

Hobe Sound

CURRENTS

COMPLIMENTARY

A turquoise sea of employees, friends and neighbors wearing Seacoast National Bank T-shirts joined scores of other entrants as they took part in the 2012 Hobe Sound Christmas Parade.

Pg 12





Photo: Associated Press

Taking the lead

Dr. Edith Widder, world-renowned deep-sea biologist and research scientist, takes on the challenge of saving the world’s oceans by starting here on the Indian River Lagoon. Pg 6

Lifestyle



“The Mask” by Leo Arbeznic will be shown at “It’s All Over....Art 2012” exhibiting at the Contemporary Cultural Center in Hobe Sound. The grand opening event is Friday, Dec. 14.

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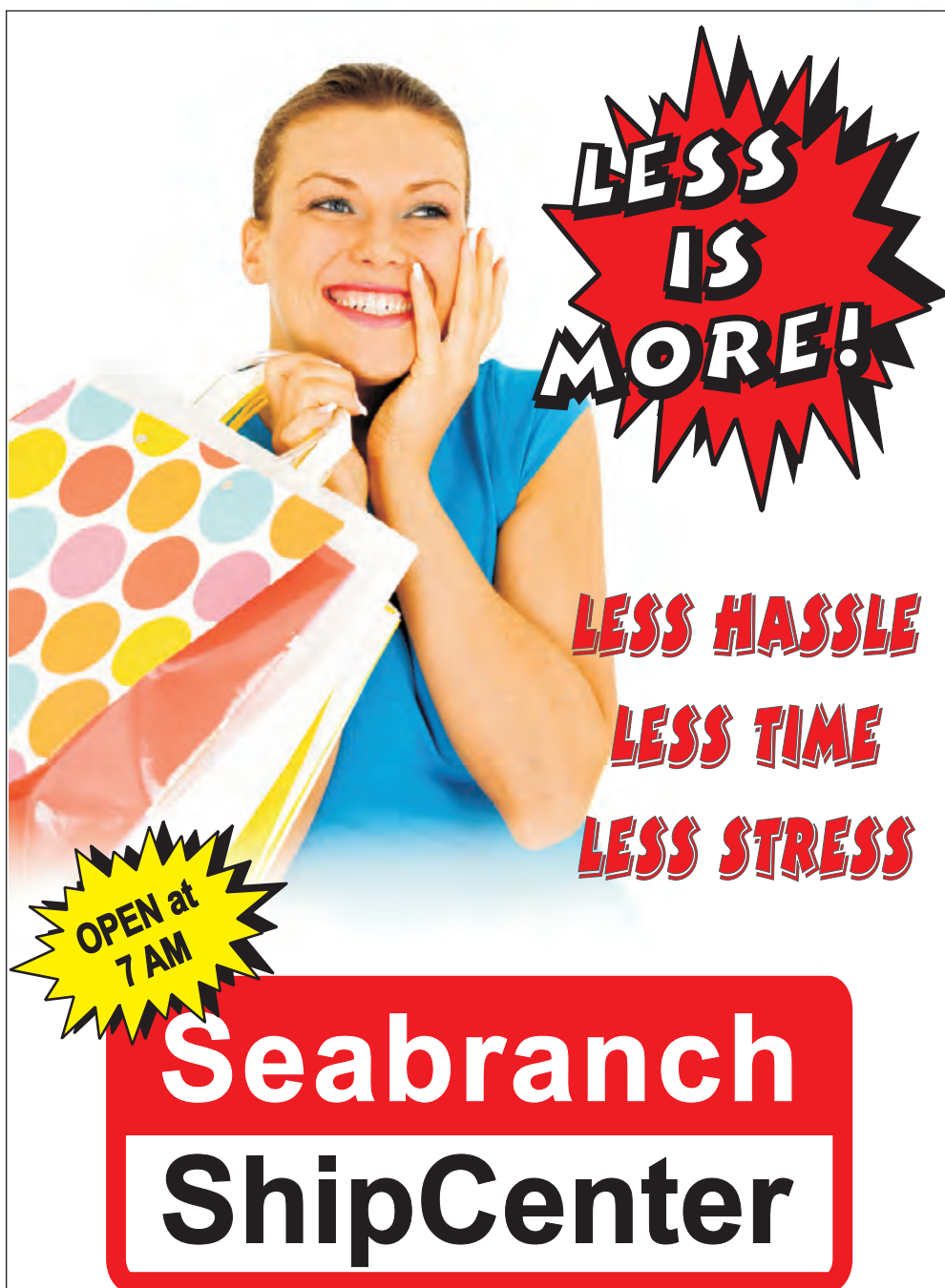
The Mustard Seed opens in Hobe Heights. Pg 16

Chamber of Commerce



The Martin County Sheriff’s Department gave a public service presentation hosted by the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce to its membership and to Zeus Park residents about the “pillowcase” burglaries in Martin County.

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All meetings of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees in

Hobe Sound, Port Salerno, and the other five Community Redevelopment Areas have been canceled, as well as those of the Community Redevelopment Agency, as the Board of County Commissioners decide their future roles, if any.

In one of her first official acts as commission chair, Commissioner Sarah Heard requested that an amendment to Chapter 39 of the General Ordinances of Martin County be drafted that would establish the Board of County Commissioners as the Community Redevelopment Agency.

A public hearing on the amendment has been set for Dec. 18 in the county commission chambers of the county administrative building on Monterey Road in Stuart.

Currently, each of the seven designated Community Redevelopment Areas has one representative from each area. The agency's budget is determined by a percentage of the increase in property values, and the monies received are returned to the area from which they came, as established by state statute.

The county commission currently approves all CRA expenditures and budget allocations. ■

In what may be its last official action, the Community

Redevelopment Agency turned down a request by Port Salerno businessman and former CRA chair, John Hennessee, to cover the cost and replacement of the Manatee Pocket boardwalk in front of the former Finz Waterfront Grill at its regular meeting Nov. 19.

Hennessee, as a partner in Red Sky, Inc., owns the building and needs to replace the seawall, which is collapsing; however, the county-owned boardwalk must be removed before work can begin. Then it must be replaced.

"We have indicated that we will work with Mr. Hennessee to accomplish this," said Kevin Freeman, director of the Community Development Department, "but we need to submit engineering drawings for the seawall to our engineering department first. We asked for these six months ago, and we still have not received them."

The county wants to ensure that the new seawall construction is compatible with the boardwalk in order to forestall any future issues, Freeman added, and they also may be able to make suggestions for a more cost-effective way to construct the boardwalk, requiring them to see the seawall construction plans.

The boardwalk, called the Manatee Pocketwalk, is a CRA-funded project, intended at some point to traverse the circumference of the Manatee Pocket to increase pedestrian foot traffic and boat traffic to waterfront businesses. Currently, only portions of the boardwalk have been completed.

Hennessee granted last year an easement to the county so the boardwalk could be constructed along his property line; therefore, the county owns and maintains the boardwalk. Currently, barricades have been erected by the county in front of the now-vacant property to keep pedestrians off the boardwalk, which is being pushed away from the seawall.

"Although we may agree philosophically with you," said Frank Wacha Jr., CRA chairman, "there is no way we can approve an expenditure of funds without knowing in advance how much it's going to cost."

Hennessee contends that leasing the space to another business or selling the property is being hampered by the prospect that the proposed construction will interfere with conducting business there. ■



If the Bureau of Land Management gets approval of its most recent permit application, the days of boaters, paddleboarders and kayakers on Cato's Bridge Beach on the Intracoastal Waterway soon will end.

If the intent is to wear down the public's interest in protecting

their access to Cato's Bridge Beach in Jupiter Sound, the federal Bureau of Land Management may be succeeding.

After more than 18 months of public protest against the loss of access to the natural shoreline along the western side of the Intercoastal Waterway south of the CR707 Bridge in Jupiter Sound, the BLM filed a third permit application for shoreline stabilization on Nov. 7, and for the third time, it was without the knowledge or input from the members of the JILONA working group, who are charged with management of the site.

Bruce Dawson, BLM's field office manager for the southeastern states, filed this latest application after having withdrawn the agency's application on two other occasions since June 2012.

Dawson withdrew the permit on July 18, after the Florida DEP had reached a compromise design with the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM), which had prepared and submitted the permit on BLM's behalf.

The design allowed 645' of boater access to the northern shore, then a breakwater barrier offshore would cut off boater access, leaving only paddleboarder and kayak access for the remainder, with an additional low wall to be constructed on state submerged land that would add stabilization and, because of an 8" cap on the wall, could be used as a resting bench for paddlers.

The compromise design was in response to public protest that threatened to label the permit as one of Heightened Public Concern, requiring it to go before Florida's governor and his cabinet officials to determine its outcome. The compromise was reached June 26.

On July 18, Dawson withdrew the permit, prior to presenting it to the members of the JILONA working group for their consideration or input.

"We might have liked it," said Tom Paterno, mayor of Tequesta, to Dawson at an August meeting of the JILONA working group. "Instead you made the decision to withdraw; it was done unilaterally."

Dawson responded that the compromise violated the tenets of the National Landscape Conservation System, of which JILONA is a part, to "protect, conserve and restore" the cultural and natural resources of the country's exceptional natural landscapes.

A member of the design team, Dan Bates of ERM, reported at the same JILONA meeting in August that the low wall would not have interfered with the plantings to restore the shoreline to native habitat, but Dawson disagreed. The low wall would have been constructed below the mean high-waterline, which is the boundary of Florida's submerged lands, but because of the meandering coastline, some of the wall would have been constructed on federal property, giving Dawson authority to reject it.

ERM also reported at that meeting that it had resubmitted a permit application

in August without either Dawson's or the JILONA working group's knowledge with the intention of "keeping the permit alive." After the meeting concluded, Dawson requested that ERM withdraw the permit, and they did.

Following a meeting Sept. 26 among BLM officials and members of the JILONA working group, chaired by JILONA working group member Palm Beach Commissioner Karen Marcus, another permit was filed by ERM on behalf of BLM that again would leave 645 feet of the shoreline with no breakwater barrier offshore, thus it would be open to boaters. They would prohibit access to the southern shore with a breakwater barrier, and it no longer included plans for the low wall for paddleboarders as had been suggested by the state DEP.

In October, Dawson withdrew that permit as well, and again he did so without informing the JILONA working group of his intentions.

Without meeting with or informing the JILONA working group, Dawson filed yet another permit application on Nov. 7. The permit application provided to Currents by the DEP office states that large limestone boulders will be used to build a 1,400-foot breakwater to block all boating access to the shoreline with breaks in the barrier to allow paddleboarders or kayakers access to shore along some portions of the northern shoreline nearest the bridge; however, a drawing submitted with the plan shows that boater access would be

Continued Page 4

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Continued from Page 3

allowed for 645 feet at the most northern part of the shoreline.

A biologist in the Mississippi office of BLM, Faye Winters, said on Monday that the 645 feet of open coastline is the design for which BLM is seeking a permit.

The DEP has responded to Dawson's application with a letter dated Dec. 6 that they had received BLM's permit application had found it complete. Details of the plan include a rock breakwater that will be placed on 2,500 cubic yards of landfill from a future ICW maintenance project to elevate the submerged shoreline.

BLM also will construct a 3-tiered, vinyl sheet pile system for 705 feet of the high banks, where erosion is most evident, as well as adding 560 feet of a submerged steel sheet pile in 13' feet of water to support the backfill and isolate it from the Intracoastal Waterway.

Florida DEP has promised to provide Dawson an answer by Jan. 6.

They will accept public comment at eric.g.reusch@usace.army.mil or greg.munson@dep.state.fl.us. ■

As unbelievable as it first sounds, a 65-year-old Hobe Sound man,

Alan Adelson, won \$5 million from the Florida Lottery Millionaire Scratch-off game, according to a lottery news release issued in late November.

"I scratched off the ticket and said, 'Holy Cow! I couldn't believe it,'" Adelson is quoted as saying in the release. "It was such an amazing feeling!"

He chose to take the winnings in a lump-sum payment of \$4.1 million, the release states. He purchased the winning ticket at the Publix store at 5893 S.E. Federal Highway in Stuart. Hope he remembers Uncle Sam's outstretched hand. ■

Former Martin County Commissioner Maggy Hurchalla, one of the

architects of the original Martin County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, presented her suggested changes to Chap-

ters 1 and 2 of the current plan to the Board of County Commissioners on Nov. 20.

The board scheduled a workshop for Dec. 11 during its regular meeting to discuss the proposed changes, which Hurchalla says will "strengthen" the plan, particularly in regard to board approval for significant changes to land use and zoning. In those cases, she suggested a "super majority" of board members' approval—a four-commissioner-majority vote.

Hurchalla conducted public meetings in September and October to discuss proposed changes and to field questions and concerns by the public. She also established a website called Martin County Comp Plan Citizens Workshop, and she says the changes she has proposed were based on that public input.

The full text of her proposed changes are attached to the county commission Agenda Item 7A in the agenda packet for the Dec. 11 county commission meeting, available online at the county website.

In a letter to the editor published in the Stuart News on Dec. 2, Hurchalla said she still is collecting public input, even as the commissioners begin the formal approval process. Send your suggestions to maggycplan@gmail.com. ■

Nearly as unbelievable as winning the lottery, developers of the Hobe

Grove project at the intersection of Bridge Road and the Florida Turnpike filed for a time extension to June 2013 on their permit application, which ordinarily would expire in December 2012.

The proposed development on 2,823 acres west of Florida's Turnpike and south of Bridge Road includes plans for 4.6 million square feet of business and education space, and 4,300 homes on a property currently zoned for agricultural use only.

The current slow growth majority of commissioners, two of whom were elected on a platform of not permitting any large-scale developments outside of the current urban services district, all have made previous public comments expressing disapproval, even Commissioner Doug Smith, considered to be supportive of business growth.

