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Volume 3 Issue 4 • August 2013

Martin County CURRENTS

And the people
raised their voices

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Rivers Coalition continues 15-year battle to end discharges

A grass-roots organization comprising businesspeople, scientists, conservation groups and politicians all working toward one goal: stop the Lake O discharges.

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New Plan 6 touted as only solution to save St. Lucie River estuary

Mark Perry, executive director of the Florida Oceanographic Society, says the old Plan 6, nixed by the Army Corps of Engineers as unworkable, has been tweaked and definitely will work.

12

Thousands gather to protest plight of estuary

Not just a few hundred people, thousands gathered at two, consecutive weekend rallies.

After several months of delay, the county commission finally settled

on an ordinance at its August 6 meeting regarding the role of Neighborhood Advisory Committees for the seven, historic Neighborhood Planning Areas, as well as qualifications for its members. In what Commissioner Doug Smith called a "substantially watered down role" for the NACs, the "working committees" will make only recommendations to the commission, which has sole discretion for all decisions, including the determination if funds are available to the planning areas and, if so, how those funds will be spent.

The ordinance broadened the scope of qualifications to include landowners who live up to half a mile outside the boundaries of the planning areas, but tightened the rules regarding residency to include voter registration. Senior managers of businesses and those living outside the boundaries must have been a resident with voter registration for a minimum of two years. Other members need to have been residents with valid voter registrations for a minimum of one year.

Commissioners Smith and Anne Scott disagreed with the majority that voter registration should be a requirement.

County staff now will need to evaluate the qualifications of those who applied by the April deadline for NAC membership and submit the names of qualified candidates to the commission for appointment. ■

Parks, owner of the adjacent property, to repave Jack James Drive at an estimated cost of \$500,000, then donate the road to the county.

They also would have been required to build two drainage lakes and a water runoff system to treat runoff from a proposed 83-parking space lot, as well as add additional trees to the landscaping. The additional costs make a travel center unfeasible, Stevenson said, but he still wants to expand his operation. The current zoning allows restaurants and a hotel, according to county records.

Most of the land near Parks property already is zoned for industrial uses, and half a dozen facilities have been constructed along Kansas Avenue next to Parks property, including the Tropical Farms Water and Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Residents of the Florida Club, Locks Landing and other homeowners associations, however, say that a travel center would bring crime, noise, pollution and traffic that does not fit the image of Martin County and would not offset the benefits of an estimated \$700,000 going to the county in fuel and sales tax revenue or the addition of approximately 40 jobs.

The HOAs currently are pursuing signatures on a petition (to prevent a zoning change to limited industrial zoning), and are continuing their letter-writing campaign to county commissioners. They expect to make a public presentation of the petition at a regularly scheduled county commission meeting sometime soon, according to sources. ■

The 321 acres of undeveloped agricultural land on Pratt Whitney Road

purchased by Christ Fellowship Church in April 2012 will become home to a 31,000 square foot satellite church that includes seating for 800, plus a children's ministry center. Two 400-square foot outdoor pavilions also are planned, according to the church's site plan application submitted recently to the Martin County Growth Development Department.

Church officials had been mum about their plans for the property last year that lies near the South Fork High School and The Florida Club golf course when originally purchased for \$3.75 million raised from parishioner donations.

Although the land is designated for agricultural use, places of worship are permitted on lands with agricultural zoning in Martin County. One of the largest churches in the United States, Christ Fellowship began offering services in 2008 at the Martin County High School auditorium. ■

Palm City resident and new author Mary Dawson sat outside the doorway

of the Rivers Coalition meeting at Stuart City Hall in July selling her book, *The River Way Home*. The former Martin County commissioner then donated all

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A sign at the Florida Club to get a petition signed to block all travel plazas in the county.

No truck stop in Tropical Farms. No truck stop anywhere in the county.

That's the motivation for homeowners in the Tropical Farms area as they continue to lobby the Martin County Commission to deny any zoning changes that could allow a travel center to be constructed at the intersections of major thoroughfares, the Florida Turnpike and I-95. Not now. Not ever.

The current owner of a Marathon gas station and Dairy Queen, Robert Stevenson, had proposed expanding his operation to property adjacent to his that lies between the turnpike and I-95 off Kanner Highway. The county would have required that Stevenson and Ralph

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continued from PAGE 3

the proceeds to the Rivers Coalition, the nonprofit organization fighting to stop the discharges from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie River.

According to Amazon.com, the historical adventure set between Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie Inlet in 1914 was the 15th best-selling Kindle



Mary Dawson

book in its category on July 23. It has stayed in the top 100 in its categories for the past three months with reviews on Amazon averaging 4.7 stars. In other words, it's a good read. The book includes a section of historical photos of Stuart

that alone is worth the \$20 price of the paperback version.

Subtitled "The Adventures of the Cowboy, the Indian, and the Amazon Queen," the novel is a fictional tale of three young teens from three different cultures, a Florida Cracker, a Seminole and an African-American girl, who lose their boat in a storm on Lake Okeechobee; however, the origin of the characters, issues, and events are historically accurate and remain culturally relevant, according to the author. ■

In addition to rising ad valorem taxes for property owners in Martin County,

they now face rising school taxes and sales taxes, too. The sales tax would be an additional one cent, raising the sales tax to 7 cents per dollar for 10 years, which must be approved by voters. The county commission will decide the wording for the ballot at its August 20 meeting. The Martin County School Board recently approved a tentative budget that would increase the school tax rate from \$6.90 per \$1,000 of taxable property value to \$7.28, which does not need voter approval. ■

The Treasure Coast Humane Society, overrun recently by kittens and cats,

also has put its newest batch of bunnies up for adoption. Born just a few weeks ago, their names have been "officially" selected, said foster-bunny mom Tracie Harris, which will allow their photos to appear on the Humane Society website, www.hstc1.org—as soon as they are spayed and neutered. Only one of the babies was a girl, Clementine, and the boys are Kiwi, Coconut, Key Lime, Peachy and Lychee. They still are in foster care, but their momma bunny, Mango, who has been spayed, now resides at the Humane Society in Palm City while she awaits a new home. ■

County Commissioner John Haddox asked the commission to be reappointed to the Martin County Business Development Board.

They granted his request with a unanimous vote in July. Haddox had resigned in May citing a conflict with the state's Sunshine law requirement that government business be conducted in public. He said at the time that the restriction made it impossible for him to participate in the current contract negotiations between the commission and the BDB, a nonprofit, public/private organization created in 1991 to promote economic growth in Martin County.

Haddox said that he had resolved any Sunshine law issues and felt that he wanted to participate in BDB meetings.

The current contract being negotiated calls for annual funding of \$625,000 from occupational license fees on county businesses to be increased at 3 percent annually. The agreement currently is for 10-year terms, automatically renewed for successive 10-year periods. The BDB currently is not required to forfeit funds it does not

Commissioner
John Haddox

spend, thus returning them to the county at the end of each fiscal year.

Its current carry-over is about \$600,000, a particular bone of contention with some commissioners, who also said they want more defined

performance standards and a shorter contract period.

The county commission voted in June to suspend further payments to the BDB until a new contract has been written and approved. In the meantime, all references to the BDB have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

The BDB has indicated it will be prepared in September to offer a revised contract to commissioners. ■

Martin County's recycling rate of 75% met the Florida Department

of Environmental Protection's 2020 goal a full eight years ahead of schedule,

which also makes it number one of the state's 67 counties for recycling, according to a just-released DEP report.

This fall, the community will have an opportunity to become more acquainted with the county's multiple recycling programs on Saturday, Nov. 16, when the Solid Waste Division coordinates "Martin Recycles Day" at the Martin County Fairgrounds.

