

**THE SARASOTA**

November 30, 2012

# News Leader

*The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida*

**A TALE OF TIME AND EXPENSE**

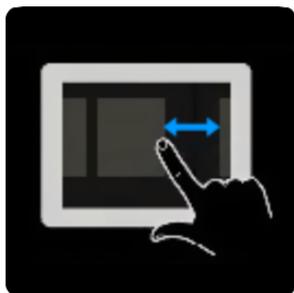
**STORMY WATERS**

**DUEL OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS**

*Inside*

**Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.**

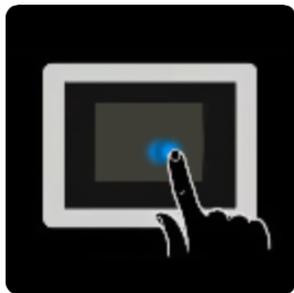
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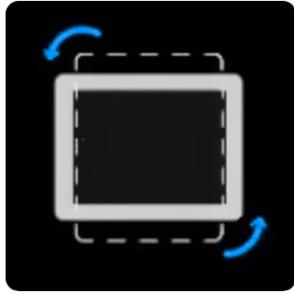
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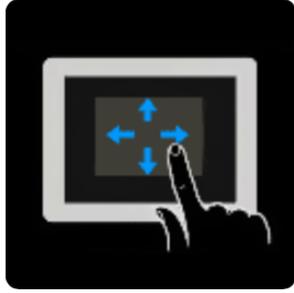
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# A.K.A. HELP

# SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

*The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida*

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# Welcome

Even without a calendar, I would know the holiday season is upon us by the sheer volume of email that pops up in my inbox each day.

Of course, the fact that we will be starting “Season” after the holiday season adds a geometric multiplicative factor to that other email — more arts and entertainment, more fundraisers, more everything!

Each week, one of my responsibilities is determining what goes into the News Briefs. Some of that selection process is pegged to timing (and, I confess, memory). Because our deadline is Thursday, items that came in the preceding Thursday or Friday end up that much further down in the email list for the next week, if they didn’t already get transferred to the News Briefs.

I do try to “capture” items as they come in and start a document for the next week’s briefs, but that effort easily can get pushed aside as my attention is called to final page proofs.

My primary goal with the News Briefs is providing you with a good mix of topics. In my previous roles as an editor for print publications, we often grabbed news releases for use as fillers. Some are still quite helpful for that purpose.

However, I do try to give good play to items that are not big enough to stand alone as news stories, yet are important enough that they should catch your attention.

I also like to think that throwing in a story about a robbery behind a city announcement about a street closing, for example, keeps you looking through the whole News Briefs section, just to see what you can spy. In that respect, you might think of the section in terms of mining for gemstones: Not every pebble is going to show promise, but you should find at least one gem or two every time.

*Rachel Brown Hackney*

*Editor and Publisher*



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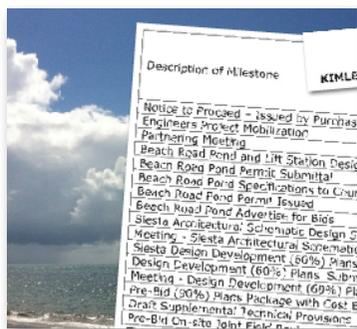
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## A TALE OF TIME AND EXPENSE

*Analysis: A Siesta architect says the public beach improvements can be done for \$13 million; News Leader research shows milestones set for the consultants called for the project to be ready for bids by January 2013 — Rachel Brown Hackney*

Siesta Key architect Mark Smith believes the improvements at the public beach can be completed for \$13 million or \$14 million, he told *The Sarasota News Leader* this week — about \$3 million less than the amount the Sarasota County Commission approved on Sept. 14, 2011. His figure is about \$14 million less than the \$27 million estimate a staff member mentioned to the board early this month.

Commissioner Nora Patterson, who lives on Siesta Key, facilitated Smith's efforts to speak with representatives of the county's consultants on the project, Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc. and Sweet Sparkman Architects. Smith had volunteered to undertake a review of the project cost estimates, on behalf of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce and other island organizations, so he could offer a professional opinion to the commission on the ballooning expenses. ([Full story here](#))



## STORMY WATERS

*North Port Commission puts the brakes on Warm Mineral Springs redevelopment — Cooper Levey-Baker*

The North Port City Commission slammed the brakes on a process designed to solicit ideas to redevelop Warm Mineral Springs during an adversarial — and, at times, downright snide — public meeting held Monday, Nov. 26.

The commission gathered to consider going forward with an Invitation to Negotiate, which would allow private developers to put forward their ideas for how to redevelop Warm Mineral Springs, the 87-degree “Fountain of Youth” jointly purchased by North Port and Sarasota County in 2010.

The Invitation to Negotiate process was set in motion in July during a joint city-county meeting, at which both commissions unanimously voted to begin soliciting long-term plans for the property.

But that plan came to a halt Monday, when the North Port commission — led by Mayor Linda Yates and two newly elected commissioners — shot down a motion to approve the Invitation to Negotiate. ([Full story here](#))



## **DUEL OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS**

*Analysis: City officials strike back after American Civil Liberties Union chapter reveals 'bum-hunting' police emails — Stan Zimmerman*

The local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida held a City Hall lawn press conference Tuesday morning, Nov. 27. Local chapter Legal Chairman Michael Barfield blasted the Sarasota Police Department for what he called “a culture of contempt and disrespect for the city’s homeless.”

Barfield was working from a 98-page compendium of police text messages sent between cruisers. He has filed suit in federal court over the city’s treatment of the homeless.

On Tuesday, he handed out excerpts from the text messages. One was an exchange on Aug. 7 between 10:11 and 10:17 p.m. between two officers. ([Full story here](#))



## **BYE-BYE UNIFORM STANDARDS**

*Each of the City of Sarasota’s parking districts soon may see its own specific regulations, following recent changes on St. Armands — Stan Zimmerman*

It took only one crack in the dike to send a flood over the City Commission’s policy of uniform parking regulations for the entire city.

That crack was created by St. Armands Key merchants. Their squeals of pain caused the commissioners to declare unconditional surrender on Nov. 19 and allow that shopping district to revert to age-old regulations.

On Nov. 28, the city’s Parking Committee heard Parking Manager Mark Lyons say all eight of the city’s parking districts will soon be considered for individual regulations. The uniform policy is dead, dead, dead. ([Full story here](#))



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## **JUST ABOVE FAILING**

*Florida earns a 'D' for its premature birth stats — Cooper Levey-Baker*

Florida earned a D in a recently released “premature birth report card” issued by the March of Dimes, reflecting the state’s high rate of premature births.

That rate has actually dipped in recent years, but not enough to get the state up to the national average.

Sarasota’s Healthy Start Coalition is bringing attention to the poor grade and promoting prevention with its Think 39 Weeks! campaign. The push emphasizes the health benefits of a full-term 39-week pregnancy, with a long list of positive factors for both the mother and the child.

That information needs to get out. In a statewide Healthy Start survey, nearly half of respondents said deliveries earlier than 37 weeks were safe. ([Full story here](#))



## **FIGHTING FOR CHICKEN FEED**

*Downtown Sarasota organizations squabble over use of \$20,000 in marketing funds and their own existence — Stan Zimmerman*

The Downtown Sarasota Alliance put on a show of force Tuesday morning, Nov. 27. The members were out to convince the Downtown Improvement District board to continue providing a \$20,000 marketing grant to the DSA.

They faced stiff opposition from the new Sarasota Downtown Merchants Association, and its chairman, Ron Soto.

“The whole reason we got started was because the DSA put up all kinds of hoops — some on fire — for our Dog Days of Summer [event],” he said. “The DSA recently sent out an email saying all the Christmas decorations were the work of the DSA. But we paid for them, and we repainted them, and we did that ourselves.” ([Full story here](#))



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A close-up photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black top, holding a large sandwich. The sandwich is made with a crusty, golden-brown roll and is filled with lettuce, tomato, onion, and a dark meat patty. The woman's hands are visible on either side of the sandwich, holding it steady. The background is a plain, light color.

# This may take a while.

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

The first impulse is just to gobble it all up.

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

*You have a whole week.*

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# A TALE OF TIME AND EXPENSE

EXHIBIT "B" PROJECT SCHEDULE KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES INC.		Calendar Days P.O. Completion of Miles
Description of Milestone		
Notice to Proceed - Issued by Purchase Order		1
Engineers Project Mobilization		3
Partnering Meeting		8
Beach Road Pond and Lift Station Design		38
Beach Road Pond Permit Submittal		38
Beach Road Pond Specifications to County		38
Beach Road Pond Permit Issued		68
Beach Road Pond Advertise for Bids		70
Siesta Architectural Schematic Design Submittal for New Structures		70
Meeting - Siesta Architectural Schematic Design Review		84
Siesta Design Development (60%) Plans Package with Cost Estimate		176
Design Development (60%) Plans Submittal for Utility Coordination		176
Meeting - Design Development (60%) Plans Review		180
Pre-Bid (90%) Plans Package with Cost Estimate		275
Draft Supplemental Technical Provisions		295
Pre-Bid On-site Joint Field Review w/Co Design Manager		300
Third Party Constructability Review Completed		330
Meeting - Review Constructability Review Comments		330
Engineer Submits Bid Phase Plans (100%)		360
Engineer's Certification Bid Form, Tech Prov., & Final Estimate		360

*'Exhibit B' of the amended contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc., approved by the County Commission on Dec. 7, 2011, shows the milestones expected of the firm.*

## ANALYSIS: A SIESTA ARCHITECT SAYS THE PUBLIC BEACH IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE DONE FOR \$13 MILLION; NEWS LEADER RESEARCH SHOWS MILESTONES SET FOR THE CONSULTANTS CALLED FOR THE PROJECT TO BE READY FOR BIDS BY JANUARY 2013

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

Siesta Key architect Mark Smith believes the improvements at the public beach can be completed for \$13 million or \$14 million, he told *The Sarasota News Leader* this week — about \$3 million less than the amount the Sarasota County Commission approved on Sept. 14, 2011.

His figure is about \$14 million less than the

\$27 million estimate a staff member mentioned to the board early this month.

“My main focus right now is bringing the cost to within our budget and making sure that we get a final project ready to go. ... Then we can talk about what went wrong in the process.”

Christine Robinson  
Chairwoman  
Sarasota County Commission

Commissioner Nora Patterson, who lives on Siesta Key, facilitated Smith's efforts to speak with representatives of the county's consultants on the project, Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc. and Sweet Sparkman Architects. Smith had

volunteered to undertake a review of the project cost estimates, on behalf of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce and other island organizations, so he could offer a professional opinion to the commission on the ballooning expenses.

Smith is chairman of the Siesta Chamber and past president of the Siesta Key Village Association.

In a letter dated Nov. 26, he provided the commissioners with details and a summary of his review. That letter is expected to be part of the discussion when the commission reviews the project with staff and consultants on Dec. 11 during a regular meeting in Sarasota.

The consultants' estimated construction cost for the project is \$14,279,597, Smith pointed out in his letter, with a contingency fund of \$2,432,825, for a total of \$16,712,422.

His construction estimate is \$13,229,597, with a contingency fund of \$3,482,825, for a total of \$16,712,422.

The \$16.7 million figure is what the commission authorized for the project in September 2011.

Among the findings that had disturbed him most in his discussions with the consultants, Smith told the *News Leader* in a Nov. 27 interview, was the cost per square foot calculated for the project.

## Proposed Construction Sequencing for Continuous Construction



A slide from a Dec. 7, 2011 PowerPoint presentation to the County Commission shows how the Siesta Beach Park improvements could be completed by the fall of 2014. Image courtesy Sarasota County

The consultants told him they had used a figure based on recent public construction in South County, Smith said, but he used a lower figure that he nonetheless characterized as “generous.”

“And I came up with a lot less” for the total, Smith added.

The consultants have been careful about their estimates because “this is a renovation project on steroids,” Smith said, and things can go wrong.

After all, he pointed out, plans call for the main parking lot to be redone and the historic 50-year-old pavilion to be renovated. No one

has any idea what workers will find when they tear up the parking lot, he noted.

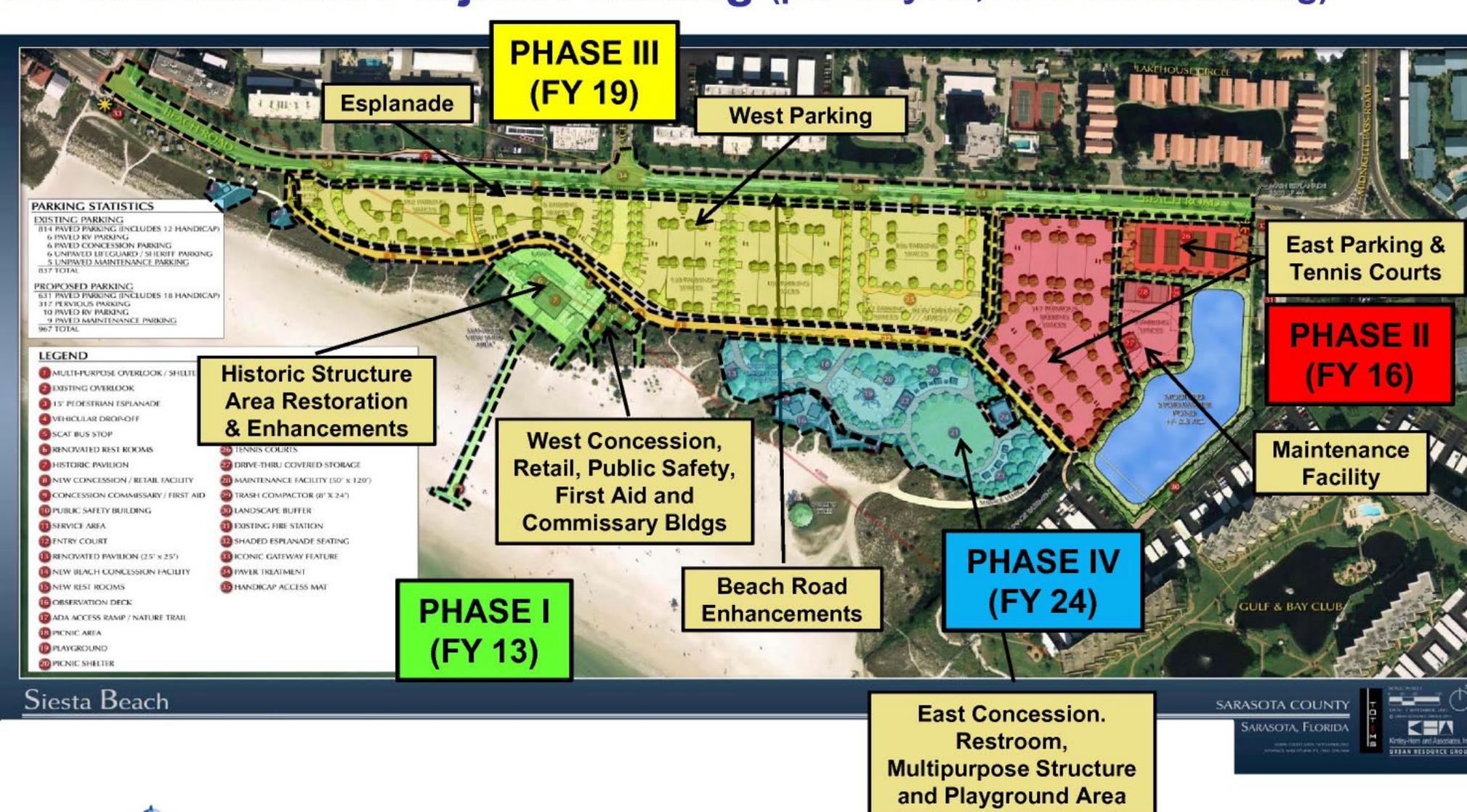
Still, Smith is firm in his belief that the consultants are being overly cautious.

His figures, he said, “are good numbers, and [the consultants] agreed with me.”

“We’ve got to reset this thing, get back to market prices,” Smith added. With the \$27 million figure and others above \$16.7 million having been bandied about, he said, “Perception becomes reality.”

When the project is put out for bids, amounts in the higher range are going to be submitted, he pointed out.

## Potential Construction Phasing for Incremental Project Funding (per July 26, 2011 BCC Meeting)



A Sarasota County graphic illustration shows how the Siesta Beach Park improvements could be phased in through the 2024 fiscal year. Image courtesy Sarasota County

That was proven during the county's process of hiring a new maintenance contractor for Siesta Village — another project with which Smith was integrally involved as chairman of the Siesta Key Village Maintenance Corp.

Because a county staff member estimated publicly before the County Commission that the annual expense of upkeep in Siesta Village would be about \$183,000, one vendor offered a proposal in the \$200,000 range when the contract finally was put out for bid at the end of May, Smith said.

The company that was hired won the contract with a bid of \$97,417.70, he noted.

“We need to put the word out: This is a \$13 million project,” he said of the beach improvements.

## QUESTIONING OTHER FACTORS

Smith also recommended in his letter to the commissioners that they seek explanation or clarification of two other, non-construction items in the project cost summary prepared by staff and presented to the board on Nov. 13: “They are items CEI and CMS which are 10% and 5% of the construction budget respectfully,” he wrote.

According to the commission-approved construction budget, he added, “these overhead costs total \$2,506,863.”

He continued in the letter, “My understanding is that CEI (Construction Engineering Inspection) is a process where Sarasota County hires an outside company to review the construction drawings, assist in hiring the contractor, oversee the construction, coordinate construction changes with the contractor and

design team, and approve construction [payment] draw requests.”