The original permit applications were submitted May 27, 2011, to the Martin County Growth Management Department, as well as to several regional, state and federal agencies. Then Midbrook 1st Realty Corp. purchased the land (for \$43.76 million in 2011) from Becker Groves and is looking to extend the application process as it waits for for Martin County to complete a study that will show how much land is available for housing development, according to a statement issued by Tom McNicholas, representing Warren Wilson of Midbrook.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council approved the time extension in a letter to the Realty Corp.

"However, based on the response at that time, council may request an additional pre-application meeting to ensure all application information is updated and that all local governments, agencies and interested parties have the opportunity to

ask questions and provide comments on the plan of development," wrote Michael Busha, executive director of the Planning Council, in a letter to Midbrook. ■



A favorite History Channel reality show, American Pickers, is

coming to Hobe Sound in January, according to show producers. That is, if stars Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz can be enticed by someone with a filled-to-the-brim barn or storage shed to sell some of their rusty "treasures."

The crew is getting prepared for its second season, which begins on April 9, by traveling to Florida in January.

As professional "pickers," these childhood buddies comb through memorabilia and artifacts, hoping to find treasures among the trash. Sometimes they make a few bucks; and sometimes they walk away with little more than the history of an item. Just as important as finding weird and wonderful Americana, though, are the often fascinating—and sometimes quirky—characters they encounter along the way.

They also look for any oddball or interesting historical items, in addition to Florida-specific memorabilia, and they absolutely do not want tractors, crocks, stoves or country primitives, neither are they interested in talking to someone with a store, or at a flea market, museum, auction, business or anything that's open to the public—just individual "collectors."

If you know someone in Hobe Sound or in the surrounding area who fits the bill, ask if he or she would like to be visited by Mike and Frank, then contact the show's producers.

Among the items of particular interest right now, are these: motor scooters (Vespas, Lambretta, Cushman), old advertising signage, motorcycles, bicycles (pre-'60s to turn of the century), old toys (tin, wind-up, cast iron), pre-1950 vending machines, pinball and slot machines, old movie posters, unusual radios (transistor, tabletop, etc.), antique casino/gaming machines, vintage movie memorabilia, taxidermy, vintage concert posters and T-shirts, early Boy Scout items, pre-'60s vintage diner collectibles, pre-'60s TV merchandise, pre-'50s western/equestrian gear, Houdini items, old rodeo items, airline collectibles (Pan-Am, TWA, etc.), late '70s and earlier military items, vintage police officer collectibles, musical instruments, Civil War antiques, and so on. You get the idea. All the junk you threw out but now wish you hadn't. Well, somebody you know hung on to it all. Every single piece.

If you have a large collection or want to refer someone to Mike and Frank, email your name, phone number, city, state and a description of the collection, including photos, if possible, to Jfriedman@cinetflix.com, or call and leave a message at 646.493.2184. ■



Dictionary Giveaway at Hobe Sound Elementary School

All third grade students in Martin County public elementary schools receive a dictionary for their own personal use as a community service project of the Hobe Sound/Port Salerno Rotary Club. The dictionary also includes the periodic chart of elements, the states and countries of the world and their capitals, a list of all U.S. Presidents,

etc. Students learn to use the dictionary in their classrooms, then at the end of the year, they are permitted to take them home. "You can use this book all the way through college," said Rotarian Christine Moreno, who organized the project and helped distribute the books along with Bill Whippen, center, Brent Miller, right, and other Rotarians at the Hobe Sound Elementary School in November. Assistant Principal Willie Gore observed, "It's refreshing to see kids get excited over a book, considering that this is such an age of video games." ■

Veterans in blue honored for service

Liberty was celebrated throughout the U.S. on Veteran's Day, including at a place where freedom no longer exists—at the Martin County Correctional Institution in Indiantown.

"It's easy to take liberty for granted when you never had it taken away from you," said Richard Otten of Hobe Sound, who had been invited to speak at one of Martin County's largest gatherings of veterans this November. Heads nodded in agreement at his remarks among the audience of 99 veterans representing every branch of the military incarcerated there.

They are members of a veteran's club at the prison, who recently transformed a meeting room into a place that honors all military service personnel year round with perfectly executed, hand-painted seals high on the walls. Military pride flowed like a river among them, evident from the spontaneous shouts by Marines to the misted eyes evoked from singing "Proud to be an American."

Otten, a Navy veteran, was being recognized for his contributions and hours of time – "to keep the dream of hope alive" – devoted to the Gavel Club, the prison's equivalent of a Toastmaster's Club. Many of the veterans also are members of the prison's Gavel Club, Otten said, reflected by their self-confidence at the speakers podium and their vocal desire to improve their circumstances.

"Though we may be incarcerated," said Commander Leo Alford of the Martin Veterans Post FLI-07 and an inmate, "we still believe and honor the moral principles we fought for...Yes, we have come short of perfection, but the standards that were embedded in us are still alive."

Recognition that incarcerated veterans may indeed have both attributes and needs different from the regular prison population has begun to surface among U.S. Justice Department and Veterans Affairs officials. Florida is currently one of a handful of states, according to a New York Times report, to rethink how imprisoned military veterans should be treated in order to be better equipped for return to civilian life.

"Though we fell," Alford continued, "we will get up and return to the commu-



Leo Alford, Commander of Martin Veterans Post FLI-07

nity to become a pillar of that society, because we have taken responsibility for our shortcomings. Now, the veterans here at Martin are preparing themselves for a future of honor and respect through our actions during this time of incarceration."

In August 2011, Florida created a program that provides separate dorms in five of Florida's prisons for incarcerated veterans who were honorably discharged, who have a maximum of three years left on their sentence, and who volunteered for the program geared to recognize that veterans may have fallen into a life of crime because they did not receive proper treatment after military service, particularly treatment for post traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse.

A U.S. Justice Department report released in 2004 indicated that military veterans were more than double the regular population to have abused drugs or alcohol prior to their incarceration, and although they represent only about 10 percent of the overall prison population, their crimes are disproportionately more violent. Vietnam-era veterans were among the highest population in state prisons, at almost 36% of veterans. In spite of those stark statistics, military veterans also were far less likely to wind up serving time in prison than non-veterans.

No additional cost to the Department of Corrections is required to house veterans separately, but space on prison grounds is an issue, so currently only 300 or so of Florida's approximately 6,700 incarcerated vets may participate. Those who do are required to adhere to higher standards of behavior than inmates in the general population, returning to the discipline and procedures of military custom, but they also are provided with information on how to receive benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder, and preparation classes to help them transition into the professional, mental, and emotional routines of civilian life.

There are no separate prison facilities for veterans at Martin Correctional.

"Our wretched condition today can be linked to the negative influences that we have come in contact with," Alford said, "but there were good influences, also, that shaped and molded our true character which has come alive under these circumstances. Those influences work day and night to make our situation better... embedded by the great men (in the military) we fought side by side with to make this country what it is today."

The veterans program combined with the Toastmaster's Gavel Club jointly instill the self-confidence and discipline required for self-reflection and to build self-esteem, in spite of their circumstances, about which visitors are reminded as

prison guards interrupt a speech to order inmates to stop the event, leave their chairs, and to stand with backs against the walls for a body count.

Otten talked about the definition of "hero" in his address, asserting that heroes are ordinary people who respond to moments of crisis in extraordinary ways and can be found anywhere. "Even here in the Martin Correctional Facility," he said, "among those with the courage to turn their lives around..."

And among those is Alford, an inmate for the past 40 years, who inspire younger prisoners not only to survive incarceration, but to grow, to change, and most of all, to never give up hope. ■

--Barbara Clowdus



A majority of the military veterans at the Martin Correctional Institution took part in a Veterans Day event lasting more than six hours.



Veteran's Day Speaker Rich Otten, a Navy veteran of Guantanamo during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, told of feeling sorry for the Marines sleeping in foxholes outside his window, until at 5 a.m. he was roused by their cadence jogging around his bedroom. In the audience of inmates at Martin Correctional Institution was one of the Marine veterans who had been stationed there.

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Holding the keys in her hands

One deep-water biologist's dream of saving the world's oceans by tracking pollution may just be the key to saving the St. Lucie and Indian River estuaries.

“We now have the technology and the tools that can pinpoint pollution,” says Dr. Edith Widder, founder, CEO and senior scientist of the Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA) in Ft. Pierce. Those have been the missing keys.

With a Ph.D. in neurobiology from the University of California in Santa Barbara, she has spent much of her career as a scientific research pilot for deep ocean diving in untethered submersibles. Her work has been featured in BBC, PBS, Discovery Channel and National Geographic television productions in California and during her 16 years as a senior scientist at Harbor Branch Ocean-

ographic Institute in Ft. Pierce. She founded ORCA in 2005.

“We have plenty of rules and regulations and laws—they’re already in place—but the challenge has been to find a technological solution for gathering the information, the scientific facts, to enforce the laws we already have,” she says. “But people don’t know how hard it is to pinpoint water pollution.” A fact even unintentional polluters take advantage of.

A beaker of water from the St. Lucie River, for example, can be tested for levels of phosphorous, or for salinity, or for toxicity, or for a number of other substances, she says, but without knowing the source,

then the problem cannot be addressed. Potential polluters simply point to other possible culprits.

“Think about how difficult this is since water is constantly moving,” she adds. “We can look at it and say, ‘Oh we’ve got something yucky here,’ but what does that sample of water tell us. We don’t know if it was taken with an incoming tide, or

outgoing; taken from shallow water, or deep....Many times—unless you’re looking at a sewer pipe dumping directly into the river—pollution is invisible, and what we’ve done here (at ORCA) is to make it visible.”

The two innovative tools developed at ORCA, the Kilroy and FAST, (a low-cost, broad-spectrum bioassay), are used together to allow scientists to gather real-time information that, combined with sampling re-

sults can create pollution gradient maps that look similar to weather maps, accurately depicting a river’s nitrogen levels and toxicity—its pollution. Total nitrogen levels are shown on the map with red indicating the most, graduating to blue to indicate the least concentrated, Widder explains. High nitrogen leads to algae blooms, reduced transparency that affects the growth of sea grass, and thus diminishing fish populations.

“Sea grass beds are the rain forests of the river,” Widder adds, “and they’re dying, and I mean all the way to the rhizomes, the roots. The Indian River lagoon right now is on the precipice of total destruction, and if it collapses, recovery could take a very long time. We won’t get it back.”

The Indian River Lagoon is the most bio-diverse estuary in North America, or at least it was prior to this fall’s releases of polluted fresh water from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie River—

home to more than 2,000 plant and 2,000 animal species. The waters of the lagoon also represent an extraordinary economic benefit to the area. A 2008 economic study estimated that the Indian River Lagoon provides an annual benefit of \$3.7 billion to residents and visitors, and more than \$47 billion to property values.

Should a collapse of the ecosystem happen here with attendant algae blooms and fish kills, the result would be not only unpleasant for residents, but could lead also to the economic collapse of the Treasure Coast, with one in every six jobs estimated to be related to the marine industry in Martin County alone.

“The good news is that our ecosystems have shown a remarkable ability to rebound if we give them a chance,” she adds, “but instead, we just keep dumping more and more onto it...we’ve got to give the river a break.”



Photo: Rivers Coalition
Dr. Edith Widder, left, in her lab with research assistants, Retta Rohm and Chloe Lloyd.



(Illustration courtesy of ORCA)

An array of Kilroys can identify the source of water pollution and transmit the data in real-time

Reaching out to students

The hope for the future, says Dr. Edith Widder, ORCA founder, lies with teaching children real, scientific methods of problem solving and showing them that they can make a difference.

“One of my concerns from a 30,000-foot view as to what’s happened to us environmentally, is that not only have we created an environmental disaster of unprecedented proportions,” she says, “but we are passing on ecosystems that are spiraling out of control to the next generation without providing them with the tools they’re going to need to address those challenges.”

To that end, she works with science teachers who want to enrich their curriculum and give high school students hands-on science study. Widder refers often to an essay she once read describing science education in U.S. schools using a baseball analogy, where kids would study the rules, read about famous players, reenact some famous plays in high school and college, but could not actually play the game until graduate school, which is similar to the way science is being taught now.

“You can just imagine what kind of baseball players they’d be,” she says, “and that’s the way we’re teaching sci-

ence.” Her solution is to work directly with school science teachers, bring students into the laboratory, take them out into the environment, and give them real problems to solve.

She is currently doing just that with 20 students from a Vero Beach charter high school, who completed the mapping between two bridges in Indian River County the first semester this year. The second semester will be spent formulating solutions, visiting stakeholders and policy makers, Widder adds, and developing a plan of action, along with a media campaign to go with it.

“We want to find the schools who want to work with us, and I would love to work with students from Martin County,” she says, “and to work with their science teachers to develop a (pollution monitoring) curriculum, eventually putting that online, so it’s free to anyone who wants to study it.”

She also is in the process of developing a simpler, even more cost-effective method of sampling sediment, so that high school students could do their own sampling without needing to use specialized equipment.

Working with Widder also allows these students to see the graphic results

of pollution, including the fungal lesions growing on the skins of Indian River dolphins, and to see the effects of polluted water on the oysters they use to filter toxins, many of them now filled with mucous and tumors, their meat green from copper.

“The dolphins have such exquisitely sensitive skin, they just must be in agony,” she adds, a flash of distress creases her forehead as she pauses to imagine it.

Dolphins also lose their first-borns to pollution, as do other marine mammals, Widder says, because they bear the brunt of all the toxins their mother accumulated in her lifetime. When lactation begins, the mother’s body and blood are cleansed, but her milk becomes toxic, killing her first born. Not surprisingly, many of the student interns working with ORCA scientists tell her they want to become marine biologists.

“These kids want to make a difference, and we need someone who wants to make a difference, so we’re trying to tap into that,” she says, “and when I ask them why they want to be a marine biologist, it’s often because they love dolphins...I tell them, if you love a dolphin, the best thing you can do for it is to clean up its water.”