Part of the national America Recycles Day, the event will bring together agencies and organizations that collect all types of recyclable and reusable materials – from electronics and batteries to paints and fishing line. ■

Thanks to the vigilance of neighbors reporting suspicious activity

in their neighborhoods promptly to police, the number of "pillowcase burglaries" in Martin County has declined, according to Martin County Sheriff William Snyder, but the number of thefts of cars in gym and beach parking lots is on the rise. The sheriff said the thieves' use of the same type of tool that had been used to break into the sliding glass doors of home burglaries was the clue that these new thefts of purses and wallets left in cars may be linked to the same gang.

He asks that residents not leave their purses or wallets in their vehicles when at the beach or the gym, and again to watch for those vehicles with dark-tinted windows cruising through parking lots, as well as through local neighborhoods. If one is spotted, call 911 to report it.

The pillowcase burglaries, under investigation by the FBI as well as county police departments throughout the state, have been linked to a gang of thieves from Broward County. They cruise neighborhoods in rented, late-model

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cars, with darkly tinted windows, and break in through rear sliding doors, using homeowners' pillowcases to carry out small, high-value items such as jewelry, cash, electronics and weapons. ■

The amount that Martin County will need to pay to avoid a lawsuit by the

owners of the former Rio Village Mobile Home Park has not yet been announced. County Attorney Michael Durham was granted permission in July to negotiate with attorneys for property owners Pete and Brittany Benevides, who are threatening civil action against the county.

The county had been poised in November 2012 to purchase the property for \$405,000, less than its then-appraised value of \$479,000, after demolishing about 30 derelict mobile homes and forgiving more than \$1 million in code enforcement fines, but the commission voted to back out of the deal in April 2013.

The two-acre site at 1055 NE Dixie Highway lies near the Rio Town Center redevelopment project.

Senior Assistant County Attorney David Acton warned commissioners at their April meeting that they could be facing a lawsuit by the owners if they chose to withdraw, but Commissioners Anne Scott's and Doug Smith's votes to continue with the purchase to aid Rio revitalization and avoid a lawsuit were overruled.

Commissioner Ed Fielding voted against the purchase, but also dissented on the vote to give permission to Durham to negotiate a settlement, saying that the county's contract with Benevides allowed the commission to withdraw their offer after inspection.

No date has been set for Durham's report to the commission regarding the outcome of his negotiations. ■

The Martin Arts Council released a call to artists to design a logo for the

nearly completed Veterans Memorial Bridge in Palm City with a cash prize for the winner of \$1,000 from Cardno, the bridge project's consultant management firm. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m., August 30, and the contest is open only to Martin County residents. The new bridge spans the St. Lucie River and Okeechobee Waterway, connecting Indian Street in Stuart and County Road 714 in Palm City in Martin County.

The bridge will be dedicated Nov. 16, at which time, the selected artist has the opportunity to sell the original artwork. The new logo will also be featured on T-shirts, posters, invitations,

etc. To submit a design, send an electronic image of no less than 72 ppi and 1200 ppi on the longest side via email to bridgecontest@martinarts.org. For more information or to gain access to the bridge site to take photographs, email Beth Zsoka at beth@qcausa.com or call 772-283-4323. ■

Plans are well underway for Martin County's annual Historic Preservation

Month in October, according to Historic Preservation Board Chair Joette Lorion Rice. "This year, we plan to coordinate with the Stuart Centennial," she said, "which I was told will also be kicked off that month."

Many of the events are free. Some of the most popular include several free tours of the Mansion at Tuckahoe, an American Roots Music Concert Series Featuring "Zydeco," a "Fishing Heritage of Port Salerno" lecture by John Hennessee, an 85th anniversary celebration of Warfield Elementary School in Indiantown, a lecture that outlines the county's struggle to protect its river and estuary, opening of the Journey Stories Smithsonian Exhibit, free admission to the Stuart Heritage Museum, a gathering to celebrate Historic Preservation Month 2013 and the Stuart Centennial and the annual Bahamian Festival at New Monrovia Park in Port Salerno, among many other events.

The full calendar of events will be released in September. The board's next meeting is Monday, August 12, at the General Services Building on Avengers Circle (near Witham Field) at 4 p.m. Any organization wishing to participate in Preservation Month activities is encouraged to attend. ■

The Reef waterfront restaurant in Port Salerno shut its doors in July,

just six months after it opened in the same location as the former Finz Waterfront Grill. The location on the Manatee Pocket has been hampered by the size, which offers seating for 400, coupled in part with a slow summer season that may have been hampered by poor water quality, according to local residents.

Upcoming renovation of the sea wall, which will remove temporarily part of the Manatee Pocketwalk and block boat arrival of restaurant guests, which account for about 30 percent of The Reef's customers, according to owner Greg Flewelling, was also a factor in the closing.

The 9,000 square-foot building is owned by Red Sky Inc. of Arizona, a partner of which is local resident and Port Salerno activist John Hennessee. ■



A painting of the Apollo School by Artist Maureen Fulgenzi

An open house and tour Nov. 16 of the nearly complete, renovated two-room schoolhouse in Hobe Sound, the Apollo School, will be

part of its latest fund raiser, "Artist in the Window," says Kathy Spurgeon, president of the Apollo School Foundation.

"We hope that almost all the construction will be done," says Spurgeon in an email, "and we want the public to see this." The cheese-and-wine event also will include a most unusual art auction.

"We have taken the original windows from the school and given them to selected local artists to create their art on the windows," she says. The artists in-

clude Dan Mackin, Cynthia Cooper, April Davis, James Hook, Nadia Utto, and Carol Kemp.

The school, the renovation of which has been a 16-year project in the making and was financed, in part, with historic preservation grant assistance provided by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, assisted by the Florida Historical Commission, is at 9141 SE Apollo Street. For more info, go to Apolloschool.org. ■

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Editorial: An apology to Ginny Sherlock . . . kind of

When facts are printed incorrectly, most people contact the newspaper and inform them of its error. A correction is printed in the following edition, and everyone remains at peace. Not so Ginny Sherlock. Her firm sends a demand letter via certified mail with a promise to file civil action.

We do not need a lawsuit to motivate us to print a correction when we've made a mistake: Attorney Ginny Sherlock has been lobbying the county commission for several weeks on behalf of the 1,000 Friends of Florida and the Martin County Conservation Alliance to forgive the court sanctions and payment of legal fees imposed by the First District Court of Appeals in response to a failed appeal filed by the Everglades Law Center. That's a fact.

In addition to the county commission and county staff, she also sent copies of her plea to her vast network of commission lobbyists, who in turn responded by copying all or parts of her plea to commissioners to request forgiveness; however, Ms. Sherlock did not represent the 1,000 Friends of Florida and the Martin County Conservation Alliance in the actual court case itself, as was stated incorrectly in this newspaper's editorial of July 2013. That's the correction.

What *Currents* was objecting to when it stated that Ms. Sherlock "sickly arranged a private session with the commission to plead her case" in the same editorial was the fact that the debate—to forgive or not to forgive those sanctions and fees—was conducted behind closed commission doors. The court case was concluded, there were no attorney/

client privileges to protect, this was not a labor negotiation, and the issue closely resembled that of the Business Development Board's, which had been forced to pay the county's attorney fees in Sherlock's suit against them demanding its meetings be open to the public, yet Ms. Sherlock did not object to the closed doors in this case.

Ms. Sherlock had positioned herself as a champion of transparency in government, yet she did not call for public debate even after the commission set a date for an "executive session" to consider her plea on behalf of the 1,000 Friends of Florida's, the Martin County Conservation Alliance's, and the Everglades Law Center's request to the commission to forgive the court-ordered sanctions. She did not have to be physically present to be pleading her case to the commission, and we remain convinced that she was a party to arranging that the debate be kept "out of the sunshine" and behind closed doors.