Instead, Smith pointed out, county staff and the professional consultants already hired should be handling that work.

Regarding CMS, or Capital Management Services, expenses, Smith wrote that he understood the \$835,621 figure for the beach project covers the expense of county staff assigned to the work because it is a capital project.

“As a taxpayer,” he continued, “I need to ask, are the staff members of this group paid solely from the budgets of all Sarasota County Capital Projects and not from the general fund? What are their qualifications? Do they lack the expertise of overseeing the construction of the Siesta Beach project, which is the justification why the CEI firm needs to be hired?”

In response to a question about the CEI expense, Carolyn Eastwood, program manager for the beach park improvements, told the *News Leader* in an email that the county does not hire a CEI firm for every project. “However,” she wrote, “for larger projects such as the Siesta Beach Park Project, the county does not have sufficient internal staff to manage a project of that magnitude and therefore hires a CEI firm to provide the oversight and management during the construction phase.”

Smith told the *News Leader* he spent the equivalent of four or five days on his review of the consultants' figures. “It was a lot more time than I thought,” he said, after adding it all up.

“I volunteered because I have a tendency to do that, I guess,” he added with a wry chuckle.

His assessment “looked great,” Patterson told the *News Leader* on Nov. 27, noting that Smith had presented it the day before to representatives of the major island organizations during their capacity as the Presidents’ Council.

She had attended that session, Patterson said.

“I thanked him profusely,” she added.

Referring to his \$13 million figure, Patterson said, “He has both the knowledge and the details to back it up. ... I think Mark did a fabulous job for us ... and I am very grateful.”

Smith told the *News Leader* he plans to be present for the Dec. 11 County Commission meeting.

## CONTINUING CONCERNS

In the meantime, Commissioner Joe Barbetta remains focused not only on the long delay in getting the design of the project completed but also on what he calls “some misinformation out there” regarding the planning.

During the Sept. 14, 2011 regular County Commission meeting when then-Project Manager Spencer Anderson submitted an update on the beach project,

Barbetta was the most vocal about taking advantage of lower construction costs and interest rates to get the design finished and put out to bid.

“It’s taken so long,” he told the *News Leader* on Nov. 27. “In a perfect world, construction would start in May or June [2013].”

Much of the site work could be completed before the tourist season began again in earnest in 2014, he pointed out.

Referencing the minutes from the Sept. 14, 2011 meeting, Barbetta said, “Our direction was pretty clear.”

As the *News Leader* reported in its Nov. 16 issue, the commission approved the staff goal of completing the design work in the fall of 2012, with construction to get under way in 2013. Another update was to have been presented to the board in late October. However, that followup discussion did not occur until Dec. 7, 2011. At the conclusion of that presentation,

the commissioners voted unanimously to approve a contract amendment with Kimley-Horn “for final design and limited construction phase services for

### Next Steps

- Finalize Permit Modification and Bid Documents for Beach Road Drainage Improvement Project
- Construction of Beach Road Drainage Improvements: Summer – Fall 2012
- Complete Park Design: January 2013
- Park Construction : Spring 2013 – Late 2014

*A slide from a staff presentation to the County Commission on Dec. 7, 2011 shows the next steps anticipated in the Siesta Beach improvements project. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

the Siesta Beach Improvement Project, in the amount of \$1,377,421.85.”

Exhibit B with the contract amendment includes a project schedule. The design at the 60 percent stage, with the cost estimate, was to be completed within 176 calendar days of the issuance of the purchase order for the firm to proceed. The pre-bid plans package, at the 90 percent mark, with the cost estimate, was to be ready within 275 days. The firm was to submit the bid phase plans at the 100 percent mark within 360 days.

The project remains at the 60 percent design point.

The original purchase order for Kimley-Horn to begin its consulting work on the beach improvements project was issued on May 17, 2010, Crystal Pruitt of the county’s Communications Department told the *News Leader* on Nov. 28. The County Commission had approved the contract on May 11, 2010, according to a Nov. 9 memo to the board from Carolyn Brown, general manager of the Parks and Recreation Department, and James K. Harriott Jr., the county’s chief engineer.

According to documentation the *News Leader* requested this week from the Procurement Department, the purchase order for the contract amendment the commission authorized on Dec. 7, 2011 was requested on Dec. 13, 2011. The documentation for the Kimley-Horn contract says the approval date of that amendment was Jan. 28, 2011. An accountant with which the *News Leader* consulted for this story said it was a common accounting error for a January date to carry with it the preceding year instead of the new year.

If the date was meant to be 2012, then, according to the timeline in Exhibit B of the Decem-

ber 2011 contract amendment, the engineer would be required to submit the bid phase plans at the 100 percent mark on Jan. 28, 2013.

## A STORY STILL TO BE UNTANGLED

In a Nov. 27 telephone interview with the *News Leader*, the original beach project manager, Spencer Anderson, said none of the commissioners had asked him whether he had any ideas regarding the delay in the completion of the project design.

When the *News Leader* asked whether he had any idea about the cause of the delay, Anderson said, “No, not necessarily.”

Anderson was promoted to a new position in May. He is director for field services in the Operations and Maintenance Group, which includes oversight of “pipe systems,” he noted — water and sewer work — as well as road and bridge work and right of way contractors.

He told the *News Leader*, “There was focus on the cost estimate every step of the way,” and he pointed to the \$16.7 million construction figure the board approved at that September 2011 meeting.

Commission Chairwoman Christine Robinson has done some digging through board records herself to try to figure out what happened to the timeline the commissioners approved last year.

Nonetheless, she told the *News Leader* on Nov. 27, “My main focus right now is bringing the cost to within our budget and making sure that we get a final project ready to go.”

She added, “Then we can talk about what went wrong in the process.” 



## STORMY WATERS

*Visitors enjoy the waters of Warm Mineral Springs in south Sarasota County. Photo by Rachel Levey-Baker*

### **NORTH PORT COMMISSION PUTS THE BRAKES ON WARM MINERAL SPRINGS REDEVELOPMENT**

**By Cooper Levey-Baker**

*Associate Editor*

The North Port City Commission slammed the brakes on a process designed to solicit ideas to redevelop Warm Mineral Springs during an adversarial — and, at times, downright snide — public meeting held Monday, Nov. 26.

The commission gathered to consider going forward with an Invitation to Negotiate, which would allow private developers to put forward their ideas for how to redevelop Warm Mineral Springs, the 87-degree “Fountain of Youth” jointly purchased by North Port and Sarasota County in 2010.

The Invitation to Negotiate process was set in motion in July during a joint city-county meet-

ing, at which both commissions unanimously voted to begin soliciting long-term plans for the property. The contract with the company currently doing business at the springs expires next June, and commissioners hoped to have at least the rudiments of a long-term solution in place by then.

But that plan came to a halt Monday, when the North Port commission — led by Mayor Linda Yates and two newly elected commissioners — shot down a motion to approve the Invitation to Negotiate. Yates, who voted in favor of the Invitation to Negotiate in July, raised several concerns about the plan, from the make-up of the selection and negotiation teams that

would evaluate the developers' ideas to what she called a scarcity of scientific data.

Yates tells *The Sarasota News Leader* she originally supported the Invitation to Negotiate because it was "presented" as a chance to hear ideas for an "overall general use of the property." The Invitation to Negotiate was first proposed in July by County Commissioner Joe Barbetta.

"What I got back was something totally different," she says, something she could no longer support.

At Monday's meeting, Yates said that instead of throwing open the door to private sector input, the city and county should first decide on their own priorities for the parcel. "What is the lay of the land that we as two governing bodies have determined? Where are we going to develop?" she asked. "Aren't we going to come together at a joint meeting to decide, rather than put something on the street?"

But as Vice Mayor James Blucher pointed out, the Invitation to Negotiate would not lock the bodies into any specific plan. It merely would get the ball rolling.

"A lot of people are concerned about our return on investment," he said. "Well, we're going to find out the return on investment. That's what this ITN is all about. We'll find out who's interested and who's not."

"It's open enough to let some people be creative, and at the same time we have the final word," he argued.

Yates, who said she has "probably been the greatest protector of that property and what it means to this community," called the proposal "extremely troublesome" and said she felt "frustrated." She called attention to concerns about the springs' ecological health (the United States Geological Society is in the middle of a three-year study of the springs) as well as licensing and tax issues.

***I think the county will be very disappointed with what took place today. We're going to be back to the starting point, and that's where this commission just took us.***

James Blucher  
Vice Mayor  
City of North Port

Newly sworn-in Commissioner Cheryl Cook backed Yates, saying she wanted to "slow down the process" and questioning the city's very ownership of the land.

"We are committing all future commissions, all future taxpayers, to being landlords," she said. "I'm extremely concerned about taking that step."

The motion to approve the Invitation to Negotiate eventually failed, with Yates, Cook and another newly elected commissioner, Rhonda DiFranco, opposed. An already contentious meeting then became bogged down with snide remarks over parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules of Order, as well as exasperated back-and-forths about the commission's backup plan.

"I think the county will be very disappointed with what took place today," Blucher said

after the vote. “We’re going to be back to the starting point, and that’s where this commission just took us.”

The vice mayor said opposition to the plan reflected only a “desire to make it really look bad that we bought” the springs.

“That’s too bad,” he said.

Yates tells the *News Leader* she is not opposed to keeping the springs as a “public asset,” but she felt the purchasing process was rushed and that it is vital to have her questions answered now, before committing to a long-term agreement.

The same 3-2 majority that shot down the Invitation to Negotiate approved a motion to request another face-to-face meeting with the County Commission. It is unclear when that might take place, but the county board is set to discuss the springs during its Dec. 4 regular meeting in Venice at the R.L. Anderson Center, located at 4000 S. Tamiami Trail.

Yates says she wants the commissions to ink a short-term concessionaire deal with a private company to manage the property as is when the current deal expires next June. Despite the vote to halt the Invitation to Negotiate, she says she is confident there will not be a “stalemate” in planning for the springs’ future. 

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# DUEL OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS

*A homeless person sleeps in Five Points Park, across from Selby Public Library. The City Commission removed the benches from the park to keep the homeless from lingering there. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **ANALYSIS: CITY OFFICIALS STRIKE BACK AFTER AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION CHAPTER REVEALS 'BUM-HUNTING' POLICE EMAILS**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

The local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida held a City Hall lawn press conference Tuesday morning, Nov. 27. Local chapter Legal Chairman Michael Barfield blasted the Sarasota Police Department for what he called “a culture of contempt and disrespect for the city’s homeless.”

Barfield was working from a 98-page compendium of police text messages sent between cruisers. He has filed suit in federal court over the city’s treatment of the homeless.

On Tuesday, he handed out excerpts from the text messages. One was an exchange on Aug.

7 between 10:11 and 10:17 p.m. between two officers.

Jacob Nelson: “U NEED TO PROVE UR SELF SON LOL”

Joshua Vance: “U THINK UR SOO COOL DON’T U IM THE BUM HUNTER TONIGHT SON!!”

Hours later, at 2:48 a.m. Aug. 8, Christo Devaney texted, “GOT A PRANK FOR THE BUM HUNTERS? THEY ARE LOOKING FOR SLEEPING BUMS AND IM GOING TO DRESS UP LIKE ONE AND HAVE THEM FIND ME LOL DOOOOOO IT.”

The dates of these transmissions meshes perfectly with then-Interim City Manager Terry Lewis ordering police captains to personally begin patrolling downtown. Lewis told *The Sarasota News Leader* in August, “We have more vagrants and they appear to be younger. It’s a different demographic.”

“*I rocked the boats and some big boats rocked back.*”

Richard Martin  
Former Executive Director  
Suncoast Partnership for the Homeless

Two weeks later, during a City Commission meeting, Mayor Suzanne Atwell said, “I’m not comfortable going downtown anymore” because of vagrancy issues.

Commissioners ordered Lewis to toughen enforcement on the city’s various anti-vagrancy ordinances, and they asked for a report at every commission meeting.

On Nov. 27, Barfield passed out copies of a table showing police citations and arrests for violations of municipal ordinances over the past four years. Not surprisingly, the chart shows a significant spike since Aug. 23, following Atwell’s complaint and the commission’s “get tough” response.

At every subsequent commission meeting, commissioners praised the police for aggressive action, and they repeatedly said, “Tell us if we can do more.”

Another text cited by Barfield was from Sept. 4 at 3:30 a.m. Corinn Stannish wrote: “AROUND 4 OR 430, CAN YOU CHECK ISLAND PARK FOR TRANSIENTS? CITE THEM CITY CODE IF FOUND. SOME BRIDGE AND PARK WALKERS HAVE BEEN HSSELED LATELY. LET ME KNOW VIA EMAIL IF ANY ENFORCEMENT HAD TO BE TAKEN.”

Considering the pressure the Sarasota police were under from their masters at City Hall, the spike in arrests and citations is understandable. And to a lesser extent, so are the “bum hunter” comments cited from just one evening. It is likely they reflect the date the night shift received new marching orders from Lewis to begin

tightening up enforcement of vagrancy-related ordinances.

Note the word “bum” has no religious or racial connotations. In fact, it is a common term in politics, as in “Throw the bums out!”

## LOSING THAT ‘NEW CAR SMELL’

While Barfield was busy harping on three comments from 98 pages of transcripts, the new city manager was undermining himself as well in a battle of who can be less credible.

After the press conference, City Manager Tom Barwin was available for press interviews, along with police Capt. Paul Sutton. Barwin started punching low and went lower in several interviews. He said Barfield had twisted the facts to suit his case, an insanely common tactic inside City Hall but apparently not available outside its confines.

And he dredged up comments that Barfield is a disbarred attorney who forged and stole from his clients — which, of course, has nothing to do with Barfield’s arguments or evidence. On one sunny morning, Tom Barwin lost his “new car smell” and became just another City Hall time-server.

Barwin even offered a recent example of how counterproductive it is to besmirch a litigant. City Commissioner Terry Turner “shot the messenger” in a public records lawsuit, costing the city an extra \$5,000 before the issue was settled. Clearly, Barwin did not learn from the experience.

In what could be a long-running Barwin-Barfield battle, Barfield came back to City Hall later and asked for a bevy of the new city manager’s emails under Florida’s Public Records Law.

Early in Barwin’s tenure, which began in September, he and Barfield tried to find common ground to defend the constitutional rights of homeless people while enhancing the safety and security of residents downtown. The negotiations obviously went nowhere.

## AND GETTING WORSE

While the legal and bureaucratic bum-fighting continues, the plight of Sarasota’s homeless will worsen. Their only publicly visible champion was former Mayor Richard Martin. He was the director of the Suncoast Coalition to End Homelessness and the architect of the recently approved Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Note the past tense. Martin had to leave the job. “I was asked to step down,” he told the *News Leader*.

“I rocked the boats and some big boats rocked back.”

Services for the homeless and vagrants in the City and County of Sarasota are woeful in comparison to those in Manatee and Pinellas counties to the north.

When Martin took his Ten-Year Plan before the city and county commissions, they applauded his efforts and turned him down flat for any funding. Meanwhile, in Manatee County, on 17th Avenue West near McKechnie Field, the “One Stop Center” is staffed by volunteers to help the homeless with food, clothing, education, training, health care and other needs.

And the center helps people on the verge of homelessness to keep their housing if they face foreclosure or eviction. A major part of the organization’s budget assists people in paying their monthly rent.

“People come here to eat because it saves the money they need to pay the rent,” said Adell Erozer, the center’s director.

Sarasota’s needs are just as great, but the assistance is fragmented. Without Martin, and without any plan to move forward, it looks like only more bum-fighting lies ahead. Yet, a pair of studies in 2010 identified 1,829 homeless children in Manatee County and 1,425 homeless children in Sarasota County. 



*City Manager Tom Barwin addresses the board during his first City Commission meeting in September. Photo by Norman Schimmel*



## BYE-BYE UNIFORM STANDARDS

*City of Sarasota officials say the lion's share of the municipal parking revenue comes from downtown. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

### **EACH OF THE CITY OF SARASOTA'S PARKING DISTRICTS SOON MAY SEE ITS OWN SPECIFIC REGULATIONS, FOLLOWING RECENT CHANGES ON ST. ARMANDS**

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

It took only one crack in the dike to send a flood over the City Commission's policy of uniform parking regulations for the entire city.

That crack was created by St. Armands Key merchants. Their squeals of pain caused the commissioners to declare unconditional surrender on Nov. 19 and allow that shopping district to revert to age-old regulations.

On Nov 28, the city's Parking Committee heard Parking Manager Mark Lyons say all eight of the city's parking districts will soon be considered for individual regulations. The uniform policy is dead, dead, dead.

These areas are the downtown core, the judicial center, Southside Village (aka Hillview Street and Osprey Avenue), Burns Square, St. Armands (already done), Newtown, the Rosemary District and the Marina Jack area.

"Each area needs to be looked at differently," said Lyons.

He will soon take his parking message to each of the districts, starting with downtown first. "The lion's share of our parking revenue comes from downtown," said Lyons.

While many revisions and modifications may not require City Commission direction or ap-

proval, Lyons is mindful of who is in charge. "There are quite a few things we can do without going to the City Commission," he told the Parking Committee. "But I'll need to measure their concerns, too. I'll review this with my bosses, and if they agree, we'll take it to the commission."

A new study of parking in Sarasota is in the wings. Two contractors submitted responses to a request for proposals, which will be evaluated Dec. 1. The results will help guide Lyons in setting the parameters for parking restrictions in the various districts.

He hopes city staff will be able to study parking in January, during the tourist season, and again in May. "The study will look at capacity, turnover, times of day, employee parking and will hit all eight districts," he said.