BIOLUMINESCENCE UNLOCKS SECRETS

ORCA, the first technology-based marine conservation organization in the world, uses bioluminescence as the key component of FAST technology to determine the toxicity of deposits in the sediments of lakes, rivers, estuaries and coastal oceans.

“We have discovered that as water flows, the pollution settles to the bottom and stays in the sediment,” Widder says. “The sediment actually records the river’s history. We can get an accurate analysis of the pollution simply by taking sediment



samples and testing them with bioluminescent bacteria, which has turned out to be a far more powerful tool than we had first expected....the higher the toxicity, the less light the bacteria emit. It's simple, accurate and relatively inexpensive."

Widder is a recognized expert in bioluminescence, the phenomenon of animals, such as fireflies, that produce light, most of which live at the bottom of the world's oceans. She developed equipment to mimic a jellyfish's bioluminescent display to attract a deep-water squid that had never previously been seen, resulting in a MacArthur Genius Award to her of \$500,000.

"This was about the time the Pew Foundation report and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy came out with a unanimous verdict about the deteriorating health of our oceans," she says, "and I thought, we're destroying our oceans without even knowing what's in them. That's when I decided I wanted to do something about it."

She used those funds to create the FAST method of testing sediment to find a waterway's "hot spots" of pollution, which then takes scientists to the next step, to the other ORCA innovation, the Kilroy. A wireless, relatively low-cost water monitoring sensor, Kilroy streams real-time data via cell phone technology to map water flow patterns around the hot spots.

KILROYS IN EVERY WATERWAY

"I didn't design the Kilroy, our brilliant engineer Dr. Eric Thosteson did, and we named it Kilroy, just like the cartoon character from World War II that showed up everywhere saying, Kilroy was here," Widder says, "We want Kilroys out there, everywhere."

The Kilroy is far less expensive than other water monitors, Widder adds, requiring

only about 20 minutes to install, and since they are small, they are unobtrusive, easy to operate and understand, and are designed with the capability of adding third-party plug-ins for a variety of tests.

A basic Kilroy can monitor speed, direction, temperature, salinity, depth, turbidity, wave height and prevalence of key micro-organisms, streaming that data via cellular signals and web-based interfaces non-stop, 24 hours a day, to ORCA computers, all of which provide the information scientists need to point to pollution sources.

"The Kilroys are online on our website," she adds. "Just click on the Kilroy symbol, and you can watch them monitoring the water."

Off-the-shelf plug-ins can test other properties, for example the level of oxygen in the water, using the same platform and communications protocol, adding versatility without adding significant cost.

It even has the capability to "capture" evidence of a pollution spill. As the turbid water flows through Kilroy, sensors snap a lid shut on a cylinder that holds the sample until retrieved by U.S. EPA-certified technicians, who are the only ones permitted to handle the samples, a requirement for enforcement of the Clean Water Act.

"When Kilroy takes the sample, we get a call on our cell phones that tells us a sample has been taken," she explains, "so then we notify the agency to come and get it. We never need to touch the container, thus Kilroys solve the most perplexing of all challenges when it comes to water pollution, collecting scientific, verifiable data."

"We haven't had the evidence to show who is polluting," she adds. "It's like expecting the police to enforce the speed limit without a radar gun. ORCA's vision



The Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORA) in the historic Coast Guard building at Fort Pierce.

is that if pollution can be made visible we can see where it is entering our waterways, and how it is accumulating in our ecosystems and work together to stop it at its source, and by creating pollution gradient maps, people can see it instantly."

She, as most environmentalists, recognizes that the heavily populated coastline of the U.S. and other countries feed the devastating pollution of the world's oceans, and she wants to map all of it.

"My ultimate goal, as a matter of fact," she says with a smile, but keeping the tone of her voice quite serious, "is to have a pollution layer for Google Earth."

We suspect that if anyone can make that happen, Dr. Edith Widder can.

--Barbara Clowdus

Mapping water pollution now possible

In ORCA's "Map-A-Mile" project between bridges in Vero Beach, high nitrogen loads had accumulated in all the finger canals, except those in the upper left-hand corner of Map A. Those were blue.

"When we investigated, we discovered that they were associated with the Vero Beach Country Club, which was using 'best practices' for their lawn maintenance," she says. "It's so intuitive to look at maps, because we're used to looking at weather maps. We took that map to the Vero Beach City Council to show them that it is possible to have a lawn as green as a golf course, and we can have a clean lagoon. They instituted a fertilizer ordinance almost immediately. So maps work."

That mapping project was funded by Indian River Impact 100 and an anonymous donor.

"We'd like to map the entire Indian River," she adds, "the only hurdle is finding the funding to do it." She has thus far submitted eight grants to map the St. Lucie at the Roosevelt Bridge in Stuart, and has been turned down eight times.

"It's so frustrating," she says. "At the beginning, ORCA's funding was like a three-legged stool, with one third of its

funding coming from the federal government, one third from the state, and the rest from private sources."

Currently, though, federal and state funds have completely dried up, so the organization is dependent entirely on private contributions and foundation grants, but she is hopeful that as public awareness grows so, too, will additional funds.

The cost to take and process one sediment sample is \$350 each for a minimum of 10 sites. The includes testing for relative toxicity, nitrogen and phosphorus. Additional testing (heavy metals, hydrocarbons, pesticides/herbicides, etc.) costs are additional.

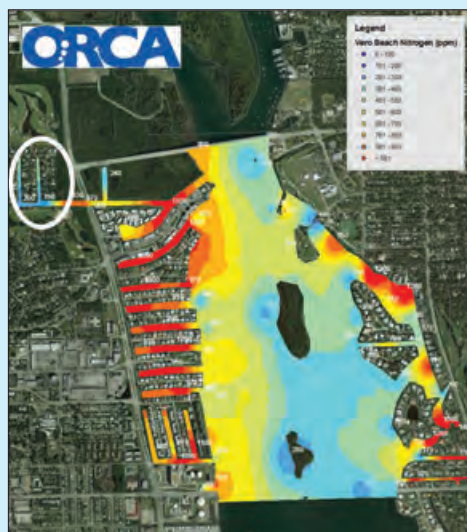
The ORCA baseline estimate for sample collection, analysis and mapping is \$35,000 per square mile of one water body.

"This cost could vary as we would like to sample more frequently in areas where we find high levels," she says, "and less frequently in areas where we find lower levels." The data obtained is used to create a gradient map for each pollutant.

The next location ORCA would like to target is the St. Lucie River, aside from testing for bacteria by the Martin County Dept. of Health, has not yet been tested.

The Manatee Pocket in Port Salerno has been tested, however, which was done prior to the dredging project last summer.

Its oysters are green from copper, and its map is solid red, colors more appropriate for a Christmas tree than for one of our most treasured resources.



The map makes it easy to spot pollution, as well as those areas like the Vero Beach Country Club, circled at top left, where "best practices" for lawn maintenance make a positive impact on the Indian River Lagoon.

WANT TO HELP?

You may become part of the ORCA team, a 501c3 non-profit, by becoming a member. Its mission is the protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystems and the species they sustain through the development of innovative technologies and science-based conservation action.

As a member, you will receive invitations to special Team ORCA events, free admission to ORCA Science Cafés, and an ORCA gift.

Family memberships will also receive The Bioluminescence Coloring book with glow-in-the-dark paint. Memberships cost \$50, for an individual, \$100 for a couple and \$150 annually for a family.

The Kilroy Society also offers memberships with gifts of \$1,000, \$3,000 or \$5,000 with special incentives at each level, describe in the giving section of the ORCA website.

The organization operates from its Duerr Laboratory for Marine Conservation housed in the historic Ft. Pierce Inlet coast guard station, operated by the Indian River State College.

Its website is www.teamorca.org.

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EDITORIAL: Commission about to kick the CRA to the curb?

It's almost funny, if it were not so perplexing. One of Martin County's most productive, most effective agencies since being separated three years ago from the Board of County Commissioners, the Community Redevelopment Agency, is about to be reabsorbed by them.

Commissioner Sarah Heard, the new chair of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners, in one of her first actions, asked that an ordinance be written to allow the board to serve also as the CRA. (A public hearing is required, which will be Dec. 18, prior to the commission vote.) With the volume of work commissioners already have on their plates, we wonder why add more to their agenda to "fix" something that does not seem broken.

Residents living within the boundaries of the seven Community Redevelopment Areas seem nearly unanimous in their praise of the work accomplished by the CRA and the county's Community Development Department staff over the past three years to revitalize their neighborhoods, especially those living and working in the Mapp Road area of Palm City, and in the historic neighborhoods of Jensen Beach, Golden Gate, and Rio. We have seen Port Salerno transformed, and the work in Indiantown has been nearly phenomenal in breadth, planning and efficient execution.

We suspect the residents of those neighborhoods are going to be particularly unhappy with the board's decision apparently to revert to the sluggish ways of the past, when revitalization resulted in pretty drawings and little else.

Even Hobe Sound residents, with the least visible, on-the-ground results, have been excited recently to learn that the ambitious Bridge Road transformation could actually become a reality after 10 years, or more, of planning. And pretty drawings.

But the dismantling of the CRA has been a priority of Commissioner Heard's ever since it was formed in 2009 as an independent agency with its own budget, comprising seven volunteers elected by the commission to represent each of the seven Community Redevelopment Areas.

The commissioners maintained oversight of the CRA agency to approve or deny its expenditures and actions. Their control, nonetheless, seems somehow to be insufficient for Ms. Heard, who often made her disdain of the agency public. No voter should be surprised at her request to have the CRA's responsibilities re-assigned to the commissioners.

Neither should anyone be surprised if District 3 Commissioner Anne Scott follows Commissioner Heard's lead. She made her thoughts about the agency quite clear prior to the election, calling the CRA "pseudo government" in na-

ture, with members wanting only to be "empire builders." We have not found that to be the case.

We have found instead each of the members to be dedicated community activists, who spend time and their own dime on various causes far beyond CRA boundaries to make our communities and our world a better place to live. Have some of them seen the value of their property increase due to CRA projects? Undoubtedly yes, which is the point of revitalization, is it not? They live and/or work in those communities.

CRA funding comes from a portion of the increase in property values (corresponding to 75 percent of the increase in property taxes) of only those properties that lie within the CRA and may be spent only within its boundaries. No increase in property values, no funding. Not one of the agency members has benefited in any other way: No juicy contracts. No employment for someone's brother. No special treatment by the building department.

Commissioner Ed Fielding seems inclined to dissolve the agency as a pragmatic concern, commenting often to Community Development Director Kevin Freeman how "nice it would be" if he did not need to make presentations before the CRA, then turn around and make them again to the county commission (which underscores our point

precisely—that the commissioners themselves retain power by maintaining control of the purse strings).

Mr. Freeman, however, thrives on seeing neighborhoods transformed, and he will tell you that he derives his abundant energy from seeing results. He has not complained about needing to meet with the CRA, and has said often that he values their insight and their input, which speed the process by averting unforeseen obstacles and providing community-oriented direction.

County commissions that have served also as their own Community Redevelopment Agencies have tended to get bogged down, kicking their CRA projects down the road—spending 15-20 minutes or so on CRA business, then moving on to more pressing issues.

We have an advantage now by having a "boots-on-the-ground, skin-in-the-game representative," as Hobe Sound CRA representative Mike Dooley says, for each designated redevelopment area—seven people who know and understand each neighborhood's unique needs and desires and character, who focus only on revitalization. Compare that to five commissioners, whose attention must be directed daily to a multitude of other topics and concerns and issues. Common sense tells us that something vital to one community or another will be lost in the translation. ■

GUEST EDITORIAL: Resolving the Lake O dilemma can be done

By Nathaniel Reed

Until a few weeks ago, billions of gallons of polluted water were flowing into the St. Lucie River, the Indian River and the Caloosahatchee Estuary from Lake Okeechobee. The environmental damage is massive. After four years of drought and no large

releases of excess water from Lake Okeechobee, the near-record rainy season again has quickly filled the lake. Every time there is a wet tropical storm or series of hurricanes such as those that hit Florida in 2004-05, the lake rapidly rises 3-4 feet within days, threatening the Hoover Dike and the communities south of the lake.

The Corps has no options. It must reduce the water level in Lake Okeechobee in case of a potential wet hurricane, common in even October, like Hurricanes Wilma and Isaac.

Before we collectively blame the Corps for the incredible damage being inflicted on our once productive waters, especially the remarkable recovery of seagrasses and inland fisheries since the Okeechobee flood gates were last opened in 2010, we collectively need a short history lesson and then a firm guide on how to stop these all-too-frequent environmental outrages.

A LOOK BACK

The great Everglades ecosystem has been brutalized by a number of thoughtless decisions: The private construction of Tamiami Trail by the Collier family to open Naples to east coast tourists in the 1915-20's formed a dike preventing natural water flow from the northern Everglades marshes into what became Everglades National Park and the great fishery of Florida Bay.

Although there are gated discharge structures and culverts under Tamiami Trail, they allow a fraction of the excess rain water to flow south as the everglades system once functioned. Water is backed up throughout the Florida Everglades known as water conservation areas.

