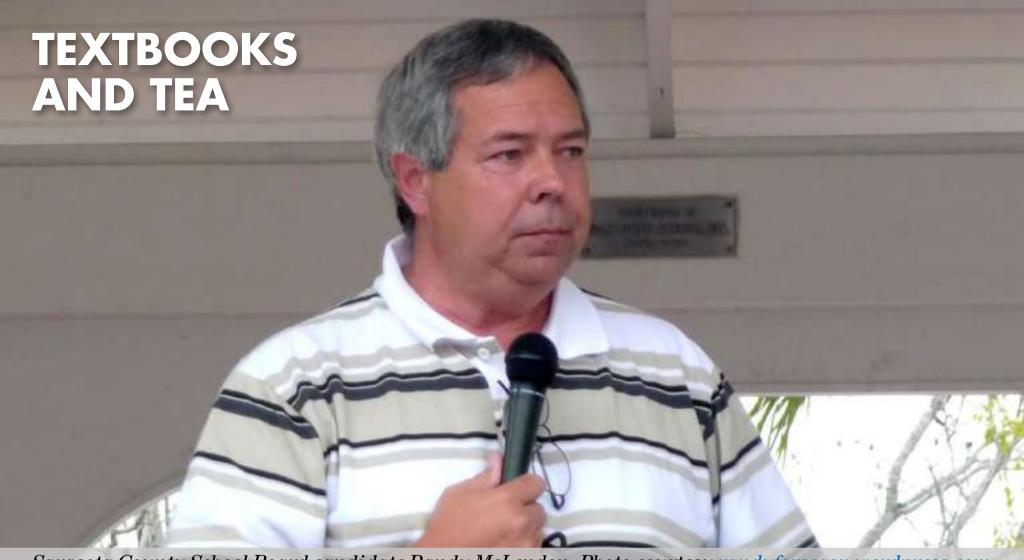
Thus, any future efforts to maintain and improve utility services — without borrowing or bonding — will require rate increases, Tidwell said. "I'm looking to keep the rate increase to a manageable number."

A slide presented to the commissioners showed current water and sewer rates from cities along the Florida Gulf Coast. A Palmetto resident using 4,000 gallons per month pays about \$50, while Cape Coral and Fort Myers residents pay \$90 per month on average. A Sarasota County customer pays approximately \$69, while a Sarasota city resident is paying roughly \$71.

One major unknown for Tidwell — and the board — is the final cost of the Lift Station 87 project. The contractor is preparing an estimate for the piping project; the design engineer is still developing the plans for the actual lift station itself.



The City Commission has been asked to hold a public hearing on utility bill increases. Photo by Norman Schimmel



 $Sarasota\ County\ School\ Board\ candidate\ Randy\ McLendon.\ Photo\ courtesy\ randy for segov. word press. complex and the second press of the$

FOUNDER OF ENGLEWOOD TEA PARTY GROUP JOINS SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD RACE

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

After losing a 2012 race for a seat on the Sarasota County Commission, Randy McLendon, the founder of the Englewood tea party group Taking Our Country Back, is once again running for higher office, filing paperwork this week to challenge incumbent School Board member Jane Goodwin.

McLendon has cited his opposition to the set of national education standards known as Common Core as a major reason for his decision to run. He tells *The Sarasota News Leader* he's not opposed to standards *per se*, but he objects to how the federal government has "usurped" Common Core. He calls the federal government's promotion of Common Core "a huge and unconstitutional federal government overstep," and praises the state of Florida for adopting what's known as the

Florida Standards, which, while largely similar to Common Core, replace it and contain a number of additional items.

When asked what a School Board member can do to oppose the new standards, McLendon says elected officials should be "standing on their desks, waving their arms and shouting to the community about what is happening and asking the community to help them get things changed by law."

In 2012, McLendon challenged Charles Hines in that year's Republican primary for the County Commission, taking home 41 percent of the vote in a losing effort. His opponent this year, Goodwin, was first elected in 2010, when she won a narrow 52 percent to 48 percent victory.

According to the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections Office, McLendon did not vote in this year's March referendum on the school system's special 1-mill property tax, which passed with support of 77 percent of the voters who cast ballots. McLendon tells the *News Leader* he knew the vote was coming up, but "the voting day never really stuck in my mind."

"It came right in the middle of season and the real estate business was [hopping] and I had intended to vote," he writes in an email, "but by the time I got finished with business that day I realized I had completely forgotten about it."

McLendon says it "comes across" like the School Board is trying to "sneak the tax in" by holding the vote in the springtime rather than during the general election. He adds that he would favor moving the vote to the fall. "I will not support a special election in March costing \$500,000 to pull off when it could be done at a regularly scheduled voting day," he writes.

(Supervisor of Elections Kathy Dent told the *News Leader* the cost of the March referendum was about \$400,000.)

Although it doesn't affect his race, McLendon supports Gov. Rick Scott's decision to appoint a candidate in another School Board race. Scott named Bridget Ziegler to the board position left open by the recent resignation of Carol Todd.

Ziegler's husband is Christian Ziegler, the former executive director of the Republican Party of Sarasota County. Her appointment has drawn accusations of political favoritism. Ziegler's opponent, Ken Marsh, for one, tells the *News Leader* he was "disappointed that Gov. Scott apparently thought so little



Incumbent Jane Goodwin will face Randy McLendon in the Aug. 26 Republican primary for a School Board seat. Photo courtesy Sarasota County Schools

of Sarasota County parents and teachers and students that he would appoint somebody with so little experience to such an important position."

"You could argue that with the election being just two months away, there was no rush and that he did it to give an advantage to Bridget in the election," McLendon writes of Scott's action. "With this being a non-partisan election, that advantage may not be as large as if it were a Republican primary, but that is politics and probably a wise political move on his part. As for Bridget, I have no doubt she will be a very good school board member and she has my full support."

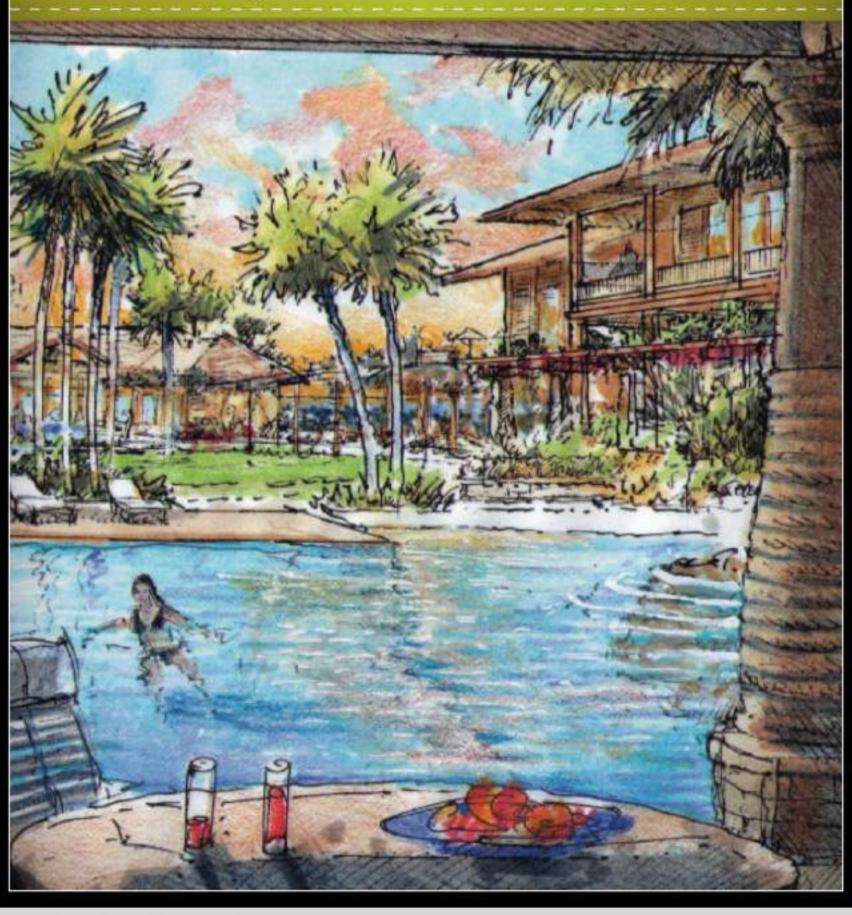
The elections for the Sarasota County School Board will begin with the Aug. 26 primary. Since McLendon and Goodwin are the only candidates who have filed to run so far in that district, the winner on that day will win the seat. If other candidates emerge, so does the possibility of a runoff election in November.

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

Opportunity For Operation and/or Development

Warm Mineral Springs

Solicitation #142723CG



The cover of the Jebco Ventures/Angelshot long-term bid shows a conceptual design for new development at Warm Mineral Springs. Image courtesy Sarasota County

TWO HUGELY DIFFERENT LONG-TERM PROPOSALS FOR WARM MINERAL SPRINGS WILL GO HEAD-TO-HEAD JUNE 24

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

The North Port City Commission and the Sarasota County Commission made a rare show of unanimity this week, voting together to select the top two bids for a long-term development plan at Warm Mineral Springs. But the plans they chose diverge wildly, leaving the boards with a stark choice when the competing developers formally present their plans in two weeks.

The commissions met together Tuesday, June 10, to winnow four proposals to two, allowing county staff to research the proposals and conduct background checks. After a series of fumbled tabulation attempts, the boards eventually emerged with two top contenders: Jebco Ventures and National and State Park Concessions. The latter company is operating the springs on a short-term basis.

Both plans won plaudits from both boards, but that doesn't mean tough decisions do not still lie ahead. North Port Mayor Jim Blucher said it was "amazing" how different the plans are.

Jebco's proposal tracks more closely to what the County Commission has sought for Warm Mineral Springs, jointly purchased by the county and North Port in 2010 for \$5.5 million. Phase One of Jebco's plan includes the renova-

tion and replacement of buildings, including the addition of a rehab and wellness center, a spa and a "healthy-eats concept" restaurant, all built while the company maintains current operations.

But three years out, per the Jebco plan, the company would begin looking at putting a hotel on the property and, at four years out, perhaps even a "medical suite campus." Beyond that, Jebco could possibly even add an "on-site condo/residential development." If everything is eventually completed, the project would cost an estimated \$35.7 million. The company is seeking a 50-year lease, and it would deliver 7 percent of its gross receipts to the city and the county after the fourth month of that agreement.

National and State Park Concessions, meanwhile, would do nothing with the property for three years, maintaining the springs as a swimming destination and using only the existing facilities. Unlike the Jebco plan, National's plan specifically pledges "to protect the geological and archeological aspects of the Spring," and it lists a host of environmentally friendly practices it would adopt—minimizing waste and ensuring that products used at the facility would be as sustainable as possible.

After that initial three-year period is up, "or

whenever the building fund has accumulated enough money to do it," National would then raze the property's current buildings and proceed with the

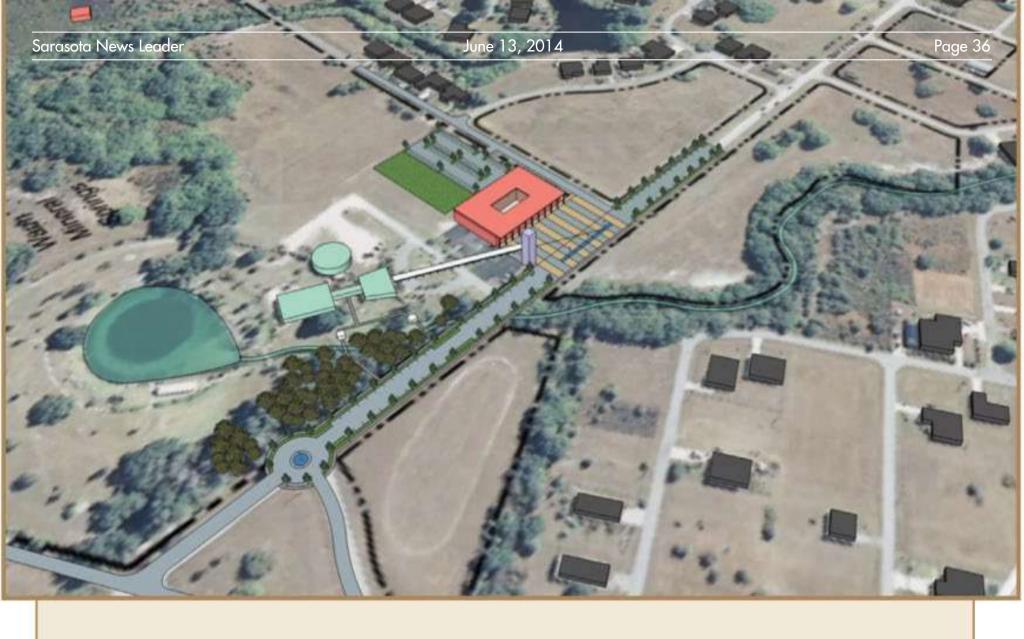
These two really have different visions.

Charles Hines
Chairman
Sarasota County Commission

National and State Park Concessions Warm Mineral Springs, Inc.



Warm Mineral Springs Solicitation 142723CG





PLAN CONCEPUALLY CONTAINS

- Springs Facilities Improvements
- Wellness Center
- Restaurant
- Hotel



 $The \ Jebco/Angelshot\ proposal\ includes\ plans\ for\ a\ wellness\ center,\ restaurant\ and\ hotel.\ Image\ courtesy\ Sarasota\ County$

construction of a new 10,000-square-foot structure, which would include a café, a gift shop, spa and therapy services and more. National estimates that construction would eventually cost \$8.9 million.

National has been operating the Springs since April 12, when the property reopened to swimmers. As of June 6, it had already collected \$265,000 in revenue. Its short-term contract runs out at the end of August.

Both the North Port and County commissions named the Jebco and National projects as their top two options, despite the immense differences between them. "These two really have different visions," County Commission Chairman Charles Hines said, while County

Complicating the return on investment calculation for the Owners and adding uncertainty to any potential recovery of potential construction investment is a very real possibility of changes in the Springs' attributes. As stated in section 8 of the proposal, "Given the natural aspect of the Spring, the Owners cannot guarantee the quality, quantity, and/or characteristics of the water from the Springs, and will not be responsible for any loss, whether expected or realized, due to changes in these attributes."

Because of the uncertainty listed in the proposal documents, and the lack of equity in the construction, construction financing would be very unlikely for NSPC from any normal financial institution. Any potential financial investors would require partial ownership in the venture, as well as excessive return on their investment, which would further reduce the potential to operate the Springs successfully at a reasonable return. Unidentified potential investors may also violate the requirements by the inability to disclose all owners, and prevent proper filing of all forms and documents required in Tab 1, section 1.4, as relates to ownership, the respondent, and his team.

There is a possibility of demonstrating to a financing company that the project could be possible with a long term lease. The lease would have to extend beyond the date of the loan payment by a number of years. NSPC understands that this has been successfully done on Public land in Georgia with residential property on long term leases. Details of these leases are various, but normally, the land is leased long term approximately 40 years, with nominal rent. The developer then has a long term interest in the property, which is then considered by certain financing institutions to be valid for collateral. In these cases, the leases would not be able to be terminated by the owner, as that would destroy the ability to be used as loan collateral.

As the proposal gave no indication that the owner wishes to give up control over the property in this manner, NSPC has not attempted to build this option into its proposal, other than mention its possibility as a future option.

However, NSPC believes that construction should be feasible under certain conditions. NSPC would like to phase in its operations and consider construction in the following manner.

This proposal is an open ended proposal, with a minimum 10 years term, depending on continued water quality. Also, NSPC would like to be able to investigate the long term lease situation to be able to further development.

Commissioner Nora Patterson called the plans "diametrically" opposed.