Of course, we could be wrong. We're not the federal government, so we do not have access to phone conversations between her and Commission Chair Sarah Heard. Neither do we have the power to subpoena Commissioner Heard's private email account to verify any correspondence between Heard and Sherlock. Even if we could, Ms. Heard would refuse, as she has refused the Lake Point attorneys in their suit against the county and Maggy Hurchalla, saying her email account had been hacked.

This we do know: Ms. Sherlock's direct line to the chairman of the commission gives her undue clout to the point that county

staff are required to drop everything to do the bidding of the county's "unelected commissioner," which is what she is called by insiders, or face losing their jobs if they don't.

We object to Ms. Sherlock's apparent notion that anyone who does not agree with her, particularly when it comes to business, or economic growth, or opportunity in this county, is automatically classified as evil, and that only Ms. Sherlock and her minions ride the white horses. It is not good versus evil.

We should not have a commission, particularly the chair, who is joined to Ms. Sherlock's hip and takes the position that only they know what's good for the people and are determined to grow their power to eliminate public input or dissent. We are all too often reminded of this whenever their personal opinions are voiced publicly long before anyone has a chance to make a presentation to them, or when effective organizations are being abolished or reorganized, apparently to have unfettered control of their funds.

We should not have such polarized positions in this county that someone with a differing opinion is demonized, or that we need to be so fearful of what was said that we remove publications from libraries to prevent anyone from reading them, or that we must add even more rewrites to our Comp Plan to ensure the Boy Scout Camp does not have "piecemeal development." The Boy Scout Camp? Are you kidding?

We need to be doing everything we can to ensure that that youth development camp has what it needs to thrive. We

should support its plans for the future and be delighted that it's here. The fact that our commission is not 100 percent behind efforts to upgrade that facility speaks volumes about its misplaced values and to what's happening behind the scenes here to our business community.

We need a commission that approaches business applications with the spirit of entrepreneurship and a determination to see them succeed as we help them navigate our complex requirements, not one that predetermines their outcome.

We need a strong economy—not just a penny more in bed taxes—that only a healthy business community can provide in order to meet the serious challenges to our way of life, to our health and well being, and to our children's future that this county faces now and long term.

We need a paradigm shift. And we need it now.

This is an Opinion Page

We want readers' opinions. Our space is limited, so please understand that we will need to edit your submission for space and clarity. We do have some requirements, however. You must include your name, address and phone number so we can verify authorship. If you wish to have your name withheld, we will honor your request, after we have verified the letter. We also do not want letters that have already been published in another publication. Please respond to this publication's editorials, not another's.

Letters to Editor

No other paper listens to truck drivers

I sent this letter to *The Stuart News*, but they wouldn't print it. I guess they don't want to know what truckers think.

I've been a cross country driver for 25 years. Recently I have been following a proposed travel center in Stuart. I've seen several articles on this subject and of course none of the news of this travel center has been remotely positive.

When I started driving cross country I had no idea what I was in for, I figured it

was a pretty simple job delivering freight from warehouse to warehouse. I never imagined the lengthy drives I was in for. When you're on the road going from state to state and covering three states a day, it's extremely exhausting and by the time the day is gone and you're ready to stop for the night, finding a truck stop out there, especially down here, can be just as challenging as driving all day, because there are not enough truck stops around to handle all the trucks to park that carry America's goods each and every day.

As a professional driver on the road delivering freight on a day-to-day basis and week by week, you suddenly realize the importance of this job and the responsibilities that are given to all of us everyday just to keep America moving.

The importance of a truck stop in any part of the country is vital to us. We need to stop and fuel, eat and shower and sometimes keep moving for those who have appointments. The Department of Transportation regulates our lives, and we need places to park to fulfill the regulations and the hours of service they place upon us.

If I didn't park by 4 p.m., I was parking on an off-ramp or at a rest area. The point is having another place to park helps out in so

many ways to a driver and its surrounding community. The safety factor for one. Get a driver off the road and there are fewer truck accidents on I-95.

Another point in fact is job creation. We all want people working and industry growing. That whole area surrounding the travel center is commercial land and is bound to grow and be built on. There is an industrial building in and around the neighboring communities.

I talked to Mr. Stevenson a few days ago when I delivered a load down in Miami and came back up to park and see an old friend in Stuart, I suggested writing something positive and informative about the travel center. He informed me that the people of the surrounding area effected by the travel center had a meeting with him again. He told me what happened at the meetings with these board of directors and their comments. I think its appalling what was said.

I hope someday people will put their differences aside and try to respect others and their jobs. I know I do.

The importance of this center can't be stressed enough.

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Love those stores that hawk nostalgia

My younger brother and I often were sent to live temporarily with strangers—strangers to us, but known to our father—whenever our mother needed to be hospitalized during her two-year battle with breast cancer. I was not quite five, my brother not quite three, when she died in 1951.

Our host families, all patients of my father's, almost always spoiled us, giving us treats we didn't know existed, allowing us freedoms my father would have considered to border on recklessness. We walked the Seaboard Railroad tracks. We ate snow cones from the neighborhood ice cream truck and splashed in the Homestead City Pool, both normally off limits to us due to the polio scare.

We would come home with little treasures we'd squirreled away to share with the other, since most often we had gone to separate homes. Shooter marbles, tiny Cracker Jacks toys, and Bazooka bubble gum became bargaining chips for who would get to bathe last, who would be "it" in games of hide-and-seek, or whose choice of cartoons we watched on Saturday morning.

My brother once brought me a pink pickled egg, which he had stuffed into the pocket of his shorts on his way home. Covered with a fine blue lint after he fished it from his pants pocket, he held it out to me in his open palm, as if he were holding the goose's very golden egg.

Nothing ever looked more unappetizing to me than that egg. I shook my head no, and

instantly, my brother shoved the egg into his mouth, the yellow yolk crumbling down the front of his shirt. I've never been inclined since to eat a pickled egg, especially pink ones.

What we loved most though were the candy bars, especially Turkish Taffy that would not yield to our bite, but would break into pieces when we slammed it on the sidewalk. Zero chocolate bars covered in white chocolate, and Goetze's caramel creams with fluffy white nougat we sucked from each piece.

We also were introduced to a most remarkable breakfast we had never eaten at home: cold cereal in a bowl doused with milk and a sprinkling of sugar. My favorite, Kellogg's Corn Soya. They were tiny shreds of blended corn and soy bean meal shaped like Lilliputian bacon. The crunch and taste were indescribable, and even half a century later, the flavor lingers in my mind, distinct from any other cereal I've ever eaten. Ever.

We also discovered that others grew strange trees. At home, we had a dozen varieties of fruit trees in our three-acre yard, as well as a giant Royal Poinciana tree, orchid trees, and two cedar trees, but my brother and I had never seen a stand of bamboo until we stayed at the Thurmans, who lived in Redland in southwestern Dade County.

The ethereal blue-green stalks seemed to soar into the clouds in a thicket so dense we lost sight of each other totally, though we stood just a few feet apart. We would lie on our backs and listen to the trunks drumming against each other when the wind



Barbara Clowdus

Unfiltered

blew. It was our favorite place to play at our favorite household to stay, because there we remained together.

There we also learned that others live differently than we did. The Thurmans' household was so neat that even the side tables were empty of clutter. No books or magazines anywhere, in stark contrast to our house where even the bathroom had a bookshelf, and magazines were stuffed into an old powder keg next to the toilet.

Every surface at the Thurman house, even closet floors, were polished to a high shine, and my brother and I would be locked outside for hours as Mrs. Thurman buffed her way from room to room.