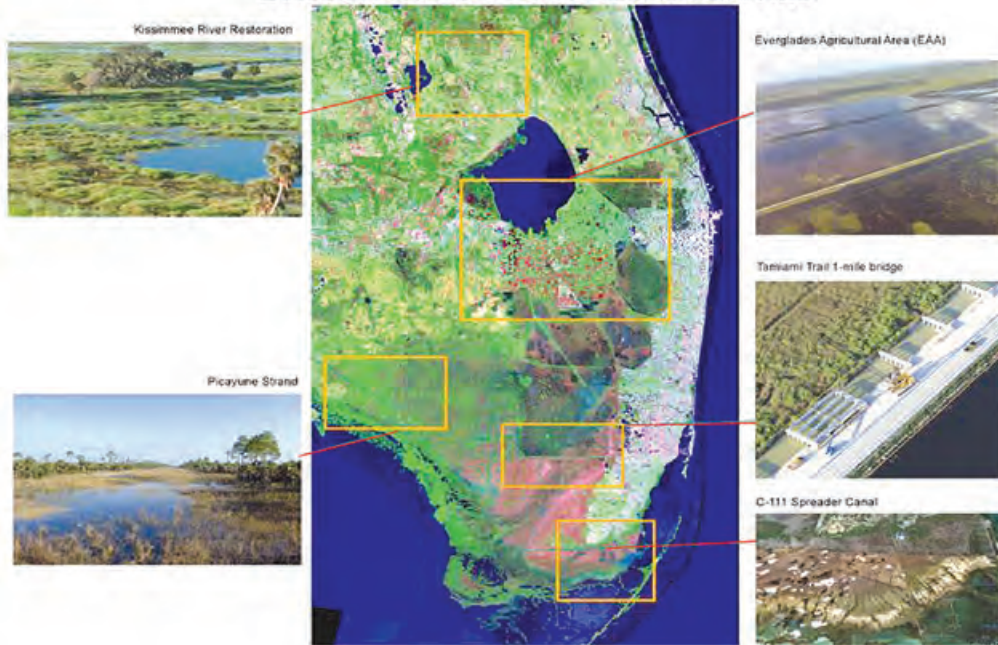
Overly high water is inundating the unique "Tree Islands," a major feature of the everglades system that provides essential habitat for deer and other mammals indigenous to the Everglades during times of excessive rain water. The Tree Islands also are "sacred sites" for the Miccosukee Native Americans.

Before the 1928 great hurricane that destroyed the small dike that then surrounded much of Lake Okeechobee, small farming communities grew around the south side of the lake. Winter vegetables were the main crop, but thousands of acres were devoted to raising cattle on the lush grass that the muck fields provided. U.S. Sugar grew a total of 50,000-plus acres of sugar cane. Their main profit was made from the sale of some of the finest Brahma cattle raised in the world for warm weather cattle ranches in Cuba, Central America and South America. The King Ranch had a similar operation for their famous crossbred cattle.

The low dike failed during a 1926 hurricane, and once again in 1928, drowning 3,000 people. President Herbert Hoover requested the Congress to pass legislation authorizing the construction of a high dike around Lake Okeechobee.

When there were long, wet summer rain seasons and fall hurricanes in the 1940s, excess water flowed through the Everglades and even over Tamiami

EVERGLADES RESTORATION PRIORITIES



The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan provides guidelines to restore the water resources of central and southern Florida. The plan includes more than 60 major components that aim to restore the ecosystem, while providing flood protection and ensuring water supplies.

Courtesy: Everglades Foundation

Trail into what is now the Everglades National Park. The Corps of Engineers studied the average size of Lake Okeechobee and designed a dike to surround it. The dike was made from local sand and gravel. The Corps then made a fateful engineering decision to cut off the natural flow-way from Lake Okeechobee to the downstream Everglades and dump it more “efficiently” to the east and west estuaries.

Perhaps the nearly 700,000 acres now known as the Everglades Agricultural Area of rich organic soils — the by-product of centuries of dying marsh grasses — was the incentive, but this error in judgment has created a conflict that will continue until sufficient land is acquired to restore a flow-way from Lake Okeechobee to the northern Florida Everglades and is then allowed to flow south and under Tamiami Trail into Everglades National Park.

SPECULATORS, DEVELOPERS CHANGE LANDSCAPE

The decision by the power brokers to persuade the-then governor of Florida and the congressional delegation to dredge the Kissimmee River to allow drainage in the headwaters of Lake Okeechobee was an ecological disaster. Thousands of acres of wetlands that served as storage for Lake Okeechobee and slowed down rain-driven floods moving south into the Kissimmee chain of lakes allowed developers to sell real

estate around those lakes, guaranteeing an unnatural low water level. The Kissimmee chain of lakes during high rainfall periods used to hold billions of gallons of water that was slowly released down the Kissimmee into Lake Okeechobee naturally. The wetland marshes flanking the Kissimmee’s two-mile-wide flood plain were wildlife treasures that were drained and turned into cattle pastures when the project was completed. Excessive rainwater then flowed at unnatural speed into the lake, raising it to dangerous levels and carrying a pollution-filled muck that now covers half the lake’s bottom.

The Caloosahatchee River first was connected to Lake Okeechobee by Hamilton Disston, one of Florida’s pioneer speculators who envisioned steamboats moving up from Ft. Myers and then the Kissimmee River to pick up winter crops and bring their loads back to Ft. Myers for shipment north.

After about 10 years, the St. Lucie Canal was completed in 1926 to provide easy access from the lake to Stuart, where ships would carry vegetables and fruit to the upper east coast and provide access for the east to the west coast for pleasure boats.

It did not take any length of time for the Corps to realize that an overflowing Lake Okeechobee threatened the “suspect construction” of the Hoover Dike and that the two outlets — the St. Lucie Canal and the Caloosahatchee River — would serve as escape valves whenever there was excessive rainfall and a rising lake that could threaten the integrity of the Hoover Dike — especially on the south side, where farming communities had grown in size. With the connection to the Everglades now severed, the present day colonel of the Corps of Engineers and his staff have no options other than releasing billions of gallons of water that is polluted from years of agricultural back-pumping from the Everglades Agricultural Area and now large amounts of nutrients flowing down the Kissimmee and the other headwaters of the lake. During his tenure, Gov. Bob Graham announced in the early 1980s a major effort to restore the Everglades system. Each successive governor has made a contribution toward that goal. The state has spent \$1.8 billion acquiring land to clean up the excess water flowing from the 500,000 acres of sugar cane — a crop that enjoys a federal taxpayer guaranteed price. The amount of cane sugar that is permitted to be imported into the United States is controlled by the sugar cartel to guarantee them maximum profit. Their leadership is unrelenting in its efforts to produce maximum profits at the Everglades’ expense.

Unless excessive Lake Okeechobee water is cleansed through a vast series of pollution-control artificial marsh systems built principally by the taxpayers of the 16 counties of south Florida for the sugar cane and winter crop growers, drainage cannot be allowed to flow into the Everglades, as it will change the botanical makeup of the River of Grass within months.

So where are we?

Before the flow way and the pollution control marshes are built and are operational, additional storage — both upstream in the lake’s headwaters and within the Everglades Agricultural Area — must be acquired, and a number of other priorities must be addressed.

THE STEPS REQUIRED

First, Tamiami Trail must be modified to allow massive amounts of water to flow southward into the park. A one-mile bridge and limited road raising are currently under construction. While this is a very positive first step, more needs to be done! The trail needs more bridges and road raising (up to another two feet) so that it is protected when the Everglades and the lake are once again connected.

Additionally, the southeast corner of the vast Everglades system known as Water Conservation Area 3B has a vital role in delivering Okeechobee and Florida Everglades’ excess water to flow under the proposed five-mile bridge. The Corps admits that when the eastern dike of Water Conservation Area 3B was constructed, it did not consider leakage to be a potential problem, as no one farmed or lived near the dike. Now, there are hundreds of acres of fruit trees and thousands of homes that could be impacted if the dike allowed significant seepage.

This problem must be solved before excess water can be released into Everglades National Park, relieving the entire system of too much water, which forces the discharges of billions of gallons of water down the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers.

We also have some local problems that must be faced with private drainage systems that drain millions of gallons of excess water into the St. Lucie River. Canals C-23, 24 and 25 were built at the urging of the Martin and St. Lucie County citrus growers and developers, who wanted their lands drained at public expense. Together with the C-44 and the St. Lucie Canal, more than 498,000 acres drain through canals into the estuary and lagoon.

These decisions have all combined to seriously add damaging amounts of polluted runoff into the St. Lucie and Indian rivers. There are plans to complete a pair of reservoirs — one on the St. Lucie, the other on the Caloosahatchee — to capture local runoff, hold it and clean it before slowly releasing it to flow into the two estuaries.

What is the hope for the two rivers that are being used as drainage escape routes?

- The federal and state governments must pay for the cost of modifications of the eastern dike of Water Conservation 3B to prevent seepage.

- The Federal government should use fuel tax revenue to raise Tamiami Trail and build additional bridges to allow water to flow into ENP.

- The state of Florida must acquire significant amounts of additional land both north and south of the lake or, at

minimum, enforceable easements to contain excessive water until it can be leaked slowly down to the lake from the north and south through a flow-way into the Everglades system.

- The gross pollution of Lake Okeechobee must become a state priority. Recent phosphorus loads to Lake Okeechobee have been in the 500-ton range, more than three times the goal of 140 tons. Today, estimates are that so much phosphorus has already been spread in the watershed to keep these heavy loads coming for decades. Today, nutrients from the EAA are less than 5 percent of the total into Lake Okeechobee. More than 90 percent is from the northern Lake Okeechobee watersheds. The failure to control phosphorus runoff is shared by the Florida Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Regulation.

- Agricultural and water utility interests must accept the fact that Lake Okeechobee’s level must be held below 16 feet and that “back pumping” polluted water from the EAA even in times of drought must not be permitted. Lake Okeechobee cannot continue to be considered a sewer.

- Additional lands within the vast EAA must be acquired by the state and the South Florida Water Management District to construct major additional storage capacity and pollution control marshes that will dramatically reduce the nutrients flowing off the sugar cane plantations into the Everglades system

- The sugar cane plantations should be forced to control and treat the thousands of gallons of polluted water on their land before they discharge it into the waters of the state. They should pay a far greater share for cleaning up their wastes for the needed additional pollution control marshes.

IT CAN BE DONE

These are tall orders, but think for a moment before we continue to rail against the Corps’ decision to lower Lake Okeechobee to protect the integrity of the Hoover Dike. Everything on my “must do” list represents one week of the Afghanistan War expenses. Everything on my wish list is obtainable.

Our congressional delegation has significant power in Congress. Our governor and Florida commissioner of agriculture are very persuasive with our legislature, even in times of recession.

Despite the need to reduce the incredible national deficit, don’t you think manmade disasters like what is threatening our rivers and the everglades ecosystem are worthy of national and state investments? ■

Mr. Reed served as the environmental advisor to governors Kirk and Askew, as assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and National Parks under presidents Nixon and Ford, 14 years on the board of the South Florida Water Management District, chaired the Commission on Florida’s Environmental Future and is currently vice chairman of the Everglades Foundation.

Hobe Sound CURRENTS

PUBLISHER AND EDITOR

Barbara Clowdus

WEBSITE DESIGN

Sonic Fish Studios

PRINTER

Southeast Offset Inc

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Phone: 772.245.6564

email: editor@hscurrents.com
advertising@hscurrents.com

web address:
www.HobeSoundCurrents.com

'Pillowcase' arrests on rise, but so are burglaries

Of little consolation to residents, the rash of burglaries to hit Martin County over the past 18 months or so are not confined to this county, or even to the Treasure Coast, according to the Martin County Sheriff's Department.

"These burglaries are being made by a gang—the Snap Money Gang based in Broward—and they're hitting the east coast of Florida from Ft. Lauderdale to Brevard County," said Deputy Sheriff Tony Dalem, of the Community Policing Unit based in Hobe Sound, "and even maybe even a little farther north. We know who they are, and a lot of them are now in jail, but not all of them. Not yet."

Dalem was speaking at a community safety meeting Nov. 13, sponsored by the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce, at the First United Methodist Church of Hobe Sound on Federal Highway. At that time, there had been 61 "pillowcase" burglaries in Martin County, all conducted with the same modus operandi.

They work together in small groups, predominantly young, black men and some white and Hispanic women, driving through a neighborhood in a new rental car with tinted windows, who determine if a targeted house is empty by knocking on the door early on weekday mornings. If no one answers, they will go to the rear sliding glass door, break through it, go directly to the bedrooms, and take small valuables that fit into a pillowcase—gold or silver jewelry, collectible coins, cash, guns, small electronics—then leave.

"They know what they want and where it is, and in less than five minutes, they're done, out the door," Dalem added, "and his buddy picks him up and they drive away. The gold and the silver are melted down that day and sold. It's quick, to the point, and they wear gloves....If we don't catch them immediately, you can kiss your jewelry goodbye. You'll never get it back."

When asked to make another presentation to Zeus Park residents after a recent helicopter search for a suspect had rattled the serenity, not to mention the nerves, of that community, Dalem responded on Tuesday evening, Dec. 4,

with a similar presentation at the Hobe Sound Community Center—except the statistics had already changed.

"There have been nine more burglaries," Dalem told the gathering, "those were in Jensen Beach and Sewell's Point, so the total number of pillowcase burglaries is now up to 70."

And although three burglaries have taken place in Zeus Park recently, none of them have been by the pillowcase gang, Dalem said.

"I could give you 15 different indicators as to why I know they're not pillowcase burglaries," he said, "but it doesn't mean that they (Snap Money Gang) won't come to Zeus Park. You still must be aware of what's going on."

The majority of "hits" have been in the Gomez area of Hobe Sound, Palm City, Tropical Farms, and now Sewell's Point and Jensen Beach.

And the most "popular" day for burglary is Thursday.

"I cannot tell you why that is," he added, "but we track when they take place, and there's been more on Thursdays than any other day of the week."

The gang is based in Ft. Lauderdale, Dalem added, and its members range in age from 18-30, but most are younger than 25 and live in Miami-Dade, Broward or Palm Beach counties. As sheriff deputies patrol neighborhoods, anyone driving a late model car, particularly one with darkly tinted windows, who comes from any of those counties is taken into the sheriff's department for questioning.

"This way, we know who they are and where to find them if something turns up later," he explained.

A multi-agency approach, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has led investigators to believe that the



Martin County Deputy Sheriff Anthony Dalem, of the Community Policing Unit based in Hobe Sound, updates Zeus Park residents regarding the "pillowcase" burglaries in Hobe Sound and elsewhere.

burglaries may possibly be a gang initiation, required first of potential members. Agencies currently are working together so if a car rental is suspected to have been made by a gang member, they alert police in other counties to be on the lookout for that car.

