

## Opera company hopes to get its house in order

BY PEG GOLDBERG LONGSTRETH  
plongstreth@floridaweekly.com

At a time when arts groups around the world are in near panic mode given the current economy, Opera Naples is smiling. Sort of.

The Naples City Council has been in preliminary discussions with developer Jack Antaramian about buying a portion of his delayed Renaissance Village project. Part of the 22-acre downtown site could become a city park with cultural amenities similar to Cambier Park off Fifth Avenue South.

That's where Opera Naples comes into the picture.

Opera Naples CEO Gerald Goldberg said his group believes it could purchase enough land from the city to put for a state-of-the-art, 1,200-seat opera house in the middle of the park. Mr. Goldberg said his board is confident it can raise an estimated \$60 million to \$80 million to pull it off — and that the community will support an opera house without eroding support of its cultural crown jewel: the Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts.

"Naples is already recognized as a cultural hub in the United States for all of the arts," he said. "The addition of an opera house for a regional opera company would only enhance that reputation, not detract from any existing programs."

It's no secret that the board of Opera Naples is determined to build its own facility rather than rely on the availability and largesse of other performance locations in the county. Its current home is the Performing Arts Hall of Gulf Coast High School. It's also no secret that the company is committed to acquiring property



Steffanie Pearce

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# NOT SO FAST

Slow Food movement urges return to age-old values

BY KAREN FELDMAN  
cuisine@floridaweekly.com

Although they probably don't know it, many people will practice the principles advocated by the Slow Food movement as they celebrate Thanksgiving.

The time-honored, but seemingly endangered, ritual of gathering a family around a dinner table for a homemade meal is one of many traditions Slow Food proponents deem valuable and worth reviving.

But that's just a slice of the Slow Food pie. Locally, the fledgling Slow Food Southwest Florida group has brought together a cornucopia of concerned consumers who

SEE SLOW, A8 ▶



>>Inside:  
Many local food producers embrace the movement.  
A8

Chef Kristina San Filippo, of the Robb & Stucky KitchenAid Culinary Center, plates a salmon course using produce from vegetables and herbs grown at Herban Gardens in North Fort Myers.

## INSIDE



### Hats on

See who stepped out in style for the Naples Botanical Garden and other to-dos. C19, 20 & 21 ▶



### The new mix

Retail, office, residential uses blend in a pedestrian-friendly setting at The Mercato. B1 ▶



### Murderous hijinx

Naples Players spoof murder mysteries of the 1940s. C1 ▶



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