Her breakfast table was set with placemats, cloth napkins, and silver spoons to eat creamy, New England-style oats that had been simmered for half an hour in milk, the bowls centered on white china plates. Bright pink hibiscus in waterless glass vases dotted the formal dining room. Every breakfast was that way, always the same, breakfast after breakfast.

Dinner was more formal with more

silverware and more china and a tablecloth. My brother, sitting eyeball to plate, once scooped the food directly into his mouth. Mrs. Thurman promptly removed his plate from the table, telling him if he was going to eat like a dog, he would eat from the floor.

He got down on his hands and knees and did exactly that. Compelled by the injustice of her reprimand, I slipped my plate onto the floor next to his, determined to suffer through loyalty.

My brother was eating with gusto, I discovered, emitting little grunts and growls between bites, unconcerned about where he or his sister ate their dinners. When it dawned on me he was having fun being a dog, I got mad about being on the floor, getting food all over my face—not at Mrs. Thurman, but at my brother.

Now I smile at the memory, and its those kind of memories that serve businesses well these days, the ones that hawk "vintage" and "retro" food and décor, that bottle, wrap, and package nostalgia in every corner, like Cracker Barrel restaurants. I so love them.

Although I seldom buy anything, sometimes I just cannot drive by a Cracker Barrel without stopping to take a walking tour of my childhood inside its wood-planked country store stocked with the toys that my brother and I argued over, and the Turkish Taffy and penny candies we got from the corner market, and especially those caramel creams. What I long for most, though, simply is a box of Corn Soya.

Eight o'clock white man's time

At my boarding school in Brisbane, our French mistress (no, no, not really...!) taught us posh French. She spent whole lessons drilling us on exactly how to enunciate *eu* and *au* and *eau*. As Henry Higgins opined in *My Fair Lady*, "The French don't care what they say, actually, as long as they pronounce it properly."

Not in Provence, though. There, most of the natives speak French the way the English speak French – sounding out every consonant the way God intended, and playing fast and loose with every vowel. Proper French is spoken more in *Haiti* than in Provence – by the ruling caste there, at least.

Most Haitians speak Creole, which is a French *patois* – in the way that French is a Latin *patois*. I spent a week there in 1966, aged 27 – island-hopping by myself, on vacation from my job in Toronto.

On the plane from Puerto Rico I found myself sitting next to a boring young Canadian fellow – boring, at least, until he announced that he was visiting his brother at a Mennonite mission station up in the mountains. Then he became exciting. By the time we landed, we were fast friends and he

was asking his brother if I could tag along as an extra guest for a few days.

Mennonites are a small Protestant denomination of no great renown, but they carried enough weight locally for the brother to extend my visa, change my onward flight and find me a hotel room for the night – all before the offices closed that afternoon. So instead of mooching around the desperately shabby capital city for two days on my own, I got a tour of the pot-holed mountain road through the heart of the country to a few miles away from Henri-Christophe's Citadelle, and five days watching the missionaries at work.

The history of Haiti is depressing. Born in the vicious cruelty of a series of slave-rebellions, nurtured in the equally vicious cruelty of home-grown tyrants, and pauperised by US and European politicians (French and British) in order to discourage any future slave revolts anywhere in the world – the new nation's government revenue was embargoed for the next hundred years and more, to pay compensation for the property lost (i.e. the slaves themselves) in the successful revolution.

(The slaves' defeat of Napoleon's army of occupation prompted his surrender of



Gordon Barlow

Outside, Looking In

French "Louisiana" to the new United States of America. The removal of the French presence there left the native-American tribes open to conquest and settlement by European immigrants – and, as they say, the rest is history.)

On the Sunday I bought a ticket on the bus from Cap Haitien back to the capital, leaving next morning. I asked the bus dispatcher (in pidgin French) what time the bus would depart. "*Huit heures.*" Ah, but did that mean eight o'clock Caribbean time, or some local approximation? The missionaries would have to drive me down from the mountains, and I wanted to get the time right. "*Oui, huit heures juste.*" Okayy, but when you say *juste*, do you mean really, really exactly, or...? He sighed heavily. "*Huit...heures...blanc!*" I took that to mean "white man's time", and shut up. And it did

leave at eight, on the dot. Nobody on the bus spoke French, or was any colour but jet-black; no upper class representatives present!

I volunteered to sit on the top of the bus with eight or nine other passengers, to help keep the luggage from coming loose, and to hand bags down and catch bags thrown up. My companions told me by gestures why we were stopping and how long for.

It was a 10-hour journey down the coast road via Gonaives, but the time passed easily; it was a lovely trip. The driver went out of his way to drop me at my shabby hotel. I was the most exotic passenger he had ever had, I expect: probably the only white person ever to have travelled the whole distance on the roof of his bus.

They all gave me a farewell salute, and I them. "*A'voi, blanc!*" "*A'voi!*"

Respect.

Gordon Barlow, an independent political commentator and writer, was born and educated in Australia. A Certified Public Accountant, he has traveled extensively throughout 80 countries. He currently lives and writes in the Cayman Islands.

Rivers Coalition continues 15-year push to end discharges

As residents cry out now in protest to the toxic aftermath of major Lake Okeechobee discharges in 2013—100 days and counting—the members of the Stuart-based, grass roots organization, the Rivers Coalition, acknowledges that they've been here before.

They said enough was enough in 1998 after toxic algae blooms had led to major fish kills and the decimation of sea grass and oyster beds. Real estate businesses partnered with environmentalists, scientists and conservation groups with a single-minded purpose: halt the discharges.

They've seen the effects first hand and too often of what is happening now: too much water flowing from the Kissimmee River water basin into Lake O, of stormwater runoff adding even more water and pollutants into local drainage canals, and the Army Corps of Engineers faced with a rapidly rising lake held back only by an aging, deteriorating dike to protect the low-lying communities of Belle Glade, South Bay, and much of Pahokee with elevations of about 10 feet. The lake level now is near 16 feet and rising.

"The Corps actually exhibited some restraint in the spring and held off on those discharges as long as they could," said Rivers Coalition member Dr. Paul Gray, a senior scientist with the Audubon Society and an expert on Lake Okeechobee ecology, as he addressed the packed audience at the July 28 Rivers Coalition meeting at Stuart City Hall.

"Maybe some would say a little too long," he added, "but that was because they're sensitive to the impact of the discharges on the St. Lucie estuary. It quickly got to the point, though, that they really had no choice....The lake is still rising and we're not even half way through the hurricane season. It could stop raining tomorrow, who knows, but we cannot count on that."

The underlying issue is that the lake rises six times faster than it can be discharged, and no one can predict the weather. Rain gauges show that this area has had more than one-and-a-half times its normal rainfall, and discharges are expected to continue through the winter months. Just two summers ago, Lake O fell 10 feet below its normal level, the City of West Palm Beach ran out of water, and Martin County suffered from wildfires and water rationing.

"This is a complicated, complex issue with no easy solution," Gray added. "I know that's what people are looking for...but stopping the discharges will require multiple projects over a period of around 10 to 15 years."

Less than half the water flowing into the St. Lucie Estuary, according to Mar-

tin County Environmental Quality Manager Deborah Drum, is coming from Lake Okeechobee. The majority of the water comes from local basin rainwater runoff. Both result in pollution of the estuary—and high enteric bacteria counts in the St. Lucie—but without extensive testing of water samples, no one can be

sure how much of the pollution is from poorly maintained, leaking septic tanks, or from animal wastes, or from fertilizer.

What has been tested is the Lake O water that comes from the agricultural practice of back-pumping excess water into the lake from the area south of it. Tests show that the water is loaded with phosphorus and nitrogen from fertilizers, as well as sediment, that coats the

bottom of Lake Okeechobee, also suffering extreme ecological damage from high water, and the St. Lucie River when the water is discharged.