The Parking Committee is a bit unusual. It is not an advisory committee, but more like a sounding board. It operates under Florida's "Sunshine Laws," but it produces no written reports or recommendations. Lyons is asking for its help in creating a comprehensive mission statement and vision for parking in town.

It is a tall order. Steve Queior is president and CEO of the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce and a committee member, as is Marty Rappaport, chairman of the St. Armands Business Improvement District.

"Whose needs are we trying to satisfy in each district?" asked Queior.

"Is it the downtown employee versus the mall shopper?" asked Rappaport.

Queior noted that 23,400 people work within a one-mile radius of downtown. And even as gasoline flirts with \$4 per gallon, car- and van-pooling remains a dream.

“*Whose needs are we trying to satisfy in each district?*”

Steve Queior  
Member  
Sarasota Parking Committee

If a downtown circulator is built as a result of the city's Mobility Study, where will people park to get aboard it? Should downtown employees pay for a parking permit, even

if parking is free?

Those are only some of the questions with which the committee is wrestling.

As Queior put it, "Whose behavior are we trying to accommodate?"

To which can now be added, "In which district?" 



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# JUST ABOVE FAILING

*Florida officials continue to work on lowering the state's premature birth rate. Photo by Micha Fleuren/Dreamstime*

## **FLORIDA EARNS A 'D' FOR ITS PREMATURE BIRTH STATS**

**By Cooper Levey-Baker**

*Associate Editor*

Florida earned a D in a recently released “premature birth report card” issued by the March of Dimes, reflecting the state’s high rate of premature births.

That rate has actually dipped in recent years, but not enough to get the state up to the national average.

Sarasota’s Healthy Start Coalition is bringing attention to the poor grade and promoting prevention with its Think 39 Weeks! campaign. The push emphasizes the health benefits of a full-term 39-week pregnancy, with a long list of positive factors for both the mother and the child.

That information needs to get out. In a statewide Healthy Start survey, nearly half of respondents said deliveries earlier than 37 weeks were safe.

March of Dimes statistics show a decline in the percentage of premature births in Florida,

from 13.3 percent to 13 percent between 2010 and 2011, down from 13.8 percent in 2006. One factor that may be slowing that decline? An increase in the percentage of uninsured women between the ages of 15 and 44. That number rose by almost a full percentage point, to 29.3 percent. March of Dimes cites a lack of regular health care before and during pregnancy as a major risk factor for premature births.

How is Florida faring when compared to other states? Well, we are not Mississippi, where the rate of premature births is 16.9 percent, but we have a long way to go to catch Vermont, where the rate is 8.8 percent.

One area in which March of Dimes does credit the Sunshine State is the commitment to reduce the premature birth rate. Florida has pledged to lower its number by 8 percent by 2014. For now, at least, the state is headed in the right direction, even if that still only gets us just above failing. 

# FIGHTING FOR CHICKEN FEED



*Downtown Sarasota has seen a number of organizations come and go, purporting to represent the area. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **DOWNTOWN SARASOTA ORGANIZATIONS SQUABBLE OVER USE OF \$20,000 IN MARKETING FUNDS AND THEIR OWN EXISTENCE**

**By Stan Zimmerman**

*City Editor*

The Downtown Sarasota Alliance put on a show of force Tuesday morning, Nov. 27. The members were out to convince the Downtown Improvement District board to continue providing a \$20,000 marketing grant to the DSA.

They faced stiff opposition from the new Sarasota Downtown Merchants Association, and its chairman, Ron Soto.

“The whole reason we got started was because the DSA put up all kinds of hoops — some on fire — for our Dog Days of Summer [event],” he said. “The DSA recently sent out an email saying all the Christmas decorations

were the work of the DSA. But we paid for them, and we repainted them, and we did that ourselves.”

Sarasota over the decades has seen a plethora of organizations sprout up, purporting to represent downtown. Alliance, association, partnership: Pick your term. Old ones were supplanted by new ones, and that is exactly what the Downtown Improvement District is worried about.

Soto’s organization is young. “We’ve been together two-and-a-half months,” he told the district board. He has 34 members.

The DSA is almost 10 times as large, with 330 members. But less than half live or work within the confines of the Downtown Improvement District, which levies a 2-mill tax for enhancement of the downtown area.

Ron Kennedy is a shopkeeper in the district. “I pay the special DID tax,” he told the board. “I wouldn’t expect the DID to clean the Rosemary District sidewalks or irrigate Burns Square. What comes from the DID should stay in the DID.”

Kennedy is concerned the DSA’s marketing is spread much wider than just the confines of the DID.

A once-a-month event called “First Friday” features downtown merchants staying open late as pedestrians stroll the area just along Main Street and Palm Avenue.

Last January, the DSA began promoting three other near-downtown areas for additional Friday strolls — the Rosemary District, Burns Square and Towles Court — on consecutive weekends. The DSA used DID money for an umbrella promotion of all four venues, and that rankled merchants and landowners who pay the special DID tax.

As Soto put it, “It’s inappropriate for them to have all that money.”

## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

“All that money” is a mere \$20,000.

“We’re going to need this money,” said DID Chairman Ernie Ritz. The organization is embarking on an ambitious capital improvement program in the coming year, and Ritz wants to preserve cash to pay for overruns and emergencies.

“I wouldn’t expect the DID to clean the Rosemary District sidewalks or irrigate Burns Square. What comes from the DID should stay in the DID.”

Ron Kennedy  
Businessman  
downtown Sarasota

In building a budget for the current period, the DID intentionally omitted marketing expenses. That omission is what brought the DSA to the table to request a repeat of last year’s appropriation. And that eventually dragged the new mer-

chants group into the discussion.

“Why won’t you guys work together?” asked Ritz.

DSA Chairman John Harshman replied later in the meeting, “We’re happy to work with them.”

“The DSA isn’t a bad thing,” said Soto. “We would love to work together.”

Dr. Mark Kaufman, DID board member and longtime downtown player, told Soto, “The birth of your organization could be the death of their organization.”

The DID voted to give DSA the \$20,000 for marketing. But Kaufman’s motion included “a strong recommendation they try to assimilate the merchants’ association.” 

# CITY COMMISSION PREVIEW



*Discussion of the proposed overlay district for Laurel Park is one item on the City Commission's Dec. 3 agenda. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## **TRESPASSING ORDINANCE, REOPENING OSPREY AVENUE IN THE AREA OF THE STALLED LIFT STATION WORK, LAUREL PARK OVERLAY DISTRICT AND CITY ISLAND LEASES ON THE AGENDA**

**By Stan Zimmerman**  
*City Editor*

It is a full plate for the Sarasota city commissioners Dec. 3, with both the afternoon and evening sessions of their regular meeting featuring numerous issues.

The first item on the afternoon consent agenda cleans up the city ordinance dealing with trespassing. This is a key anti-vagrancy tool, and the changes will allow the county-owned Selby Library at Five Points and the Sarasota County Area Transit transfer station on Lemon Avenue to issue trespass warnings enforceable by the city Police Department.

Approval will set up this measure for a public hearing early next year.

Also on the consent agenda are lease extensions for MarineMax and the Ski-A-Rees on city-owned property on City Island. MarineMax would receive a five-year extension to avoid lease termination on Dec. 31. Meanwhile, city staff is negotiating a longer lease to come back before the commission later. MarineMax operates a marina on New Pass.

The Ski-A-Rees have entertained Sarasota audiences since the 1960s, with Sunday exhibitions of water ski expertise on the south side of City Island. They are requesting a five-year extension to 2017.

Under unfinished business in the afternoon, the commissioners will consider extending, modifying or relaxing a hiring freeze. While the city staff is down 24 percent from five years ago, most of the reduction is due to “self-imposed staffing delays and outsourced functions,” according to a city memo. In the meantime, some staff members have been promoted, while others have left, leaving vacancies. How to deal with the consequences of the hiring freeze is the question.

The second piece of unfinished afternoon business holds huge consequences for Laurel Park, a time-warp neighborhood from the 1920s faced with concerns about mega-development along its borders. The south-of-downtown neighborhood is seeking an “overlay district” with stipulations requiring neighborhood meetings with prospective developers of properties adjacent to the residents’ bungalows; the homeowners want the requirement in the city’s comprehensive plan.

Third on that part of the agenda is a \$750,000 expense regarding the giant holes in the ground blocking Osprey Avenue. The money would be used to put Osprey back into two-lane order while the city struggles to find an engineer to complete its sewage lift station No. 87. The former engineering company was dismissed for incompetence.

If you have a host of unpaid parking tickets, you might want to testify during the evening

portion of the City Commission session, when a public hearing has been scheduled about a host of parking issues. Prices are proposed to go up for delinquency fees, and the fine for parking a gas-powered car in an electric-car recharge spot; the amount of fine will be considered for removing an immobilizing wheel boot or tampering with it. And three parking violations will mean you cannot renew your tags or driver’s license without paying up.

While they are in revenue-boosting mode, the commissioners will hold the evening’s next public hearing — about raising fees for enforcement of the Florida Building Code. And the following public hearing — among other things — will focus on requiring anybody who tears up the right of way to put in a patch better than the original surface. We can only hope this applies to city repairs as well.

New business always comes at the end of a meeting. St. Armands merchants and landowners will present a petition asking the city to extend the life of their business improvement district for another decade. They are fresh from a victory two weeks ago, during which they saw the commission overturn a one-size-fits-all parking policy.

Then City Commissioner Paul Caragiulo will lead a discussion about downtown parking and how it fits in the new and unregulated environment the commission created two weeks ago. 

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# ROOM TO ROAM

*The Celery Fields soon will be welcoming youngsters eager to learn about nature. Photo courtesy Sarasota County*

## **AUDUBON SOCIETY LAUNCHES KIDS PROGRAM TO COMBAT 'NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER'**

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

Hoping to expose as many children as possible to the joys of the natural world, the Sarasota Audubon Society has launched a collaboration with Around the Bend Nature Tours and Sarasota County Schools to bring students to the [Celery Fields](#) for a day of outdoor learning.

Starting in January, groups of kids from area schools will travel to the Celery Fields, where they will be supplied with binoculars to identify birds and learn about native

plants and the ecology of the wetlands. The cost of the program (\$700 per trip) is being split by the Audubon Society and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

Audubon Society President Jeanne Dubi says the program was created to combat “nature deficit disorder,” the increasing distance between local children

and the wilderness. The term is a joke (no such medical condition exists, of course), but the need is very real. The Society advertised the excur-

“*There's a lot more to Sarasota than the beaches.*”

Jeanne Dubi  
President  
Sarasota Audubon



sions one Monday morning a couple of weeks back, and all 28 trips filled up within hours.

Dubi says that shows “the desperate demand and the desperate need for field trips.”

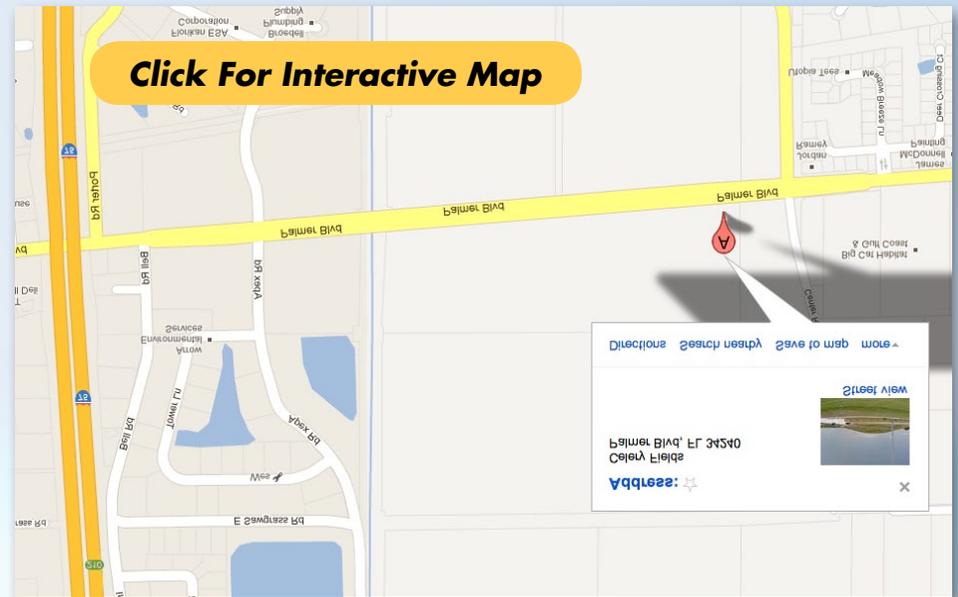
A flyer for the program argues that field trips are vital in helping students “understand the basic principles of environmental citizenship,” something that is difficult to teach in just the classroom. The program is in line to reach 1,300 to 1,400 children this spring, according to Dubi.

A side goal of the trips is to promote the Celery Fields itself. The area is a treasure trove for birders, and the Audubon Society is working to build a nature center there that can serve as a hub for the area’s entire range of woodsy activities. The building will have classrooms and meeting space, as well as a visitor’s center,

where tourists and locals alike can become educated about the outdoor opportunities.

“A lot of money is spent on encouraging people to go to the beach and stay at the beach,” Dubi says. “There’s a lot more to Sarasota than the beaches.”

That is something a whole lot of kids are about to learn. 



*A Sarasota Audubon capital campaign is under way to fund new facilities for visitors to the Celery Fields. Photo courtesy Sarasota County*



Jim Neville  
Marine Preserve

Palmer Point Park

Project Site

## ANOTHER GO AT IT

Palmer Point Park Restoration  
CIP 85459  
2012 Aerial Photo

*A Sarasota County map shows the area where part of Palmer Point Park would be restored. Image courtesy Sarasota County*

### **AFTER REACHING AN IMPASSE WITH THE ORIGINAL CONTRACTOR, THE COUNTY COMMISSION VOTES TO TRY AGAIN TO RESTORE A SECTION OF PALMER POINT PARK**

By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

During late 2011, Florida Department of Transportation officials in Sarasota were almost alarmed enough to raise caution flags: Both Sarasota County and City of Sarasota staff were eyeing FDOT right of way by the north Siesta bridge for separate projects.

The state highway officials still were months away from their June starting date for the bridge rehabilitation work, but they wanted to make absolutely

sure no one would be in the way when that project started.

As it turned out, the city's replacement of a sewer pipe under the bay was completed well in advance of the start of the bridge work.

“*This thing really should have been done a couple of years ago.*”

Nora Patterson  
Commissioner  
Sarasota County

However, the county project — which already had hit some snags — remains unfinished.

On Nov. 13, the manager of that project was back before the Coun-

ty Commission to explain what had transpired and seeking a vote to enable him to move forward once again.

The commissioners gave him that go-ahead, on a 4-1 vote.

On May 10, 2011, the commission authorized a \$559,650 contract with Tampa Contracting Services Inc. to remove and dispose of exotic vegetation; excavate and grade dredge spoil material; transport the excavated material; and supply and plant wetland and upland vegetation on the southeastern section of Palmer Point Park. It was the first spoil islands restoration project designed to improve water quality in that part of the bay, returning the body of water to the level of health it enjoyed before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the Intracoastal Waterway in the 1960s.

Palmer Point Park is on the north end of Casey Key.

As a Nov. 13 memo to the commission explained, the exotic vegetation was removed, but because of neighborhood opposition to the contractor's selection of a staging/offloading site to dispose of the vegetation, county staff and the contractor had to seek an alternative plan.

Project Manager Paul Semenec put it this way in addressing the County Commission on Nov. 13: "There was very strong and immediate reaction from the neighborhood about that proposal."

Semenec explained to members of the Siesta Key Association on Oct. 6, 2011, that if FDOT granted use of its right of way just below the



*The Florida Department of Transportation right of way below the north Siesta bridge yet may serve a role in a spoil island restoration project. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

north bridge, the contractor could pile the dredge material on barges, send them up the ICW to the bridge, offload the material and truck it away.

FDOT did end up granting the permit, he pointed out to the County Commission on Nov. 13, but the contractor also had to develop a sediment management plan, which needed approval of the Florida Department of Environmental Management.

Because of the delay in working out a plan to remove the dredge material, Semenec continued, the contractor ended up submitting a claim to the county for an extra \$189,945 for the project, along with a request for a 90-day extension. "That claim was rejected, as was a revised claim for \$95,000 and 90 days," he added. "That claim remains an unresolved issue."

Semenec pointed out that the agreement Tampa Contracting Services signed with the county made it the company's responsibility to identify a site to which it could transport the vegetation removed from the park, and it had to obtain the necessary permits for whatever plan it chose.

"The schedule change also remains a major unresolved cost issue with the contractor," Semenec told the commissioners.

After staff met with the contractor recently, he added, the parties agreed to a mutual termination of the contract. However, the county owed the contractor a final payment of \$32,818.76, Semenec said.

## THE SWFWMD FACTOR

The Nov. 13 memo points out that a county agreement with the Southwest Florida Wa-

ter Management District for funding of the project called for the work to be completed by Dec. 31, 2011. However, the memo says, "when it became apparent that construction ... would not be completed by the expiration date, county staff requested a reallocation of funds."

SWFWMD staff amended the agreement, the memo continues, to apply \$89,201.62 to the design and engineering costs of the completed Bird Colony Island project, which involved cleaning up that island just off Siesta Key.

Altogether, SWFWMD provided \$631,490.56 of the \$950,000 the county had budgeted for spoil islands restoration. With the park restoration incomplete, the memo points out, only \$43,806.98 of the SWFWMD funding had been applied to the project.