Dalem also says that cars are "staged" at certain intersections, such as at Kanner Highway and I-95, and in particular neighborhoods in order to intercept cars suspected in burglaries.

"And on Thursdays," Dalem adds, "we have twice as many cars out."

The best defense, he added, is for neighbors to watch out for neighbors, and to call in anyone or anything that looks intrusive or out of place.

"This is the time to make friends with your neighbors," he said, "even if you don't like them." ■

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT TIPS TO THWART BURGLARIES

1. Be alert to strangers in your neighborhood, particularly if driving new cars, vans or trucks with tinted windows, and call 911 to report them.
2. Keep shrubs less than two-feet tall, and tree limbs trimmed no lower than eight feet above ground to improve visibility of your house to neighbors and police patrols.
3. Install security cameras, if possible, or burglar alarms that sound loudly when tripped. Turn on alarms.
4. Record the serial numbers of electronics; take photos of jewelry and other valuables to aid in recovery of stolen items.
5. Bolt home safes to the floor.
6. Do not keep jewelry in jewelry boxes; use containers designed to look like ordinary household cleaners or other devices.
7. Do not expect dogs to be a deterrent. Even a pit bull was subdued, locked in a bedroom, and traumatized during a recent "pillowcase" burglary.
8. If you are away from your house, leave on a light and a television, and if possible leave a car in the driveway; if out of town, make sure neighbors pick up newspapers and take in mail.
9. Even gated communities are not immune to burglaries.
10. Do not hesitate to call police, even if you are unsure whether or not a person is an intruder, and call 911, not the general office number.

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772-932-7299
www.floridalivingrealty.com
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HOBE SOUND CHRISTMAS

A DAY TO REMEMBER

If a perfect day for a parade could be bottled and sold, the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce would be rolling in the dough. Saturday, Dec. 1, was never more pleasant in Hobe Sound, with a festive air floating above a light-hearted crowd of thousands gathered along Dixie Highway and Bridge Road as they watched 74 units march, roll and bark their way through town.

The young, the young at heart, and all those in between applauded, saluted and cheered at school bands, honor guards, and famous characters that included the Grinch, Ronald McDonald, the Chik-Fil-A cow, and, of course, Harry MacArthur and his speeding chair.

The Art Stroll had opened that morning for early morning shoppers, and a smattering of food vendors provided some dawgs and beverages, as well as some gourmet treats. A few businesses took advantage of the crowd by moving outside, including hair stylists Deanna Rothgeb and Kendralynn Deem from The Hair Company, who offered red and green Christmas hair extensions for \$5 each. "This is something we're going to offer right up to Christmas," said Rothgeb, "so be sure to tell everyone just to stop by and do something special for the holidays."

A new business was launched, 2 Coastal Girls, who make and sell appliqued T-shirts with a coastal theme, and their cheerful shirts flapped and waved in the breeze from their sidewalk tent on Dixie. Another business, Kwik Stop, had a party in its parking lot with a band playing, glasses of wine clinking, and dozens of kids lining up for a turn in a free bounce house.

"Last year, this parking lot was just full of bored kids waiting for the parade to start," said Kwik Stop proprietor Moe Nasser, "so I decided to do something about it and got the bounce house. Next year, it will be even bigger and better."

Along the parade route, youngsters petted therapy dogs and baby alligators, stared in awe at the Sheriff's posse of horses, and collected armloads of loot that included necklaces, T-shirts, beach balls, flying disks, sun visors, jingle bracelets and inflatable hammers.

No one was happier to get off her feet and just watch from the Mancuso Building balcony than Chamber volunteer Lillian Johnson, who organized the parade, and no one was more pleased that it ended with every unit having moved smoothly into place than volunteer Mike Ennis, the behind-the-scenes parade master.

"This is my 27th year," he said with a grin, as he followed right behind the last unit—Santa Claus riding and waving from inside a Martin County fire truck—as he began collecting road cones and barriers. Within the hour, the streets had been returned to travelers. The 2012 Hobe Sound Christmas Parade was over.

--Barbara Cloudus



Elora Fucigna



Martin County Sheriff's Posse



Santa loses his reindeer so he can ride in a fire truck.



The Hobe Sound Soccer Club was one of the parade sponsors.



Metz Construction was one of the parade sponsors.



Recording the parade to share with others.



Harry MacArthur in his souped



The sign said it all.



Helen Feller, 13, Stuart

HOBESOUND FLORIDA TMIAS PARADE 2012



Brandon Vames, 6, said he'd never been to a parade like this one.

Kimberly Warnick

Rebecca Negrón and Maddie

Bella

Reba Marshall

Kendralynn Deem, left, and Deanna Rothgeb of The Hair Company

Waiting for a turn at the bounce house at Kwik Stop's parking lot party.

Martin County Commission Chair Sarah Heard

The Hobe Sound Nature Center brought alligators and snakes.

Major sponsor Treasure Coast Irrigation brought a flotilla of tractors decked out for the holidays.

Coastal Paddleboarding float

Moe Nasser, hosting a parking-lot party

Therapy dogs spread some love.

Steve DeSena and his famous T-shirts

Thur and sons up chair.

Commissioner Anne Scott

Commissioner Haddox

Tolton, Adeleine, Meehan

Painted 'rivers of memory' at Hobe Sound Art Gallery

Maya Ellenson

Currents Staff Writer

*That you're wavin' from the back roads by
the rivers of my memory ever smilin', ever
gentle on my mind – John Hartford*

Art galleries are not about size, but rather the content they embrace. Just as Alfred Stieglitz's legendary Photo-Secession Gallery at the turn of the 20th century was baptized by Marsden Hartley as "the largest small room in the world" due to its aesthetics and the modern artists it promoted, so too is the Hobe Sound Art Gallery on Dixie Highway a small room housing big works.

And just as Stieglitz's galleries created a sense of intimacy, so does the Hobe Sound Art Gallery as it allows you to experience fully all the dimensions of an artist's work in a cozy, elegant setting, in sharp contrast to today's all-too-common remote electronic exhibitions. The Gallery induces a sense of community as well, by providing a cultural retreat to area residents, essential for preserving a small-town feel.

Small towns seem to reveal themselves again in the soft drawl of owner

Captain Robert M. Lumppp as he greets you at the gallery door, asking that you call him Capt. Bob or simply Bob, although Little Rock, Ark., can hardly be considered a small town. Opened in August and suitably anchored by the upscale Courtyard Grill in the old Hobe Sound Post Office building, the Hobe Sound Art Gallery features four southern artists with an elegant symmetry of styles reminiscent of chamber music, which Goethe described as "four rational people conversing."

The visual conversation includes David Berger, whose realistic and panoramic oil canvases complement Matt Coburn's impressionist subjects in a vibrant palette-knife impasto of intriguingly broken colors. Hobe Sound artist Suzanne Briley's charming compositions converse beautifully with Capt. Bob's lighthouses and shorelines, imbued with his own "rivers of memory."

He is a retired Mississippi River boat captain, whose life resembles one of the longest rivers in the world with its mysterious lore and constant rhythm of ebbs and tides. Prior to becoming a licensed Merchant Marine officer, he embarked on a large-scale career in broadcasting, advertising and commercial art that changed course one summer after he helped a friend build a houseboat to cruise the Illinois River.



Capt. Robert Lumppp stands among only a small portion of the Hobe Sound Art Gallery's works of art.

"That summer changed my life forever," he says, a new course that lead him on a three-decade career of operating excursion boats, for many years based in Mark Twain's hometown, Hannibal, Mo. His boats plied the waters of Chattanooga, Knoxville, Louisville, Mobile, Tunica, Miss., and Little Rock, carrying more than three million passengers on sightseeing and dinner cruises and charters.

After retirement, he and his wife of 47 years, Sally, a retired judge and stained glass artist, sought refuge from the cold on the east coast of Florida and settled on Hobe Sound after spending a weekend last year at the Hobe Sound Festival of the Arts.

"We fell in love with this place," he says. "We thought the quiet and solitude would be good to pursue our art."

Now with the time to be a full-time artist and gallery owner, Capt. Bob fulfills his lifelong urge to draw and paint, working in a room at the rear of his gallery, applying the lessons he learned from Duane R. Light of Studio West, Hannah Ingmire of Hannibal, Mo., Dr. Mary Stafford at the Arkansas Arts Center and David Paul Cook at White Wagon Farm in his preferred mediums of acrylic and watercolor. He identifies his technique with downright clarity: "impressionist in palette, realist in line." Novelty of expression is harmoniously intermingled with tradition.

Capt. Bob's watercolors call to mind American luminism with almost invisible brush strokes and lavishly scattered light. His art is personal and instilled with lyricism. As Capt. Bob's favorite bluegrass singer and composer, John Hartford, sings, "the rivers flowing gentle on my mind," Capt.

Bob paints what he feels and knows the best – water, with its tacit pulse, reflections and elusive hues.

Capt. Bob is not just a landscape painter, however, and like the Mississippi River with its sacred lore, his Hobe Sound Gallery has its holy of holies – dramatic images of the American flag, a patriotic theme that Capt. Lumppp adopted not long ago. His flag paintings are often compared to those by American artist Jasper Johns.

In Capt. Lumppp's Hobe Sound Art Gallery, though, there is no monochromatic flag or muted colors. His flags boast energetic voices, often emerging from a rich mosaic background of earthly warm mustards, a sunlight of cadmium yellows and descending celestial cobalts with silky overtones of all shades in between. Palette wise, his images of the American flag surface from all four elements – earth, air, fire and water – from nature itself, as they embody the integrity and glory of American history.

No wonder they are much admired and have sold so often, these visual archetypes of the American psyche that have been called "a symbol of yourself." Capt. Bob even created a website just for them: www.theflagpainter.com. But resist the temptation to go online until after you've made a personal visit to the Hobe Sound Art Gallery, an experience that exceeds the boundaries of its walls. ■

The Hobe Sound Art Gallery is at 11970 SE Dixie Highway, about a quarter-mile south of Bridge Road in Hobe Sound. Hours are 11-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, but Capt. Bob says if those hours do not fit your schedule, no problem. He is delighted to have an excuse to come in anytime. Just call him on his cell: 772-341-1343.

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♦ **JENNIE DRESS KITCHEN-KOVASH**, 92, of Hobe Sound, died Dec. 2 at Treasure Coast Hospice in Stuart. Born Dec. 28, 1919, in Logan County, W.Va., she moved to Hobe Sound in June 2004 coming from Chapmanville, W.Va. A retired nurse, she was a member of the Wesleyan Methodist faith. Survivors include her daughter, Peggy J. May, of Hobe Sound; son, J. D. Kitchen of Old Town, Fla.; two sisters, Virginia Kennedy and Charlotte Simpkins both of West Virginia; one brother, Joseph Dress of West Virginia, two grandchildren, Dale Scheible, Sr. and Jenna Kitchen; and two great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husbands, Olus Kitchen and John Kovash. Memorial Contributions may be made to Treasure Coast Hospice.

♦ **DELORIS "DEE" E KUHL**, of Hobe Sound, died Dec. 1. She was born March 29, 1930, to Charles and Ruth Gaffney of Mt Horeb, N.J., and was predeceased by brothers Charles and Douglas Gaffney. She is survived by her daughters, Debbie Caramagno, and husband Tommy, Betsy Miller and husband, Jeff, and two grandchildren, Travis Kyle and Kodey Lee Miller. An accomplished Florida artist and supporter of the arts, she was a lifetime member of the Lighthouse Gallery in Tequesta, having served on the board and an art instructor. She also gifted her talents to the Palm Beach Ceramic League, serving on its board as president for several years. Her work had been exhibited in many Florida state shows and galleries, including the A.E Backus Museum of Art in Fort Pierce, and most recently at the Hobe Sound Art Gallery.

♦ **JAMES MARTINELLO**, 90, of Hobe Sound, died Nov. 29 at St. Mary's Medical Center in West Palm Beach. Born in White Plains, N.Y., he has resided in Hobe Sound for 19 years, coming from Jupiter, Fla. In Chicago, he was a retired stockbroker and former partner at Goodbody and Company; after retirement, he and his wife owned and operated four Fabulous Fakes jewelry stores in Palm Beach and Martin counties. He was a military police officer during World War II serving in the United States Army. Survivors include a daughter, Joy Martinello of Portland, Ore.; a son, Robert Martinello of Atlanta, Ga.; a brother, Albert Martinello of Melbourne Beach, Fla., and three grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Mary Irene Tromp-Martinello.

♦ **CLAUDINE CAPPS**, 83, of Hobe Sound, died Oct. 16 at Treasure Coast Hospice. Born in Rosboro, Ark., she resided in Hobe Sound for the past six years, moving here from Statesboro, Ga. Survivors include her husband of 66 years, Charlie A. Capps of Hobe Sound; four daughters, Susan B. Mooring of Palm Beach Gardens, Andrea G. Premuroso and

Rhonda E. Mack, both of Hobe Sound, and Melissa G. Rembis of Mount Orab, Ohio; two sons, Thomas E. Capps of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and John W. Capps of Kissimmee, Fla.; brother, John Thornton of Glenwood, Ariz.; sister, Jodi Smith of Prescott, Ariz.; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. She was preceded in death by her son, David W. Capps, in 1971. Memorial contributions in her honor may be made to Treasure Coast Hospice.