"Why is Big Sugar allowed to back-pump their polluted water into the lake," asked Indian Riverkeeper Marty Baum, also a member of the Rivers Coalition. "It's that phosphorous and nitrogen from sugar cane that's feeding the toxic algae that's killing our estuary....They just need to let their fields flood. They need to share the adversity."

The Everglades Agricultural Area covers about 700,000 acres just south of Lake Okeechobee and encompasses 27 percent of the historic Everglades, growing primarily sugar cane, made possible by an intricate system of 15 canals and 25 water control structures the South Florida Water Management District manages to artificially control water depth.

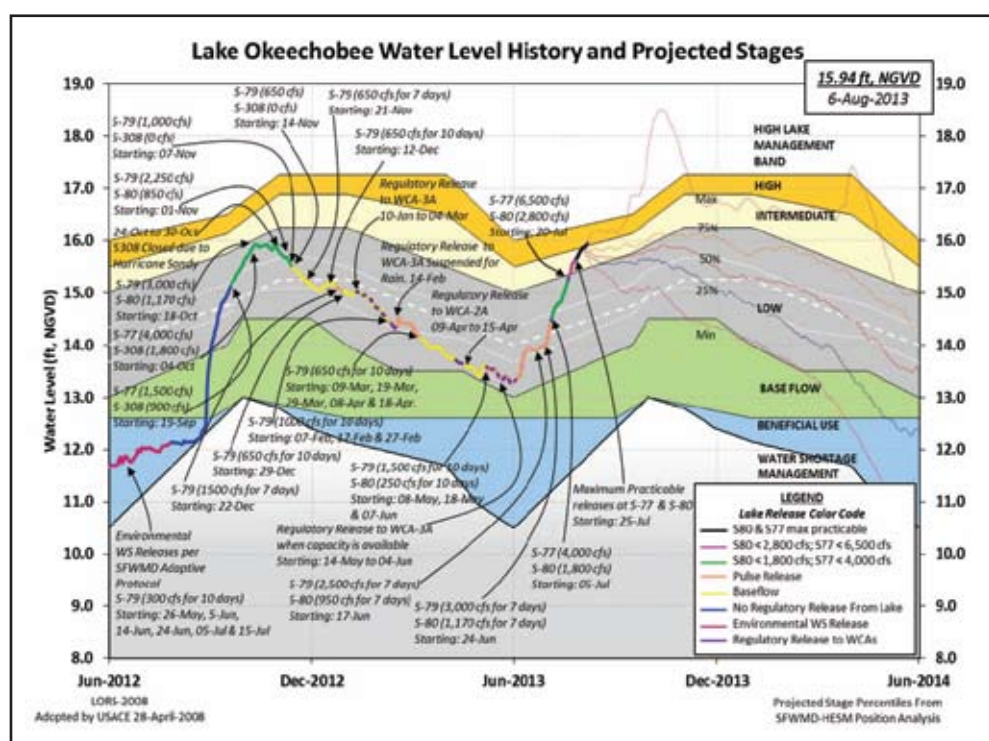
Baum, who received a standing ovation after he blamed politicians dependent on Big Sugar contributions for ensuring that sugar farm subsidies and flood protections will continue, called for voters to refuse to support any politician "who accepts one penny" from sugar farmers.

Lt. Col. Thomas Dodd of the Army Corps of Engineers and Kevin Powers, vice president of the South Florida Water Management Board of Directors, also attended the Rivers Coalition meeting and came under intense fire from the audience for their perception that the Corps and the SFWMD were standing by, when they should be flooding farms to protect the most bio-diverse estuary in the U.S.

In fact, the SFWMD went into the water farming business, Powers responded. With \$1.2 million in state monies, the water district has been paying farmers to fill their ditches to keep water on their land, at the same time that the Everglades Water Management Areas filled to the point that deer had drowned.



Dr. Paul Gray, of the Audubon Society



"We're doing everything we can with all this water," Powers added. "We cannot just flood properties without permission. People have rights in this country."

The agricultural lands were once part of the Everglades "River of Grass," which would cleanse the water as it moved slowly through the wetlands at a speed of about one mile every four days before it discharged into the Florida Bay, and it's that movement of water south—in some manner—that must be restored to eliminate the Lake Okeechobee discharges, several scientists are proposing and has been the mantra of the Rivers Coalition since it began.

"We decided back in the '50s that it was a good thing to drain the swamps, straighten the rivers, create farmland, and build cities," Gray told one audi-

ence member after the presentation. "To accomplish that, we built this complex flood control system, and in the process, we destroyed an ecosystem. It's not going to be easy to restore it, and it's not going to happen overnight. The truth is that even if we flooded all the agricultural lands tomorrow, we would not solve all the problems."

Rivers Coalition Chairman Leon Abood encourages residents to attend Rivers Coalition meetings, usually on the last Thursday of the month at 11 a.m. at the Stuart City Hall. One meeting quarterly is at 6 p.m. Their website is www.riverscoalition.org.

"It's important that people remember this even after the rains stop," he said. "We need people to stay involved, now more than ever."

—Barbara Clowdus



Rivers Coalition: Join the fight

The Rivers Coalition of 59 local businesses have banded together to "fight for a safe, healthy and ecologically balanced St. Lucie River Estuary and Indian River Lagoon." The grass-roots organization comprising business people, attorneys, environmental organizations, scientists and others has been in the middle of the fight since 1998 with 11 members. It now represents about 300,000 people.

Charles Grande, of Hutchinson Island and coordinator of the Coalition's Defense Fund, said that they were preparing to file a lawsuit, against whom and on what grounds, he did not divulge, "on the advice of attorneys."

He did reveal that several "protected" areas are now being harmed by the discharges, including two state aquatic preserves, the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Essential Fish Habitat, Environmental Protection Agency Critical Habitat for Seagrass, the St. Lucie Inlet State Preserve Reefs, and the St. Lucie Nearshore Reefs nominated for National Marine Sanctuary designation.

The estuaries and coastal ecosystems are habitat for more than 4,000 species of plants and animals, including 36 endangered and threatened species, which may be the focus of the suit.

"That's about all I can say," Grande added, "except that we need donations to our Legal Defense Fund."

For more information, go to www.riverscoalition.org, or attend a meeting.

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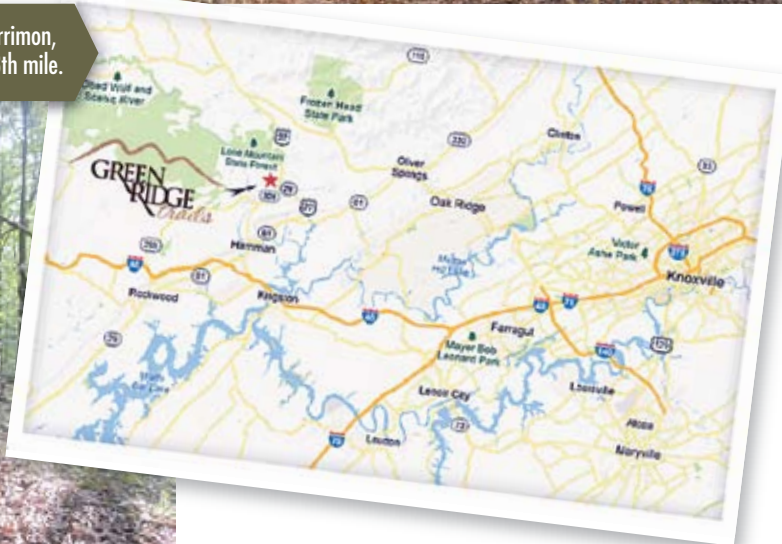
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New Plan Six touted as only solution to save estuary

When Mark Perry, executive director of the Florida Oceanographic Society on Hutchinson Island, speaks to the Rivers Coalition and other groups, his remarks often are dotted with acronyms and scientific terms that leave ordinary residents behind. No longer. Now his mantra is simple, "Plan Six is the Only Fix."