"It's amazing how they are so different," Blucher said, adding that he'd "love to take pieces from both of them. But we'll see where that goes."

Both boards eventually voted unanimously to select Jebco and National as their top two choices, a rare show of common feeling in a process that has dragged on for years. The two competing plans will be discussed in greater depth at another joint meeting, to be held in Venice on June 24.

Pre Phase:

1. 90 days to finalize due diligence.

Phase 1:

- 1. Execute 50 Year ground lease with 50 year renewal option.
 - a. Subordinate 10 acres of contiguous land to loan for the purpose of developing modules.
- 2. Assume operations as they exist today.
- 3. No revenue to City/County for first 3 months.
- 4. 150 days to complete engineering for utilities and architectural for rehab/rebuild of existing structures.
- Commence utilities installation.
 - a. 12 month estimate for completion.
- 6. Commence improvements/renovations/rebuild on existing facilities.
 - a. 12 month estimate for completion.
 - b. The existing facilities may be rehabbed/rebuilt to be utilized as one or more of the following:
 - i. Fyzical Therapy & Balance™. Medically based, doctor-referral, prescription/insurance based and client select physical therapy/rehabilitation & wellness center.
 - 1. 4,000-8,000 square feet.
 - 2. Typically employ 12-17 full-time and additional 2-3 part-time depending on module's size.
 - 3. \$2,000,000 annual sales in time.
 - ii. Fyzical Fitness™ medically-based and supervised physical fitness, exercise and wellness center.
 - 1. 4,000-8,000 square feet.
 - 2. Typically employ 18-20 full time depending on size/demand.
 - 3. \$1,500,000 annual sales in time.
 - iii. "Restourant." A healthy-eats concept dining experience.
 - 1. 4,000-8,000 square feet.
 - 2. Typically employ at least 12 and up to 30 depending on size/demand.
 - 3. \$1,500,000 in sales in time.
 - iv. Fyzical Spa™ world-class massage, relaxation and restoration spa and salon.
 - 1. 4,000-8,000 square feet.
 - Typically employ 18 full time and up to 5 additional part-time depending on size/demand.
 - 3. \$1,000,000 annual sales in time.
- Beginning month 4 and continuing for balance of 50 year ground lease, 7% of gross receipts (park/springs ticket sales) to City/County partner.



Entries line up for the 2013 Boat Parade in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel

THE COUNTY COMMISSION AGREES TO COVER CERTAIN EXPENSES FOR THE 2014 SUNCOAST SUPER BOAT GRAND PRIX BUT EXPRESSES **DISMAY OVER BEING MISLED LAST YEAR**

As it turns out, when the Sarasota County Commission last year acceded to pleas from Suncoast Charities for Children to pay the sanctioning fees so the organization could host its 29th Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix, the board spent \$79,200 on more than just

those fees.

On Wednesday, June 11, the commissioners learned that part of the money was for operational expenses necessary to hold the race. The 2013 race budget provided to the

Boat International was \$25,000. As Commissioner Nora Patterson put it this

board showed the sanctioning fee to Super

week, "[W]hat we were calling sanctioning fees wasn't really sanctioning fees. They are

just a fairly small part

of it."

"Correct," responded Lucy Nicandri, vice president of Suncoast Charities.

This year, the nonprofit was seeking \$94,600 from the county under

We felt the [request for more money | would be in line just because of the gradual increase, since 2008, in economic impact [from the festival and the boat race].

> Lucy Nicandri Vice President Suncoast Charities for Children

November 26, 2012 SBIP



Suncoast Charities for Children

2013 Race Budget

Fixed Cost:

Rights to air a live and delayed show of Suncoast Super	TBD
Boat Grand Prix Festival	Separate Contract
Travel:	2
Land / Food	7,500.00
Air	4,500.00
Car Rental	1,500.00
Salaries:	
Medical Salary	9,800.00
Staff Salary	9,000.00
Equipment Rental:	
Radios	1,200.00
Insurance (4M-1M-10T-10T) estimate	19,500.00
Sanction Fee:	
SPIP	25,000.00
Utilities:	
Phone	400.00
Postage / Express Mail	300.00
Printing / Supplies	500.00
Payment to SBIP in advance of event	\$79,200.00

In-Kind Service:

Portable Potties	\$2,500.00
Land Rental	2,000.00
Lodging (100. per night x 4 days x 35 rooms)	14,900.00
Helicopters - 2 Jet Rangers - 1 R44	12,000.00
Trophies for Event	2,500.00
Security	4,000.00
Meetings / Parties	2,000.00
Docks	1,000.00
Cranes	5,000.00
T-Shirts for volunteers (250 @ \$5.00)	1,250.00
Total In-Kind Services	\$47,150.00
Possible Race Budget	\$126,350.00



Lucy Nicandri addresses the County a Commission in March 2013. File photo

an agreement inked in conjunction with the board's award of the 2013 grant. However, Carolyn Brown, director of the county's Parks and Recreation Department, explained that only \$81,302.60 could be covered by Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue set aside by law for promotional purposes. TDT money was what the board used last year for the \$79,200 grant.

The agreement for 2014 provides up to \$94,200, Brown added. That ceiling, Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson pointed out, was included "just to be for a comfort level" if Super Boat International raised the sanctioning fees.

"We felt the [request for more money] would be in line just because of the gradual increase, since 2008, in economic impact [from the festival and the boat race]," Nicandri told the board.

In 2008, research commissioned by Suncoast Charities showed an economic impact on the county of \$9.6 million from the race and related activities, including a parade of boats down Main Street in Sarasota. That figure climbed to \$12.7 million in 2011, \$14.3 million in 2012 and \$17 million last year, Nicandri noted.

Robinson eventually made a motion for the board to approve the \$81,302.60, which passed unanimously. Commissioner Joe Barbetta argued for the maximum allowed in the agreement, but he conceded he did not have the votes for that move.

"I was a part of reaching that compromise last year," Robinson said, referencing discussions she had with members of the charity's board after Nicandri appeared before the commission on March 19, 2013, to ask for a grant to cover the sanctioning fees. "I know what the intent was [with the county agreement]."

Robinson made a second motion, which also passed without dissent, calling for County Administrator Tom Harmer and the Office of the County Attorney to seek clarification of the language regarding sanctioning fees in the agreement for coming years, as well as any other adjustments considered appropriate.

Brown quickly responded that such action already was planned.

PAST AND PRESENT

On March 19, 2013, Nicandri stood before the commissioners to say the organization was

desperate to cover the expense of the upcoming festival. A day later, Suncoast Charities' board set the date of April 5 to decide whether it could move forward.

Although Barbetta argued that the commission should award the nonprofit the \$79,200 it was seeking, in addition to a \$10,000 grant the county already had awarded Suncoast, the board voted 3-2 on March 19 in opposition to his motion. Only then-Chairwoman Carolyn Mason supported Barbetta.

On April 9, 2013, Commissioner Charles Hines raised the topic again, and Robinson explained she had spoken with Nicandri and Suncoast board President Jack Cox after the



Sarasota County Commission Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson. File photo

March 19 session. During that conversation, she continued, she told them of her concern that if the commissioners approved the request, "we would see a bleed that wouldn't stop," with their coming back for more funding every subsequent year. They told her, Robinson explained to her colleagues, that if the board approved the sanctioning fee on a regular basis, they would not seek any other county grant funds except those available to nonprofit organizations, for which all interested groups apply on a competitive annual basis.

On Wednesday of this week, Parks and Recreation Director Brown pointed out to the commissioners, "[W]e learned that these [sanctioning] fees are more appropriately described as 'promoter costs.'" Although Super Boat International "will not sanction the race without the payment of these fixed costs," Brown added, the TDT money could not cover them all legally.

Some expenses are associated with the rental of equipment, such as cranes and helicopters, Brown noted. However, \$2,102.60 in charges associated with the live broadcast of the race could be paid for with the tourism funds, she said.

Expenses have risen this year, Nicandri told the board, because more international interest in the race has led to more boats being registered for it. Race day this year will be July 6, and 40 boats already have entered the competition, she added — 10 more than the 2013 event featured.

Because of the greater number of boats, she said, Suncoast will need two cranes instead of one, for example, to enable all of them to get into the water in time for the race.

Another new expense is for two boats that will stay in the middle of the course with personnel keeping an eye out for wildlife that could be endangered by the activities, she added. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission stipulated that action.

Barbetta pointed out because the costs Nicandri outlined are necessary to Suncoast holding the race, the county should cover the amount provided for in the 2014 agreement, \$94,200.

Robinson then brought up her discussions with Suncoast board members in 2013, adding, "The [resulting] agreement was pretty specific about limiting future requests."

"I don't know how to fix it so that we know what's our responsibility and what's yours," Patterson told Nicandri. "It's a pretty loose interpretation at this point."

A number of times during the discussion, board members did make a point of complimenting Nicandri for her work and the charity for its assistance to special needs children in the community. "Lucy, you do a great job," Robinson said. "There's no reflection on you."

"It's sort of a heart-wrenching thing," Patterson added, "because we all support the charity and we certainly all support the event."

Just before the vote to allocate the \$81,302.60, Patterson asked Nicandri if she could cover the extra expenses through an application directly to Visit Sarasota County, the county's tourism office.

"I can certainly explore that option," Nicandri replied. SNL



SOME PROGRESS, SOME PROBLEMS

City staff says insufficient space exists at its Public Works facility located at Goodrich Avenue and 12th Street (above) to accommodate large vehicles and other equipment that use the lot at the city's 1330 N. Osprey Ave. site. Photo courtesy City of Sarasota

ANALYSIS OF TWO HOMELESS SHELTER SITES CONTINUES, AND A THIRD POSSIBLE SITE IS ON THE MARKET

By Roger Drouin

County Editor

The most difficult and controversial part of addressing homelessness in Sarasota remains challenging. However, more details did emerge on that point this week regarding where a come-as-you-are shelter in the community might be located.

Two pieces of city property remain pos-

sibilities, 1330 N. Osprey Ave. and 1800 N. East Ave. Now a third potential contender, 209 N. Lime Ave. — home to the Harvest Tabernacle Church campus — is on the market for \$2.9 million.

three sites.

City and county staff have remained focused on continued analysis of both the 1330 N. Osprey Ave. and 1800 N. East Ave. parcels, discuss-

In a June 3 memo, Wayne Applebee, the coun-

ty's director of homeless services, updated

the Sarasota County commissioners on all

We've received some additional information, and I look forward to seeing what options staff can put in front of us to bring this forward.

Christine Robinson Vice Chairwoman Sarasota County Commission ing them at weekly meetings. In the most significant development, staff members had the opportunity to discuss them with representatives of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

"In this meeting, it was agreed that, while each site will need to seek approvals for stormwater mitigation, the conditions found on these two sites are routine, and reasonable solutions can be developed for each site," Applebee wrote.

FDEP would have to approve remediation plans because contamination was found at both sites. A key report released in April detailed contamination and other logistical challenges involving the two parcels.

Yet the proposal to build a shelter in Sarasota continues to be a lightning-rod issue. County commissioners say the shelter is the best option for addressing homelessness, which has led to increasing problems in downtown Sarasota, from complaints about crime to customers expressing trepidation about dealing

with homeless people if they want to shop or dine downtown. The City Commission, conversely, has been divided over the shelter, with two commissioners steadfast in saying it should not be built in the city. Some city residents fear its location in the city will lead to an increase in the number of people panhandling downtown.

The City and County commissions are slated to discuss the issue again in another joint session at 1 p.m. on June 23 at the Sarasota County Administration Center, located at 1660 Ringling Boulevard in Sarasota.

"We've received some additional information, and I look forward to seeing what options staff can put in front of us to bring this forward," County Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson said this week.



The city lot at 1330 N. Osprey Ave. has parking for some vehicles. They would have to use an alternative site if the parcel becomes the location for a homeless shelter. Photo courtesy City of Sarasota

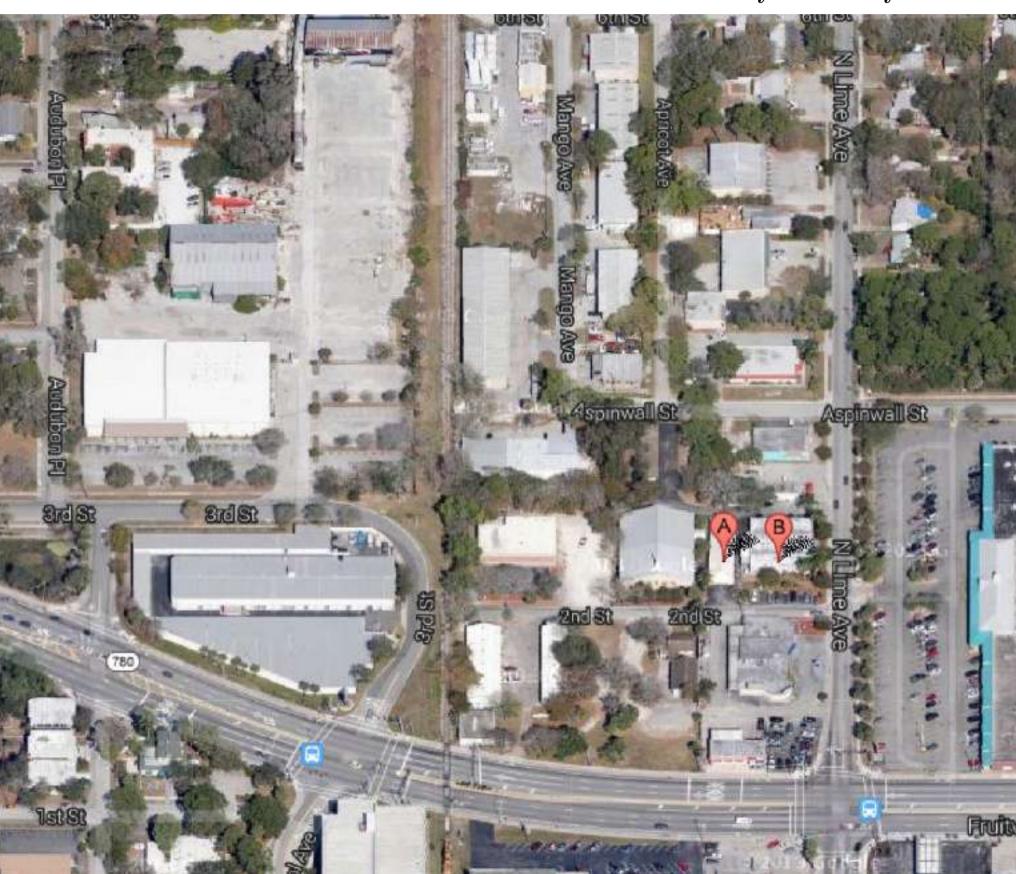
Robinson added that she wants to see the effort moving ahead, not backward.

TROUBLE WITH THE TWO

Regarding the 1330 N. Osprey Ave. site, the biggest hurdle is where to park 60 city utility vehicles and relocate storage bins that would be displaced if elected officials tap this site for the shelter.

County Commissioner Joe Barbetta previously suggested moving the vehicles to a nearby city lot on Goodrich Avenue. City officials, however, have stated that the Public Works Department lot at the end of Goodrich Avenue sees too much usage already to accommodate any further vehicle parking.

Last month, Assistant City Manager Marlon Brown shared with city and county officials



The property at 209 N. Lime Ave. in Sarasota might become a third potential site for a homeless shelter. Image from Google Maps

some photos of the Goodrich lot, illustrating that fact. According to Brown's May 13 memo, more than 100 employees and the city's Fleet Management Services use that site.

City officials previously considered purchasing a \$1.6 million parcel from Florida Power & Light Co. so they could relocate the utility vehicles and bins from the Osprey Avenue site. That option was nixed, however, because of the steep cost.