The Nov. 13 memo adds, "At this time, the [Palmer Point Park] project is being evaluated to ascertain the potential for use as mitigation for impacts that will occur during construction of the future Siesta Beach Improvements project. Should it be determined that [it] is acceptable as mitigation, the county will reimburse \$43,806.98 to SWFWMD."

## MOVING FORWARD

During his presentation, Semenec sought board authorization to re-advertise the Palmer Point Park project, with the FDOT right of way by the north Siesta bridge identified as an available transfer site for the dredge material. FDOT's staff in Sarasota had agreed to use of the right of way, he added.

Commissioner Nora Patterson asked Semenec to make certain he notified the president of the Bay Island Association — which rep-

resents the neighborhood closest to the right of way.

“I can do that, definitely,” he replied.

“So they’re not surprised then when a year-and-a-half later, a project starts,” Patterson added.

“Yes,” Semenech told her. “I fully intend to meet with them.”

A meeting was not necessary, Patterson said; he just needed to contact the association.

At the request of Chairwoman Christine Robinson, the board split the requested action into two votes. First, the commissioners voted unanimously to resolve the issue with the contractor, including making the proposed final payment.

Then, with Robinson dissenting, they authorized the rebidding of the project.

Robinson noted she previously had opposed the spoil island restoration effort.

“This thing really should have been done a couple of years ago,” Patterson said, adding that at one point, the county had enough revenue to undertake several spoil island restorations.

“The money’s too tight to move forward [on other projects],” she said. “This one, I think, people really do expect.”

“She’s right on,” Commissioner Jon Thaxton agreed.

The meeting was held during the last week of Thaxton’s term. 



# Enter To Win A New iPad

When our “Likes” on Facebook reach 1,000, we will randomly select one of our subscribers to receive a new iPad.

- 1 Click here to Subscribe
- 2 Then Like Us On Facebook

The contest concludes when The Sarasota News Leader achieves 1,000 “Likes” on Facebook. One winner will be selected at random from among subscribers. Only subscribers are eligible to win the iPad, regardless of having “Liked” our page on Facebook. Contest is open only to residents of Sarasota County. Selected winners must provide a valid Sarasota County street address to receive the iPad. Contest is void where prohibited by law.



Jennifer New (left) and Patti Wertheimer make clear their feelings for Israel. Photos by Norman Schimmel

## HUNDREDS RALLY FOR ISRAEL IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST HAMAS

### Staff Reports

More than 600 people came to J.D. Hamel Park in downtown Sarasota on Nov. 23 to show their support for Israel, Howard Tevlowitz, the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, told *The Sarasota News Leader* this week.

Following a rally in the park to show solidarity for Israel in its recent conflict with Hamas, participants crossed U.S. 41 for a walk over the Ringling Bridge.

The federation provided small Israeli flags to those wishing to carry them.

Online resources regarding Israel's fight against Hamas are available at [www.SarasotaLovesIsrael.com](http://www.SarasotaLovesIsrael.com), a news release says.

For more information about the federation, visit [www.jfedsrq.org](http://www.jfedsrq.org). 



*Marchers make their way up the Ringling Bridge on Nov. 23.*



*Surrounding the doughboy statue, rally participants listen to speakers in Hamel Park.*



*One rally participant is wrapped in an Israeli flag.*



*The American flag waves behind the banner of support for Israel.*



*The Payne Park playground in downtown Sarasota has proven popular with families. Photo courtesy City of Sarasota*

## **PAYNE PARK PLAYGROUND CLOSED UNTIL MID-DECEMBER**

Payne Park playground, 2050 Adams Lane, was closed as of Nov. 26 for the installation of a shade structure, the City of Sarasota announced.

It is expected to reopen on or before Friday, Dec. 14, a city news release adds.

The shade structure will cover the area for small children (ages 5-12) as well as the music

area, providing relief from the sun as requested by residents, the release says. The installation will include the placement of support columns.

In January, portions of the playground will be temporarily closed again to install a shade cloth over the structure, the release notes. The planned closure dates are Monday, Jan. 14 through Friday, Jan. 18, 2013.

## **PAY YOUR TAXES FROM YOUR CAR**

Nov. 30 is the last day to pay property taxes with a 4 percent discount and that day “usually brings in quite a crowd at the Tax Collector’s Office,” a county news release says.

To make it easier for taxpayers, on Friday, Nov. 30, drive-through service will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the following Tax Collector Service Centers:

- Downtown Sarasota — Terrace Building, 101 S. Washington Blvd. (south side).
- South Sarasota — West of Palmer Ranch Plaza, 8484 S. Tamiami Trail (south side).

- Venice — Anderson Administration Center, 4000 S. Tamiami Trail (east side, Florida Highway Patrol parking lot).

Tax Collector Barbara Ford-Coates also reminds taxpayers in the news release, “The 4 percent discount is given if you postmark or pay at [www.SarasotaTaxCollector.com](http://www.SarasotaTaxCollector.com) by Nov. 30.”

In addition, 24-hour drop boxes are available at the service centers and in North Port at the Supervisor of Elections Office, 13640 Tamiami Trail, on Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The elections office is closed from noon to 1 p.m., the news release notes.

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## **PINE VIEW JUNIOR NAMED 2013 SUNSHINE STATE SCHOLAR**

Thomas Chaffee, a junior at Pine View School in Osprey, has been selected to represent the Sarasota County School District as its 2013 Sunshine State Scholar during an event to be held Thursday and Friday, Feb. 21-22, 2013, in Orlando.

If Chaffee is unable to attend, the alternate student is Dominic Morrow, a junior at Venice High School, a district news release notes.

Each school district in Florida selects its top 11th-grade scholar, a person who demonstrates “tremendous academic ability and [expresses] a desire to attend a Florida university,” the release adds. The Sunshine State Scholars program recognizes students’ achievements in STEM courses (science,

technology, engineering and mathematics), a weighted grade point average of 3.9 or higher and a minimum of 25 hours of approved community service.

The focus of the program is to retain intellectual talent in Florida, the release notes.

Each of the scholars, along with his or her parents and a teacher who has served as a significant influence for the student, will travel to Orlando for the two-day program at the Doubletree Hotel at Universal Orlando.

The scholars will have the opportunity to meet with representatives of Florida’s colleges and universities to discuss career and postsecondary opportunities available to them in the state, the release adds.

**Press Releases & News Tips**

**[News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com](mailto:News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com)**

## HOLIDAY ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW TO BE HELD IN ENGLEWOOD

Items such as holiday-themed arts and crafts from local artisans will take center stage at Sarasota County Parks and Recreation's Holiday Arts and Crafts Show, Saturday, Dec. 1, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Englewood Sports Complex, 1300 S. River Road, Englewood.

Parking and admission to the show are free.

The event will feature more than 50 vendors offering a variety of handcrafted jewelry, quilts, paintings, handbags and more, a county news release says.

"Children ages 5-9 will enjoy making a variety of hands-on craft projects to take home

from Santa's Kid's Craft Workshop," the release adds. The workshop will be open from 10 a.m. to noon. The cost is \$2 for each child; advanced registration is suggested.

"Santa will be available for photos so parents can capture that special holiday moment with their own camera," the release adds.

For more information or to register your child for the Santa Kid's Craft Workshop, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 or visit [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).

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## SARASOTA HOLIDAY PARADE DETAILS PROVIDED

The Sarasota Holiday Parade will be held on Saturday, Dec. 1, starting at 7 p.m., the city has announced.

The parade route will start at Main Street and U.S. 301 and head west on Main Street to Bayfront Drive.

The event and staging for it will result in street closures, the Sarasota Police Department has announced. Vehicles that remain parked in the posted prohibited areas will be towed, a news release says.

The staging area will shut down at noon. It is anticipated this area will remain closed until approximately 9 p.m., the release says.

The staging area includes Main Street from U.S. 301 to School Avenue; School Avenue from Main Street to Fruitville Road; Audubon Place at Fruitville Road; Fletcher Avenue at Fruitville Road; Wallace Avenue at Fruitville

Road; and East Avenue from Fruitville Road to Ringling Boulevard.

U.S. 301 (North Washington Boulevard) will close at 5 p.m. from Fruitville Road to Ringling Blvd. It is anticipated that U.S. 301 will remain closed until approximately 9 p.m. as well, the release says.

The parade route will be closed to vehicle traffic at 5 p.m.; it is expected to reopen by 10 p.m.

The parade route includes Gulfstream Avenue from U.S. 41 south to McAnsh Square and McAnsh Square from Gulfstream Avenue to Pineapple Avenue.

The 1600 block of Main Street will not close until 5:30 p.m. to accommodate traffic from a previously planned event — "Singing Christmas Tree," the release adds.

## ATWELL ANNOUNCES FOR RE-ELECTION TO CITY COMMISSION

Sarasota Mayor Suzanne Atwell kicked off her re-election campaign Tuesday, Nov. 27, with a reception at a local restaurant.

This will be her third bid for an at-large commission seat. She ran and lost in 2005, then ran and won in 2009.

“I can’t imagine not running,” she told the crowd of supporters. “Four years is not enough. I want four more years.”

She suggested this is a good time “to start the revitalization of City Hall,” because a number of senior staff positions in city government will turn over in a short time.

New City Manager Tom Barwin has been in place about 90 days, and a new police chief — Bernadette DiPino — starts work Jan. 1. Also coming are a new finance director, human resources director and public works director.

“The community is tired of fractured leadership. We need consistency and I’m willing to look at that,” she said.

Atwell is the only incumbent in the race. She joins Linda Holland, Richard Dorfman, Kevin Lumpkin, Pete Thiesen and Susan Chapman in the competition for two at-large seats on the Sarasota City Commission.

*Stan Zimmerman*



*Sarasota Mayor Suzanne Atwell cuts the ribbon at the opening of the Season of Sculpture in November 2011. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## WORLD AIDS DAY SERVICE SET FOR DEC. 1

GAIN (Gulfcoast Affirming Interfaith Network) will hold its annual World AIDS Day service on Saturday, Dec. 1, at 6 p.m. at the [Unitarian Universalist Church](#), 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota.

Among the participants will be the Rev. Roger Fritts, Rabbi Harold Caminker, the Rev. Phil Garrison and Deacon Bonnie Moore.

AIDS quilts will be on display, and the Voices of Diversity will present musical selections, a news release says.

“GAIN is composed of diverse communities affirming the dignity of all persons,” the release adds.

For more information, call 377-1003.

## ASSISTANCE SOUGHT IN IDENTIFYING SUSPECT

The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office is asking the public for assistance in identifying an armed suspect who robbed a cashier at Beall’s Outlet, 4084 Cattlemen Road, on Friday night, Nov. 23.

Witnesses say a man walked into the store at 7:05 p.m., pointed a knife at salespeople and demanded cash from the register, according to the Sheriff’s Office. He fled the store and left on a black bicycle, a news release says.

The suspect is a blond white male, 5 feet 8 inches tall and about 230 pounds, the release adds.

Along with store security camera photos, surveillance video can be viewed on the Sheriff’s Office YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/SarasotaSheriff](http://www.youtube.com/SarasotaSheriff).

Anyone with information is encouraged to call Criminal Investigations at 861-4900, leave an anonymous tip with Crime Stoppers by calling 366-TIPS (8477), go online at [www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com](http://www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com) or send a text message by texting TIP109 with a message to CRIMES (274637).



*Surveillance images show the Beall’s Outlet robbery suspect from two angles.*

## SARASOTA REPUBLICAN CLUB TO MEET DEC. 5

The [Sarasota Republican Club](#) will host its annual Christmas dinner on Wednesday, Dec. 5, at the Sarasota Yacht Club, 1100 John Ringling Blvd.

Among the evening's highlights will be remarks by Joe Gruters, chairman of the Republican Party of Sarasota County; violin and guitar entertainment by the Anton Cutajar Duo; and holiday songs by the State College of Florida Choir, a news release says. A raffle

will benefit Wounded Warriors and disadvantaged children.

Members are asked to bring unwrapped toys.

The social hour will begin at 6 p.m.; the event will start at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$30 for members and \$35 for guests and non-members.

For additional information and reservations, click on "Upcoming Events" at [www.SarasotaRepublicanClub.com](http://www.SarasotaRepublicanClub.com) or contact Donna Arenschiold at 312-5279.

## SELBY GARDENS TO LIGHT BROMELIAD TREE ON DEC. 4

The annual lighting of Selby Gardens' signature bromeliad tree on Dec. 4 will kick off the season for holiday celebrations in the Gardens.

"This magnificent tree, more than 20 feet high, is composed of hundreds of colorful bromeliads with a new display each year," a news release says. The Bromeliad Tree first appeared in 1997; it "has been a holiday favorite of Selby Gardens visitors for 15 years," the release adds.

The event will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 4. The Gardens is located at 811 S. Palm Ave.

The tree will be in front of the Christy Payne Mansion.

The bromeliads are available for sale to the public after the holidays.

Among the Gardens' festivities in December will be the family-friendly Lights in Bloom as well as the ASID Designer Showhouse in the Christy Payne Mansion.

The Bromeliad Tree lighting ceremony is a prelude to Lights in Bloom, when the Gardens will be adorned with life-sized, garden-themed illuminations, the release notes. The festive winter wonderland will run from Dec. 15-23 and Dec. 26-27, 6 to 9 p.m.



*Selby Gardens' bromeliad tree shines brightly during the 2011 holiday season. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## GULF GATE ELEMENTARY PTA TO HOLD FLEA MARKET ON WHEELS

The Gulf Gate Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association will hold a Flea Market on Wheels from 8 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Dec. 8.

Community members may load their vehicles with items to sell, rent space for \$10 and keep the proceeds they make, a school district news release says. The rent money will go directly to the school's PTA, which will use it for scholarships for students to participate in field trips, grants for teachers and playground

equipment, among other purposes, the news release adds.

"We encourage everyone to bring their items to sell or come buy some! Either way it helps our school," said Principal Robin Magac in the release.

Anyone wishing to rent a space must pay by cash or check by Monday, Dec. 3. More information is available by calling Patti Harrell at 544-8111 after 5 p.m.

## SCHOOL BOARD ELECTS NEW CHAIRWOMAN AND VICE CHAIRWOMAN

The School Board of Sarasota County has elected Jane Goodwin as chairwoman and Shirley Brown as vice chairwoman for the next 12 months.

Chairmanship of the board rotates each November among the five members, a district news release points out.

The decisions were made at the School Board's annual reorganization meeting on Nov. 20, held before the regular, semi-monthly meeting.

During the meeting, School Board members Caroline Zucker and Frank Kovach, who were re-elected without opposition in June, were sworn in for new four-year terms by Judge Lee Haworth of the 12th Judicial Circuit Court.

Goodwin was elected to the School Board in August 2010; she took her seat in November of that year.

Brown was elected to the School Board in November 2006. She served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1992 to 2000, representing District 69 as a Democrat.



*Members of the Sarasota County School Board (shown clockwise from left) are Carol Todd, Chairwoman Jane Goodwin, Frank Kovach, Vice Chairwoman Shirley Brown and Caroline Zucker. Contributed photo*

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AWARDS \$238,000 IN GRANTS

During its Nov. 16 meeting, the Board of Directors of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County awarded \$238,000 in grants to numerous area nonprofits. These funds, which are for programmatic and operating use, were granted from the Kathleen K. Catlin Fund of the Foundation.

“Kathleen Catlin was an extraordinary donor from Venice who cared deeply about South County,” says Foundation President and CEO Roxie Jerde in a news release. “These grants continue her legacy of caring about those who are most in need by supporting the nonprofits serving and strengthening our community. And the holiday needs grants — which provide funds for food and/or small gifts for families in need — are particularly heartwarming at this time of year.”

Grant recipients were as follows:

- Habitat for Humanity South County (Venice): \$10,000 toward building one duplex villa for two low-income families in Englewood.
- iTN Sarasota: \$5,000 to offset costs to provide seniors a low-cost and safe alternative to traditional public transportation.
- New College Foundation (Sarasota): \$10,000 for the installation of professional grade lighting and digital recording equipment in the Mildred Sainer Pavilion.
- Pines of Sarasota Foundation: \$15,000 to complete the north entrance at the Pines’ campus to allow fire and emergency vehicles alternate access.
- Sarasota Military Academy: \$10,000 to help furnish one complete academic classroom in the new building.

- Take Stock in Children of Sarasota County: \$10,000 to support the “Come Alive for 75” program — scholarships through the Florida Prepaid Program.
- Venice Area Beautification: \$5,000 to purchase and install hanging flower baskets on downtown Venice streets.

The following are “holiday needs” grants, with funds to be used for food and/or small gifts for families in need: All Faiths Food Bank (Sarasota): \$30,000; Community Mobile Meals (Sarasota): \$7,500; Laurel Civic Association: \$5,000; Mayor’s Feed the Hungry Campaign (Sarasota): \$3,000; Resurrection House (Sarasota): \$5,000; Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center (Sarasota): \$5,000; St. Jude Hispanic-American Catholic Church (Sarasota): \$5,000; Senior Friendship Centers, Sarasota (for Sarasota and Venice clients): \$10,000; South Biscayne Baptist Church (North Port): \$5,000; South County Food Pantry (Venice): \$40,000; YMCA Children, Youth & Family Services (Sarasota): \$7,500.

For the Season of Sharing Fund, which helps individuals and families on the verge of homelessness, \$50,000 was awarded to those in need in Sarasota County.

The Kathleen K. Catlin fund is administered by an advisory committee of Community Foundation of Sarasota County. An open, competitive grant cycle was available to organizations meeting qualifications and guidelines of the fund, the release adds.

For more information about the Community Foundation, call 955-3000 or visit [www.CFSarasota.org](http://www.CFSarasota.org).