"Moving water south out of Lake Okeechobee is the only way to save the estuary," he says passionately. "It is the only option, and it can be done."

It's also easy to remember. Plan six is the only fix.

The polluted discharges from Lake Okeechobee are having major impacts on the St. Lucie River estuary, the Indian River Lagoon and the nearshore reef habitats. The salinity levels under the Roosevelt Bridge in Stuart are near zero, which results in massive oyster kills. The pollution also is covering the seagrass beds in the outer estuary and within the Indian River Lagoon, toxins are leaching from algae blooms, and enteric bacteria is multiplying.

Perry told one member of the Rivers Coalition audience (in answer to her question) that to replace the salt required for oysters to survive would take 11,720 truckloads of salt daily, Perry calculated. Just not a feasible solution.

"We must demand that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District stop all pollution discharges from the major drainage canals of C-23, C-24, C-25 and C-44 immediately," he said. "Lake Okeechobee discharges are the largest single freshwater source to the St. Lucie estuary, more than twice the volume of any other sub-basin in the St. Lucie estuary watershed."

Perry concedes that other non-point sources of pollution also cause ecological deterioration of river and estuary quality, however, nothing else eclipses the need to stop the Lake O discharges, which can happen only if the natural, southward flow of water is restored.

The estuary simply will not survive without it, he said.

“Restoring the natural southward flow of the Everglades ecosystem is absolutely critical to restoring the Ever-



Mark Perry, executive director of the Florida Oceanographic Society

glades and saving the St. Lucie estuary," he said. "Yes, it's going to be expensive, but I'm here, and I'm willing to spend my tax dollars on something that will work."

A group of respected scientists proposed a flowway as far back as 1993. The report stated that recapturing water diverted by manmade structures and naturally re-flowing Everglades water in a north to south direction was critical to Everglades restoration.

Plans were developed then, but subsequent analysis by the Army Corps of Engineers resulted in their decision that Plan Six was unworkable, in part because the areas were too large to ensure an effective flowway, and thus was deleted from restoration plans.

Plan Six has since been “tweaked” by scientists, and endorsed by the Rivers Coalition board, who are proposing a system utilizing a combination of reservoirs, current storm-water-treatment areas (STAs), farmers who store water on their land (water farming), as well as purchasing additional farm land needed to move the water south.

"We can do this," Perry said. "We already have options on that land, and we need to follow through with purchases



This gunk now lies at the bottom of the St. Lucie River.
Photo: Rivers Coalition

before those options expire."

Time is not on anyone's side, however, particularly for the completion of what many scientists feel is critical to the success of Everglades restoration, the completion of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) and a part of Plan Six.

CEPP is projected to move 217,000 acre-feet of water, which amounts to 70 billion gallons per year, south from Lake Okeechobee into the Everglades, not resolving the issue entirely, but alleviating the most damaging flows during high-water seasons from Lake O into the estuary by around half.



But funding for CEPP will not happen unless it's part of the Water Resources Development Act moving through Congress now. The project must be accepted by the South Florida Water Resources Management District as the local partner for implementation, in concert with the Army Corps of Engineers.

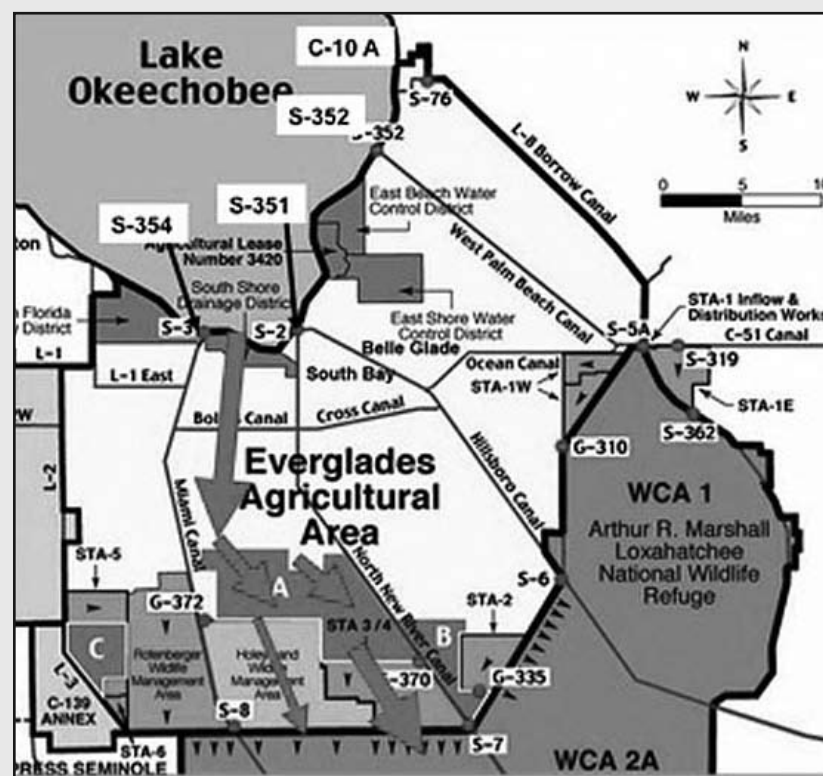
"If this opportunity is missed," Perry said, "we'll have to wait seven years before Congress again considers funding water projects. We cannot wait seven years."

ects. We cannot wait seven years."

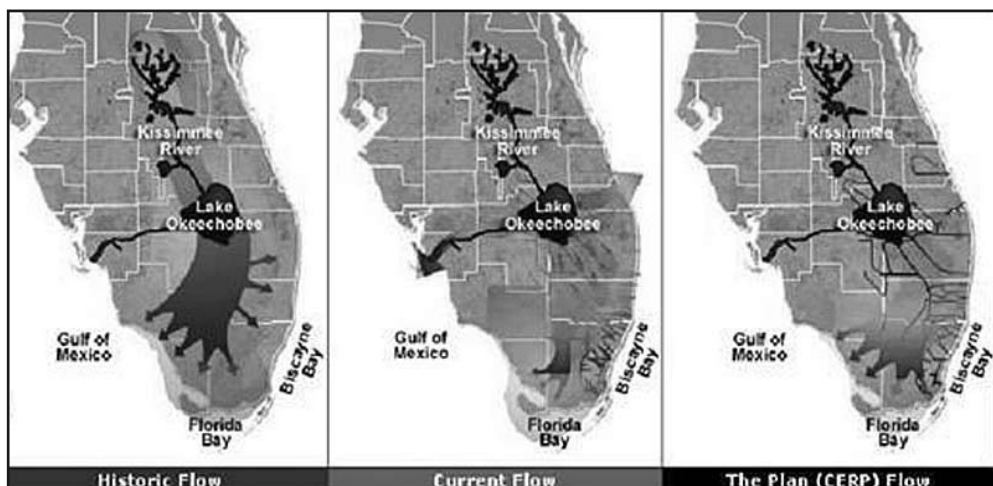
The SFWMD Governing Board meets to consider the Army Corps of Engineers plan for the CCPP on Thursday, August 15, at 9 a.m. at its district headquarters in West Palm Beach, but even if the plan is agreed to by both the Army Corps and SFWMD, Congress still has to approve funding it.