As for the 1800 N. East Ave. location: "The current owner's timing requirement for a purchase contract and the city commission's final land use approval are not aligned," Applebee wrote in his June 3 update. "The County's ability to move through the City's entire approval process exceeds the amount of time the property owner is willing to place the property under contract."

County and city staffs are working on options to deal with those constraints and should



Jon Thaxton, a former county commissioner, is on the staff of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

Photo by Norman Schimmel

have them ready for the commissioners to consider at the June 23 meeting, Applebee indicated in the memo.

A THIRD OPTION?

If the city and county commissioners vote to consider the Tabernacle property, Applebee recommends due diligence as the next step, including environmental and building condition analysis and renovation estimates.

The parcel, which is north of Fruitville Road and two blocks east of U.S. 301, holds some logistical promise because the campus is home to four separate buildings. Those structures total 23,533 square feet on 1.98 acres, Applebee added in the memo. The site would have to be rezoned for use as a shelter.

The property was not on the "Optimal and Available" or "Possibly Viable and/or Possibly Available" sites in homelessness consultant Robert Marbut's Nov. 25, 2013 action plan presented to the City and County commissions.

SUCCESS ON ANOTHER FRONT

There has been some progress in other aspects of the countywide effort to address homelessness.

"The goal is to provide better service to homeless families and children and help them get back on their feet," Jon Thaxton, director of community investment with the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, told the county commissioners during their regular meeting on Tuesday, June 10.

The "success has been exceptional" on this front after hours of meetings and collaboration involving the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and 30-plus social service agencies throughout the region, Thaxton added.

By the end of the summer, an emergency intake facility for families is scheduled to open in Sarasota. A second center should be operating by then in North Port, he pointed out.

Collaboration has also resulted in help to get a new community system up and running that will enable case managers to keep track of assistance provided to clients. Further action is under way to promote a cultural change, which will encourage the public not to give money, food or goods to the homeless — a recommendation in Marbut's plan.

Thaxton further noted that The Salvation Army is working on means to address the need for long-term housing for families and individuals. "You will be seeing and hearing a great deal more on it."

A significant factor in handling homelessness is finding sufficient moderately priced housing for people, Thaxton said.

Funding will be one of the challenges as that initiative moves ahead, he pointed out.

However, he continued, "The Gulf Coast Community Foundation has been working with donors to bring some local money to the table that will allow the local governments to leverage that money," Thaxton said.

Using funds to help homeless families and children get the services they need is an investment, he told the commissioners. "If you do not spend that money, you will be spending more down the road on human health services."

As for the effort to make a come-as-you-are shelter a reality, "All I can say there is we are all praying for you," Thaxton told the board. SNL



Sarasota entrepreneur Jesse Biter won Planning Board approval for a 10-story residential structure that he wants to build on the site of the former United Way office on Second Street and the adjacent parcel. Image from Google Maps

THE PLANNING BOARD SENDS THREE PROJECTS ON TO THE CITY COMMISSION, INCLUDING PLANS FOR A RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE ON SECOND STREET

By Stan Zimmerman

City Editor

On Wednesday, June 11, the Sarasota Planning Board passed three figurative hot potatoes along to the City Commission. Jesse Biter's residential high-rise plan was allowed an additional quarter-acre; Duval's New World Café won a nod to become a "nightclub"; and Mary Lee's not-so-whimsical plans for her Marietta Museum of Art and Whimsy were approved.

None escaped scrutiny, and only one passed unanimously.

Biter's request caused the most apparent heartburn because neither staff nor the Planning Board members knew what they were approving. At an earlier city Development Review Committee meeting, a top staffer pointed out, "You're asking us to sign off on a project we have not seen plans for." But the committee nonetheless did just that, and staff recommended approval to the Planning Board.

I trust staff will ensure the architecture is good for downtown.

Vald Svekis Chairman Sarasota Planning Board On June 11, Planning Board member Mort Siegel said, "You need to explain to me why we should treat you differently." Biter already has every scrap of approval he needs for a 10-story, 168-unit building on Second Street in downtown Sarasota. But he bought extra land, and he wants to know whether he can put only one building on the site or whether he has to erect two.

That, fundamentally, was the question before the Planning Board, but without any architect's renderings or engineering drawings showing a concept for the proposal. Adding to the complexity of the matter, Biter gets a double density bonus because he is using the Downtown Residential Overlay District provisions for his project. With member Chris Gallagher, an architect, recusing himself, the Planning Board voted 3-1 to approve Biter's one-building plan, with member Jennifer Ahearn-Koch in the minority. Chairman Vald Svekis said, "I trust staff will ensure the architecture is good for downtown."

THE NIGHTCLUB THAT IS NOT

Duval's on Main Street wants to serve whiskey with dinner as well as wine. But to offer customers the hard stuff, it needs a "major conditional use" added to its zoning, and the only use that applies to this type of request allows "nightclubs."



Welcome Menu Reservations Info Reviews News Photo Gallery Contact



Rated "#1 Seafood Restaurant in Sarasota" by OpenTable Diners



Seafood so fresh you ought to wear your swimsuit! Fresh local fish and other mouthwatering dishes. Voted best seafood restaurant in Sarasota. Lunch, Dinner & Sunday Brunch. 7 days a week!

Mon - Thu: 110H - 50H Fri - Sat: 110H - 16pH Sun: 100 - 100

1435 Main Street Sarasota, FL 34236 (511 - 322-400)

Welcome to

Duval's New World Cafe

Please check our never page for information on upcoming events.

Would you like to join our platinum patrons email club? We'll keep you informed of unique chef-prepared menu additions, holiday reminders and special event notice with priority seating. And as a thank you for joining us, we'll also enter you into a monthly \$50 gift card raffle drawing.

The city Planning Board this week gave Duval's New World Café the go-ahead for adding a nightclub provision to its zoning status. Image from the website

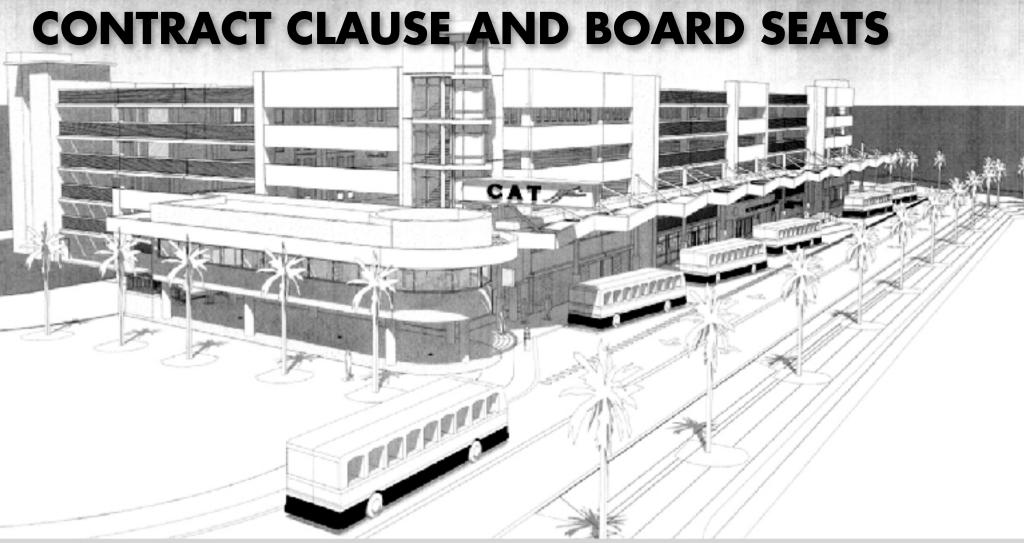
The owners have made multiple promises to the city about the future of Duval's. They do not want the establishment to be a nightclub nor will they let it become one. Representatives of another establishment in downtown Sarasota underwent a similar conversion from "wine bar" to nightclub status, but without the promises made by Duval's owners. In that earlier case, the Ivory Lounge became a hot, rockin' spot but also a source of unending complaints from residents about noise inside and outside the club.

However, the city planning staff and Planning Board were satisfied not only that Duval's owners do not want to create a nightclub, but also that their promises will remain bound to the property. Any future owner or lessee would have to abide by the promises. With that assertion, the vote in favor of the Duval's request was 5-0.

WHIMSICAL DOCKS

Another case was similar to Biter's. Mary Lee already had approval to build a café and gift shop at her Museum of Art and Whimsy on the North Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. But she wanted to add a loading dock to enable staff to move artwork, as well as an outdoor bathroom for her ground-keeping crew. Staff recommended approval of this application as well, but there were Planning Board concerns about commercial activity in this single-family neighborhood. Lee got the go-ahead on a 4-1 vote, with Svekis in the minority.





A 2002 contract could prove a bump in the road for county plans to erect a new downtown Sarasota bus transfer station on Ringling Boulevard. The new facility could resemble one in Collier County, as shown in an architect's rendering. Image courtesy Sarasota County

DOWNTOWN BUS STATION REVERSION AND COMMISSIONER REPLACEMENT ON THE JUNE 16 AGENDA

By Stan Zimmerman

City Editor

A little homework will put another proverbial stick in the wheel of city-county cooperation. The final item on the agenda for the Monday, June 16, City Commission meeting is a forgotten provision of a sales contract. In the 2002 deal, the city sold the county a piece of downtown property for \$478,000. That piece became today's bus transfer station at First Street and Lemon Avenue.

The Sarasota County Commission, led primarily by Commissioner Joe Barbetta, wants the bus station moved and the property sold for downtown redevelopment. What Barbetta perhaps forgot was a "reverter clause" in the original contract. It says the city has the right

of first refusal should the county ever want to sell the parcel.

"Seller shall have a right to re-acquire the property in the event that Buyer desires to sell the property," the 14-year-old contract says. "Seller shall have the right to re-acquire the property at a price equivalent to the fair market value of the property, including all improvements thereupon."

The item was placed on the agenda by City Commissioner Shannon Snyder, who is an announced candidate for the County Commission seat being vacated by Barbetta because of term limits. To set a price, the city and county would independently hire appraisers and then hammer out an agreeable figure.

Barbetta wants the bus transfer station moved to the county-owned parking lot at the intersection of School Avenue and Charles Ringling Boulevard. The southeastern corner of that intersection is site of the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County. A crosswalk was recently added across School Avenue to eliminate rampant jaywalking to the Health Department.

Three parking lots feed into the intersection — from the Health Department, Payne Park and the county lot used by employees. The same small stretch of roadway also has two bus stops.

Because School Avenue has escaped the mania for speed control devices — humps, bumps and tables — it has become a high-speed commuter artery, as well as a route favored by parents conveying their sons and daughters to Sarasota High School.

The transfer station property issue has not formally come up before the city commissioners, who may not be aware of the buy-back provision in the 12-year-old contract.

FILLING TWO PAIR OF SHOES

The two city commissioners running to replace Barbetta (Paul Caragiulo is the other) must give up their seats under Florida's resign-torun law. They will be replaced by two people



City Commissioner Shannon Snyder served as mayor last year. He has filed for the District 2 County Commission seat. Photo by Norman Schimmel

appointed by the three remaining city commissioners. Under New Business (always the final item on an agenda), City Auditor and Clerk Pam Nadalini will lay out the requirements of the city charter and state law.

There is some latitude. For example, should people interested in an appointment fill out an application or questionnaire or a simple letter of interest? Or should commissioners seek out their own nominees?

Nadalini has provided a timeline for the process. Both Snyder and Caragiulo have complied with state law and submitted letters of resignation effective Nov. 18 (when somebody will be sworn in to replace Barbetta).

The city charter requires replacements be made by Dec. 9.

Less than one month later, on Jan. 5, 2015, the qualification period will begin for candidates to run for City Commission district seats. Both Caragiulo and Snyder were elected from districts, respectively District 2 and District 3. The election will be March 10, 2015, and if no candidate receives 50 percent plus one of the votes, a run-off election will be held on May 12, 2015.

Whoever is nominated to fill the two vacancies will remain in office until May 15, 2015, when the newly elected commissioners are sworn in for their full terms.



City Commissioner Paul Caragiulo is vying for the District 2 County Commission seat. Photo by Norman Schimmel

The vacancies throw a real wrench into the plans of anyone thinking of starting a campaign to run for the two district seats. Normally, campaigning for City Commission seats begins after Christmas, which tallies nicely with the timeline Nadalini has outlined. But serious candidates begin running sooner, holding fundraisers and campaign events in the late fall.

Any individuals nominated to fill the vacancies would enjoy the advantages of incumbency without carrying the baggage of prior votes and stands on issues. But should they announce their candidacies before the Nov. 18 resignation dates?

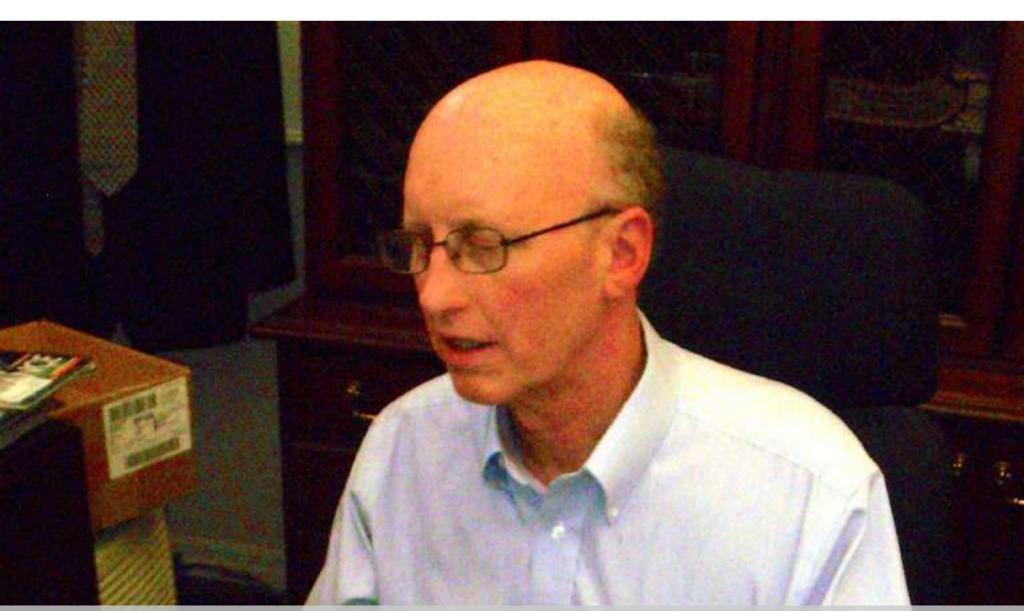
The city has not experienced a double-vacancy before on its commission.

U.S. 41 ROUNDABOUTS ROLLING FORWARD

On Monday, the city commissioners also will hear a briefing from the Florida Department of Transportation about the roundabouts planned for 10th Street and 14th Street. Construction is expected to begin in April 2017.

Before then, the state must acquire additional rights of way on 12 different parcels with seven different property owners. Four of the pieces of property are owned by the city. Plans are now about 60-percent complete.