♦ **JESSICA LYNN JOHNSON**, 36, of Fort Pierce and formerly of Hobe Sound, died Nov. 20 at home. Born in Wichita Falls, Tex., she was a waitress and recently returned to school where she received an associate degree from Indian River State College. She was a Christian. Survivors include her mother and step-father, Kelley Johnson Saulnier and James Saulnier of Wellington; father and step-mother, Carlton and Patty Johnson of Springfield, Mo.; two sisters, Maegan Johnson of West Palm Beach, and Kathryn Saulnier of Hobe Sound; brothers, Michael Johnson and Bobby Johnson, both of Nashville, Tenn.; Adam Johnson and David Johnson, both of Springfield, Mo.; grandparents, Doris Ruth Farthing of Alamogordo, N.M.; Carl Johnson of Kansas City, Mo.; James and Janice Saulnier of Boston, Mass.. Memorial contributions may be made in Jessica's memory to National Alliance of Mental Illness, 3803 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203 or Wounded Warriors, 4899 Belfort Road #300 Jacksonville, FL 32256.

♦ **MAUREEN LORETTA TODD**, 79, of Stuart died Wednesday, Nov. 7 at Parkway Health and Rehabilitation Center in Stuart. She was a member of St. Christopher Catholic Church in Hobe Sound. Survivors include: sons Michael Roger Todd and wife, Gale, of Hobe Sound, and John Patrick Todd and wife, Judith, of Yardville, N.J.; daughter, Diane Marie Wade and husband, Christopher, of Rockaway, N.J.; brother, William Parks and wife, Ann, of Greentown, Pa.; and seven grandchildren. Born in Jersey City, N.J. she moved to the Treasure Coast in 1994 from Jupiter, Fla. She retired as principal of Hillside School in Closter, N.J. During her career she worked three years as a teacher in Ridgefield, N.J., before coming to Closter, where she worked for 25 years. She was a teacher for seven years; reading specialist for 11 years and principal for her remaining years there. She also worked briefly as an adjunct professor at Alphonse College. She received her bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University and later earned two master's degrees from Jersey City State

College. She was a former member of St. Vincent's Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps in Bayonne, N.J. She was preceded in death by her husband, James P. Todd and brothers, Roger and Charles Parks. Memorial Contributions may be made to Treasure Coast Hospice.

♦ **ALLEN PARRISH**, 96, known in his early years as the "Country Boy Auto Ambassador" and "Mr. Automotive," died at home in Hobe Sound, surrounded by his family, after a long struggle with cancer. Formerly of Bloomfield Hills, Mich., he was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Vivian Knutson Parrish. Allen was born in Humphreys County, Tenn., to Zetta Belle and Isaac Parrish, a circuit riding Presbyterian preacher. He is survived by his three daughters: Sandra Ebling (Walter) of Bloomfield Hills, Mich., Karen Brown (Bill) of Springfield, Va., Sonja Kropff of Hobe Sound,, seven grandchildren, 13 great-grand-children and his 101 year old brother, Ike, of Mesa, Ariz. He loved sales and eventually formed Parrish Products, a worldwide distributor of radio controlled garage doors. He worked his way up in the automotive business and was instrumental in the development of innovations, such as the power steering pump for his company, Federal



Industries. TRW, Inc., the automotive and aerospace company, acquired his company, where Mr. Parrish ultimately became vice president in charge of worldwide automotive customer requirements. During his more than 40 years of service with TRW and its predecessor companies, he was universally respected by his peers, who honored him by electing him chairman of the Automotive Hall of Fame. He was active in his community and churches. He was a former member, elder and one of the founders of Camp Skyline, part of the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Mich. He was also a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Tequesta, and Spruce Presbyterian Church of Spruce, Mich. He was a member of the Birmingham 44 Masonic Lodge, Detroit Moslem Shriners and former life member of Oakland Hills Country Club in Birmingham, Mich. Al also served as President of Lost Lake Woods Club in Lincoln, Mich. Memorial donations may be made to Kristi's Christmas (in memory of Allen's late granddaughter), West Springfield Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 2097, Springfield, Va., 22152, or to Camp Skyline, 1669 W. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.

♦ **LARRY STEPHEN HAMLIN**, 61, of Hobe Sound, died Nov. 2. He is survived by his father, James E. Hamlin; children Chandra, Adriana, Michelle, and Daniel; two brothers and a sister.

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Roman Hevia has been making the trip north on Federal

Highway from Jupiter to Stuart for the past six years as he delivered Florida-grown produce to Stuart restaurants each day.

"Every time I drove through Hobe Sound," he said, "I thought to myself, they really need a good produce stand here, and with every trip, I started looking for a spot."

He found his spot at the entrance to Hobe Heights in a small shopping strip that provides easy access to travelers, but also allows them to get off the sometimes-busy highway. His shop, marked by two hibiscus bushes by the front door, is called The Mustard Seed, and was the

former location of Farmer Bob's Produce.

"My prices are much lower than other places," he says, "because I've got really low overhead, so I can keep my prices down. Customers really appreciate that, and 80 percent of everything in here is grown in south Florida."

He also looks for natural, healthy additions to his produce, so he offers an aloe drink and honey from Loxahatchee. His celery is \$1.25 bunch, a fresh pineapple grown in Homestead is \$2.50, bananas are 59 cents per pound, and grapes, \$1.29. He stocks the standard fare, including tomatoes, cantaloupe, green peppers, whatever is in season.

His biggest worry is that residents are not aware that a new produce stand is in town.

"I make signs; I try to get their attention," he says, "but, so far, not very many people know I'm here." ■



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Over the past two years working as a hair stylist in Hobe

Sound, Marli Mager accumulated many loyal customers, she says. When she moved to the A Cut Above Salon in Hobe Heights, her customers no longer knew where to find her. "I learned an important lesson," she said, at her new location. "I need to keep my customers' phone numbers, so I can let them know if I move!" ■

Port Salerno, still reeling from the loss of business brought

to the area by the Finz Waterfront Grill, will see a new project come to fruition, according to Deanna Smith, who owns the Wings of Deliverance Outreach Center on Geraldine Street in Stuart.

She announced her intentions to expand her operation, which currently offers worship services and counseling, to include cultural offerings for children, including drama, film production, dance, fashion design, music, etiquette, nutrition, technology, career prep, and tutoring, all to be housed in a new 39,000 square foot building, which also will have banquet facilities.

The \$5 million project is funded largely by donations, grants, and sales of nutritional products by Real Food 4 Kids through Wings of Deliverance. Once the center is open, many of the events hosted there will help fund the center, according to Smith.

For more information or to make a contribution, call Deanna Smith, 888-859-8774. ■

It's All Over...Art 2012

Contrary to the name of the event, the opening night of the "It's All Over" exhibition at The Commons on Robyn Street is actually the genesis of a Contemporary Cultural Center in Hobe Sound. At least, that's the hope of its organizers and supporters.

Artist Boshia Stone, as calm as the eye in the center of a storm, spends her time these days amid the tempest of final preparations for opening night Friday, Dec. 14, of the "It's All Over...Art 2012" exhibition. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. for a POP-UP cultural event unlike any previously in Hobe Sound, or perhaps anywhere else ever on the Treasure Coast.

The exhibition will gather a group of about 20 artists for opening night. Their artwork, dance, photography, film and music will be based on the predictions surrounding the end-of-the-world date of the Mayan calendar.

"We're a little early," says Stone, with an unmistakable twinkle in her eye. "The Mayans predicted the world would end on Dec. 21, 2012, so I guess we just want to make sure everyone has a chance to experience this fabulous multi-dimensional cultural event first!"

All the senses will be engaged: visually, the artwork is stunning and thought-provoking, the music and dance is exhilarating, and the food will be enticingly aromatic and visually tempting.

"There is a tremendous 'buzz' in the community right now," Stone adds. "Everyone involved and those who are beginning to hear about it are getting genuinely excited."

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet many of the artists whose works are displayed, as they enjoy "artistic" hors d'ourves by area restaurants, dance and music performances, and a juried exhibit of contemporary art forms that include paintings, glass, sculpture, fiber art, photography, and film.



"Posieden's Wrath," 13' x 9', by Irwin Berman

A private, invitation-only VIP event will be offered earlier in the evening to potential donors who have expressed interest over the past year in supporting the creation of the Contemporary Cultural Center.

"All of this is happening because of the overwhelming response we had last year at our Festival of the Trees event," Stone says. "It got people talking about the possibility of creating a permanent center for contemporary art forms in Hobe Sound, and The Commons, with its 18-foot-high ceilings and 11,000 square feet of white brick walls and gray concrete floors, makes it the perfect venue for the center."

Dance performances will be by Preston Contemporary Dance Theatre, accompanied by Terry Barber; conceptual installations by Rachel Tribble and James Hook; abstracts by Stephen Stone, Katrinia Fiumara, Daniel Gorostiaga, Jen Dacota and Cynthia Cooper; sculpture by Nadia Utto and Josef Utto, oils by Roseanne Williams; charcoals by Christina de la Vega, photomanipulation by Irwin Berman, glass art by Barry Blecher; painting by Sylvia Proidl and Boshia Stone; film video by Kari Tribbel; and photography by Leo Arbezni, Andrew Feiler and Thomas Winter.



Artists Boshia Stone, right, and Nadia Utto direct the hanging of artwork from the 18-ft ceiling of what they hope will become the Contemporary Cultural Center in Hobe Sound.

Sponsors of the event include Dennis and Roseanne Williams, Scott Hughes Architects, Suncoast National Bank, Martin Arts Council, Hobe Sound Sprinklers, Rood Landscaping, Hobe Sound Currents, Jenkins Landscaping, Landmark Arts, Jonathon W. Andrews Fine Floral Design, Martin County Boys & Girls Clubs, Office Depot, The Print Shop, Hobe Sound Ace

Hardware, Iris Upholstery and the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce.

Refreshments at the kick-off will be provided by Taste, Flash Beach Grill, the Courtyard Grille, edible ART by the Krumbcakes Bakery, all in Hobe Sound, along with caviar pizzas by the Pizza Girls of West Palm Beach, EVO Italian Dining of Tequesta, Fresh Market of Stuart, and Roy's Liquor and Fine Wines of Ft. Pierce.

The Commons, a building intended originally by owners Robert and Jan Webster of Hobe Sound to house a manufacturing facility, is at 8827 SE Robyn Street. As a cultural center, it would be the site of additional pop-up art, music, dance and conceptual events, host workshops in art, dance, opera, glass arts, writing, and music, host international artists exhibitions, and will include studio space to working artists.

"We hope to have both local and international artists to exhibit and teach workshops," Stone adds. "It truly will make a huge impact on Hobe Sound and on the entire Treasure Coast."

Tickets for the opening are \$10 each and are available at the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce office, 772-546-4724, the Martin Arts Council, 772-287-6676, or from Leo Arbezni at the Images of Paradise office in Hobe Sound, 772-545-7655. The exhibition will run for two weeks with a \$5 admission fee. For more information, contact Boshia Stone at boshajstone@bellsouth.net or Leo Arbezni 772- 545-7655. ■



Artist Boshia Stone



One panel of an installation by Rachel Tribble



"Impact," 33" x 34" by Katarina Fiumara

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Weekends until Jan. 12 Holiday Thrift Store



On your way to the Wal-Mart store in south Stuart (yes, we all do it) stop by the House of Hope Holiday Thrift Store in the Palm Square shopping plaza at 4456 SE Federal Highway. Open from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays through Jan. 12, the store has concentrated a vast collection of holiday gifts, home décor, and just plain fun stuff, all at great prices of course, to benefit the programs of the House of Hope of Martin County. You'll find the store in the former Golf Shop just south of Monroe Street on the west side of U.S. 1.

Sunday, Dec. 9 Bel Canto Singers Christmas Concert

The Bel Canto Singers Christmas Concert will be performed at the St. Christopher Catholic Church on U.S. 1 in Hobe at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 9. A \$10 donation is requested. For info, call 772-546-5150 or email gmccddw@comcast.net.

Tuesday, Dec. 11 Sips & Wags at Pirate's Cove

To support the Humane Society of the Treasure Coast, Pirate's Cove Resort on the scenic Manatee Pocket in Port Salerno is offering 20% off their food on Tuesday, Dec. 11, plus two free drinks for a \$10 donation to benefit the animals at the Humane Society.



Saturday, Dec. 15 A Wildlife Presentation

The public is invited to Phipps Park Campground (Where, you say? The park is on Locks Road in Palm City.) on Saturday, Dec. 15, at 11 am for a FREE Florida wildlife presentation by the Treasure Coast Wildlife Center. It is a chance to get up close and learn about gopher tortoises, alligators, owls, or indigo snakes, the original inhabitants of our area. It's a great addition to spending the rest of the day at the mall.



Weekend, Dec. 14-16 A North Pole Variety Show

The Marvelous North Pole Variety Show at the Barn Theatre includes original holiday skits, beloved songs, classic and modern dance to amuse and delight audiences for a three-day limited engagement at the Barn Theatre. From the North Pole Dating Game to the Marvelous Wonderette's rendition of "White Christmas," two dozen young people from the Barn Theatre and South Fork High School arts programs have created an enchanting holiday entertainment celebrating the spirit of the holidays. Performances are at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14 and Saturday, Dec. 15 and 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 16. Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased at www.barn-theatre.com, by calling 772-287-4884 or at the box office at 2400 S.E. Ocean Boulevard in Stuart Mondays through Thursdays from noon to 4 p.m. and one hour prior to the performance.

Weekend, Dec. 14-15 2012 Holiday Concert

The Jensen Beach Performing Arts High School will perform on Friday and Saturday nights, Dec. 14, 15, at 7 p.m. each night at the Performing Arts Center, 2875 N.W. Goldenroad Road, Jensen Beach. Tickets are \$10. For more info, call 772-232-3500 ext. 225, or email paulj@martin.k12.fl.us.

Saturdays, Dec. 15 & 22 Light Up The Season

Helping People Succeed "Lights Up the Season" with two floors of offices full of holiday decorations, lights, villages, tropical views and more open for FREE public tours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Saturday, Dec. 15, and the following Saturday, Dec. 22, at its office at 1100 SE Federal Highway, Stuart (just south of Johnson Avenue and U.S. 1 on the west side of the highway). The tour is free, but donations to the nonprofit will be appreciated. For more info, call 772-320-0770, and to learn more about Helping People Succeed, go to hpsfl.org.