"Never has it been more critical for people to write their legislators than it is now," Perry said. "They need to sign petitions, attend rallies, call the President of the United States, do whatever they can to get this this done. Plan Six really is the only fix." ■

Plan 6 Project – Restoring the River of Grass



1. Becomes THE primary outflow of water from Lake Okeechobee.
2. Stops harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the Northern Estuaries.
3. Replaces the A5R project of the Central Everglades Restoration Plan with a greater flow capacity project.
4. Restores water flows to the Everglades.
5. Provides for healthy water levels in Lake Okeechobee.
6. Maintains Water Quantity, Quality, Timing, and Distribution for South Florida and the Everglades.



Saving the St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon

Where to write; whom to call, where to go



With dozens of organizations, some local, some state and national, in the fight to protect the St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon, the flood of information, pleas and petitions can be a little intimidating. You could the White House directly at: (202) 456-1111 or Congress at: (202) 224-3121. Voice messages are transcribed and delivered via email. Scripps newspapers offers daily updates to its subscribers at www.tcpalm.com/indianriverlagoon, and comments may be sent to indianriverlagoon@tcpalm.com.

The following is an additional list of petitions, rallies, contact numbers and websites that address the plight of the St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon:

– **Petitions**
www.change.org. Enter "save the St. Lucie."
<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov>.
Enter Indian River Lagoon or Lake Okeechobee discharges.

– **Rivers Coalition** Petition –
www.riverscoalition.org

– **Rallies by activist Evan Miller**, who has pledged to have a rally each weekend. Miller's Facebook events page: **Save the St. Lucie River and Martin County Wildlife**.

– **A statewide rally, The Sugarland Rally**, is a peaceful gathering for all Floridians and organizations in support of putting an end to the Lake Okeechobee discharges into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers at Sugarland Park near Clewiston, on Sept. 1, from noon – 3 p.m.

– **The South Florida Water Management District** Governing Board Meeting: Thursday, August 15, 9 a.m. at district headquarters: 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach. Website: www.sfwmd.gov/stlucie.

Kevin Powers – Vice Chair and the Martin County representative – kpowers@sfwmd.gov

Sandy Batchelor – sbatchel@sfwmd.gov
James Moran – jmoran@sfwmd.gov
Daniel O'Keefe – dokeefe@sfwmd.gov
Juan Portuondo –

jportuon@sfwmd.gov
Timothy Sargent – tsargent@sfwmd.gov
Glenn Waldman – gwaldman@sfwmd.gov
Mitch Hutchcraft – mhutchcraft@sfwmd.gov
Rick Barber – fbarber@sfwmd.gov

– **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** –
Thomas M. Greco, Lieutenant Colonel,
U.S. Army, Deputy District Commander,
S.Fla. – thomas.greco@usace.army.mil

– **Political Representatives:**
Governor Rick Scott – rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com
US Representative Patrick Murphy – congressmanpatrick.murphy@mail.house.gov
US Senator Bill Nelson – bill@billnelson.senate.gov
US Senator Marco Rubio – Greg.Langowski@rubio.senate.gov
Senator Joe Negron – negron.joe.web@flsenate.gov
Representative Gayle Harrell – gharrell@gayleharrell.com
Representative Marylynn Magar – marylynn.magar@myfloridahouse.gov
Representative Larry Lee – larry.lee@myfloridahouse.gov

– **National Media Contacts:**
letters@time.com
CNN.com/feedback
60m@cbsnews.com
editor@nytimes.com

– **The Senate Select Committee** on Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin will meet Thursday, August 22, from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Charles and Rae Kane Center on Salerno Road. Since space is limited and not everyone will be able to address the panelists who will convene, a special website has been created for comments and feedback. The Select Committee will conduct workshops and prepare a report to be submitted by November 4 to the Senate Committees on Appropriations, Environmental Preservation and Conservation, and Agriculture. The website is <http://www.flsenate.gov/topics/irlob>. ■

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The brown plume of Lake O discharges meets the blue water of the St. Lucie River.

Thousands gather peacefully to protest plight of estuary

Perhaps the presence of children made a difference. Perhaps the size of the crowd reinforced the notion that people can indeed make a point just by showing up. Perhaps it was just a collective need to do something to save the St. Lucie River and the Indian River Lagoon, which scientists say are perilously close to ecological collapse.



Rally organizer Evan Miller tells the crowd more rallies are to come.

Regardless of the reason, however, a distinctively positive energy flowed through the estimated 5,000-strong river rally crowd gathered in Phipps Park in Tropical Farms on August 3, in spite of the handmade signs slamming politicians, Big Sugar, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the South Florida Water Management District.

All ages and all walks of life from throughout south Florida and the Treasure Coast joined together with a single-minded purpose: to stop the polluted discharges from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie River by whatever means, at whatever cost, and to do it now—not 20 years from now.

"Let's get this river re-done and re-stored," said Mark Perry, executive director of the Florida Oceanographic Society, during his second trip to the microphone to announce a revitalized, slightly altered "Plan 6" to create a water flow-way south of Lake Okeechobee as part of the Central Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

The original Plan 6 had been nixed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers a few

years ago as unworkable—which the Army Corps of Engineers admitted during the January 2013 Rivers Coalition meeting in Stuart—but Perry and his colleagues tweaked the original, calling it now the Plan 6 Project.

"It's workable if the political will is there," Perry said. "That's what today is all about."

Politics and politicians, nearly all of whom receive generous donations from the sugar cane farmers who own and farm the agricultural lands south of the lake, were targeted by many speakers, some calling for an entirely new set of faces in government, others demanding that those seeking office, even incumbents, take no campaign contributions whatsoever from sugar farmers or their subsidiaries.

Many of the signs reflected the same sentiment, as costumed protestors weaved among them: some wearing Hazmat gear, another wearing a ghillie suit disguised as river sludge, one covered in green Spandex from head to toe as river algae. Heads nodded in agreement. One group carried a blowup dolphin on a stretcher bearing a sign declaring it "the last river dolphin." Another stretcher carried a faux-dead manatee.

Cheers and spontaneous applause often erupted after comments deriding Florida Gov. Rick Scott's perceived inaction, insensitivity and irresponsibility in resolving the issues that currently plague the Treasure Coast's most prized jewel, the



An estimated 5,000 attended a rally organized by 29-year-old Evan Miller at Phipps Park in Tropical Farms near the lock where polluted Lake O water is being discharged into the St. Lucie River.



Rivers Coalition Chairman Leon Abood called all the children to the front of the crowd. "This is who we're fighting for," he said.

most bio-diverse estuary in the United States, according to marine scientists, with more than three times the species of fish as can be found in Chesapeake Bay—at least, that was the case prior to the latest assault of Lake O discharges.

Pollution from too much phosphorous and nitrogen, as well as septic tank leakage, has led to the blue-green algae blooms evident in the river and the lagoon, which has been blamed both directly and indirectly for dolphin, manatee, turtle, fish and bird illnesses, lesions, tumors and deaths, the decimation of sea grass beds, and now is threatening human health.

DANGEROUS TO HUMANS, TOO

Scientific tests have shown that the type of algae present in the waters can produce toxins, and more tests are currently underway to determine if toxins are indeed present.

Even the rally demonstrators were barred from entering the gates surrounding the St. Lucie lock where the polluted water of Lake Okeechobee is being released from the C-44 Canal into the St. Lucie River, controlled by the Army Corps of Engineers, who are charged with keeping the water from rising too high, thus breaching the aging Hoover Dike around the lake.

Corps officials cited possible risks of contamination should anyone fall into the river or breathe in river spray as their

reasons for the locked gates, so many demonstrators hung their signs on the tall, chain-link fence after the short march from Phipps Park to the lock. A soft rain began to fall causing some of the paints to run like tears down the posters.

The Martin County Health Department, responding to both the algae blooms and to unsafe levels of enteric bacteria in many areas, including the popular sandbar in the St. Lucie Inlet, under the Roosevelt Bridge and at Sand-spirit Park, have posted signs to stay out of the water for much of the summer.