Designs for the two are quite different because they will serve different needs and users. The 10th Street roundabout must handle not only normal traffic but also boaters in both the



Chris Lyons retired last year after 26 years of service with the City of Sarasota. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

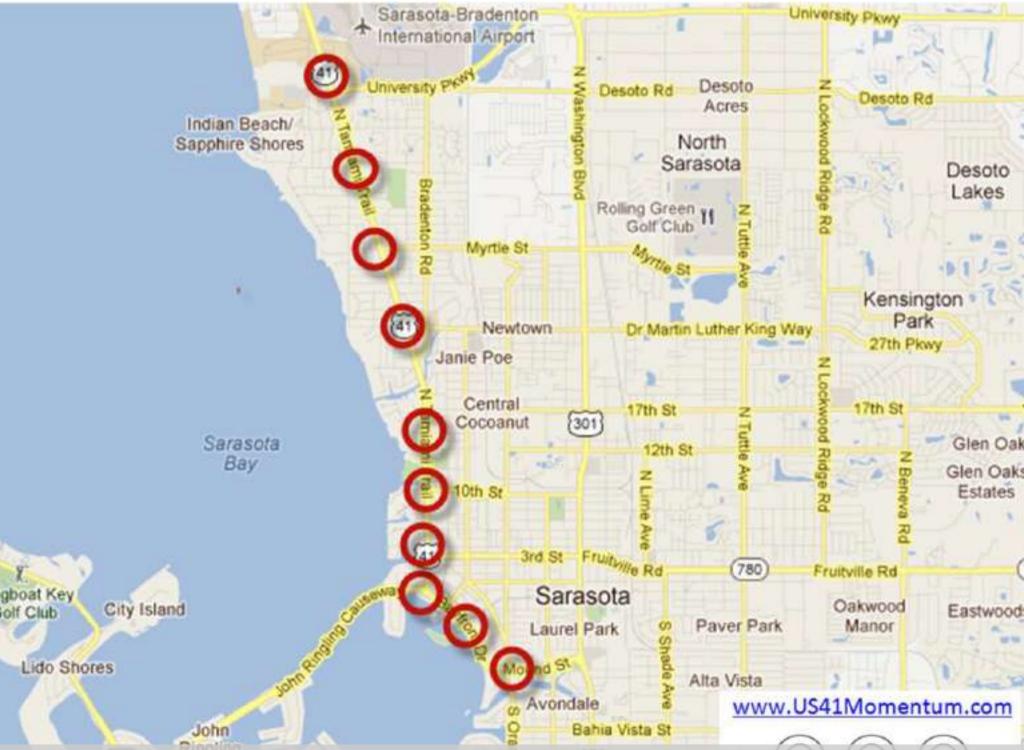
north- and southbound lanes who will be towing watercraft to the 10th Street boat basin. And the roundabout needs to serve overflow audiences leaving performances at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall.

The 14th Street roundabout will also serve a public space, Whitaker Gateway Park, as well as two large condominium complexes. Both roundabouts will feature crosswalks at the intersecting roadways, with "islands" where pedestrians can pause after crossing two lanes of the four-lane roadway.

LYONS TO BE HONORED

The city's long-serving finance director, Chris Lyons, will be awarded the Florida Government Finance Officers Association's Lifetime Achievement Award on Monday evening. Lyons spent 26 years with the city, working up from the Accounting Department to be the city's top finance officer. He and his staff repeatedly won awards for best budget presentations and other accomplishments.

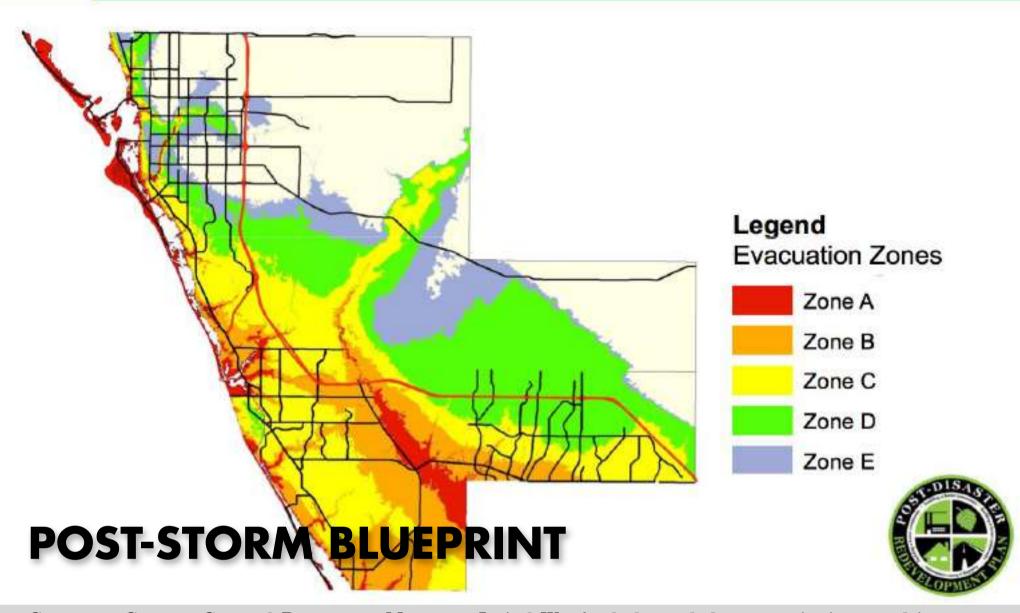
Lyons served 18 years as a volunteer leader in the professional association. He retired from the city last year. SNL



A map shows all the roundabouts planned along Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. Image courtesy City of Sarasota



Hurricane Evacuation Zones



Sarasota County Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford showed the commissioners this map, which uses color-coding to indicate the various evacuation zones across the county. Image courtesy Sarasota County

THE COUNTY COMMISSION GETS AN UPDATE ON PLANNING FOR THE AFTERMATH OF A MAJOR DISASTER

By Roger Drouin

County Editor

If a major storm were to hit the region, the county commissioners Wednesday, June 11, barrier islands would not be the only areas referring to a natural disaster.

dealing with the impact.

"This can affect a huge portion of the county," Sarasota County's Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford told the This is a preliminary discussion. It will come back to you in October for formal adoption.

Laird Wreford Manager Coastal Resources To illustrate the point, Wreford showed them a map of the county with five evacuation zones. The bright swaths of color have no alignment to

municipal boundaries or the unincorporated sections of the county.

That map in the county's draft Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP) and other illustrations document how storm surges can reach well inland, beyond the islands.

Sarasota County began drafting its post disaster plan after the back-to-back storm seasons of 2004 and 2005. On Wednesday, Wreford summarized a draft of the 112-page document, which outlines how the county would

redevelop and spur economic recovery for the long-term after a major storm event.

"This is a preliminary discussion," Wreford said. "It will come back to you in October for formal adoption."

There have been many meetings and collaboration with officials from municipalities, he pointed out. "Large storms do not recognize political boundaries," Wreford said. As the final version of the PDRP takes shape, the hope is that those municipalities will endorse or adopt the countywide plan, Wreford added.



Request for policy guidance

Barrier Island League (BIL)

The spirit of this redevelopment plan residents and businesses should be able to replace the structures they have lost to the disaster as long as they conform to current building standards and codes. It is not the intent of this plan to rezone areas that have been struck, but depending on the extent of the disaster, many residents will require assistance with issues, such as locating temporary housing, understanding disaster assistance programs, wading through insurance claims, finding reputable contractors, understanding their renter's rights, and making decisions on whether to rebuild their home.

A STICKING POINT

Over the past few years, Wreford and other county staff members also met with stakeholder groups, including the Barrier Island League, which includes representatives from Manasota Key, North Manasota Key, Casey Key and Siesta Key. "We have had tremendous success … dealing with those representatives," Wreford said.

Nonetheless, one sticking point arose from those discussions.

The Barrier Island League has requested additional language in the post-storm blueprint to

address concerns its members have regarding reconstruction on the islands, Wreford told the commissioners.

That proposed language follows:

"The spirit of this redevelopment plan is that residents and businesses should be able to replace the structures they have lost to the disaster as long as they conform to current building standards and codes. It is not the intent of this plan to rezone areas that have been struck, but depending on the extent of the disaster, many residents will require assistance with issues, such as locating temporary



What is a PDRP?

Framework

- Long-term redevelopment issues
- Pre- and post-disaster actions
- Focuses on actions County can take to better position the community for redevelopment

Goal

 More rapid and sustainable countywide recovery and redevelopment after a disaster

Not a regulatory tool

Maintain all property rights and regulations



The draft Post Disaster Response Plan is available on the county website. Image courtesy Sarasota County

housing, understanding disaster assistance programs, wading through insurance claims, finding reputable contractors, understanding their renter's rights, and making decisions on whether to rebuild their home."

It is meant to reassure residents that they will be allowed to rebuild the types of structures they have lost in a storm. The language stems from the view of Barrier Island League members that the county's post-storm plan does not provide adequate support for expedited reconstruction and property rights.

In an email Thursday to *The Sarasota News Leader*, Catherine Luckner, vice president of the Siesta Key Association and a member of the Barrier Island League, said she has concerns about a lack of specificity in certain aspects of the plan.

"The need for advance information, for guidance and direction that mitigates economic hardship and stabilization is our purpose," Luckner wrote. "Our idea was to design a matrix with decision points and rules so everyone easily recognizes and responds to their circumstance."

The group had hoped for a mechanism in the PDRP for "on file" digital records so property owners would be "mapped" in county records, with data about their property easily accessible. The League sees that as a means of expediting redevelopment.

But county staff and commissioners say the group's proposed additional statement could be considered over-arching.

While the PDRP is a plan for redevelopment, it should not offer too much specificity, staff and commissioners said Wednesday.

"If part of their concern [with] the plan is about wrestling property or property rights from individuals, that is not what the plan is about," Wreford said. "But there are elements of this plan that [highlight how], in the face of catastrophic disaster, we would want to do things smarter, more sustainable."

Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson noted that agencies such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection would assuredly become involved with redevelopment efforts.

"I don't want to lead [concerned residents] down a road to a false sense of security," Robinson said.

"They want a guarantee they can rebuild what they have," Robinson added of the Barrier League members. "We may not be able to guarantee that if their piece of property, for instance, becomes an inlet."

Robinson said she would like to see county staff members try to clarify redevelopment goals in a way that will be satisfactory to them and the barrier islands group.

Chairman Charles Hines agreed with Robinson's remarks.

Wreford said he believes he can work with representatives of the League between now and October, when the plan will be back before the County Commission for adoption. "We can probably iron out some language that can get to what their main concern is."

Commissioner Nora Patterson called attention to the financing section of the plan, which says the county could offer short-term leniency on property tax payments to alleviate homeowners' financial burdens during the recovery period. The PDRP also proposes the option of a temporary repeal of the Tourism Development Tax as a potential means of assistance.

Patterson did say she had not completed her review of the PDRP, having read 90 of the 112

pages. "In the next few days I will finish reading it."

Still, she continued, "I really winced when I saw [those sections]. ... A commission is going to be hard put to live without income sources, when they are probably really needed for the public good."

She added, "It's going to be a time when people want infrastructure repaired as quickly as possible."

The commissioners will also probably want access to tourism development funding so they can "try to invest in ways to bring tourism back," Patterson pointed out.

"Generosity is not giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is giving me that which you need more than I do." — Kahlil Gibran





The vacant lot at 162 Beach Road on Siesta Key will be the focus of a mediation process involving Sarasota County and its owners. Photo by Rachel Hackney

AFTER BEING TURNED DOWN TWICE ON PETITIONS TO BUILD A HOUSE ON A SIESTA KEY LOT FRONTING THE GULF OF MEXICO, THE OWNERS WILL ENTER INTO A DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS WITH THE COUNTY

By Rachel Brown Hackney *Editor*

Before the Sarasota County Commission voted unanimously on April 23 to deny a couple's second request to build a two-story Siesta Key house that would have been fully seaward of the county's Gulf Beach Setback Line (GBSL), the board was threatened with legal action if it took that stance.

"To deny this variance would put an unreasonable hardship on the land, because without this variance, there is not reasonable or economically viable use available for the property at all," the couple's agent, William Merrill of Icard, Merrill, asserted, adding that it would be "a categorical taking."

The move for legal recourse came on May 21, when the owners of the property, Ronald and Sania Allen, filed a Request for Relief under the

We will report to you on any developments in the process.

Stephen DeMarsh County Attorney Sarasota County Florida Statute known as the Florida Land Use Environmental Dispute Resolution Act (FLUEDRA). County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh

explained the action to the board as part of his report during the board's regular meeting on June 10.

The May 21 Request for Relief says the commission's denial of the variance petition leaves the Allens not only unable to construct a house on the site but also unable to "make any other beneficial use of the Property."

The Allens and the Office of the County Attorney already have agreed to a Special Magistrate to conduct the process, according to a June 4 memo provided to the commissioners. Among the possible outcomes could be the county's purchase of the property, an adjustment of the county's variance standards or suggestions of conditions that would allow development, the memo from the Office of the County Attorney explains.

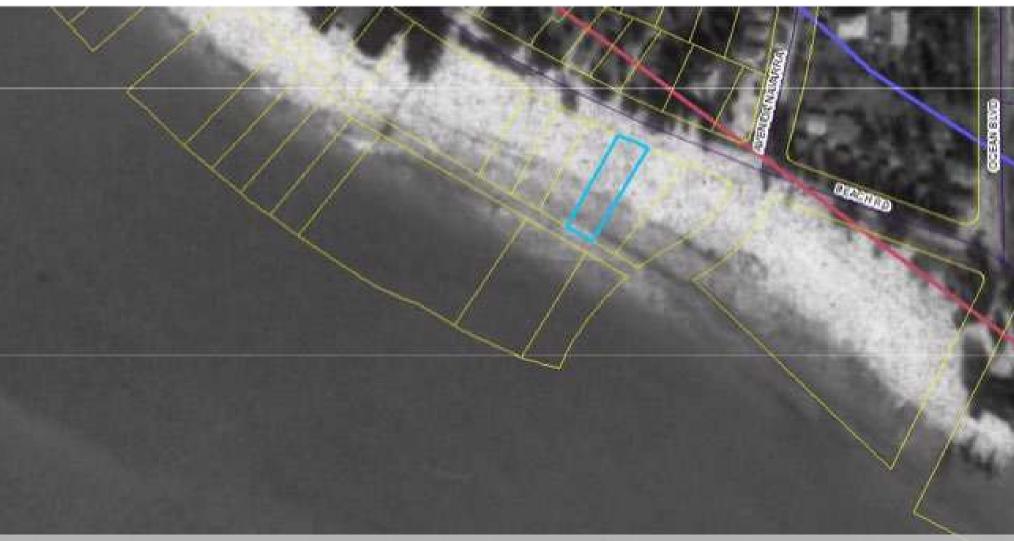
The Allens bought the 162 Beach Road property as part of a two-lot package in 2009,

paying \$5.4 million for both. In 2013, the Sarasota County Property Appraiser's Office put a value of \$1,047,500 on the land. A year earlier, the value was \$1,161,200.

The process should be concluded within 165 days, DeMarsh told the board. "We will report to you on any developments in that process."

THE BACKGROUND

In a unanimous vote on May 20, as part of its consent agenda, the County Commission approved a resolution memorializing its April 23 denial of the Allens' latest variance for the 162 Beach Road parcel. The resolution explained that the Allens' request was the third for that lot since 1992. (The first petition was made by a previous owner.) The County Commission denied that first request as well as a 2013 petition the Allens submitted to the county, seeking a variance for a larger house than the one the board considered in April.