## CITY OF SARASOTA FINANCE DEPARTMENT HONORED

The City of Sarasota Finance Department recently was honored by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada with two prestigious awards: the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, a city news release says.

“These achievements are impressive and underscore the high caliber staff we have in the Finance Department,” said City Manager Tom Barwin in the release. “The city continues to face challenging financial times and a prestigious peer recognition like this reaffirms that we have a first rate staff overseeing the city’s finances,” he added.

The Distinguished Budget Presentation Award was given for the city’s 2011–2012 fiscal year. The budget met or exceeded guidelines in four categories: policy document, financial plan, operations guide and communications device, the release notes.

As the budget manager, Michelle Valentich was presented with the award. This is the 22nd consecutive year the city has received this honor, the news release points out.

The Certificate of Achievement

for Excellence in Financial Reporting was presented to Finance Director Chris Lyons for the 2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. It is the highest form of recognition within governmental accounting and financial reporting, the release adds. “Receiving this award represents a significant accomplishment by a governmental body and its management,” the release notes.

This is the 31st year in a row the City of Sarasota has been honored with the award.

“Many staff members were instrumental in receiving these awards,” said Lyons in the news release. “I would like to thank several employees for their contributions throughout the year: Kelly Strickland, deputy finance director; David Flatt, accounting and payroll systems manager; Dolores Gamble, accounting and payroll systems supervisor; Michelle Valentich, budget manager; and Susan Dodd, assistant to the finance director. Their dedication

and commitment make professional honors like these possible.”

The City Commission recognized the Finance Department for these achievements during its last regular meeting in November. 



*Mayor Suzanne Atwell (left) recognizes members of the city’s Finance Department for winning prestigious honors. Photo courtesy City of Sarasota*

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WE CARE PASSIONATELY ABOUT HELPING WOMEN, MEN, AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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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.

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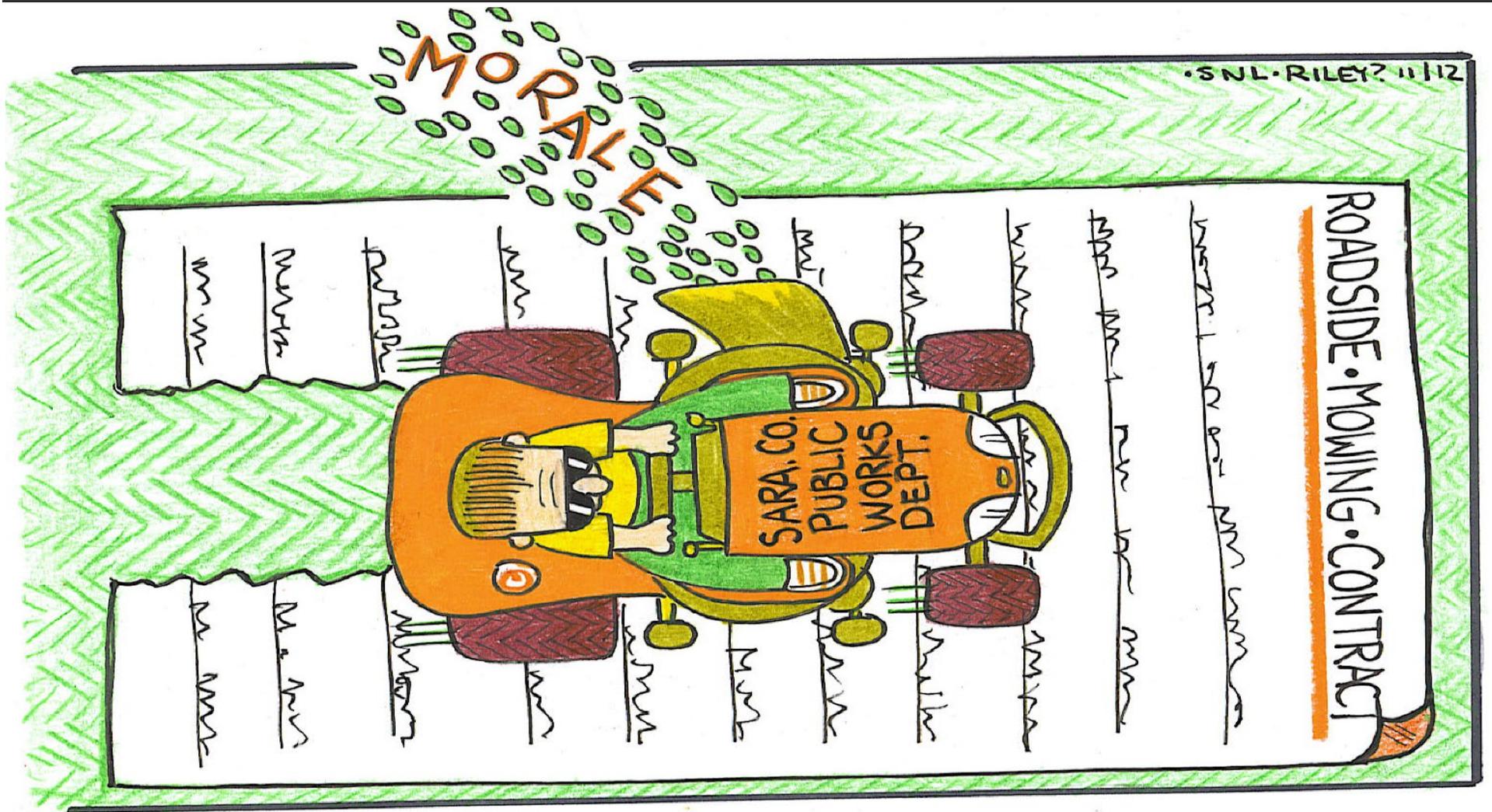
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# OPINION



## FOR HOMELESS, SARASOTA IS A 'TOWN WITHOUT PITY'

**EDITORIAL** A press conference held by the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union earlier this week is only the latest episode in a tragic tale of institutionalized disdain for the homeless in Sarasota.

Emails obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, which were revealed by Michael Barfield, legal chairman for the local chapter, contained homeless-taunting exchanges between officers in the Sarasota Police Department. “Bum hunters” were how these officers referred to one another.

These revelations come on the heels of the forced resignation of Richard Martin as executive director of the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness, ostensibly because of threats of a reduction in funding to the orga-

nization by local foundations whose contributors objected to his efforts.

Shortly after Martin’s ouster, a homeless person in Gillespie Park was arrested by an SPD officer for “theft of utilities.” The crime? Charging his cell phone in a public outlet in the park gazebo.

The city’s hostility toward the homeless is not a recent development. In 2006, the city was “recognized” as the meanest city in the nation toward the homeless by the National Coalition for the Homeless. At the time, it was a crime for anyone — including young children desiring to “camp out” in their backyards — to sleep outdoors without a permit.

The latest crackdown gathered momentum a few months back after the mayor stated in an open meeting of the City Commission that she was fearful to walk about downtown be-

# OPINION

cause of the many homeless gathered there. The message was clear: Homeless equals dangerous.

In fact, the homeless typically are the neediest subset of the poor, unable even to keep roofs over their heads. And they are not a recent development.

In prehistoric times, the Darwinian “survival of the fittest” meant that those unable to care for themselves perished. But with the rise of civilization, the means — if not the will — to care for the poor was at hand. Even Jesus rebuked the hard-hearted of His day: “[J]ust as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”

The ACLU has been fighting the city’s systematic persecution of the homeless in both the state courts and the court of public opinion, with reasonable — if, unfortunately, somewhat Sisyphean — success.

A judge dismissed the case against the “utilities thief.” And another judge recently ruled the city’s trespassing prohibition — which really was an anti-homeless ordinance — was unconstitutional.

Probably the most dedicated opponents to the homeless presence in downtown are those wealthy people who purchased condominiums in the city’s center, some costing upward of \$500 per square foot.

In their cloistered towers, these exclusionary individuals want no loud music, no noisy ve-

hicles and definitely no poor people milling about. In a perfect world, downtown Sarasota would be their private park ... and they apparently have spared no effort to make it so.

A nation or state or city is defined not by how luxuriously it accommodates its wealthiest citizens, but by how humanely it treats “the least of these.” Everyone in Sarasota, regardless of station, is equal in God’s eyes and deserving of dignity and respect.

The homeless require assistance to overcome previously insurmountable obstacles in their lives. The city, the county and the citizens who are prospering share in the responsibility to provide it.

*The ACLU has been fighting the city’s systematic persecution of the homeless in both the state courts and the court of public opinion, with reasonable — if, unfortunately, somewhat Sisyphean — success.*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

# OPINION



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

If you have a large dog that shows signs of any type of aggression, *never* let it out of your *immediate* control. Put a muzzle on it when it is outside the house.

If you have a small dog, keep your dog close and be aware that it only takes a few seconds for tragedy to occur.

Sandy and Todd Frauhiger drove into their garage in Osprey about 5:30 p.m. on Nov. 24.

Sandy opened the car door and got out. Casey, their Cairn terrier, followed her. As Sandy bent to pick up Casey to take her into the house, a large dog raced into the garage out of nowhere, with no sound and no eye contact, and attacked Casey in Sandy's arms.

The dog took Casey's whole head into its mouth. Sandy was screaming; Casey was squealing. Sandy could not pull the dog's jaws off Casey.

Todd jumped from the car, grabbed the attacking dog's collar and twisted it until the dog could not breathe. The dog released Casey.

All of this happened within seconds.

Sandy and Todd took Casey to the Sarasota Veterinary Emergency Center on U.S. 41. The wounds were deep and messy, because the attacking dog had shaken Casey. All the wounds required stitches.

She was put on an IV with wide-spectrum antibiotics and other life-saving medications. A herculean effort was made by the doctors and technicians to save Casey.

Casey later succumbed to massive infection and heart failure.

The attacking dog belonged to nearby neighbors. The dog was fine around people, but it had a history of aggression toward smaller dogs. It and other dogs the people own had escaped from the lanai and were roaming the neighborhood. They just happened to be there when Sandy and Todd pulled into their garage.

The owners of the dog feel terrible. Animal Control has been notified.

*Lucena Winberg  
Sarasota*

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# Sarasota Leisure

Featuring



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SARASOTA'S MASTER CALENDAR



**ARTISTS SHOWING OFF**

**ASK OTUS**

**LIGHTING UP THE VILLAGE**

*Inside*



## ARTISTS SHOWING OFF

Many of those in the audience, such as (from left) Mariel Purdon, Shannon Fortner of MeteorEYES and Ha Pham, are frequent patrons of live music and art shows in Sarasota. Photos by Arielle Scherr

## ART CENTER SARASOTA AND THE CLOSET TEAM UP FOR THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF *Chrch!!!* WITH LOCAL MUSIC AND ART

By Tyler Whitson  
*Contributing Writer*

Art Center Sarasota and the Closet's recent and final collaborative *Chrch!!!* show on Sunday, Nov. 18, showcased a nexus of different artistic pathways, aesthetics and scenes to patrons craving an evening of original artistic expression.

The diverse array of visual pieces, live music, performance art, underground and popular art, politically charged pieces, abstract sculptures and more were brought together at the Art Center to demonstrate a single idea: Florida has an art scene that stands on its own.

Chief Exhibitions Coordinator Emma Thurgood put together the visual art portion of the

night's show. Between musical performances, she explained to *The Sarasota News Leader* that this was precisely her goal, not just for the particular event, but for the gallery's entire season, which, she said, is "focusing on the importance of Florida artists and how we have some really wonderful artists right here at home in Florida."

In addition to limiting its attention to Florida artists, Thurgood explained that the Art Center's current season places a strong emphasis on Sarasota in particular. The simultaneous showing of the two main exhibitions, *The Curated Unknowns: An Exhibition of Emerging Artists* and *Artists Who Made Sarasota*

*Famous — Part II: A Curated Exhibition of Sarasota Artists from 1962 to the Present*, unites two aspects of Sarasota culture that are not often seen together.

*The Curated Unknowns* reflects the underground: college students, recent graduates and up-and-comers, many living on shoestring budgets, congregating, collaborating and encouraging each other in their respective pursuits. On the other side are the artists who have broken through in the past and whose works are known throughout the nation or the world as representing Sarasota.

Asked if she thinks some of the artists in the “unknown” category will some day cross over into the “famous” category, Thurgood responded enthusiastically, “I know that some of those artists are already on that journey and it will happen for them.”

Along with art pieces that represent the area, the Art Center’s collaborations with Mike Murphy of the Closet — an organization that works to bring live music to the community and often acts as a liaison between local venues and musicians — have presented Sarasota bands to audiences craving original compositions and energetic performances. The final installment of *Chrch!!!* featured a number of popular Sarasota acts, with its lineup consisting of, from start to finish, the Other Ryan Willis, the Send-Offs, Cassolette and MeteorEYES.

Enhancing the ambiance of the venue, with its colored, motorized lights, lasers and mirrors, were the live projections accompanying the musical performances. Ringling College of Art and Design students Irene Garibay, Nelson Ledezma and Jose Carlos Zavarse Pinto huddled throughout the evening around a homemade



*MeteorEYES concludes the evening with a performance featuring epic instrumentation, soulful vocals and swirling electronic embellishments.*

projector that they affectionately referred to as “Frankie” and a repurposed overhead projector, manipulating a number of found or homemade objects and raw materials, including strands of hair, glass lamp shades, colored Saran Wrap sheets, perfume bottles, magnifying glasses, stencils, dry erase markers and more. The result was a constantly metamorphosing splash of lights and shadows in the shapes of globules and polygons in colors that traversed the spectrum — a unique sight that could not have been produced any other way.

Garibay and her collaborators have been seen contributing this unique light show to musical performances around Sarasota over the past few months, a project they plan to continue. “It just became an addiction,” Garibay said, explaining the genesis of the idea to the *News Leader*. “I’m always looking for something to project.”

In addition to the projection team and the musical acts, one of the artists whose work is on display in the *Curated Unknowns* exhibition was present at the event. Between sets, S. Paul Matkowsky spoke with the *News Leader* briefly about what it is like to be an artist working to attain increased recognition in Sarasota and the role of the Art Center in that process.

“If you want to get exposed and you’re just emerging and you want to get involved with art, you have to go to the Art Center. It’s the first step,” he said.

Matkowsky went on to express his appreciation for what the Art Center contributes to the Sarasota art scene. “It seems like there is a need for something authentic of an artistic nature in Sarasota in general, and it seems like



*S. Paul Matkowsky stands with War Paint, one of his two pieces included in the Curated Unknowns exhibition, part of a body of work he described to The Sarasota News Leader as “based on organic impulse and the parallel of nature and the human impulse.”*



*Untitled, by Dirce Kennedy, was part of the It's Political! all-media juried exhibition organized for the past election season and on display in the gallery where the musical acts were playing. This exhibition also exclusively featured Florida artists.*

the Art Center is stepping up,” he said. “I’ve been here for a few years and as time passes, I see the Art Center progressively getting more edgy, more progressive in many respects. They’re making a lot of progress.”

Though that night’s show concluded the *Chrch!!!* series, local musicians and fans need not worry that it means the end of live music at the Art Center.

“It was an experiment to do the Sunday series and, unfortunately, looking at the calendar, we’re not able to continue doing them every Sunday,” Thurgood said. “We’ve decided that, from now on, it will just be individual events that will be happening,” she continued.

Thurgood emphasized Murphy’s role in curating the live music for events such as *Chrch!!!* and added that those who have enjoyed the series can look forward to more of these col-

laborations. “We’re really excited to showcase local bands,” she said, explaining that the inspiration for that night’s show and those coming up is to give Sarasota residents plenty of opportunities to “get local and get familiar with [their] hometown culture.”

The next collaboration between the Art Center and the Closet, with an as-of-yet unannounced musical lineup, will take place on Saturday, Jan. 19, 2013.

Those who cannot wait until next year to see live music at the Art Center can attend the gallery’s next scheduled concert, *Last Chance, First Dance*, featuring Another Roadside Attraction, on Friday, Dec. 7, at 7 p.m.

*The Curated Unknowns* and *Artists Who Made Sarasota Famous — Part II* exhibitions will run until Dec. 7. 



(From left) Jose Carlos Zavarse Pinto, Nelson Ledezma and Irene Garibay create kaleidoscopic projections using colored liquids, plant watering bulbs and other materials to augment the night’s energetic set by the Send-Offs.



**I like to take my time.**

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## ASK OTUS

### **THE LOVELY GREAT EGRETS HAVE QUITE THE ROBUST APPETITE, AS THE GREAT NATURALIST AUDUBON LEARNED**

Dear Otus:

You were so helpful and informative in your response to my questions about our Red-Shouldered Hawks, I am hoping you can enlighten me about some of our neighborhood's resident birds.

We have at least one Great White Egret (or is it a White Heron?) that shows up regularly in our neighborhood during the fall and winter. I

noticed him (her?) the other morning when I was leaving for a meeting. I thought of trying to stop and get a photo, but I also was afraid of disturbing it, because it seemed so intent on something in the ditch of my neighbor across the street.

From time to time, I also notice this egret or one of its relatives eyeballing something in our oak tree. The egrets do not seem nervous about our proximity as long as we do not try to get too close to them. In fact, I am enthralled by their level of concentration.

First, are they known for their single-mindedness? Second, can you tell me exactly what they do eat, as I am uncertain what catches their attention in our oak. I look forward very much to your help.

*Alexis*



*These Great Egrets are heading to an oak to roost. File photo*

Dear Alexis:

Thank you for your interest in the wonderful birds inhabiting your neighborhood and for your inquiry into *Ardea Alba* the Great Egret, also known as Great White Egret, Common Egret, Large Egret or (mistakenly) the Great White Heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*).