Sunday, Dec. 16 Opus 2013 Combined Choir Holiday Concert

One of the season's most-talked about events, the Opus Combined Choir from Martin County High School will perform its Holiday Concert Sunday, Dec. 16, at The Lyric Theatre in downtown Stuart. The popular choir will offer two performances, one at 3 p.m. and the other at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and will benefit the choir. For more information, contact Lisa Colletti at 772.215.7346 or lisacolletti@remax.net.

Saturday, Dec. 15 Pictures with Santa in Port Salerno

Blue Water Editions and Gallery at 4665 SE Dixie Hwy. in Port Salerno is hosting a "Picture with Santa" event from noon to 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15. Get a free 5x7 picture taken with Santa for each nonperishable food item donated. For more info: 772.286.0484.



Weekend, Dec. 14-16 Yesteryear Village at S. Fla Fairgrounds



This just may be worth your drive to Southern Blvd. in Palm Beach County, so our warm-weather kids can experience a Christmas with ice skating, hot chocolate, apple cider, and gingerbread houses celebrated against a backdrop of strolling carolers. Yesteryear Village on the South Florida Fairgrounds, with a 30-foot Christmas tree and synchronized light show, has 20 historic buildings festooned in Christmas lights and garland. A community tree trim competition, a live Nativity scene, holiday crafters and a General Store, pony rides, children's games and a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus round out the activities. Admission is \$10; children ages 2 and under are admitted free, and parking is free. Or purchase an advance admission ticket for \$15 to January's South Florida Fair at any Palm Beach Publix to receive a free child admission ticket to Christmas in Yesteryear Village. Take Southern Boulevard to Sansbury's Way (west of Turnpike). Go North. Enter Gate 3 to Main Expo entrance. For more info, call 561.793.0333.

Weekend, Dec. 14-15 The Grand Miracle Drive-Thru Nativity



Another signature event in Martin County, The Grand Miracle Drive-Thru Nativity, will be Friday and Saturday, Dec. 14-15, at the New Hope Fellowship Church at 3900 S.W. Citrus Blvd. in Palm City. You also can choose to park your car and walk through a Galilean village with authentic food, a petting farm, as well as shopkeepers offering handcrafted items, demonstrations, and interactive activities. The event is 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. both evenings. For more info, call 772-283-8343 or go to palmcitynewhope.com.

Friday, Dec. 14 It's All Over...Art 2012

A fundraiser to benefit the creation of a Contemporary Cultural Center in Hobe Sound will be Friday, Dec. 14, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at The Commons, at 8827 SE Robywn Street featuring the works of more than 15 artists based on the theme of the end-of-world predictions indicated by the Mayan calendar. Admission is \$10 per person and will include "artsy" canapes, music and dance performances. The exhibit will remain open for two weeks following the event with a reduced charge of \$5. For more information, contact Bosha Stone, 917.714.1400, or Leo Arbezniuk, 772.545.7655.

Friday, Dec. 14 Holidays Around the World

The Children's Museum of the Treasure Coast on NE Indian River Drive in Jensen Beach is offering half-priced admission from 5 p.m. -7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 14, so children may experience holiday celebrations from around the world. For info, call 772-225-7575, or go to childrensmuseumtc.org.



Friday, Dec. 14 For Teen Writers

A FREE discussion about creative writing, as well as help with plots and characters and critiques of sample works, will be offered to teens 13-18 at the Hoke Library, 1150 N.W. Jack Williams Way in Jensen Beach from 4-5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14. They will meet again each month through May. For more info, call 772-463-2870.

Saturday, Dec. 15 Port Salerno Christmas Jamboree

Last year's event included lighting a 50' Christmas tree, the delivery of five tons of snow for kids to play in, a sound stage with carolers and entertainment, hot dogs and soda, and Mr. & Mrs. Claus arriving via fire truck. Santa's elves gave away 400 toys and 60 bicycles to neighborhood kids. Port Salerno Community Promotions, sponsors of the event, promise that the 2012 Christmas Jamboree on Saturday, Dec. 15, beginning at noon, will be bigger and better, with more food and activities, including numerous arts and crafts vendors.

Dec. 16-Jan. 4 Tequesta Winter Camp

Open to non-residents, the Tequesta Winter Camp will host children from ages 5-14 for two weeks from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with a host of fun, daily activities. Registrations are still being taken. Non-resident fees are \$85 per week, discounted to \$70 if signed up for both weeks. Call Kathleen for more information at 561-768-0475.

New Year's Eve 5th Annual New Year's Eve Extravaganza

The Jove Comedy Experience brings a hilarious show to the 5th Annual New Year's Eve Extravaganza at Jupiter's Atlantic Arts Theater on Monday, Dec. 31, at 5pm and 8pm. The show recaps the year that was 2012, with equal doses of satire and parody—a perfect alternative to the same old New Year's Eve traditions. Tickets are \$20 per person and can be purchased by calling the Atlantic Theater Box Office at 561.575.4942 or by emailing jesse@atlanticartsacademy.com. The Atlantic Arts Theater is at 6743 W. Indiantown Road. Shows offer audiences written sketch comedy similar to what you might find on Saturday Night Live, to live audience participation where cast members get suggestions from the audience and create a comedic suggestion from one word, similar to what was seen on "Whose Line Is it Anyway?"

Friday, Jan. 4 Light, Wings & Other Things

An opening reception for the "Light, Wings & Other Things" exhibition by photographer Geoff Coe, whose work is dedicated to "capturing the beauty and behaviors of Florida's birds," will be in the Kimbell Education Center of Jonathan Dickinson State Park on Friday, Jan. 4, at 6:30 p.m. The evening will include a presentation by Mr. Coe about his photography, a silent auction and refreshments.

The park entry fee is waived for the opening with a \$5 donation to the Friends of JD Park at the door. For more information, call 561-745-5551. The exhibition will run through Jan. 30.



Tuesday, Jan. 17 Bark and Art Benefit for Heroes

Operation Care For Heroes will sponsor a benefit for the U.S. War Dogs Association in Tequesta at Village Art Studios and Original Elements at 377 Tequesta Drive on Jan. 17 from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. The "Bark and Art" event is FREE, giving you an opportunity to win a commissioned sculpture and/or painting of your own pet as it raising funds in support of U.S. military canines and their handlers. Proceeds from sales will purchase supplies and postage to send care package items to canines and the handlers currently serving in Afghanistan. For more information, contact Kit Stewart-Legato at 561-747-5204.



Weekend, Jan. 12-13 Jensen Beach Fine Art & Craft Show

One art show you do not want to miss is the annual Jensen Beach Fine Art & Craft Show, which will be Jan. 12-13 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in downtown Jensen Beach. For more info or to be a vendor, call 772-334-3444.

Saturday, Jan. 19 100 Years of Cars in Hobe Sound

The 6th Annual 100 Years of Cars Show will be at The Pine School's Hobe Sound campus on Saturday, Jan. 19, with all proceeds to benefit the school's Patriot Scholarship program for children of active or veteran military personnel. Co-chaired by Rachelle "Rocky" and Henry Grady, who have been part of the show since its founding in 2008, are now looking to add an American car to their collection of European models to fit the theme of the 2013 car show – American classics and performance cars. For more information about 100 Years of Cars, visit www.100YearsofCars.com or www.thepineschool.org.



Saturday, Jan. 19 Cacheapalooza 7 at JD Park



No family event has grown quite as fast as Cacheapalooza 7 in Jonathan Dickinson State Park over the past six years. Last year, more than 500 people attended, traveling from throughout the U.S., and from England, Germany, Hungary and Canada to participate. Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices to navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates, find a geocache (container) hidden at that location, and sign its logbook. If you remove something from the container, you must replace it with something of equal or greater value for the next geocacher who comes along. Organizers for Cacheapalooza have added more than 200 new geocaches hidden in this diverse, 11,500 acre park of various difficulty and terrain ratings. The main event will be Saturday, Jan. 19, at JD Park's Kitching Creek Pavilion from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. and will include clowns, live music, animals from the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital, a pizza and salad dinner, and caching-related presentations. Other activities have been planned in the days leading up to and after the main event. For additional information, visit www.cacheapalooza.org, and for info on geocaching go to: geocaching.com.

Saturday, Jan. 26 Port Salerno Seafood Festival



A festival all about food, a community's heritage, and the fishermen and women it celebrates, the Port Salerno Seafood Fest is made possible through the efforts of the local fishermen of Port Salerno who catch, clean, cook, and serve most of the festival's seafood. The Port Salerno Fishing Dock Authority invites you to mark your calendar now for this major Treasure Coast event known for its food, music and hundreds of vendors.

Tackling a most unusual holiday cooky recipe

As we mark another holiday season and the end of an interesting year, it is time to pause to consider where we are and where we are going. As I look back, I think about the new friends I have made and the friends I have lost; the adventures I have had and the ones I've shared with my neighbors.

Two Ridgeway neighbors traveled to Washington, D.C., on Honor Flights to see the World War II Memorial. Wilbur Wagner and Hap Harrington each made the trip and reported back how moved they were, and how grateful they each felt for the opportunity they would not have otherwise had.

There was happiness as we marked birthdays, anniversaries and accomplishments. There were somber times as



George Kleine

Pots, Pans, Puddin' & Pies

we said farewell to friends, family and neighbors, some moving away, some having been "called home."

I saw the devastating effects of "Super Storm Sandy" on my former home town, Staten Island, as here in "hurricane central" we escaped, once again, relatively unscathed.

The long and short of it is that I am reminded how lucky we are to be living here. Of course, I am supposed to be

sharing more than my thoughts about current events. This is, after all, a cooking column.

In our house, Christmas was another one of the 365 days we celebrated by overeating. Although my mother was an accomplished cook (even making her living cooking for the local school district) she was never much for baking. My sister, however, earned her stripes baking the family recipe for molasses cookies, candy cane cookies, and various other treats a mother of four has to master.

If you arm me with some condensed milk, coconut and chocolate chips I can make up a respectable batch of macaroons. I love fudge (can you tell?) and often make up a batch for holiday giving. Your kitchen can be an effective shopping spot for inexpensive and

thoughtful gifts for friends.

I save empty jars (pasta sauce jars work great) remove the label, cover the lid with fabric or contact paper and fill them with the premeasured dry ingredients for cookies. I type the instructions on some holiday stationery, attach them to the jar with a ribbon, and the result is a special gift to give to friends.

I was searching through my dozens of cookbooks for a unique recipe of some sort with a holiday touch. Then I found this. To say it is unique is an understatement. ■

George Kleine is a "semi-retired" professional chef who spends much of his time sharing his culinary talents with his fellow Ridgeway residents in Hobe Sound. Email him at george@hscurrents.com.

STUFFING COOKIES

This recipe has caused a lot of buzz on T.V., the internet and in the cooking blogs that I follow. It is from the Downtown Cookie Company. I decided to try it and share my progress and results. It requires that you use Pepperidge Farm Stuffing Mix, as the original recipe works best with their special blend of seasonings and herbs.

1 cup butter at room temperature.

1 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 cup white sugar

2 large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 3/4 cup flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

2 1/2 cups Pepperidge Farm Stuffing (not the cubed style)

1 cup dried cranberries, chopped

Mix the dry ingredients (except the sugars) in a large bowl and set aside. Cream the butter and sugars. Add eggs and vanilla and beat well. Add dry ingredients until just combined. Mix in cranberry pieces.

Drop the dough in two-ounce portions onto an ungreased cookie sheet (line it with parchment paper if you have it). Bake in 350 degree oven 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.

This recipe should yield about 15 cookies.

The resultant cookies resemble oatmeal raisin cookies, though a bit sweeter than I would usually make them. My neighbors enjoyed them and thought they had an unusual (good) flavor. Give 'em a try.

Until next month, Merry Christmas.....



They may look like oatmeal cookies, but they have a taste all their own.

Photo: George Kleine

New emphasis placed on helping pets of veterans

Ike Crumpler

Special to Hobe Sound Currents

Despite its charm, beauty and wealth, Martin County remains deeply impacted by the economic slide.

Against a backdrop of nine percent unemployment, scores of strip malls with empty storefronts, and reports of more than 150 children numbered among the homeless, many Martin County residents find themselves in need of a helping hand.

And many of them are veterans. The unemployment rate among veterans is around 12 percent, with the numbers among younger veterans running much higher.

Fortunately, our generous community is home to a wide variety of nonprofits and charities, but one relatively low-key nonprofit serves an especially unique service. Founded in Hobe Sound in 2001, Help Us Help

Them cares for the pets of people struggling to make ends meet. Providing assistance to more than 1,000 pets each year, Help Us Help Them is now turning its successful model to helping the pets of veterans.

"We do what we can to help pay for pet food, spays and neuters through our partners at Animal Birth Control," said JoAnne Matz, who raises funds for Help Us Help Them.

"We're fortunate not only to work with some dedicated local veterinarians who discount or donate their services to take care of these pets, we're also blessed with some generous donors," Matz added. "They're typically animal lovers who truly understand just how much joy our pets bring to our lives, and they're very sympathetic to pet owners suffering with tough times and tougher decisions about caring for the animals they love."

To conduct effective outreach to the veterans community, Help Us Help Them turned to Martin County Veterans Services. Martin County makes 20,000 contacts annually with the local

veteran community, secures an estimated \$34 million in benefits and aid for local veterans and their families, and makes 2,500 annual trips transporting veterans, many elderly and indigent, to medical treatments.

Veterans Services alerted the network of Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts around the county, which help inform other veterans about the Help Us Help Them program. Any veteran or immediate family member of a veteran in Martin County in need is eligible for pet assistance.

"This effort was well received before it even officially got off the ground," said Tony Reese, veterans services supervisor at the Martin County Veterans Services after former supervisor John Haddox was elected to the county commission. "I just mentioned it at a veterans council meeting and within a day received several requests for help.