A historic photo shows the lot at 162 Beach Road in 1948. Image courtesy Sarasota County

Among the findings stated in the resolution are the following:

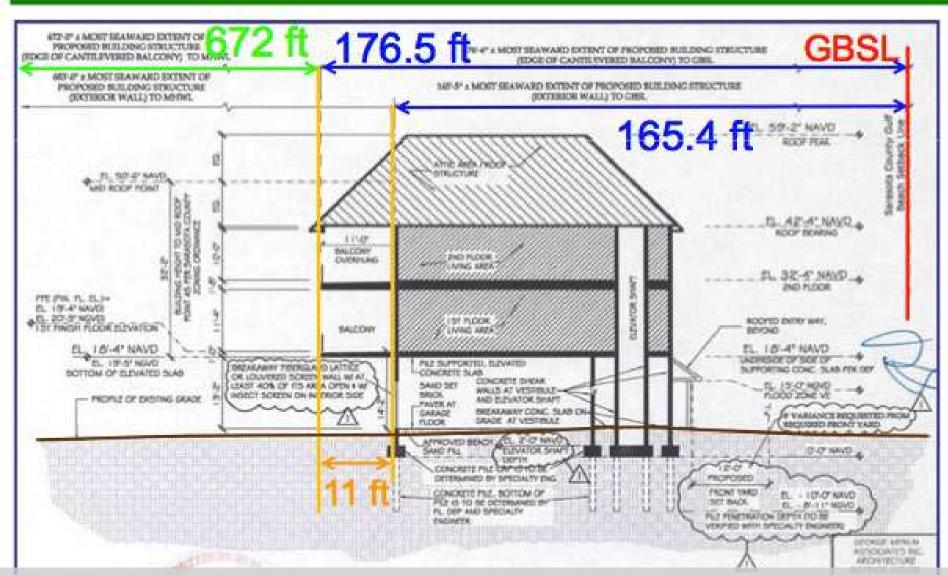
- The area of the shore seaward of the GBSL near the property "is unstable and subject to rapid and severe fluctuations resulting from erosion and accretion in this coastal high hazard area."
- The property "is frequently inundated by moderate storm waves and abnormally high tides." The lot was flooded in June 2012 when Tropical Storm Debby lingered offshore for several days.
- The parcel "is entirely composed of shoreline stabilizing dune native habitat. The proposed construction "would disturb or eliminate 3,538 square feet of this habitat."

The resolution also points out that testimony and evidence presented on April 23 showed that strict enforcement of the county's Coastal Setback Code, "which prohibits construction and excavation seaward of the Gulf Beach Setback Line, would not impose an unreasonable and unjust hardship on the land."

Further, it says, "The testimony and record evidence [demonstrate] that the requested two-story over parking single family residence (3,088 square feet of habitable area) and paver driveway are not the minimum variance necessary to protect reasonable use of the property."

REQUESTING RELIEF

The June 4 memo from the Office of the County Attorney explains that within 45 days



A graphic shows the most recent plan for a house at 162 Beach Road which would place the structure 176.5 feet seaward of the county's Gulf Beach Setback Line. Image courtesy Sarasota County

of receipt of the Request for Relief, "a Special Magistrate conducts a hearing." That session is designed to be informal and open to the public, the memo points out.

The Special Magistrate first must try to facilitate a resolution of the conflict, the memo says. If one cannot be reached, then the Special Magistrate must consider the facts and circumstances set forth in the Request for Relief, plus any responses to them and any other information produced at the hearing, "to determine whether the development order is unreasonable or unfairly burdens the use of the property."

Within 14 days of that hearing, the Special Magistrate must provide both parties a written recommendation, the memo continues. That recommendation, which is not binding, may suggest an adjustment of the county's variance standards "or other provisions governing the use of the land," including suggestions regarding conditions of development or the county's purchase of the parcel.

Assistant County Attorney David Pearce is representing the county in the matter, County Attorney DeMarsh noted. SNL

Road.

65	Approval Criteria Sec. 54-724	Facts Demonstrating Consistency	Facts Demonstrating Inconsistency
4(2):	Reduce and minimize future public expenditures for flood and erosion control measures;	The proposed construction is on private property and any expenditure for flood and erosion control measures would be the responsibility of the property owner.	 The property is located in a FEMA velocity flood zone. A structure built within a velocity zone could be damaged or destroyed by storm activity and may result in flood damage insurance claims, which are often subsidized by public tax supported programs such as the National Flood Insurance Program.
4(3):	Reduce and minimize future public expenditures for relief and/or restoration of projects following natural disasters or gradual erosion;	The proposed construction is on private property and is not likely to increase public expenditures for relief and restoration following natural disasters or gradual crosion.	 The proposed residential structure is located on a state-designated critically eroded beach in a high hazard coastal area. Damage to the residence following a severe natural disaster may result in higher public expenditures for removal of debris from the coastal area.
4(4):	Insure public access along the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico and barrier island passes;	 The proposed construction is approximately 320 feet from the open sandy beach and more than 670 feet from the MHWL. Therefore, no impacts to lateral public pedestrian access along the beach are anticipated as a direct result of the proposed project. 	 The proposed construction does not appear to be inconsistent with this criterion at this time, given the current state of the beach; however, the MHWL was once located on the subject property.
4(5):	Avoid erosion damage to adjacent property resulting from man-made structures;	 No shoreline hardening structures are currently proposed, nor would such shoreline hardening structures be allowed if this variance were approved. The proposed residential construction is a pile-supported building. 	 The site is prone to overwash and flooding during storm events. The project removes pervious surface from the site and will likely increase stormwater runoff. Fill is proposed to level the area under the residence. Given the limited elevation changes on the property, the addition of fill may result in adverse impacts by directing stormwater runoff and gulf overwash toward neighboring properties or Beach

A staff report was prepared in advance of the April 23 public hearing on a request for a variance for construction on the parcel at 162 Beach Road. Image courtesy Sarasota County



SIESTA TROLLEY MARKETING PLANNED; MORE PARKING WOES AIRED AT SIESTA KEY ASSOCIATION MEETING; STAND-UP PADDLEBOARD RACE SERIES ANNOUNCED; AND THE BEACH GETS INTERNATIONAL PLAUDITS



By Rachel Brown Hackney *Editor*

Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) is planning a print and radio marketing campaign to announce the start of the new Siesta trolley route on July 12, Kendra Keiderling, the department's marketing coordinator, told me this week.

Additionally, she said, "Our whole new branding [program] is going to be launched July 12."

Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) Secretary Helene Hyland asked last week during the organization's monthly meeting whether anyone had new information about plans for the trolley service, having recalled that SCAT Manager Glama Carter told SKVA members in April that her department was planning a "big marketing campaign" about all its bus routes, starting about two months later.



A seasonal county bus route connecting the Amish and Mennonite community of Pinecraft to Siesta Key proved very popular this year, county staff said. Photo by Rachel Hackney



A map shows the route for Sarasota County Area Transit's Siesta trolley service, which will begin July 12. Image courtesy Sarasota County



On June 10, after Commissioner Nora Patterson brought up the topic based on the SKVA discussion, the County Commission voted unanimously to make certain that staff has such a plan in place prior to the inauguration of the trolley service.

"Everybody's very excited about the trolley," Patterson pointed out to her colleagues, but "Are we letting people in the condos and the businesses on Siesta Key know this is going to start so that the people who are staying here in the summer know it's available and what the cost is."

Patterson continued, "It's really important. This trolley could either be packed or be a real bust, and one of the important things is that people not take six months trying to figure out it exists."

Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson voiced similar concerns. "I truly believe in my heart of hearts [that inadequate marketing was] why the [SCAT] Express bus failed in Venice," she said. "I don't want to do that to Siesta Key

At Patterson's behest, Robinson made the motion to ensure a marketing plan is pursued.

Keiderling also told me on June 9 that staff has decided to "wrap" the six buses that will serve Siesta on Route 10 with a design featuring a beach theme. Altogether, the department has 19 new buses, she pointed out. A wide range of advertising decals will be used on the others, she added, indicating, for example, that SCAT serves the airport, shops, theaters, schools and the hospital.



Sarasota County Area Transit has released this final schedule for the Siesta trolley service. Image courtesy Sarasota County

Bold type indicates P.M. service

10:07P

* Trips go to either Turtle Beach or Sarasota Pavillion, not both in the same trip

0:54P

9:48P Light Type indicates A.M. service

Siesta Seen

As previously reported, the trolleys will run from Southgate Mall on Siesta Drive through Siesta Village, with stops at Sarasota Pavilion — next to Gulf Gate — on Stickney Point Road. Trolleys also will run to Turtle Beach.

In April, Carter mentioned that SCAT staff still was working on a new smartphone app with QR codes, which people would be able to use to check schedules. Between now and July 12, Keiderling said, SCAT will be installing 345 signs at bus stops to function with the app, which will go live that day. Passengers will be able to find out right away how much longer they will have to wait for a particular bus. "It's going to be great," she added.

Last week, Hyland also asked, as she had in April, whether it might be possible for SCAT to sell daily passes on the key, an initiative she felt would be especially helpful to tourists during season. "I will definitely discuss it with Ms. Carter," Keiderling told me Monday.

Carter noted in April that daily, monthly and seasonal passes are available from bus drivers.

Possibly, Keiderling said, such sales could take place at the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce office in Davidson Plaza in the Village or from a kiosk. She is going to explore options on both the north and south ends of the island, she added.



A sign on the fence (center, front) advertises A Taste of Germany in Siesta Village. Photo by Rachel Hackney



Later on Monday, Keiderling spoke with Wendall Jacobsen, the new SKVA president. As a result, she will be a guest at the July 1 meeting of that organization, which will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Daiquiri Deck Raw Bar in Siesta Village.

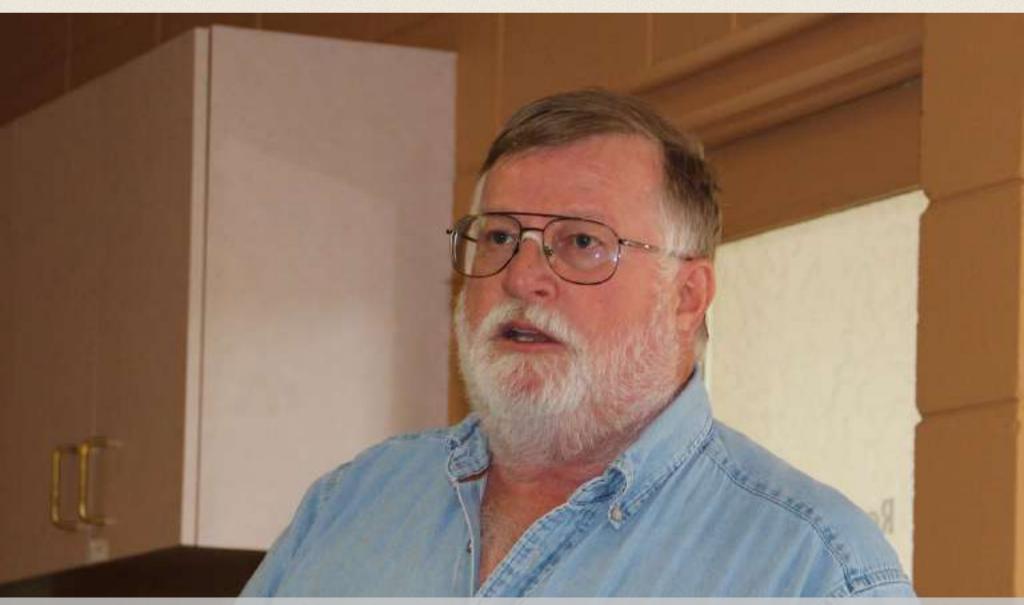
ENFORCING THE CODE

Since Sarasota County Code Enforcement Officer John Lally came back to work on Siesta Key in late April following medical leave, he has been busy writing up all sorts of violations, from illegal signs to illegal rentals, he told members of the Siesta Key Association (SKA) during their June 5 regular meeting.

"The merchants think there are no rules," he said. "Most of 'em know they're still not allowed to have [certain types of signs and banners], but they still try to put 'em out and get away with it," he added, especially on nights and weekends when no regular Code Enforcement staff patrols the key.

Furthermore, Lally told the approximately 20 members present, "The illegal rentals are going absolutely crazy."

Just as he mentioned to me before the start of a May 23 Code Enforcement Special Magistrate hearing, he pointed out to the SKA audience that he has been dealing with 15 cases. Just



County Code Enforcement Officer John Lally talked about parking issues during the May 2, 2013, Siesta Key Association meeting, too. File photo



A homemade sign in front of Bonjour French Café in Siesta Village lets customers know about parking behind the restaurant. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

within the two previous days, he said, he added eight new ones to his list. As more of Siesta's multi-family residences fill up with tourists, he said, and demand remains high for space on the island, people in neighborhoods "are finding out [rentals are] an easy way to make extra money."

He indicated \$2,000 a week is a typical fee for accommodations in residential areas.

However, Lally noted, when most people learn a Special Magistrate can fine them up to \$500 a day for repeat violations, they stop renting rooms or houses illegally.

In response to a question, Lally explained, "We have to give them a reasonable time to correct a violation" before a fine is imposed.

When SKA President Michael Shay asked whether Lally had issued any citations for outdoor merchandise displays in Siesta Village, Lally replied, "Nothing has been done on the outdoor display [matter]."

As I reported in this space on May 23, a proposed revision of the Siesta Key Overlay District (SKOD) ordinance has been submitted to the county. It would allow for limited outdoor displays for both retail and rental businesses through a formal permit process.



Siesta Key Association Vice President Catherine Luckner and President Michael Shay participate in the organization's June 5 meeting. Photo by Rachel Hackney



Lally pointed out that two public hearings will be necessary before the changes can be adopted. Both the Planning Commission and County Commission will have to consider the matter.

"I just got a copy of the ordinance yesterday myself," Lally added.

"In the meantime, we're continuing to do nothing while all of that is being worked on?" Shay asked.

Lally responded that it would not be a good use of his time to cite anyone for illegal outdoor displays right now. By the time he had the paperwork filed and the issue went through the appropriate channels, he said, the new ordinance could be in effect.

Then Lourdes Ramirez, a candidate for County Commission, asked Lally about a food truck that reportedly has been operating in space on Midnight Pass Road on Sundays, a short distance east of Siesta Public Beach.

Lally said he had just learned about that matter and would make sure someone from Code Enforcement checked on the food truck on June 8.

Shay asked about a person who has been charging for parking on commercial property just east of the county's Fire Department No. 13 on Midnight Pass Road. He spotted the situation on Memorial Day weekend, he noted. Someone had set up an umbrella stand, Shay continued, and was charging about \$20 for each space. "Is that legal?"

"If they've got a business [Certificate of Occupancy (CO)] to do parking there, it's legal," Lally explained. "If not, then I'll address it."

"Is that really a bad thing?" Commissioner Patterson, a guest at the SKA meeting, asked of the rental of spaces at that commercial complex. "Frankly," she continued, "this church is doing the same thing." She was referring to St. Boniface Episcopal Church, where the SKA holds its monthly meetings. The church asks for donations from beach-goers in exchange for use of its parking lot. It is a short distance north of the Midnight Pass Road/Beach Road intersection.

Shay told her he understood the parking situation at St. Boniface is legal.

When Patterson asked for details, Shay and Vice President Catherine Luckner both explained that the church operates as a not-for-profit organization. Additionally, Lally said, it implemented its parking arrangement before the current county code went into effect, according to his understanding of the situation.

"I don't want anybody to come cite the church," Patterson quickly clarified her earlier comment. "But there is and always will be, frankly, insufficient parking [on the island] to suit everybody. ... And it's hard to get excited when a commercial property charges for parking."

"I guess, from my perspective," Shay responded, "if there are rules on the books,

Siesta Seen

and people are flouting them, I don't follow that gray area that says, 'We shouldn't allow it, [but], well, we need the parking, so we'll allow it."

When Shay then pointed out that a "For Lease" sign stands in front of the commercial property on Midnight Pass Road referenced earlier, Lally explained that a business is in operation on the upper floor of the structure, adding that he thinks its management has been selling parking spaces in that lot for the past several years. However, the business must have paid the \$140 fee for a CO to charge for parking there, he continued, and it must have submitted a plan that received county

approval. He would check on the situation, he added. Nonetheless, he said, "It's better than parking in the neighborhoods."

Patterson concurred that the business owners would need to conform to policy, "but they can legally [charge for parking there by complying with county regulations]."