Your questions about its intense concentration while hunting and its adaptability to human environs brought to mind a wonderful account by [John James Audubon](#) of his experiences with its cousin, the Great White Heron. Forgive this apparent digression, but the two species share the same characteristics: They do not display sexual dimorphism; Great Egrets hunt in classic Heron fashion, standing immobile or wading through wetlands to capture prey with deadly jabs of their yellow bills; and they both have fascinated early naturalists and ornithologists because of their all-over pristine white feathers.

What you read here about the characteristics of the Great White Heron, which exists only on the Keys and in southernmost Florida, also applies to *Ardea Alba*.

Audubon had a very dear friend, the Rev. John Bachman, whom he met in 1831. Bachman then was already a respected naturalist and scientist. He would found Newberry College and he and Audubon would go on to collaborate on the three-volume *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*, which is the superb mammal complement to *Birds of America*. The friendship between the families was even closer after Audubon's two sons married the two charming Bachman daughters.

On April 24, 1832, Audubon and his expedition companions landed on Indian Key in the upper Florida Keys. Indian Key is again an un-

inhabited island so it is hard to believe that it was once the temporary county seat of Dade County after its separation in 1836 from Monroe County. It was on Indian Key that Audubon first encountered the Great White Heron.

In 1821, while in New Orleans, Audubon had completed his fabulous drawing of the exquisite Great Egret in breeding plumage, and finally he came across its rare cousin — a larger, stockier bird, lacking aigrettes but bestowed with pristine white feathers and a gorgeous head plume during breeding season. Even Audubon could not distinguish between male and female. But it is not important that he or you could not tell them apart, only that the birds do!

Audubon proved to the world that these birds bore white feathers throughout — something other naturalists had long disputed. He also commented, just as you did, that some were easily approached and others flew off before he was even within a thousand meters of them. And guess what he did with the ones that were easily approachable? He captured a pair and took them all the way to Charleston, S.C., and presented them as a gift to his host, Dr. Bachman. What better present from a houseguest?

It speaks well of Dr. Bachman that he was simply enchanted by these exotic gifts. He already had quite an interesting menagerie of species, alive and not alive, meandering about his property and strewn about his home. Lacking the Key's mangroves, the Heron pair "betook themselves to roosting in a beautiful arbour in his garden; where at night they looked with their pure white plumage like beings of another world."

Well, they were of another world ... a very hungry avian world.

Despite the Bachmans' generous bucketful — or gallon — of mullet a day, the herons were observed “like pointer dogs” perched over garden flowers in the early morning hours, striking with a “well-directed stroke of their bill” at fluttering moths and butterflies and swallowing them in great numbers. They also went after the Bachmans' chickens and speared and ate them. Soon, the grounds being devoid of tasty poultry, these herons proceeded to hunt the pheasants, geese “and ducks on the property, which they would tear up and devour.”

Audubon also describes how the Bachmans' cat, “which was asleep in the sunshine, on the wooden steps of the veranda, was pinned through its body to the floor boards and killed and devoured by one of them.”

This slaughter continued for several months until the pickings on the Bachman property were pretty slim for this exotic pair of gourmands with their highly developed umami. It

was then that Audubon noted, “At last they began to pursue the younger children of my worthy friend, who therefore ordered them to be killed.”

Truthfully, as scholars are often themselves “beings of another world,” I believe the practical Mrs. Bachman, not the Rev. Bachman, personally saw to their disposal. One was carefully preserved, stuffed and sent to the Museum of Charleston. As for its mate: I assume that Mrs. Bachman made a superb meal out of it. As Audubon commented, they are good eating if not too old.

So, Alexis, I think that pretty much answers your question as to what they eat and why their attention is riveted on your oak tree: Either your neighbor's cat is stuck up there again or children are playing in their treehouse.

*Otus*

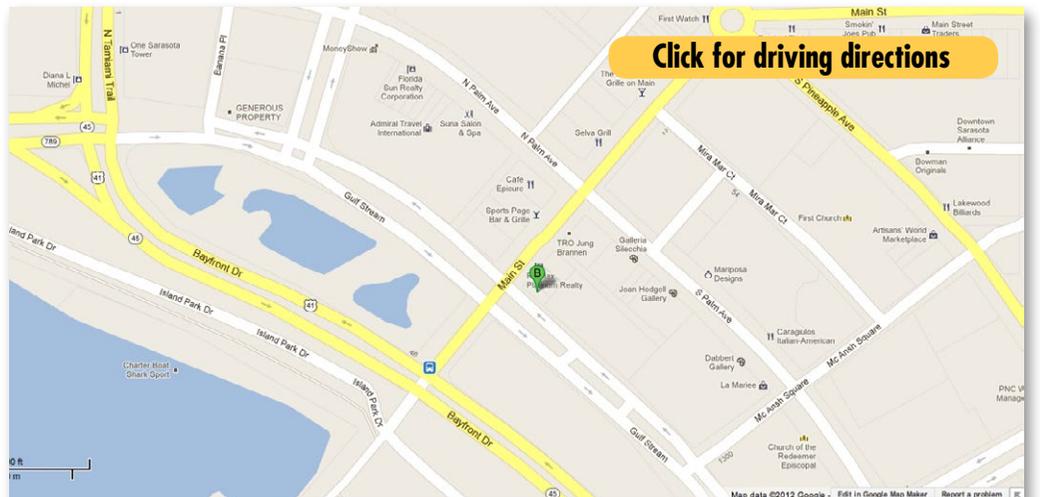


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# LIGHTING UP THE VILLAGE



*A new stove for Christmas has this 'chef' smiling.*

## **CROWD WELCOMES THE HOLIDAY SEASON TO SIESTA KEY**

### *Staff Reports*

The weather was a bit nippier than usual for Siesta Key, but it did not deter the spectators who lined Beach Road and Ocean Boulevard on Nov. 24 to see the parade that kicked off the Light Up the Village event.

“The parade was awesome,” Cheryl Gaddie, who helped coordinate the event, told *The Sarasota News Leader*. “I have not had a person who has not said it was the best parade we ever had.”

Numbering 26 entries altogether, the floats and marching units represented an array of businesses and organizations.

This year, the Jolly Old Elf himself arrived by boat instead of sleigh, before he took his appointed place in Siesta Center to hear the Christmas wishes of the children.

As expected, Siesta Key Association Director Bob Waechter had his antique fire engine in



fine form. It transported not only SKA members but the island's representative on the Sarasota County Commission, Nora Patterson.

"The weather was a little colder than we would have liked to see it," Gaddie said.

However, the crowd was so thick, she added, that deputies did not need to block off traffic along Canal Road leading to Ocean Boulevard; the throng of people made that unnecessary.

Light Up the Village is the biggest annual event on the island sponsored by the Siesta Key Village Association.

*Editor's note: The News Leader thanks SKA Director Peter van Roekens for his gallery of photos from the parade.* 

*Children of all ages watch for the next float.*



*A pirate and his ship, festooned with holiday trappings, celebrate the recent Siesta Key Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Competition.*



*Jonny's Free Beach Rides sports a holiday wreath.*



*Siesta Key Association Director Bob Waechter has his antique fire engine in fine running order for the parade.*



*Siesta Key Association President Catherine Luckner (left) prepares to take her own photos of the parade from atop the fire engine. Sarasota County Commissioner Nora Patterson (in red) is among the SKA entry's passengers.*



*What would a parade be without pretty girls waving to the crowd?*



*The Beach Bazaar float is merry and bright.*



*A Laughter Unlimited clown is attired in a suit befitting a holiday parade.*



*This giant Christmas present is delivered on a surfboard.*



*Who needs a sleigh? Santa Claus waves to the crowd from a boat supplied by Siesta Key Marina.*



*People line Beach Road, too, to watch the festivities.*



*Girl Scouts march down Ocean Boulevard.*



*RE/MAX Alliance Group and Economy Tackle join forces for this float.*



# CAPTIVATING CATS

*One of the Big Cat Habitat's residents performs in a show on the grounds. Photo courtesy Richard Czina*

## **THANKS TO A SARASOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE CLASS, STUDENTS GET TO PRESERVE EXTRA SPECIAL MEMORIES AT BIG CAT HABITAT**

**By Harriet Cuthbert**

*Contributing Writer*

I recently had the great pleasure of participating in an educational opportunity at the [Big Cat Habitat](#) that was offered through the Sarasota County Technical Institute (SCTI).

It was a class listed in SCTI's *Adventure Photography* category as a one-day learning opportunity under the heading, "photography/wildlife."

The Big Cat Habitat is a sanctuary for lions, tigers and even bears, many of whom were rescued as very young animals. Kay Rosaire, who is the founder of this magnificent Garden of Eden, has been caring for these beautiful animals for more than 30 years.

As we drove onto the grounds, we were welcomed by an assistant and told to wander around and enjoy seeing some of the regular farm inhabitants. We observed a cheetah, some llamas, many goats of all ages, a very old and immovable tortoise and a few bright, chatty birds.

Then we were called into the "big top" area for our one-hour photo session. This was conducted by Jason Hahn, a local wildlife photographer, who gave an excellent and informative presentation on capturing the best possible photos of dangerous and/or active animals in the wild.

Afterward, we were psyched and ready for our own personal photo shoot at Kay's Habitat.

We were escorted to a large area that faced the animals' pens on the left and their play area directly in front of us. We were separated from the animals by only one metal fence, and

as we lined up to find our favorite photo op, we awaited our stars.

As with any great performance, the curtain rose and the show began. Kay's son, Clayton, appeared, accompanied by a magnificent orange-and-black striped Bengal tiger named Conan. We were told that Clayton was raised



*A liga is a genetic mix of a tiger and a lion. Photo courtesy Richard Czina*



*Clayton Rosaire may be the animals' trainer, but he seems to have a firm friendship with them.  
Photo courtesy Richard Czina*

with these animals from his birth, and he has absolutely no fear of them. Watching them walk the grounds together, just like best friends, you believe that is true.

To say our group of 16 was speechless is an understatement. It took me awhile to even locate my camera and remember to snap a photo or two. Conan definitely wanted to show off his beauty, and he seemed to enjoy posing for us. Clayton finally told him play time was over, and they quietly walked back to the cages.

After we caught our breath, our eyes practically popped as the next spectacular cats appeared. Two white tigers, appropriately named Vanna and Barry, sauntered into the yard, with Clayton on the sidelines. As the cats frolicked in their pool and played with their large red rubber ball, you could see an expression of almost pure enjoyment on their gorgeous faces. Snacks offered by Clayton helped end their recess and ease their return to the pens.

We were next amazed to see a liger — a lion and tiger hybrid — which seems to be fairly common nowadays. Mia the liger just loved posing and primping and preparing for the appearance of her king — the lion, who absolutely knew he was in total command of his kingdom; you could tell. To say he was spectacular, as he sat so regally and flaunted his perfect mane, is another understatement. And his bond with Clayton is miraculous to see.

As the last animals departed and we began to leave, I think we all agreed that experiencing this wondrous day and feeling our own bond with these beautiful cats will remain with us for a long, long time. 



*This tiger appears a bit shy at the moment.  
Photo by Harriet Cuthbert*



*He may have his tongue out, but he certainly doesn't appear to be making a rude gesture.  
Photo by Harriet Cuthbert*



*Trainer Clayton Rosaire works with a lion.  
Photo by Harriet Cuthbert*



*Among Big Cat Habitat's residents are rare white tigers. Photo by Harriet Cuthbert*



# Siesta Seen

## SIESTA WOMAN SETS UP LOST PET HOTLINE; COUNTY'S COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGER DISCUSSES RESTORE ACT AND TURTLE BEACH



By Rachel Brown Hackney  
*Editor*

A Siesta Key businesswoman has started a lost pet hotline to help owners and their critters reconnect when circumstances have conspired to separate them.

Judi Moore, the financial advisor at Edward Jones in Siesta Village, says this is her way of giving back to the community.

She announced the project during the [Siesta Key Village Association](#) meeting on Nov. 6, pointing out that she has an email address, cell phone number and a Facebook page for people to let her know about missing pets or to report dogs and cats that obviously have found themselves far from their owners and homes.

That very day, Moore told me this week, she received an email letting her know about a young Rottweiler that had been found on the island.

Peter van Roekens, vice president of the [Siesta Key Association](#) and the Terrace East representative at the SKVA meetings, had notified Moore about the animal, he said.

Van Roekens and SKVA President Russell Matthes both applauded Moore for her efforts after her comments at the SKVA meeting.

“Thank you for doing that,” Matthes told her. “That’s awesome.”

Moore used the email addresses she already had accumulated for the program to disseminate the information about that dog.

No one ever stepped forward to claim ownership of the Rottweiler, she added, but “he has been adopted.”

One big key to the success of her program, she says, is gathering enough email addresses to create a broad network for assistance. She encourages pet lovers to email her at judi.moore@earthlink.net to add their names to the list. She asks that they put “pet hotline” in the subject line.

“Getting the network built is extremely important,” Moore pointed out. “It really needs to be known island-wide.”

People also may stop in her office at 5112 Ocean Blvd., in Davidson Plaza in Siesta Vil-

# Siesta Seen

lage, to learn more about the program. “I have information here all about it,” she said.

The cell phone number for reporting lost or found pets is 941-749-5665. The Facebook page is [Siesta Key Lost Pet Hotline](#).

“We’re trying to get the word out,” Moore said: “If there’s [an animal that is] lost, we’ll be looking.”

Moore will make a presentation on the program during the Dec. 6 SKA meeting. Already,

she said, SKA President Catherine Luckner has been working with her.

Anyone who regularly attends SKA meetings knows Luckner and her husband, Bob, are true animal lovers as well. They have helped spread the word themselves in past cases involving missing or found pets.

The SKA will meet at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 6, in Room F at St. Boniface Episcopal Church, 5615 Midnight Pass Road.

## THOSE BP DOLLARS

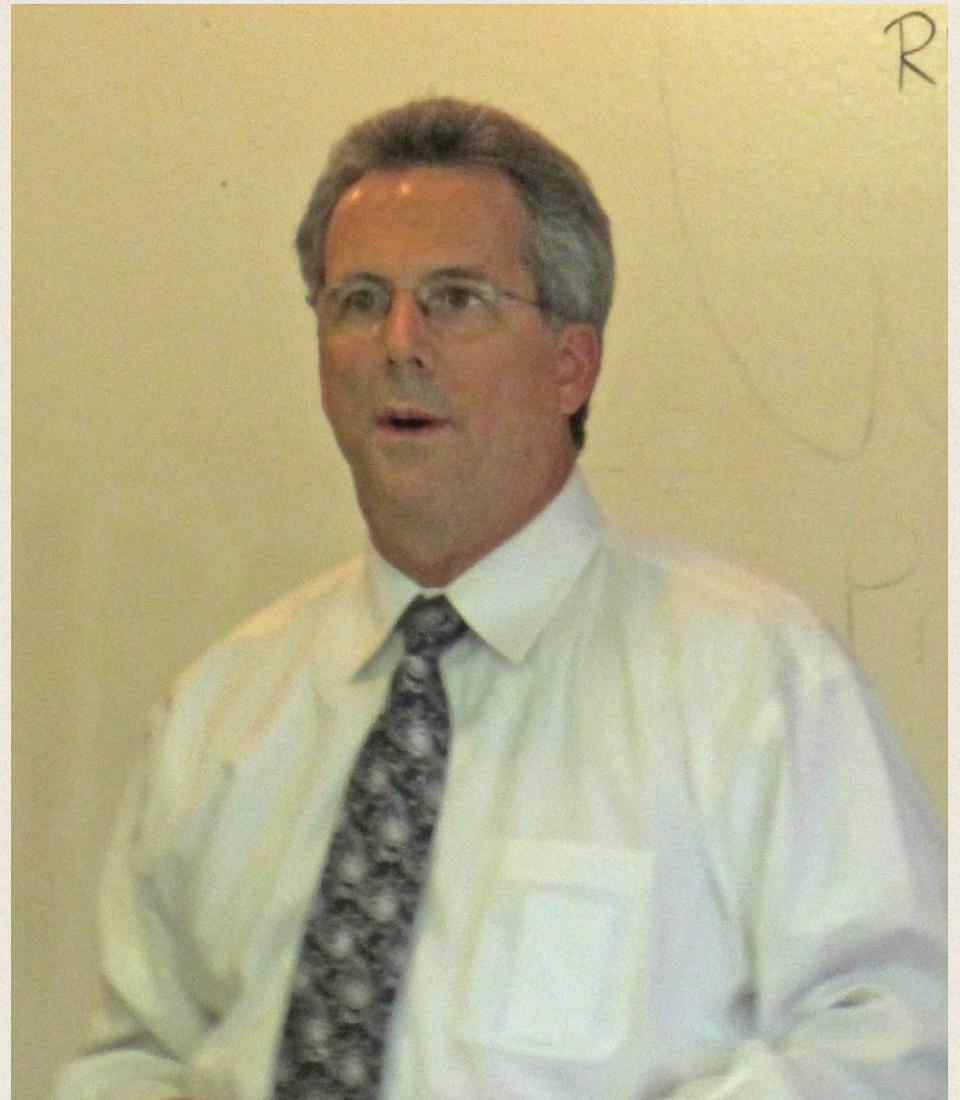
Speaking of the SKA: Laird Wreford, the coastal resources manager for Sarasota County, was the guest speaker at the Nov. 1 meeting of the association.

Wreford’s main topic was the RESTORE Act — how funds from the federal government’s settlement with BP over the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico are going to be funneled to the affected states.

When he made his remarks, Wreford was anticipating a federal settlement ranging between \$5 billion and \$20 billion — “with a ‘b,’” he stressed.