"Our office has always focused on benefits and aid for veterans and their families," Reese continued, "but we're happy Help Us Help Them is thinking about their pets, too, because they're

obviously important to the veterans' overall well being."

Earlier this year, Help Us Help Them partnered with the Treasure Coast Food Bank to offer pet food to people in need. Help Us Help Them also works with sister organization, Animal Birth Control of Florida in Palm City, to arrange free spays and neuters for the pets of people in need.

Help Us Help Them also is affiliated with the Pegasus Foundation—a worldwide organization that conducts educational and advocacy efforts to further the cause of animal welfare. "Your pets love you unconditionally," said Matz, "and they don't care whether you're rich or poor. For many people struggling with hard times, illness, or loneliness, their pets are sometimes all they have. Taking care of them is a wonderful way to lift the spirits of their owners, too."

For more information on the Help Us Help Them Pets of Vets assistance program—or to make donations to the program—please call Martin County Veterans Services at (772) 288-5448. ■

Baby Boomers not immune to STDs

Seniors must learn to protect themselves—and not just from scam artists and fall-related injuries. We're talking the same kind of protection you hear so much about on college campuses. Yes. That protection.

CBSNews.com recently reported that over the last 10 years the number of Americans aged 50 and older contracting sexually transmitted diseases has doubled. Like STDs themselves, the numbers aren't pretty.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention chronicled that among people in the 45-64 age groups, cases of syphilis jumped from 900 in 2000 to 2,550 in 2010. Meanwhile, cases of Chlamydia rocketed from 6,700 to 19,600 over the same 10-year period. The CDC also noted that infections of HIV—which typically precedes the AIDS virus—are rising faster in people over 50 than people under 40.

Some experts explain the consequences of this surprising amount of randiness among our elders as generational—but not in the classic sense of the term. Baby Boomers—those of the legendary libertine '60s and '70s who defied convention, forged the counterculture and



**Nicolette
Christie**

*Ask
Florence*

waged the sexual revolution—are the seniors of today. From LSD to AARP, for many Boomers the Summer of Love truly is endless.

The Boomer generation is bookended with massively significant advances in sexually intended pharmaceuticals. Then, there was The Pill—which reshuffled the entire landscape of sexual relationships. Today, there is the little blue pill—and it's frequently noted that the rise in STDs among Boomers coincides with the time Viagra was introduced in 1998.

In 2010, AARP put together a report called "Sex, Romance and Relationships," surveying seniors about their sex lives. The report found, among other things, that:

- 28 percent of respondents had sex at least weekly—half of those were single.
- 85 percent of men and 61 percent of

women called sex "important to their quality of life."

- Only 12 percent of single dating men and 32 percent of single women reported always using condoms.

An editorial in the *Student British Medical Journal* on seniors and STDs (which reported 80 percent of those across the pond aged 50 to 90 leading active sex lives), suggested that doctors prescribing erectile dysfunction drugs also offer primers on the risks of unsafe sex and the steps seniors should take to protect themselves.

Maybe it's time to revamp the popular Boomer admonishment of yesteryear—"Don't trust anyone over 30"—for "Don't trust anyone over 60 to carry condoms."

Changing habits commands education—and that means more than merely telling seniors to practice safer sex.

Remember: Get screened regularly. Simply make it part of your normal checkup routine when you see your physician.

Understand your vulnerability. Your immune system naturally slows when you age, increasing your susceptibility to infection.

Realize what risks specifically endanger you. For example, after menopause women suffer thinning in the vaginal tissue—increasing risk of transmission of diseases such as HIV-AIDS.

Know that the past can catch up with you. Even seniors who are no longer sexually active can carry an STD. Without getting screened, the lasting neurological effects—particularly of diseases such as HIV and syphilis—are often mistaken as signs of senility.

Perhaps the best means to inform on the safer senior sex movement is a celebrity spokesperson. Anyone know if Betty White is available?

Most medical inquiries are best served by consulting your physician or a qualified specialist and this "Ask Florence" is no substitute for professional exams and insights. To reach Ask Florence, please email AskFlorence@hscurrents.com. ■

Most medical inquiries are best served by consulting your physician or a qualified specialist and this "Ask Florence" is no substitute for professional exams and insights. To reach Ask Florence, email Nicolette.Christie@vnaflorida.org.

Hospice tends to end-of-life needs

Knowing that your elderly loved one is facing a life-threatening illness can be a scary feeling, but there are several home care options that can alleviate your loved one's discomfort. Hospice, a well-known care philosophy, offers soothing treatment that will allow your loved one to live out the rest of his or her days comfortably.

The word "hospice" is, most often, associated with death. But hospice is so much more than a program that cares for terminal patients. The very idea behind the hospice method of treatment is that individuals who are fighting life-threatening diseases are able to experience a higher degree of comfort at the end of their lives. The main goal of hospice is to ensure that your elderly loved one is kept as comfortable as possible, allowing him or her to receive personalized services that are tailored to specific and individualized needs.

The idea of maintaining one's dignity at the end of one's life is important in today's culture. Although medical breakthroughs have done much to treat and cure illnesses, death is a natural and expected part of the life cycle.

Hospice professionals understand this and treat the event with the respect that it deserves. By keeping your elderly loved one comfortable and neither postponing nor accelerating death, hospice care providers can create a calm environment for your elderly loved one to enjoy before passing.

When a beloved family member dies, it is an event that affects every person who cares about that individual. Hospice understands this, and as such its dedicated



**Steven
Snell**

*Ebbing
Tides*

care professionals work to ensure that all members of the family are comfortable and understand the process that is taking place.

There are different hospice programs across the country, and you and your loved one can choose the program that best meets the needs of your family.

Hospice care providers will see to it that your elderly loved one is as comfortable as possible, providing the medical attention they need to maintain their quality of life. The exact services will vary, depending upon the needs of your elderly loved one, but they will be compassionate and sensitive to the loss that your family is facing. ■

Steven R. Snell, of Hobe Sound, provided care for both of his grandparents for the last 10 years of their lives, which included cancer treatments, stroke & TIA-related dementia, in-home care, assisted living placement, memory care and end-of-life hospice care. That experience led him to a new career, and he now owns a nationally accredited senior care home health agency with offices in Hobe Sound, West Palm Beach, and Port St. Lucie that seeks to help others navigate the sometimes complex senior care options. He can be reached at ebbingtides@hscurrents.com, or ssnell@abc-seniors.com.

Rood Landscape honored

Rood Landscape, LLC, of Hobe Sound earned the Professional Landcare Network's 2012 Grand Prize for Environmental Improvement for its work at the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area (JILONA) project, according to its press release.

A particularly sensitive environmental and historical site in Jupiter, the project included removal of invasive plants that had grown around the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse site to help prevent future soil erosion, a topic of heightened public concern, in addition to selecting appropriate plants for the site's proximity to an

ocean environment.

Rood also faced a unique challenge in also protecting the native American shell mound on which the lighthouse is built. "As the site has enormous archeological significance, no digging could take place without an archeologist present," reported project manager Ron Vekeman, according to the release.

An erosion control geo-grid fabric was applied at the north side of the lighthouse to assure stabilization of the soil prior to planting. New irrigation was provided by Rood Landscape's sister company, Treasure Coast Irrigation. ■

2013 Python Challenge

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has announced the 2013 Python Challenge beginning in January.

A grand prize of \$1,500 will be awarded to the person who kills the most pythons, and \$1,000 will go to the person who bags the longest one. Participants will pay a \$25 registration fee and complete an online training course, which focuses on safety while hunting pythons.

The Burmese python was first found in the Everglades in 1979, according to UF researchers, and it is believed that the snakes were originally pets that found their way into Everglades National Park.

The largest python ever found in Florida, 17 feet, 6-inches weighing 164.5



pounds, was harvested in the Everglades in August. University of Florida researchers found 87 eggs inside the snake.

Earlier this year, researchers reported that populations of rabbits and fox have disappeared, and the numbers of raccoons, opossums and bobcats have dropped as much as 99 percent.

The contest begins January 12 and ends at midnight on February 10. To register, go to www.pythonchallenge.org. ■

The 'silver bullets' are back!

Illustrations Courtesy of University of South Florida

First, I want to wish "Sandy" victims in the Northeast all the help that they deserve. To be positioned for back-to-back weather fiascoes is really unfortunate. As a result of the storm, I have several pompano buddies who won't be making the journey to south Florida to catch their favorite fish.

I know also that my relatives won't even be able to spend Christmas at their northern homes, much less visit my family and spend time with us here. Floridians were quietly spared, succumbing primarily to beach erosion but very little homestead damage. We will certainly miss you guys this season, and hope maybe we'll see you around Easter.

I'd like to start the fishy part of this read with the description of how these migrators entered

Florida. There were two separate migrations of pompano this month. One was the resident migration of river-bred fish that were residing in the Intracoastal Waterway from Cocoa through the Sebastian Inlet.

From late August through early November this year, numerous pompano congregated in this nearly 30 miles of Intracoastal.

Typically they leave whenever a huge cold front and/or late tropical depression shows up here. Four days prior to Sandy brushed by the Treasure Coast, numerous sheepshead and poms had schooled up well inside of the Sebastian Inlet. This phenomena is called "staging."

Not long after the storm passed, both these species streamed out of the inlet on a turbo-driven south current to

the Ft. Pierce region. My contact, a commercial cast netter, told me to fish various beaches until

I caught a lot of sheepshead. He indicated the striped prison fish would be paired up with the big, yellow under-bellied pompano.

Now it was my turn to see if I could live up to my expectations and to test my

skill. (Guess I wouldn't be conveying this story if I was just spiked in and patiently waiting for something to hit our lines.) Three days, three really good hauls, and three diverse locations panned out. Here's the oddity of this catch.

The first smack down was south of the Ft. Pierce Inlet; the second was in Jensen Beach; and the third was on the north side of the Ft. Pierce Inlet. Pretty much the weather and dirty sea water pushed them south, then further south, and finally back north a ways. Then they disappeared with the sheepshead, and out of the blue, they were being caught by smart fishermen in boats.

What about the Hatteras south migration?

After Sandy, there was no easter after no easter, and then even a bigger arctic blast. Fernandina Beach and the Georgia/Florida border went off in early November. This report was substantiated by a handful of fishing experts who keep me apprised of the "Pompano Mystery Tour."

One would think these tourists would stay a while, but within several days they migrated into the north Ponce Inlet jetty. The same experts from Jacksonville caught them again!

At this point I would think some of our readers would figure Rich to be a fin addict, and they would be correct. Now the mid-November front of fronts displayed awesome swells and huge rip currents. With the ocean being a turbid mucky color, numerous schools of mackerel and pompano speed-shifted past all inlets, circumvented every approachable beach, and located off the Palm Beaches. Only the commercial boatmen found and caught them.

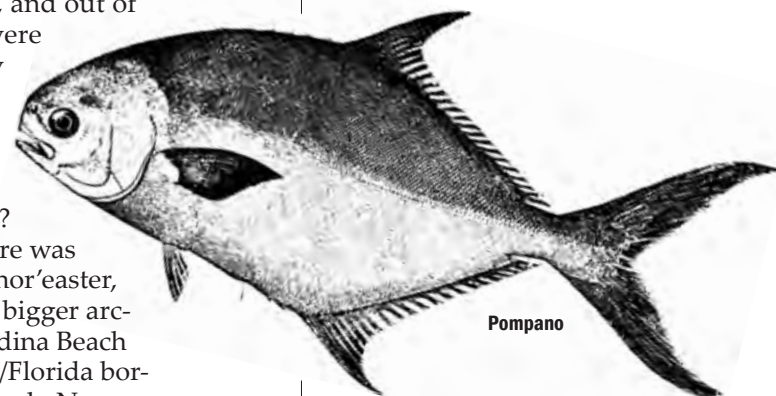
That last week of November produced good, scattered pompano catches



**Rich
Vidulich**

*Pompano
Reporter*

in Juno Beach, Stuart and the Port St. Lucie beaches. The ocean is still healing and Hobe Sound started to clear as well. Everything is lined up for a fabulous December bite, so go out and put some poms in the bucket!



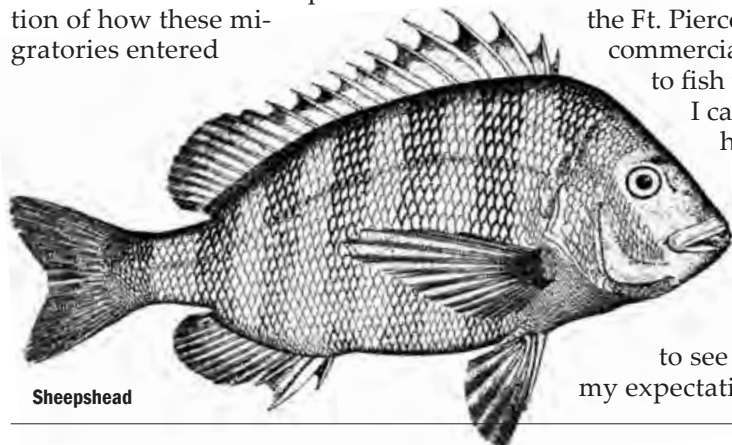
Pompano

These fish are from 11-inch keepers, with many of them with 2 to 3 pound slabs. They're not fussy, and are hitting both live and blanched fleas. Actually, I've done considerably well with the blanched fleas.

With the full moon, they are feeding at night so the early bite has not been good. The noon to midday has been their feed time. Keep this in mind during these full moon phases, and I expect wonderful action three to five days after the full moon.

That is, as long as they don't dump more distressed poison out of "Lake O," we will have a superb winter bite. Hang in there and keep casting and cranking. ■

Rich Vidulich, a commercial fisherman, lives in Jupiter and fishes the beaches of the Treasure Coast. Send your comments/questions to fishing@hscurrents.com.



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Should less than 1,500 tickets be sold, the drawing will be a 50/50.

All proceeds will benefit local Rotary charities.

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