Lally then pointed out that establishments with parking spaces also can apply for Temporary Certificates of Occupancy to enable them to charge for parking. For example, he said, St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, located north of St. Boniface on Midnight Pass Road, could seek county approval to



Deputy Chris McGregor speaks to members of the Siesta Key Association on June 5. Photo by Rachel Hackney



allow visitors to park in its lot, and then the free services on Siesta — such as Sun Ride Pedicab and Jonny's Free Ride — could shuttle people from there to the public beach.

Lally also noted that the new parking lot at Siesta Public Beach will be open before the July Fourth holiday. "Maybe that will relieve some of [the problems]."

After all the improvements at the beach park have been completed in late 2015, according to county staff, 143 more spaces will be available.

SPEAKING OF PARKING ...

In April 2013, regular readers will recall, the County Commission approved a new ordinance prohibiting "The blocking of or obstructing access to or from vacant designated parking spaces except when moving a motor vehicle into and out of such designated parking space or when conducted by or with the permission of County officials."

The primary purpose was to reduce the number of altercations that have erupted over the years as people have stood in parking spaces at Siesta Public Beach to save them for drivers seeking spots in the lot. The fine for trying to keep someone out of a space is \$100; notice of the ordinance is visible to drivers entering the beach parking area.

Nonetheless, Deputy Chris McGregor told SKA members on June 5, "Just this past Friday, I had four fights in the parking lot over parking issues. You know, for some of these people, a \$100 fine is not a big deal."

Although the beach will be getting extra spaces as part of the improvements, he continued, "It may be a drop in the bucket" in terms of meeting demand. "The majority of my job on a Saturday or Sunday is spent in that parking lot, diffusing situations," he added.

SUP RACE SERIES

The second annual Sarasota SUP (Stand Up Paddleboard) Race Series will kick off Saturday, June 21, at Siesta Key Beach, organizers have announced.

"The Sarasota SUP Series offers a unique SUP experience, showcasing three different Sarasota County Parks," a news release explains. Races also will take place at Nathan Benderson Park on Aug. 23 and at the Sarasota Sailing Squadron on Ken Thompson Parkway on Oct. 11, the release adds.

A new video highlights the upcoming race, the release notes.

Events planned for Siesta Key Beach include the 6-mile Beach Start Battle of the Paddle Course, the 3-mile Recreation Course and a half-mile Short Course "for the younger crowd," the release says, as well as Beach to Buoy and Back coed team relay races.

The Sarasota SUP Series features more than \$10,000 in trophies, awards and giveaways — including four NK SpeedCoach devices during the Siesta event — as well as music, food and drinks in the "Kona Lounge" and manufacturers' board demonstrations, the release says.

Siesta Seen

Tickets for competitors in the Siesta events are available at sarasotasupseries.com. Admission is free to the public.

SUP Race Series founder Rob Alfieri points out in the release, "Stand-up paddling is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world, and Florida is leading the pack as new participants are eager to explore our amazing waterways while enjoying incredible exercise. We look forward to seeing all our paddling friends from last year and meeting new ones as we enjoy three Sarasota treasures together — Siesta Key Beach, Benderson Park and the Sailing Squadron."

A NEW ACCOLADE FOR THE BEACH

Sarasota County Commission Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson alerted her colleagues last week to news that Siesta Public Beach had been named one of TripAdvisor's Top 10 Breathtaking Beaches in the World.

The list includes beaches from the Seychelles to the Caribbean to Greece, with a quote provided for each. Under a photo of Siesta at sunset, the quote says, "Siesta Key Beach is the nicest beach I have ever been to. I have been all over the world and nothing compares."



Siesta Public Beach has won another accolade from TripAdvisor. Contributed photo by Peter van Roekens











ADOPTABLE DOGS SARASOTA DOG NEWS BREED PROFILES **EMERGENCY** DOGTIONARY

You are here: Home / Doggia Directory / Dining with Your Dog

Dining with Your Dog

Lots of great places in dine at fresco with pups here in town. We compiled a list here of some our favorites. Polo Grill in Lakewood Ranch is great any time, but their covered courtyard makes it an all weather option. Ophelia's Pasta House in Nokomis, also treats four-leggeds with special care and their own menu! If you are feeling Tiki. . .be sure to check out Spanish Pointe Pub and Marina - they've expanded with a new totally covered deck.

Address	[2]	
Subsc	ribe	
his website	SEAR	Cŀ
	Subsci his website	Subscribe SEAR

Sarasotadog.com lists county restaurants where 'doggie dining' is permitted. Image from the website

'DOGGIE DINING' MADE A PERMANENT PART OF COUNTY CODE

With a representative of the Florida of April, 21 facilities have licenses allow-Department of Health in Sarasota County having assured them, "We have no record or knowledge of any complaints," the Sarasota County commissioners this week agreed unanimously to make the "doggie dining" ordinance it originally adopted in 2007 a permanent part of the county code.

No persons appeared to address the board during the public hearing held prior to the vote. The staff recommendation in a June 10 memo to the commission called for providing the "permanent local exemption to allow dogs in designated outdoor portions of public food service establishments."

Quintin Clark, who works at the Health Department's Ringling Boulevard office in Sarasota, told the commissioners that as

ing pets to join owners during outdoor dining experiences.

At one time, Clark said, as many as 28 establishments were licensed under the ordinance.

The June 10 memo explains that the commission first adopted the "doggie dining" ordinance on May 8, 2007, and set a fee schedule to cover the costs of processing applications for permits, inspections, renewals and enforcement. On June 30, 2009, the memo adds, the board extended the sunset date of the ordinance to July 1, 2014.

Clark pointed out that Health Department staff held a meeting on March 14 at the Fruitville Library to seek comments on renewing the ordinance without a sunset date. While notifications were sent to all the county's

municipalities and to each food service establishment licensed to allow dogs in outdoor seating areas, no one but Health Department staff was present for the session.

The ordinance does require all licensed restaurants to make certain employees "wash their hands promptly after touching, petting, or otherwise handling any dog," and prohibits employees from having contact with dogs "while serving food or beverages or handling tableware or before entering other parts [of the establishments]."

Further, the ordinance requires owners to keep their dogs on leashes and under control at all times.

Just before the June 10 vote, Commissioner Nora Patterson chuckled as she recalled the "brigade of people" who showed up, pleading with the board to adopt the original ordinance in 2007. Many of them had photos of their dogs on cards they wore akin to ID badges, she added. "I'm almost sorry we can't do a repeat performance."

Rachel Brown Hackney



Village Café in Siesta Village is among 21 Sarasota County restaurants licensed to allow pets to dine outside with patrons. Photo by Rachel Hackney

ANIMAL RESCUE COALITION OFF TO GOOD START IN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Animal Rescue Coalition (ARC), a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, is continuing to seek donations for its capital campaign, which supporters hope will enable it almost to triple the number of spaying and neutering procedures it can provide each day, it has announced.

ARC's mission is to end the killing of adoptable dogs and cats by making spaying and neutering services more accessible and affordable to low-income pet owners, a news release explains. The goal for the campaign, which kicked off in February, is to raise enough money to establish a clinic just east of Interstate 75 near the Fruitville Library, the release continues.

"ARC's mobile operation, implemented in 2002, has become expensive to operate," the release adds, and, with a capacity of just 16 procedures a day, the challenge is to meet demand. A permanent facility will make it possible to increase the number of procedures to as many as 35 a day, making better use of fixed overhead and reducing the cost per surgery, the release points out.

In addition, ARC plans to implement a transport program to reach outlying areas of critical need in south Sarasota, DeSoto and Charlotte counties, the release notes.

With an initial gift of \$300,000 made by Joanna Pace-Brackett and David Brackett, the campaign is off to a good start, the release says.



The Animal Rescue Coalition is seeking contributions to enable it to increase the number of spaying and neutering procedures it can accomplish, especially for low-income pet owners, its supporters say. Photo by Arantz via Wikimedia Commons

To date, \$545,000 has been raised, including a challenge pledge of \$100,000 to cap ARC's campaign goal of \$800,000.

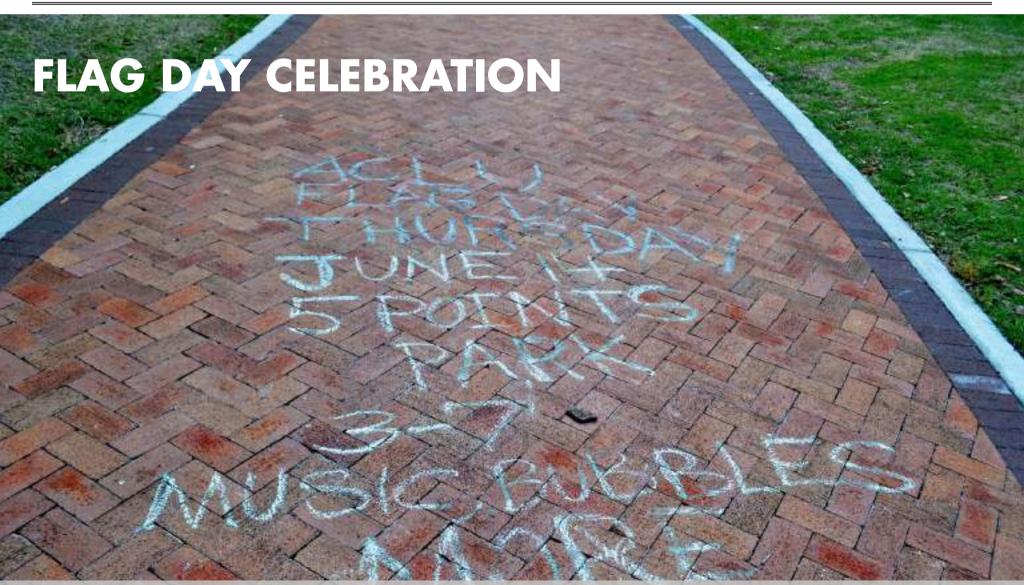
When asked what motivated them to give ARC such a generous gift, Joanna, ARC's board chairwoman, replied in the release, "We cannot shelter or adopt our way out of this situation." She is referring "to the stark reality that many thousands of animals crowd shelters and are euthanized each year due to a lack of space, funding and resources," the release adds.

All funds received for the campaign will be used to start the renovations needed for a fully equipped spay-and-neuter clinic, the release emphasizes. "We are very conscious

of spending our donors' money wisely and are focused on accomplishing our mission," said ARC Executive Director Gisele Pintchuck in the release.

ARC has been accepted as a Humane Alliance organization, a process that has required extensive due diligence, the release points out. "The Humane Alliance is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that focuses on high-volume, high-quality, low-cost companion animal sterilization," the release says. ARC is one of 120 clinics in the U.S. "that have adopted its tried and tested clinic model," which increases procedures and lowers expenses, the release adds.

For more information, call 957-1955, Ext. 2.



The Sarasota chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union will host its third annual Flag Day celebration from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, June 14, in Five Points Park in downtown Sarasota, the organization has announced. The event will feature live music, distribution of free flags, chalk drawings, honor guards, magicians "and a bare minimum of politicians speaking!" a news release promises. Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel captured the above Flag Day celebration reminder in 2012.

2014 I LOVE SARASOTA BAY PHOTO CONTEST ANNOUNCED

Organizers of the Sarasota Bay Water Festival are encouraging photography enthusiasts of all ages to prepare entries for the 2014 *I Love Sarasota Bay Photo Contest*.

The winning submissions in the four age divisions will be displayed at the free festival on Saturday, Nov. 1, at Ken Thompson Park, a news release points out. Contest guidelines are posted on the festival website.

The 2013 winners were Terry Frankford, Sally Twinem, Logan McLeod, Emma Griffin, Karl Ford, Larry George, Francis Twinem, Judith Horn, Caroline Griffin, Michael Oelschlager, Judy Sargent, and Julie Doyle, the release notes. All of them are area residents, it adds.

"The Sarasota Bay Water Festival celebrates the importance of Sarasota Bay to the region's environment, economy and quality of life," the release says. Along with the photography contest, the event will include live music, dragon boat races, panel discussions focused on bay-friendly living, delectable edibles offered by food trucks and local restaurants, activities for children, displays of vintage boats and hands-on exhibits promoting recreational boating, fishing, kayaking, paddleboarding and scuba diving.

New for the 2014 festival will be a Pet Zone featuring a selection of pet-friendly exhibitors selling products and services and an afterparty at Circus City Architectural Salvage. The adult party, which will run from 7 p.m. until midnight, will feature live music and an original "aqua-garde" fashion show with unique fashions made entirely of plastic, the release points out. The after-party and fashion show will benefit Save Our Seabirds and Sea to Shore Alliance, the release adds.



Accompanied by her mother and grandmother, Logan McLeod holds her 2013 first-place photo. Contributed photo by Bryan Moore

NORTH PORT LIBRARY TO HOST FORUM FOR PARKINSON'S PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS

The North Port Library, located at 13800 S. Tamiami Trail in North Port, will host a free discussion titled *Overview of Parkinson's Disease and the Supportive Role of Neuro Challenge Foundation* on Saturday, June 21, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, Sarasota County has announced.

"County libraries are a key component to improving the quality of life for residents and visitors in our community," said Janis Russell, North Port librarian, in a county news release. "By offering these types of programs, we not only educate people on the disease, we also make them aware of the resources available to help them."

Carisa Campanella, a care coordinator, will lead the discussion and a question-and-answer session afterward, the release explains. Campanella will talk about ways the Neuro Challenge Foundation can help patients and caregivers, including the following, the release notes:

- Locating Parkinson's treatment resources.
- Asking doctors the right questions.
- Finding the most effective Parkinson's disease treatment options.
- Looking beyond medication to alternative and integrative therapies.
- Finding patient-based Parkinson's disease programs and events.
- Staying up-to-date on the latest Parkinson's research.



The North Port Library will host a program for Parkinson's disease patients and caregivers on June 21. Contributed photo

- Planning for the future.
- Getting help at home.

The Neuro Challenge Foundation was established in 2008 by Dr. Dean P. and Doreen Sutherland with the goal of focusing on the emotional, financial and educational needs of Parkinson's patients and their care partners, the release notes.

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

CITY FINANCE DEPARTMENT WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

For the 24th consecutive year, the City of Sarasota Finance Department has been honored by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, the city has announced.

The recognition is for the budget presented for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, a news release explains. It means the City of Sarasota budget "met or exceeded guidelines in four key categories, helping to make complex municipal budgets user-friendly to taxpayers," the release continues. Those categories are policy document, financial plan, operations guide and communications device.

"Deputy Finance Director Kelly Strickland and Budget Manager Michelle Valentich were instrumental in earning the award," the release points out.

"An honor like this continues to speak highly and reflect well upon our dedicated and talented team in the Finance Department," said City Manager Tom Barwin in the release. "This will continue to instill confidence in our residents that our community is well run."

Nearly 18,000 government finance professionals are served by the Government Finance Officers Association. Approximately 1,400 received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, the release notes.



The City of Sarasota Finance Department has received a significant honor for the 24th consecutive year. Photo by Norman Schimmel

ARCHITECTURAL GROUP TO HOST FILM AND DISCUSSION OF LUNDY

On June 26, the Sarasota Architectural Foundation (SAF) will host a film and panel discussion about the work of Victor Lundy, the organization has announced.

The documentary, *Victor Lundy: Sculptor of Space*, will be shown at Burns Court Cinema at 7:30 p.m. Afterward, panelists Carl Abbott, John Howey and Christopher Wilson will discuss Lundy, a news release explains.

"The [film] beautifully captures the recollections of the modern American master architect and artist," the release says of Lundy.

Born in 1923, Lundy practiced architecture in Sarasota between 1953 and 1960, the release adds. He is considered one of the founding members of the Sarasota School of Architecture, it notes.