“The truth of the matter,” he said, was that signs indicated the final number would be closer to the higher figure.

That was not how things worked out, however. On Nov. 15, news came that the federal government and BP had settled on a figure of \$4.5 billion.



*Sarasota County Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford explains the RESTORE Act to members of the Siesta Key Association. Photo by Rachel Hackney*

# *Siesta Seen*

County and state officials earlier had said Sarasota County could expect between \$5 million and \$20 million, based on the original estimate of the settlement range, thanks to the way the funds will be divvied up among the 23 affected Florida counties. Therefore, it is reasonable to think our county will be netting less than \$5 million at this point.

Wreford was in fine humor that afternoon during the SKA meeting. In fact, when he talked about attending a recent meeting of

the state consortium that is dealing with the RESTORE Act, he noted that county officials were upset at the news Gov. Rick Scott wanted to insert himself into the process by naming the chairman of the group and appointing members.

“I thought the Civil War was going to break out,” Wreford said. “The county representatives grabbed their clubs and pitchforks and made a stance of counties’ rights.”

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## **TURTLE BEACH EROSION**

After Wreford completed his RESTORE Act presentation, SKA President Luckner gave Director Ron Flynn the opportunity to ask about the situation at Turtle Beach.

Flynn said he was concerned about “some severe scalloping,” adding he was fearful that someone in the adjacent county-operated RV park would start to stroll down the beach one evening and find himself “taking a long tumble” into the Gulf of Mexico.

Probably seven to eight feet of the beach has disappeared, Flynn noted.

Wreford had seen the photos Flynn had sent to County Commissioner Nora Patterson, which clearly showed the problem, he said.

Along with that scalloping, Wreford noted, at the southernmost part of the beach, “that water is about ready once again to crash up against the house.”

Wreford explained that county staff is working already on the design and permitting phase of the first renourishment of the project since sand was added to Turtle Beach in 2007.

“That is a lengthy process,” Wreford added, but “the permitting has become at least more streamlined than it was ... We’ve been hearing from our counterpart agencies that their permitting efforts have, in fact, been less cumbersome than they were before.”

He was referring to working with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

He quickly added that instead of three years, the permitting probably could be finalized in two years.

Staff had told the County Commission the goal was to start renourishing the beach after sea turtle-nesting season ends in the fall of 2014, Wreford added. “We are still shooting for that goal.”

# Siesta Seen

“We have had some procurement problems,” he continued, but staff felt the goal still was a reasonable one.

In the meantime, Wreford said, he also had learned that as long as the county did not use heavy equipment, it probably could send a crew out to Turtle Beach “and knock the escarpment down.”

He was hoping that could be accomplished in the next several days, he added.

Men with shovels and light equipment should be able to complete that job, Wreford continued, because of the “relatively non-compact, relatively soft sand.”

However, when I contacted Flynn this week about whether the work had been done, he sent the following note by email:

“To answer your question, I am not aware of any action by the County to level the drop-off as requested, but they may have. There has been much wave action driven by northwest winds that keep changing the scalloping (drop-off) of the beach sand.”

Wreford had tried contacting Parks and Recreation Manager George Tatge for me, as well, to learn if any work had been done. Tatge had not responded by our *News Leader* deadline this week.



*People walking along Turtle Beach stop to look at the severe scalloping, part of which was linked to Tropical Storm Debby's wave and wind action in June. Photo courtesy Ron Flynn*



*A photo taken on Nov. 29 shows the scalloping issue at Turtle Beach has not been remedied. Photo courtesy Ron Flynn*

# Siesta Seen

## FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Nine-year-old Abby Ivey, daughter of my colleague Trish Ivey and her husband, David Ivey — and granddaughter of longtime *Pelican Press* editor Anne Johnson — decided earlier this month to do something wonderful for someone else.

Having heard about the nonprofit organization [Locks of Love](#), which provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children suffering from long-term hair loss as a result of medical treatments, Abby went to Sassy Hair on Siesta Key to get 10 inches of her long blonde hair cut off.

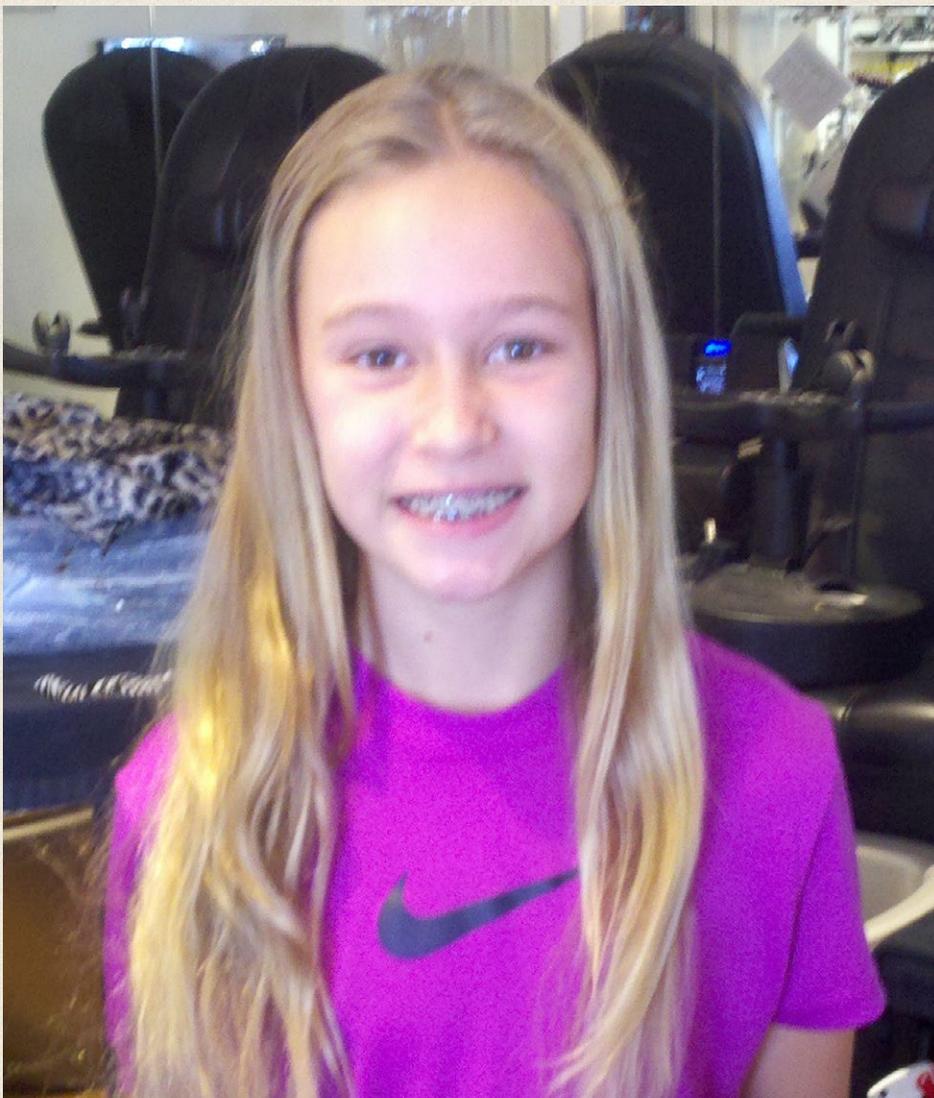
Stylist Julie handled the honors.

Trish said all that remained was for her to send the tresses to Locks of Love.

Abby's gesture should inspire all of us to think about less fortunate people, especially at this time of year.

## SKVA MEETING

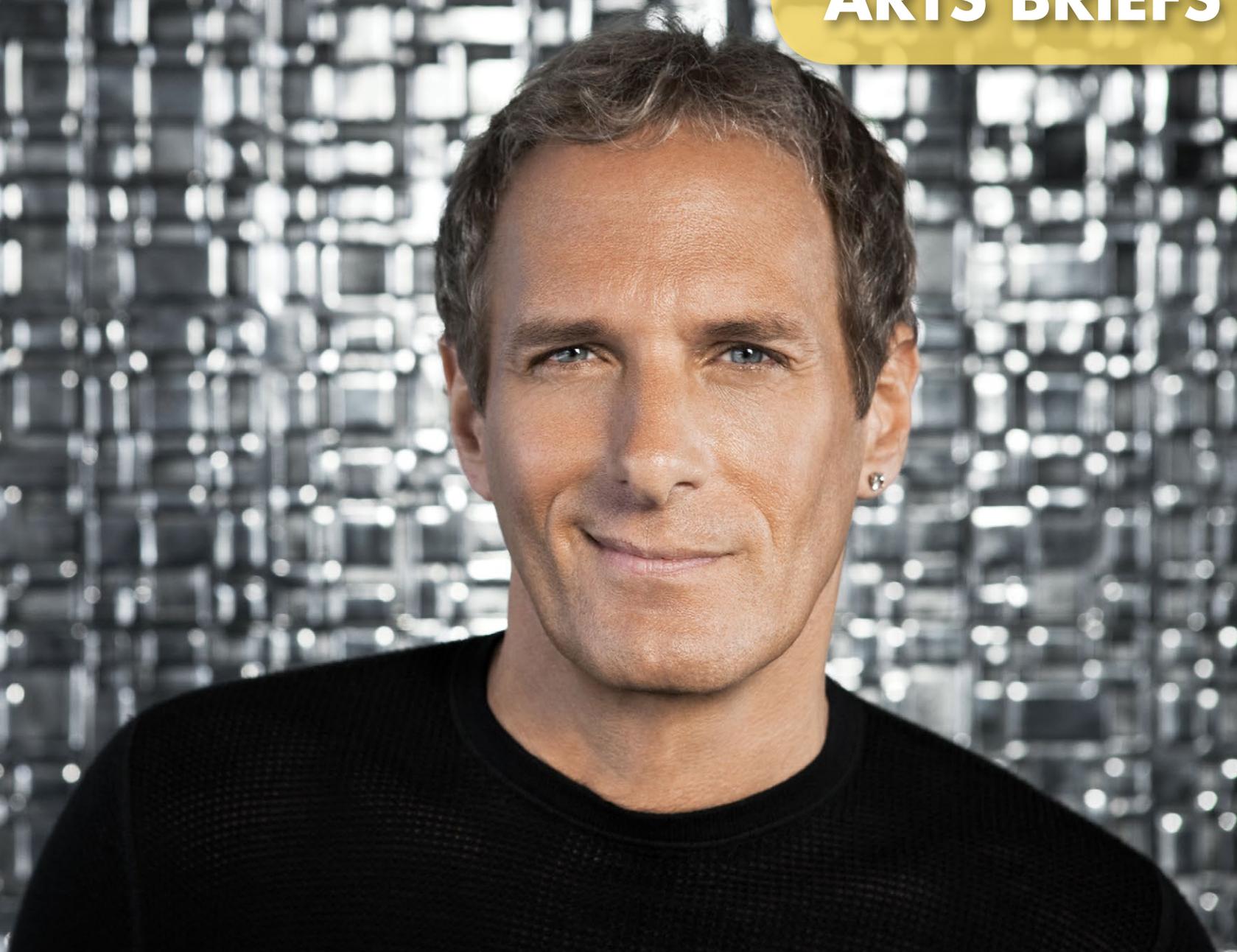
Not only will the SKA meet next week, but the Village Association also will have its regular meeting — at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 4, at the Daiquiri Deck Raw Bar, 5250 Ocean Blvd. 



*Abby Ivey poses with her long locks before getting them cut for charity. Contributed photo*



*Abby Ivey and Julie at Sassy Hair on Siesta Key show off Abby's shorter hairstyle. Contributed photo*



*Grammy Award-winning singer Michael Bolton will take the stage at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall on Nov. 30. Contributed photo*

## **MICHAEL BOLTON TO RETURN TO THE VAN WEZEL**

The multi-platinum recording artist and multi-Grammy Award-winner Michael Bolton will return to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall at 8 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 30, the Van Wezel has announced.

Bolton is one of the few vocalists who “can lay claim to a catalogue of songs that truly falls under the realm of ‘timeless,’” a news release notes.

With a musical career spanning almost 40 years, Bolton has had a slew of hit singles such as *When a Man Loves a Woman*; *How*

*Am I Supposed to Live Without You*; *Time, Love and Tenderness*; *How Can We Be Lovers*; and *Georgia on my Mind*, the release points out. He has also had the opportunity to perform with artists as diverse as Luciano Pavarotti and BB King, “showing that he is not only sought after by his listeners, but also by his peers,” the release adds.

Tickets are priced from \$30 to \$100. For more information, call the box office at 953-3368 or visit [www.VanWezel.org](http://www.VanWezel.org). 

## **SARASOTA TO TUSCANY EXHIBIT TO OPEN AT CENTER**

*From Sarasota to Tuscany*, an exhibit of pastels and oils painted by artist Nancy Goff, will be on display from Dec. 6 through Jan. 30, 2013 at The Women's Resource Center, 340 S. Tuttle Ave., Sarasota.

An artist's reception and opening will be held on Thursday, Dec. 6, from 5 to 7 p.m. The public is invited; refreshments will be served.

Whether it is a statue at Butler Gardens or the light in a Tuscan alley, "Goff captures beautiful and peaceful moments in her vibrant oil and pastel paintings," a news release says.

Goff attributes her sense of composition and use of color to her commercial background,

the release adds. She focuses on the light in her oils and pastels, pointing out in the release, "My art is symbolic of my attitude and view of the world. I want my audience to feel the same comfortable optimism that I do."

An upstate New York artist, Goff also teaches at Art Center Manatee, The Art Center at Longboat Key and Art Center Sarasota and gives private lessons during the winter months, the news release notes.

Goff is a member of the prestigious Pastel Society of America, based in New York City. Her work is displayed internationally.

For more information, call the center at 366-1700. 



*Hanging Out in Tuscany will be among the pastels and oils by Nancy Goff on display starting Dec. 6 at the Women's Resource Center in Sarasota. Contributed photo*

## BEACH READING TO FEATURE POETS, NOVELIST

The Hermitage Artist Retreat has announced that its first beach reading of the season will feature three writers — Jeff Parker, an American novelist and short story writer; Tony Hoagland, an award-winning American poet and essayist; and Rodrigo Garcia Lopes, a Brazilian poet, songwriter, journalist and fiction writer.

The event will take place on Friday, Nov. 30. The campus will open to the public at 4 p.m. for tours of the historic buildings; the beach readings will commence at 5 p.m., “followed by Mother Nature’s spectacular gulf front sunset,” a news release adds.

The event is free. Visitors are encouraged to bring beach chairs and any refreshments. The Hermitage Artist Retreat is located at 6660 Manasota Key Road in Englewood. Cancel-

lation due to weather will be posted on the website, [www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org).

“Since they began a few years ago, our beach readings have grown to be one of our most popular programs,” explained Bruce E. Rodgers, the Hermitage Artist Retreat’s executive director, in the news release. “Typically, we have two or three a year. It’s a wonderful opportunity to open our otherwise closed campus for the public to tour; we feature incredible writers who read from their work and Mother Nature provides the grand finale sunset. If this isn’t the best way to end a day or begin a weekend, I don’t know what is! And it’s free.”

Regarding the three writers who will be featured on Nov. 30, the news release notes that Parker is the author of the novel *Ovenman*



Tony Hoagland/Contributed photo

and the short story collection *The Taste of Penny*. His work has appeared in *American Short Fiction*, *The Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *Ploughshares*, *The Walrus*, *Tin House* and others. His nonfiction book *Igor in Crisis* will be published in 2013.

Parker, who grew up in Tallahassee, earned a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Florida. He then attended the prestigious creative writing program at Syracuse University, where he graduated with an M.F.A. in creative writing in 1999.

He serves as a faculty member at the University of Toronto and also runs the Low Res Writing Program at the University of Tampa.

Hoagland is the author of three volumes of poetry: *Sweet Ruin*, winner of the Brittingham Prize in Poetry; *Donkey Gospel*, winner of the James Laughlin Award of The Academy of American Poets; and *What Narcissism Means to Me*, as well as a collection of essays about poetry, *Real Sofistikashun*.

His poems and critical essays have appeared widely in journals and anthologies such as *American Poetry Review*, *Poetry Magazine*, and *Ploughshares*, the news release notes.



Rodrigo Garcia Lopes/Contributed photo



Jeff Parker/Contributed photo

Hoagland is the winner of the 2005 O.B. Hardison Jr. Prize, which is awarded by the Folger Shakespeare Library; it is the only national prize to recognize a poet's teaching as well as his art, the news release points out.

Garcia Lopes comes to the Hermitage through its partnership with the University of Iowa International Writing Program. An accomplished poet, songwriter, journalist, fiction writer and translator from Brazil, he has published five collections of poetry, including *Solarium* (1994), *Polivox* (2001) and *Nômada* (2004). His poems, essays and interviews have been widely published and included in anthologies such as *Os Cem Melhores Poemas Brasileiros do Século 20 (The Best 100 Brazilian Poems of the Twentieth Century)*, the news release adds.

His second CD, *Canções do Estúdio Realidade (Songs from Reality Studio)*, a new book of poems and his first novel, the detective story *O Trovador (The Troubadour)* are set to be released in 2013. He translates from English and from French. A freelance journalist and translator, he co-edits the arts magazine *Coyote* and performs his poems and songs regularly around Brazil.

For more information about the beach reading or The Hermitage Artist Retreat, call 475-2098 or visit the [website](#). 

## DABBERT GALLERY TO FEATURE *LASTING IMPRESSIONS*

The Dabbert Gallery, located at 76 S. Palm Ave. in Sarasota, will present its new exhibit, *Lasting Impressions*, beginning Dec. 7.