The film was produced by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), whose U.S. Tax Court was designed by Lundy in 1965

and completed in 1972. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places, the release points out. "Throughout his career, Lundy strove to create inspiring and uplifting spaces, most of which can be described as having 'more roof than wall," the release adds.

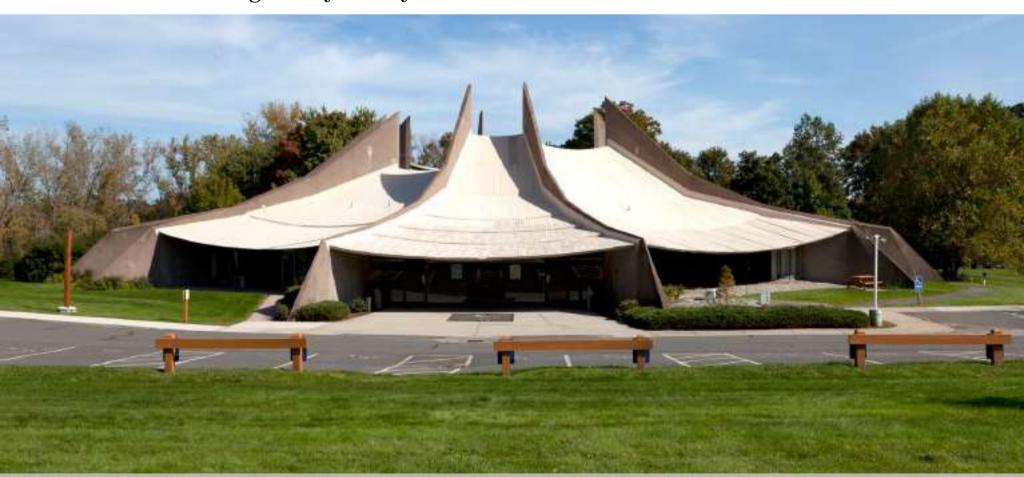
Burns Court Cinema is located at 506 Burns Court in downtown Sarasota. Check-in time for participants is 7 p.m. The panel discussion and Q&A are expected to conclude at 9 p.m.

The cost for SAF members is \$10; for the public, \$15; and for students, \$5.

For advance registration and payment, click here.

Otherwise, call 364-2199 to register and mail a check, payable to SAF, to SAF, PO Box 2911, Sarasota, FL 34230.

For more information, email info@saf-srq.org or call 364-2199.



Victor Lundy designed the Unitarian Meeting House in Hartford, CT. Photo by Carol M. Highsmith via Wikimedia Commons

COUNTY RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED BUDGET PRESENTATION AWARD

For 24 consecutive years, Sarasota County's Office of Financial Management (OFM) has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) the county has announced.

The award, which is the highest professional recognition in governmental budgeting, was presented to OFM staff during the County Commission meeting on June 11, a news release notes.

"One of the county's eight strategic goals is to ensure fiscal sustainability," said Shannon LaFon, OFM capital budget manager, in the release. "This award acknowledges the many hours, hard work and dedication of our Financial Management staff along with the collaboration with other departments and constitutional officers to achieve that goal," she added.

National recognition is based on how well a budget serves as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide and a communication device; it is rated based on 14 specific criteria, the release points out.

"Like with many processes and planning, there's sometimes ebb and flow, but we're always steadfast in our fiscal responsibility," said Kim Radtke, OFM operating budget manager, in the release. "For our staff and the county's budget process to be consistently recognized for excellence is a great testament demonstrating our commitment to our citizens."

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving more than 18,000 government finance professionals throughout North America, the release notes. The organization's Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program is the only such means nationwide of recognizing governmental budgeting, the release adds.

The Sarasota County budget process includes upcoming meeting presentations, workshops and public hearings. The workshops are scheduled for June 25, 27 and 30; July 1 and 9; and Aug. 20. Public hearings will be held on Sept. 8 and 22.

For meeting details, visit the county's calendar at scgov.net. SNL



Staff members of the county's Office of Financial Management received recognition during the June 11 County Commission meeting. Photo courtesy Sarasota County

CRIME BLOTTER



Just before 9:30 a.m. on a mid-March day, plenty of visitors already were making themselves at home on Siesta Public Beach. Photo by Rachel Hackney

MOST SIESTA SPRING BREAK CHARGES RELATED TO ALCOHOL

After reviewing data for a special directed patrol initiative on Siesta Key throughout March and April, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has found that of the 338 total charges issued, nearly 75 percent were alcohol-related, the office reported on June 11.

The increased patrol efforts "resulted in a much safer spring break for residents and visitors," a news release says. In effect, saturating the popular beaches and village areas over the eight-week period with a uniformed law enforcement presence "was a crime deterrent overall," the release adds. The findings included the following:

- 184, or 54 percent, of all charges were for underage possession of alcohol.
- The next most prevalent charge was for narcotics.

- The most serious charges were against local residents, not visitors.
- Most charges were for incidents at the main beach itself, not in Siesta Village.
- On Siesta Key, there was only one more crime reported by a member of the public during March and April 2014 compared to the same period in 2013, the release points out. However, the number of charges issued by Sheriff's Office personnel increased significantly (42 percent) as a result of the agency's patrolling effort.

"More people in one place increases the potential for incidents to occur," said Sheriff Tom Knight in the release. "By committing additional resources to one of the top destinations for citizens and visitors alike, we clearly establish that misconduct will not be tolerated."

TWO ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY MAKING METH ON LIBRARY GROUNDS

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a homeless couple found making meth at their campsite on public library grounds, the office has announced.

Narcotics detectives received information that a man was manufacturing methamphetamine near the Jacaranda Library, located at 4143 Woodmere Park Blvd. in Venice, a news release says. An undercover detective walked the property on June 9 and saw a woman sitting on a mattress, the release continues. As he continued his surveillance, the release adds, a

man rode up on his bicycle, removed several items from his backpack and began mixing liquids. The detective recognized the materials as those commonly used to manufacture meth, according to the report. Because of "the inherent hazard of [that operation] and the risk to citizens at this location, deputies took the suspects into custody," the release points out.

While they remained on the library grounds, the report says, deputies spotted numerous substances and objects used in the



Materials used to make meth were found on the Jacaranda Library grounds in Venice this week, the Sheriff's Office reported. Photo courtesy Sheriff's Office





Tiffany Stoltz/Contributed photo

manufacturing of meth, the report says. They found bottles of Coleman Fuel, lithium batteries and tubing, along with several bottles of unknown liquids. The Sarasota County Fire Department sent its Hazmat Section to analyze the latter, the report continues.

Interviews with the suspects determined that King "is an active methamphetamine cooker who was living on the library property for approximately one month," the report adds. Detectives arrested Raymond King, 28, and Tiffany Stoltz, 23, both of whom have prior drug arrests, the release notes. "Detectives learned King sent associates to buy pseudo-ephedrine at local pharmacies and provided them with meth in exchange for their services," the release says. Both suspects are charged with felony counts of Possession of Listed Chemicals with Intent to Manufacture and Attempt to Manufacture Methamphetamine.

SUSPECT ARRESTED IN NORTH PORT STABBING INCIDENT

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested the man wanted in connection with a stabbing in North Port early in the morning of June 1, the office has announced.

Deputies responded to the 12000 block of Rosaro Avenue just after midnight and found the victim, 43-year-old Gustavo Yepez-Mora, had been stabbed in the left side of his abdomen, allegedly during an altercation with Mario Blackbull, a news release says. "The victim told detectives he has known Blackbull for about two years," the release adds.

When Yepez-Mora accused Blackbull of stealing money from him, the release continues,

"Blackbull lunged at him with an unknown object," leaving him with a stab wound about half a centimeter long. Blackbull then fled the scene.

Detectives spoke with several other witnesses before obtaining an arrest warrant for Blackbull, 28, whose last known address was 61588 Pan American Blvd., North Port, the release says. Deputies with the Fugitive Apprehension Unit, assisted by the North Port Police, took Blackbull into custody on the morning of June 5. He was charged with Aggravated Battery with a Deadly Weapon.

"Blackbull has an extensive arrest history dating back to his teenage years," the release notes. Among the crimes with which he has been charged are Burglary, Drug Possession, Battery and Carrying a Concealed Weapon, the release adds.



FATHER CHARGED WITH USING CHILDREN TO STEAL AND FENCE ITEMS

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a Sarasota family and an accomplice after learning the father allegedly was using his sons to steal and fence stolen items, the office has reported.

Deputies with the Tactical Unit say Brian Frost, 39; son Brian Jr., 20; and son Cody, 17, visited area Walmart stores in May and stole camping equipment and televisions worth nearly \$1,500, a news release explains. The group used a white Chevrolet Blazer driven by Jessica Romine, 27, it adds.

During questioning, deputies determined the elder Frost "also committed six residential and vehicle burglaries" during which he stole weapons and tools valued at about \$10,000, the release continues. When the family lived at 4636 Garcia Ave. in Sarasota, the release



says, "Frost went out at night to exploit open or unsecured garage doors and unlocked vehicles." He then had his sons post the stolen items on social media sites under "swap shop" pages to sell them, the release notes. The suspects said the money they collected was used to buy meth.

The elder Brian Frost is charged with two counts of Grand Theft, one count of Petit Theft, two counts of Vehicle Burglary, two counts of Residential Burglary and two counts of Armed Residential Burglary.

Brian Frost Jr., is charged with one count of Petit Theft. Cody Frost is charged with one count of Grand Theft and one count of Principal to Grand Theft. Romine is charged with two counts of Principal to Grand Theft and one count of Principal to Petit Theft. A number of additional charges are pending.



Brian Frost Jr./Contributed photo



Jessica Romine/Contributed photo



SUSPECTS SOUGHT IN ARMED ROBBERY ON MANGO AVENUE

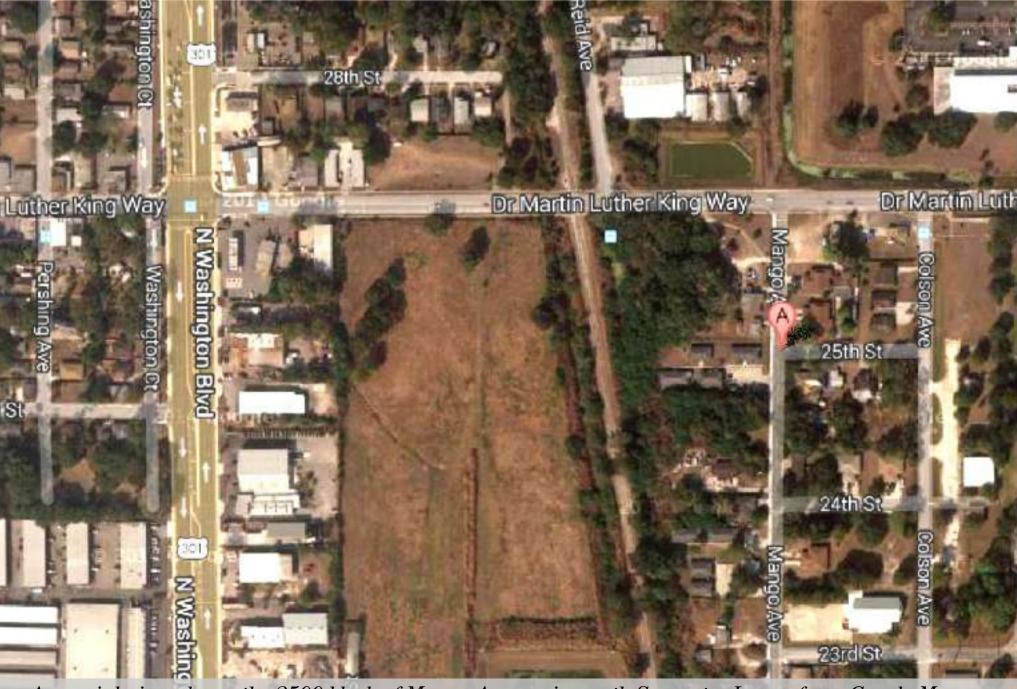
The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office is seeking the public's help in identifying two suspects in an armed robbery reported early on the morning of June 11, the office has announced.

About 2:27 a.m. on June 11, patrol deputies responded to a report of an incident in the 2500 block of Mango Avenue in Sarasota, a news release says. The female victim had parked her vehicle at her residence and was walking to her front door when she was approached by two black men, one of whom was armed with a dark handgun, the release adds. One of the men told the victim to "give up the purse" and pointed the handgun at her, the report continues.

After the victim complied, both suspects ran from the area, the release notes. Responding deputies set up a perimeter, and a K9 unit attempted to track the suspects but was unable to locate them, the release says.

As of the morning of June 11, the only descriptions the Sheriff's Office could provide are that the suspects are a tall black man and a heavyset black man.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact the Criminal Investigations Section at 861-4900, leave an anonymous tip with CrimeStoppers by calling 366-TIPS (8677) or going online at sarasotacrimestoppers.com.



An aerial view shows the 2500 block of Mango Avenue in north Sarasota. Image from Google Maps

FOUR MEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH RETAIL THEFT RING

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested four men in connection with an organized retail theft ring that stole thousands of dollars' worth of lawn equipment that the men then sold in order to buy drugs, the office has announced.

The Tactical Unit conducted surveillance on residents of 3721 Stokes Ave. in Sarasota as part of a joint investigation with the Manatee County Sheriff's Office, a news release says. Deputies observed the men at multiple Lowe's and Home Depot stores in Sarasota, Charlotte and Manatee counties. The men allegedly pawned the stolen equipment or sold it to

private individuals, claiming they bought the items with gift cards and wanted cash, the release continues.

Those arrested were Bruce Ponder, 26; Richard Easton, 27; Jacob Davis, 26; and Davis' brother, Jason Davis, 21. The suspects are facing 16 charges in Sarasota County and six charges in Manatee County, including Organized Retail Theft, Grand Theft and Dealing in Stolen Property, the release adds.

All have previous arrests, and Ponder was out of jail on bond for similar crimes when he was taken into custody, the release points out.



Evidence seized from members of an alleged retail theft ring was displayed at the Sheriff's Office. Contributed photo







Bruce Ponder/Contributed photo





395 SYNTHETIC DRUG PACKAGES SEIZED AND STORE OWNER ARRESTED

Rami Ahmed Abed Rabboh, 31, of Brandon, has been arrested and charged with Possession of a Designer Drug (a misdemeanor) and Possession of a Controlled Substance (a felony) after Sarasota Police Department personnel executed a search warrant on June 6 at Snacks Grocery in Sarasota, the Police Department has reported.

The search warrant involving the store, which is located at 1950 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Sarasota, was obtained following an investigation into the alleged illegal sale there of synthetic drugs, also known as "spice," a news release says.

The owner of the grocery store, Rabboh, was arrested, and detectives seized 395 packages of a variety of synthetic drugs, \$937 in U.S. currency, a firearm and numerous items of drug paraphernalia "hidden behind the counter of the store," the release adds.

None of the designer drugs was on display for purchase, the release notes. Instead, a customer had to request the drugs and then they were retrieved from a hidden area, the release continues.

The investigation is continuing; additional charges are expected.



Sarasota Police Department personnel seized a number of synthetic drug packages after executing a search warrant at a store on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Sarasota, the office reported. Contributed photo

TWO MEN ARRESTED FOR POSSESSION OF COCAINE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office arrested two men on drug charges after executing a search warrant in Nokomis on June 5, the office has announced.

Deputies from the Special Investigation Section, Fugitive Apprehension Unit and Patrol Bureau, with the assistance of the SWAT team, executed a search warrant at 113 Avenida De La Isla in Nokomis on June 5, a news release says. The location was known as one where drug buys had taken place in the past, the release points out.

Eddie Outing, 29, of 113 Avenida De La Isla, Unit B, Nokomis, was arrested on two counts Sale of a Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Possession of Cocaine With Intent to Sell and Possession of Cannabis (Under 20 Grams).

Deputies also arrested Ryan Duncan, 25, of 494 Patton St., Laurel, who was leaving the address when they arrived, the release continues. He was charged on a warrant for Sale of a Controlled Substance (Cocaine).

A search of the residence and Outing's person yielded approximately 10.6 grams of rock cocaine, 5.2 grams of cannabis and \$3,192 in U.S. currency, the release adds. The money primarily was in denominations of \$100 and \$20, according to the report.

Outing is a prolific offender with three prior felony convictions and multiple past arrests for crimes including Sale of Cocaine, Drug Possession, Burglary and Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer, the release adds.





NORTH PORT MAN CHARGED WITH TRAFFICKING IN COCAINE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a North Port man for allegedly selling heroin and for drug trafficking after finding baggies of heroin and cocaine in a vehicle in which the man was a passenger.

On June 4, detectives with the Fugitive Apprehension Unit conducted a traffic stop while executing warrants near the 8700 block of Trionfo Avenue in North Port, a news release says. Marlon Cordova, 25, of 8299 Leona Ave., North Port, who was a passenger in the vehicle, was being sought under four warrants for sales of heroin to undercover detectives, the release adds.

After the detectives activated their emergency lights on June 4 to initiate the traffic stop, the report says, they saw several objects being thrown from the passenger side of the vehicle. After they stopped the vehicle and took Cordova into custody, the report continues, the detectives found a bag on the passenger floorboard that held what appeared to be 10 separate bags of cocaine. They also saw a clear plastic bag in plain view between the passenger seat and the center console, the report adds. Inside it, according to the report, were 80 individual bags of a substance suspected to be heroin.

Off the roadway, in the area where the detectives saw the objects being thrown from the vehicle, they found a prescription pill container and a bag they suspected to hold cocaine, the report says.



Subsequent testing of the substances yielded positive results for cocaine and heroin, the report continues.

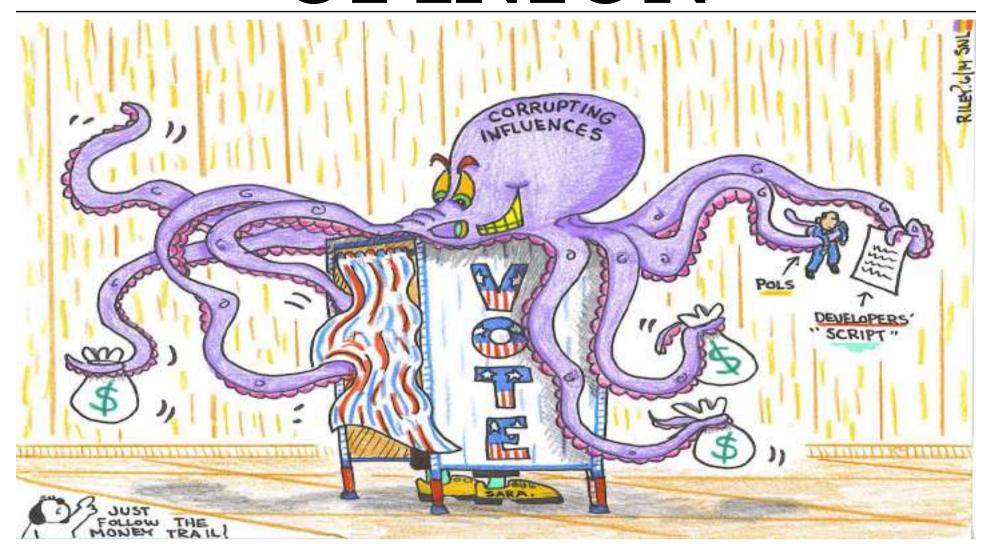
In this latest case, Cordova was charged with one count each of Trafficking in Heroin and Possession of Cocaine with Intent to Sell and two counts of Possession of a Controlled Substance. The earlier counts for which the detectives had warrants were for Sale of a Controlled Substance (Heroin).

The North Port Police Department assisted the Sheriff's Office in the apprehension of Cordova, the press release notes. SNL



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



THE BEST GOVERNMENT MONEY CAN BUY

The Sarasota Herald-

Tribune reported this week that developers are blithely circumventing the voter-mandated \$200 cap on political donations for local races by funneling money through a series of affiliated corporations. The beneficiaries of this ethically challenged largesse? Development darlings Paul Caragiulo and Alan Maio, both Republican candidates for the Sarasota County Commission.

According to published reports, Caragiulo has received almost \$30,000 in donations, while Maio has garnered an astounding \$80,000. Eight contributors have used corporate loopholes to funnel \$12,500 to Maio, while four contributors have similarly given \$3,400 to Caragiulo.

Still, the revelation of this subterfuge should not have come as much of a surprise. Following the Great Recession, developers have been looking for a way to fast-track their return to the profitability of the previous boom years, and the Sarasota County 2050 Plan has been their favorite target. The 2050 Plan places limits on the nature of new developments in the eastern part of the county, and it requires developers to guarantee that the burden of paying for public infrastructure necessary for those new developments will not be covered by existing taxpayers — a concept termed "fiscal neutrality."

While developers have chafed at the plan's requirements to create higher-density villages, with commercial space placed in the centers to improve walkability and the surrounding

environs dedicated to preserving green space, they also have made no secret of their loathing for the fiscal neutrality requirement. And why not? How could they make the obscene profits they enjoyed during the boom years if they were forced to pay for roads, schools, water and sewer and other infrastructure specific to their planned developments?

Their solution was a simple one: Support development-friendly candidates for the

County Commission who are willing to revise the 2050 Plan to remove most of the provisions onerous to their interests.

The result has been the election of a decidedly pro-development contingent on the County Commission, led by

Commissioner Joe Barbetta. Barbetta has been vocal in his disdain for the 2050 Plan, claiming it is imperiling the county's economic future. In discussion after discussion of the 2050 Plan in commission meetings, Barbetta has consistently articulated the same positions as developers.

At no other time was this more obvious than when the County Commission felt compelled to have an independent review of the plan to develop guidelines for its application going forward. Barbetta blocked every attempt to hire an economics expert from academia and instead foisted on the commission the selection of Donna Arduin, a well-known political

operative with minimal qualifications for the sort of economic review needed for the 2050 Plan.

That almost backfired on Barbetta when Arduin's firm, Laffer Associates, delivered the first draft of its analysis and it consisted almost entirely of a pro-development, anti-smart growth screed that practically advocated repealing the plan in its entirety. So shocked were other stakeholders in the

county at the brazenness of this philippic from Arduin's firm that Barbetta — in his best Louis Renault impersonation — had to join the chorus of outrage.

The firm had to do two rewrites of its analysis until it was palatable enough for Barbetta to

force-feed the material to the other commissioners ... not that there was much resistance from most of them.

In fact, only Commissioner Nora Patterson has been a consistent critic of Barbetta's move to eviscerate the 2050 Plan and open up the undeveloped eastern county to virtual pillaging by profiteering developers. On many votes on changes to certain elements of the plan, Patterson has been on the losing end, 4-1.

So why, one might ask, do developers feel the need to spend tens of thousands of dollars to influence the election of two new county commissioners?

Developers are aided in their efforts by being able to focus only on Republican candidates. Despite being a minority of county voters, Republicans have a stranglehold on county offices. The Democrats' perennial timidity in the face of Republican hegemony has perpetuated this situation.

First, Joe Barbetta is ineligible to run again because of term limits. Paul Caragiulo, his handpicked successor, is widely expected to continue Barbetta's campaign to give free rein to developers in the county. Yet, Caragiulo is opposed in the Republican primary by fellow Sarasota City Commissioner Shannon Snyder and local political gadfly Pete Theisen.

Second, Nora Patterson — the only remaining voice of reason when it comes to smart growth policies — also is ineligible to run again. Lourdes Ramirez, a neighborhood activist who has been vocal in her opposition to changes in the 2050 Plan, is running for Patterson's seat. Her election would continue, or even increase, the opposition to developers' efforts to run roughshod over the county's pristine areas.

Perhaps it is for that reason that her pro-development opponent, Alan Maio, has received more campaign donations than all other candidates for the commission combined. And, given the far-right proclivities of the core of local Republicans, Ramirez faces an uphill battle in her primary fight against Maio.

Developers are aided in their efforts by their being able to focus only on Republican candidates. Despite being a minority of county voters, Republicans have a stranglehold on county offices.

The Democrats' perennial timidity in the face of Republican hegemony has perpetuated this situation. Even when the occasional Democrat files for office, the lack of any cohesive organization within the party for recruitment and promotion of viable candidates means those occasional filings are by fringe candidates who are little better than their Republican counterparts.

For example, the sole Democrat in the commission race — running for Patterson's seat — is not convinced of the reality of sea level rise as a result of climate change because, when he goes to the beach, it seems the beach is getter larger, not smaller. Such myopic naïveté is almost shocking to more enlightened Democrats, and risible to the opposition.

We have observed previously in this space that individuals seek public office sometimes for imperfect reasons. They might have a score to settle. They might have a preset agenda or a devotion to the preset agenda of an influential backer. Or they just might want to feel important.

The true public servant seeks elective office to better his or her community and to serve all those who live and work therein. Critical thinking and a sense of humor are two essential traits for an effective officeholder. A fair and respectful examination of all sides of any issue can then lead to the most beneficial resolution.

Most important, a scrupulous avoidance of undue influence — especially through

political donations — is the only protection against the corrosive effects of corruption.

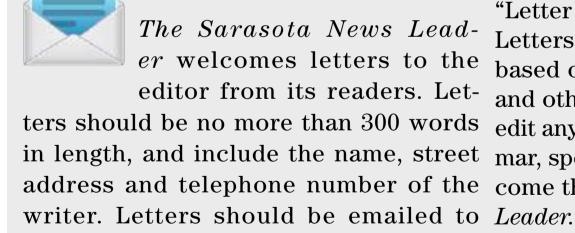
The desire — even the expectation — of such public servants might seem Quixotic in this cynical age of cronyism and venality, but it is an expectation resonant with the desires of our nation's Founders.

The first step in achieving this superior governance locally is to amend the county charter to make all county offices nonpartisan, removing the exclusionary nature of closed party primaries from the selection process for the best qualified candidates. The next move should be to establish public financing of county races, cutting off the outsized influence of wealthy donors.

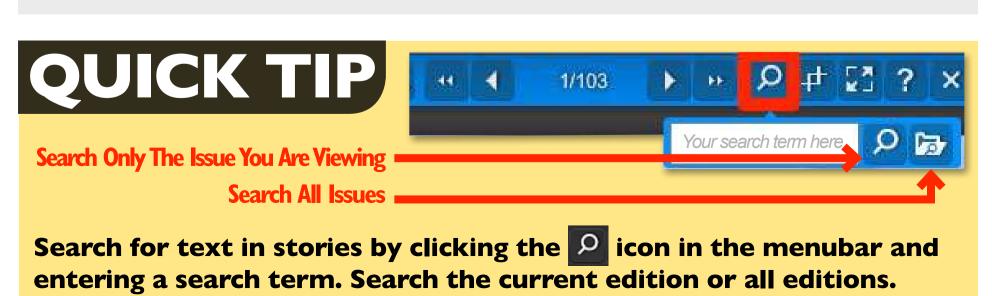
Finally, and most important, the voters must want honest and effective leaders enough to support their candidacies and vote for them in elections.

The corrupting influence of big money donors in local political offices has made a mockery of our democratic processes and imperiled the economic future of the county. We hope the collective outrage of the electorate will fuel an eventual end to this irretrievably broken system.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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*.





THE BARRED OWL

By Anita West-Lewis

Contributing Writer

Barred owls are year-round residents in Owl in my backyard in Bradenton and am Florida. According to All About Birds, mem- fortunate to have a breeding pair nesting bers of this avian species "don't migrate and nearby. they don't even move around very much."

They are difficult to see once they have landed in a tree. I photographed this Barred you, all?" (SNL)

Most days around noon, I hear their call: "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

13+

Asolo Repertory Theatre presents *I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti* Through June 15; times vary. Cook Theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets: \$25 and up. Information: 351-8000 or AsoloRep.org.

13+
JUNE

Players Theatre presents The Dixie Swim Club

Through June 22, times vary. 838 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets: \$18. Information: 365-2494 or ThePlayers.org.

13+

Black Is the Color of My Voice

Through June 22; times vary. Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, 1646 10th Way, Sarasota. Tickets: \$21.50. Information: 366-1505 or wbttsrq.org.

13+

Unconventional Inventions, Vanishing, Black Box Projects: Summation and Perspectives

Through June 27. Art Center Sarasota, 707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Free. Exhibits include kinetic sculpture created in collaboration with area schools and businesses, cutting-edge works by University of South Florida Master of Fine Arts candidates, a selection of art from the Lemur Conservation Foundation and an all-media juried show. Information: 365-2032 or www.artsarasota.org.

13+

Florida Studio Theatre presents Pump Boys and Dinettes

Through June 29; times vary. Gompertz Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$34 to \$44. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

13+

Baritones Unbound: Celebrating the Uncommon Voice of the Common Man

Through June 29; times vary. Asolo Repertory Theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets: \$20 and up. Information: 351-8000 or AsoloRep.org.

13+

Florida Studio Theatre presents At the Hop

Through July 6; times vary. Court Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$32 to \$36. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

13+

Allyn Gallup Gallery presents A Few Great, Big Pictures

Through July 28; times vary. 1288 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Free. Information: 366-2454 or AllynGallup.com.

13+

FST Improv: Out of Bounds Match Up

Through Aug. 23, 7:30 p.m. Browne's Lab Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$15. Information: 366-9000 or www.FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

13+

UUCS Presents Jane Shannon: Works in Fabric

Through Sept. 4; times vary. Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, Lexow Wing Gallery. 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota. Free. Information: 371-4974 or the church website.

13+

Dabbert Gallery presents Summer Showcase

Through Sept. 29; times vary. 76 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Free. Featuring works by three sculptors, one printmaker, 15 painters, one pastel artist and one photographer. Information: 955-1315 or dabbertgallery.com.

14
JUNE

Florida State League All-Star Game

June 14, 7:05 p.m. Gates open at 4:30 p.m. McKechnie Field, 1611 Ninth St. West, Bradenton. Ticket prices vary. Post-game concert by Save the Radio and fireworks show to be featured. Information: 747-3031 or MaraudersInfo@Pirates.com.

16+

Venice Theatre presents aactWorldFest

June 16-21; times vary. 140 W. Tampa Ave., Venice. Tickets for shows: \$20 and up. Event features workshops, plays and social events. More information: 488-1115 or venicestage. com/international.

25+
JUNE

Florida Studio Theatre presents Becoming Dr. Ruth

June 25 through July 27; times vary. Keating Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$34 to \$44. Information: floridastudiotheatre.org or 366-9000.

26+
JUNE

Banyan Theater Company presents The Price by Arthur Miller

June 26 through July 13; times vary. Jane B. Cook Theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets: \$28.50 for a single performance; \$52 for two of Banyan's summer season plays; and \$70 for three shows. *The Stye of the Blind Pig* by Phillip Hayes Dean to follow in July and *Collected Stories* by Donald Margulies in August. Information: banyantheatercompany.com.

27JUNE

FridayFest returns with Yesterdayze

June 27, 5-9 p.m., rain or shine. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Free. Blankets and lawn chairs welcome. No outside food or drinks allowed. Information: 953-3368 or vanwezel.org.

Submit Calendar Events ToNews@SarasotaNewsLeader.com



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.

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