An opening reception will be held from 6 to 9 p.m.

The exhibit will continue through Dec. 31.

“This show features 10 artists whose compelling work will inspire generations of artists and collectors,” a news release notes.

The artists are Robert Baxter, Craig Rubadoux, Candace Knapp, William Suys, Nancy Turner, Allan Teger, Russell Woody, Gert Olsen, Thyra Davidson Wexler and Jeff Cornell.

For more information, visit [www.dabbertgallery.com](http://www.dabbertgallery.com) or call 955-1315. 



*After the Bath* is a bronze work by Thyra Davidson Wexler. Contributed photo



*Evening Calm Siesta Beach* is an oil painting by William Suys. Contributed photo

## A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS TO BE PRESENTED DEC. 7 AND 9

The Sarasota-Manatee Bach Festival will launch its 2012-2013 season with the first of its three-concert series — *A Baroque Christmas*, to be presented Friday, Dec. 7, at the Church of the Redeemer in downtown Sarasota, and Sunday, Dec. 9, at Christ Church in Bradenton.

Both programs will begin at 8 p.m.

Festival Artistic Co-Directors Dr. Richard Benedum of Christ Church and Dr. Ann Stephenson-Moe of Redeemer will give pre-concert talks beginning at 7:15 p.m., discussing the works to be performed and giving insights into the music of J.S. Bach — “arguably the world’s finest church musician and a prolific composer whose work is rich with intellectual depth and emotional inspiration,” a news release says.

*A Baroque Christmas* will feature Jennifer Best and Christopher Takeda, assistant and associate principal violinists with the Sarasota Orchestra, performing Bach’s *Double Violin Concerto in D Minor*. A small, select choral ensemble will present excerpts from Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio* and his *Cantata 40*, also written for the Christmas season, the release points out.

The Sarasota Young Voices, the area’s outstanding children’s choir, and organist Mary Mozelle, will also perform.

Sixteen-year-old Pine View School junior, violinist Natasha Snyder, and her teacher, Lena Cambis, director of the Sarasota Music Academy, will be featured in Arcangelo Corelli’s well-known *Christmas Concerto*. Born in Brazil, Snyder has studied violin since the age of four, the news release points out. Winner of the Edward and Ida Wilkof Young Artist Concerto Competition in 2009, she made her professional debut at the Neel Performing Arts Center, accompanied by the Sarasota Orchestra, at the age of 13.

“Natasha is certainly one of the most talented young musicians in the entire area, and the

Bach Festival is very proud to have her be part of the coming concert,” said Benedum in the release. “The Corelli *Concerto* Natasha is playing will be very familiar to many listeners, so the audience will really be able to focus on her interpretation of this well-known Baroque classic,” he added.

Tickets are \$20 or \$5 for students. Advance online purchase for both concert locations



Mary Mozelle/Contributed photo

is available at [www.redeemersarasota.org](http://www.redeemersarasota.org); by calling or visiting either church; and via regular mail per instructions at [www.sarasota-manateebachfestival.org](http://www.sarasota-manateebachfestival.org). Subject to availability, tickets will also be sold at the door on the day of each concert.

The Church of the Redeemer is located at 222 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota; for more information, call 955-4263. Christ Church is located at 4030 Manatee Ave. West, Bradenton; for more information, call 747-3709.

The December concerts will be followed in the new year with *Hearing Bach's Music Bach's Way* concerts in January (12 and 13) and February (8 and 9), featuring Baroque chamber



Jennifer Best/Contributed photo



Natasha Snyder/Contributed photo

music performed on period instruments. For details, visit [www.sarasota-manateebachfestival.org](http://www.sarasota-manateebachfestival.org). More about both concerts and churches may be found at [www.redeemersarasota.org](http://www.redeemersarasota.org) and [www.christchurchswfla.org](http://www.christchurchswfla.org).

The Bach Festival is the only organization to present historically informed performances, performed on authentic instruments, to Sarasota and Bradenton audiences, the news release points out. 

## JAZZ CLUB ANNOUNCES DECEMBER JAZZ AT TWO CONCERTS

The Jazz Club of Sarasota's *Jazz at Two* 2012-2013 concert series continues during the holiday season with the Terry Myers Quartet (Dec. 7); the Billy Marcus Trio (Dec. 21); and Marc Maninno (Dec. 28), the club has announced.

The series, which was founded in 2001, showcases the region's top jazz performers on Fridays from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, a news release notes.

Tickets are \$7 for Jazz Club members and \$12 for non-members. A portion of ticket sales is directed to the Jazz Club's scholarship program.

The Terry Myers Quartet consists of Myers on saxophone, Jeff Phillips on keyboards and bass pedals and Dave Pruyn on drums. Considered one of the nation's top reed players, Myers has performed with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, Ray Charles, Chubby Jackson, Louis Bellson, Bob Haggart, Jake Hanna and Butch Miles, the news release says. He also led the Artie Shaw

Orchestra when its former leader, Dick Johnson, was on hiatus.

The Billy Marcus Trio features Marcus on piano, Mark Neuenschwander on bass and Steve Bucholtz on drums. Marcus has played with some of the biggest names in jazz, including Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, The Bill Evans Trio, The Horace Silver Quintet, McCoy Tyner, Maynard Ferguson, Dexter Gordon and Sonny Rollins, the release adds. In 1982, he was named "Miami's Best Musician" by Miami/South Florida Magazine. He is a regular performer at jazz festivals around the world, the release notes.

Finishing out the month of concerts, the Marc Maninno Jazz Quartet consists of Maninno on guitar, George Mancini on trombone, John Miller on bass and Bob Lunergan on drums. Maninno is the director of jazz studies at the State College of Florida; he also teaches jazz guitar, jazz history and jazz improvisation at the school. Additionally, he is the conductor of the SCF Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combo.

For more information about the Jazz Club of Sarasota, call 366-1552 or visit [www.jazz-clubsarasota.com](http://www.jazz-clubsarasota.com). 



*The Billy Marcus Trio will perform Dec. 21./Contributed by the artist*



*The Terry Myers Quartet will present a concert on Dec. 7./Contributed by the group*



*Marc Mannino and his quartet will perform on Dec. 28./Contributed by the group*

## **BEST OF ENEMIES TO OPEN DEC. 7 IN NEW FST THEATRE**

Florida Studio Theatre will present the regional premiere of *The Best of Enemies* by Mark St. Germain beginning Friday, Dec. 7, with preview performances on Dec. 5 and 6, the theatre has announced.

“This powerful drama exposes the poison of prejudice and explores how two polarized individuals can overcome their differences,” a news release says.

*The Best of Enemies* will open in FST’s remodeled Gompertz Theatre, located at 1247 First St. in downtown Sarasota.

Inspired by the book of the same name by Osha Gray Davis, *The Best of Enemies* is based on a provocative true story, the news release notes. In 1971, a high-ranking member of the Ku Klux Klan is pitted against an African-American Civil Rights activist over the desegregation of schools. “A strange and transformative relationship develops between the two as they find common ground based on their love and concern for their children and their struggles as

working class families,” the release adds. The play invites the audience to look back at the history of the Civil Rights Movement in America, “examining the progress that has been made in the last 40 years as well as the ways in which the struggle continues,” the release notes.

The cast includes returning Florida Studio Theatre actors Sheffield Chastain, Stephanie Weeks and Kevyn Morrow. New to FST, Amanda Duffy rounds out the cast.

Tickets are on sale through Jan. 27, 2013; they may be purchased online at [FloridaStudioTheatre.org](http://FloridaStudioTheatre.org), by phone at 366-9000 or by visiting the box office.

The Green Room Café will be open beginning Dec. 5 for pre-show dining and post-show cocktails and light bites. FST Mainstage patrons may enjoy fresh baked FST favorites as well as new additions to the menu. Dinner reservations are required and may be made by contacting the box office at 366-9000 or going online at [FloridaStudioTheatre.org](http://FloridaStudioTheatre.org). 



*The Florida Studio Theatre marquee announces the upcoming show, Best of Enemies. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## PREPARATIONS UNDER WAY FOR SIXTH ANNUAL OVATION

Plans are in the works for the sixth annual Ovation, a Lakewood Ranch festival that celebrates the region's cultural assets with free live performances.

Event organizers are extending an open invitation to area non-profit and performance groups that wish to participate in the 2013 event, a news release notes.

Ovation will be held Saturday, Feb. 2, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. along Main Street in downtown Lakewood Ranch. "Drawing on the success of last year's event, the festival will once again showcase performances from a variety of local school groups, musicians, dancers, chorus groups, drama teams and more," the release says. Those interested in participating may find applications online at [www.lwrevents.com](http://www.lwrevents.com) or at the SMR Headquarters office at 14400 Covenant Way, Lakewood Ranch. The application deadline is Jan. 17, 2013.

Event sponsorships are also still available, the release points out.

"Ovation is the only event of its kind in Southwest Florida," the release adds, drawing attendees from the Tampa Bay area as well as cities to the south, including Naples and Fort Myers. Officials estimate 3,000 people turned out for the 2012 festival; they are expecting to exceed that number next year, the release adds.

As a community-wide celebration of cultural arts, Ovation is a free event, both for attendees and participants, the release says. There are no parking or admission fees, and all the shops and restaurants along Main Street are open. Each participating nonprofit group has a designated table where it can advertise upcoming seasons, sell tickets for future events and recruit new members and patrons, the release notes.

Among the highlights from this year's festival were entertainment provided by the Sarasota Ballet, Sarasota Opera, Manatee Players, Lakewood Ranch High School Silver Stars dance team, Florida Studio Theatre, The Players and Sarasota Dance Academy. 

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## TUCK TO MEET THE PUBLIC AT SARASOTA BAY CLUB EVENT

Sarasota painter John-Norman Tuck will be the featured guest at a Meet the Artist event on Tuesday, Dec. 4, at The Inn at Sarasota Bay Club.

"John-Norman Tuck is a master colorist who paints and shares his interpretations with an unabashed joy of life and exuberant appreciation for the beauty of nature and floral ex-

pression," designer Ann Hall says in a news release. "I enjoy his paintings as a professional and treasure them as a collector," she adds.

Tuck will talk with guests from 2 to 5 p.m. at the The Inn at Sarasota Bay Club.

The Inn is located at 1303 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. 



*Prior to the Advent season organ recitals, members of the community are invited to enjoy brown bag lunches in the gardens of The Church of the Redeemer / Contributed*

*The Church of the Redeemer is located on South Palm Avenue. Photo by Norman Schimmel*

## MIDDAY ORGAN RECITALS TO BE PRESENTED AT REDEEMER

The [Church of the Redeemer](#), 222 S. Palm Ave. in downtown Sarasota, will begin its annual offering of midday Advent organ recitals on Wednesday, Dec. 5, with guest organist Neil Page, music minister of St. Boniface Episcopal Church on Siesta Key.

The recitals begin shortly after noon, at 12:10 p.m., and end promptly at 12:40 p.m., the church has announced.

“Each Wednesday throughout Advent, guest organists and musicians perform a 30-minute organ recital on Redeemer’s massive 50-stop Nichols & Simpson pipe organ, providing a brief but welcome weekday respite during the hectic holiday season,” a church news release says. The recitals are free, with offerings accepted. Every member of the community

is invited to come, “perhaps first enjoying a brown bag lunch on one of the several benches throughout the gardens and verandah, and then listening to the music of the Advent season,” the release adds.

Following Page’s recital on Dec. 5, Faith Lutheran Church organist Michael Stuart will perform on Dec. 12. The final recital will be presented on Dec. 19, featuring Redeemer’s own organist/choirmaster, Ann Stephenson-Moe, who will be joined in the performance by Daniel Mendelow, the former principal trumpet for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

For more information, visit [www.redeemersarasota.org](http://www.redeemersarasota.org) or call 955-4263 

## CHANUKAH CELEBRATION TO PUT A FOCUS ON IRVING BERLIN

On Saturday, Dec. 1, at 10:30 a.m., the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism will host a Chanukah service and party with the theme *Come on Along*, a celebration of the life and music of Irving Berlin, one of America's most popular, prolific and patriotic songwriters.

The program will be presented by Carol Kaufman, who will discuss Berlin's life from a Russian shtetl to New York's lower east side and on to Broadway, Hollywood and beyond.

For the past several years, Kaufman has given orchestra pre-concert talks at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and other local venues, a news release says.

The program is free and open to the public.

The Congregation for Humanistic Judaism meets at Unity, 3023 Proctor Road in Sarasota.

For more information, visit [www.chj-Sarasota.org](http://www.chj-Sarasota.org) or call 929-7771. 

## TEMPLE EMANU-EL, ST. MARTHA'S UNITE FOR FRIENDSHIP LUNCHEON

Temple Emanu-El hosted its sixth annual Friendship Luncheon with St. Martha Catholic Church on Nov. 17. The event demonstrated the enduring relationship between the two congregations, which also unite every spring for the interfaith Feast of Abraham celebration.

About 100 guests attended the lively luncheon, which began as Temple Emanu-El Social Action Co-Chairwoman Emily Tennenbaum introduced Rabbi Brenner J. Glickman; St. Martha's spiritual leader Father Fausto Stimpiglia; and Temple Emanu-El President Michael Richker.

"After blessings and greetings, attendees enjoyed a delicious Italian lunch catered by Word of Mouth," a Temple news release says. "The festive decorations, tablecloths and table settings — prepared by event chairwoman Lorraine Glixon and Social Action Committee members — reflected the Italian theme," the release adds.

Following the meal and socializing, Thomas Solomon of the Crime Prevention Unit of the City of Sarasota Police Department pre-



(From left) Annabelle Wolter, Rabbi Brenner Glickman and Lorraine Glixon enjoy the fellowship of the Friendship Luncheon. Contributed photo

sented a program about the importance of people being aware of and protecting themselves from violence in the community. Solomon explained that violence is more than just criminal action; the definition includes acts as disparate as breaking into a home or business, road rage, purse snatching and physical abuse, he pointed out.

The issue of violence in the home and community was the subject of roundtable discussions

after Solomon's talk. Temple Emanu-El and St. Martha Catholic Church members decided to create an interfaith committee and work together in an effort to reduce the amount of violence in the area, the news release adds. This committee will meet after the winter holidays.

For more information about social action and interfaith programs at [Temple Emanu-El](#), call 371-2788. 



*(From left) Michael Richker, Father Fausto Stampiglia, Rabbi Brenner Glickman and Father Patrick Wilson are all smiles at the luncheon. Contributed photo*



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## THE BEST OF THE UPCOMING WEEK

**30**  
NOV

### **Sarasota Craft Show**

Nov. 30 through Dec. 2, Robarts Arena, Sarasota, featuring ceramics, decorative fiber, glass, jewelry, leather, metal and mixed-media works. Tickets: \$9 per day, regular admission; \$8 for seniors; \$5 for students; \$12 for a three-day pass; children under 10 admitted free. Call 800-834-9437 or visit [sarasotacraftshow.com](http://sarasotacraftshow.com).

**01**  
DEC

### **Sarasota Holiday Parade**

Saturday, Dec. 1, 7 to 9 p.m., from the intersection of Main Street and U.S. 301 to the bayfront, featuring a wide variety of floats, bands and Jolly Old St. Nick himself.

**01**  
DEC

### **1776 the Musical**

Through Dec. 22 at the Asolo Repertory Theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. For ticket information, call 351-8000 or visit [asolorep.org](http://asolorep.org).

**06**  
DEC

### **Annie**

Dec. 6-16 at The Players Theatre, 838 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. For ticket information, call 365-2494 or visit [theplayers.org](http://theplayers.org).

**07**  
DEC

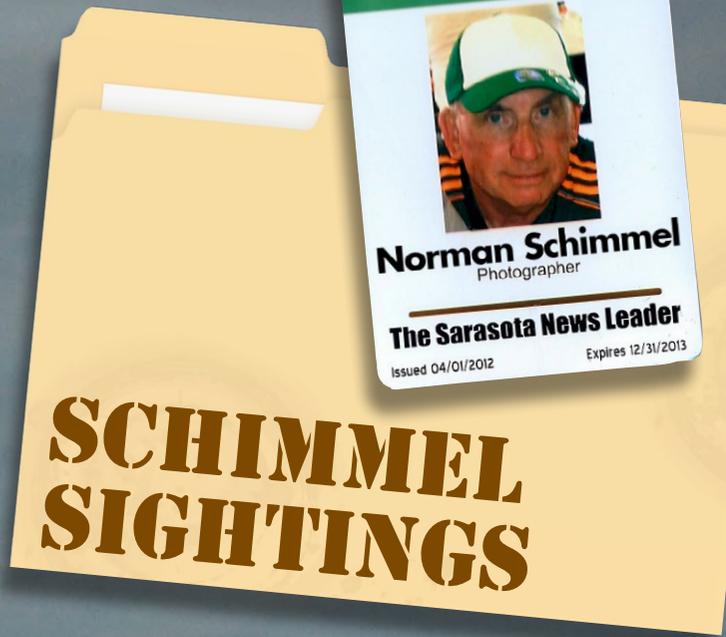
### **WSLR presents Mark Stuart and Stacey Earle**

Friday, Dec. 7, 8 p.m., Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. For information, call 587-6588 or visit [WSLR.org](http://WSLR.org).

*To get all the details on these and other great activities — food, nightlife, music, art, theater, children's events, learning opportunities and more — go to Sarasota's No. 1 source for local events, hot spots, fun activities and hidden gems:*



thisweekin  
**SARASOTA.com**  
SARASOTA'S MASTER CALENDAR



# I THINK I SPY ... SOME DINNER!

*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.*