NOT JUST WATER

"It's not just water," said Marty Baum, Indian Riverkeeper, whose normally booming voice rasped slightly from over-used vocal cords bearing the weight of numerous public appearances and testimonies recently, "it's got neurotoxins in it, and they (sugar farmers) are allowed to back-pump their polluted water into the lake and dump it on us."

Baum, a member of the Rivers Coalition in Stuart, got most animated when he talked about the unwillingness of the sugar farmers to "share the adversity" from the heavy rainfall this season. The sugar farms experienced a bumper crop that produced excess sugar, he said, because keeping agricultural lands safe from flooding is a federal priority.

"That's sugar that the U.S. government will buy, with your tax money, to



Thousands more rally at the beach

Crowds estimated in excess of 10,000 people gathered Sunday in the blistering sun on Stuart and Jensen beaches, first forming letters that spelled Save Our River for overhead photographers, then forming a human chain stretching three miles from one beach to the other. One New Yorker said she was there because the estuary is "more than just a local issue. It's a national issue." Exactly.



Bob and Karen Voisenet of Stuart stood for hours next to their banner. Karen said, "Anything for this river."

turn it into ethanol," he added, "for an industry that already gets your tax dollars in sugar subsidies. Where's the adversity here?...If you overflow the sugar cane fields today, I guarantee you that they'd be dry."

Baum implored the crowd "not to forget" the current state of the river and its estuary, and to go to the polls in 2014. "Hold them accountable," he said of local, state and federal politicians.

"Don't forget today" was a common theme running throughout the crowd, in speeches and in conversations among participants, many of whom had seen the same, or similar, situations at river rallies in the past.

Harris "Boo" Lowery, of Stuart, said he was 12 when he took part in his first protest. That was in 1953. "Nothing ever changes," he said. "People get all stirred up when there are really big discharges, but nothing ever comes of it."

A similar sentiment was shared by former Martin County Commissioner Patrick Hayes, a water activist for the past 15 years.

"Unfortunately, people don't get upset, don't get involved, until the water turns green," he said, "but people need to stay involved now. That's hard to do after the water clears up, and everything seems to have returned to normal, but it won't ever be 'normal' until the natural water flows in the Everglades are restored."

PUT ACTION BEHIND YOUR VOICE

To capitalize on people's current heightened awareness of river issues—attributed by many to the recent emphasis by

The Stuart News on the effects of the discharges on the river and the estuary—several groups urged attendees to sign petitions, including the Rivers Coalition, a 59-member grassroots organization representing approximately 300,000 people formed 14 years ago to stop the Lake O discharges.

The group's chairman, Leon Abood, a Stuart Realtor, introduced an 11-year-old speaker, Veronica Dalton, a member of what Abood called "the next generation of activists," the River Kidz, originally organized by two young girls selling lemonade to raise money and awareness for the cause and now sponsored by the Rivers Coalition.

"Listen, we may be kids," Veronica said in her call to end the dumping and to stop killing the river, "but we have a voice."

Abood called for all the children at the rally to come to the front of the crowd.

"Right here, look right here," he said, "This is who we're fighting for. We're fighting for the children."

Rally organizer Evan Miller concurred, holding his six-week-old daughter aloft after his own remarks. "She's why I did this," said the 29-year-old Martin County High grad from Jacksonville who effectively used social media to generate the widespread response to his rally for the river in about a week's time. He told the crowd it was important to continue their protests, to send emails and letters to politicians, and attend rallies, particularly an upcoming forum August 22, from 1 to 9 p.m., organized by Florida Senator Joe Negron at the Kane Center on Salerno Road in Stuart.

Negron attended the rally on Saturday, telling reporters that his goal "is to channel this passion into some short-term alternatives and solutions..." His eight-member oversight panel will hear experts and stakeholders discuss issues and challenges.

Time also will be set aside to hear from the public, who are urged to attend even if the Kane Center building is not large enough to hold the numbers expected.

"Our politicians need to walk through a sea of protestors that day," said Baum. "They need to see we won't stand by any longer and just watch our river die." ■

—Barbara Clowdus



Your Business Makes Martin County!

We are the Business Development Board of Martin County! As the official economic development organization for Martin County, the BDBMC is charged with the responsibility of supporting existing companies in their expansion and growth needs and attracting new companies to the community. We are dedicated to creating successful Martin County businesses.

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The BDBMC is funded in part by the Martin County, Florida, Board of County Commissioners.

Sandy Pines groundbreaking celebrated in Tequesta

To protect the privacy of their clients ages five to 17, no children or adolescents at Sandy Pines in Tequesta attended the groundbreaking July 17 for a 38-bed addition and a separate school administered by the Martin County School District. They could not be seen anywhere, although 75 of them live temporarily on campus.

Their presence, however, was felt before guests even entered the residential facility that treats behavior, trauma, or mental illness among the young at the 19-acre campus just north of the Palm Beach/Martin County line, tucked alongside Jonathan Dickinson State Park.

Along the front sidewalk are step-



ping stones with small handprints centered on each, colorful glass marbles catching the light among stamped words that spell "JOY," or "LOVE," or with phrases, "Beauty in Every Struggle." No names, but you see their feelings expressed per-



manently in concrete—the Sandy Pines mission etched in stone.

"We are here today because of John McCarthy's vision," said Roz Hudson, division vice president of United Health Services of Delaware, a Fortune 500 company that owns Sandy Pines, along with 224 other health care facilities throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. "He may no longer be here, but his heart is here; this is his vision."

Hudson gave her remarks during a brief ceremony prior to the groundbreaking, welcoming guests that included State Rep. MaryLynn Magar and County Superintendent of Schools Laurie Gaylord, and recognizing the former CEO's role in shaping Sandy Pines, who died in June 2011. Hudson compared him to the new CEO, Karin Carl.

"She has the same heart for children," Hudson said. "I knew she was the right person to follow John McCarthy."

Carl shepherded the facility during the most difficult part of its journey through the approval process, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Service's permit requirements regarding protection of the endangered scrub jay, which delayed construction by more than a year.

"Scrub jays and gopher turtles are just part of the process in Martin County," said Commissioner Doug Smith, who served on the Sandy Pines board of directors for 10 years, as he ad-



The Sandy Pines Residential Treatment Facility for Children and Adolescents is off the Martin/Palm Beach County Line Road in Tequesta.

dressed the gathering. "...but we need to find a way to be better at this, to be more efficient, and to get this done right, because facilities like Sandy Pines are an asset to all of Martin County."

In her remarks, Carl thanked those who had contributed to the "fulfillment of a dream" and lauded the Business Development Board of Martin County for providing "valuable assistance" in guiding the treatment facility, founded in 1990, through what she called "a complicated and somewhat frustrating process" to the reality of the groundbreaking.

Tim Dougher, executive director of the BDB, responded that "...it's not just about ribbon-cutting, or even about scrub jays and turtles here in Martin County. We're very specific about the businesses we recruit to Martin County. We want to make sure it's a good fit," he said, "and Sandy Pines is exactly the kind of company we want in Martin County."

The BDB assisted first McCarthy then Carl in working with the Growth Management Department to get Sandy Pines designated as an L-Star project, arranging and attending meetings with county staff throughout the permitting process.

"L-Star is a special designation for targeted businesses to expedite the permitting process," Dougher said. "The company was then able to move through the county process more quickly and efficiently." Dougher explained after the official gathering that Sandy Pines management also had requested personal introductions and meetings with the Martin County Commission and other elected officials, which the BDB arranged and attended, and when Sandy Pines encountered the state permitting issues, the BDB staff assisted them in navigating through that process and making the proper connections. They also will assist in developing a job recruitment fair to assist in the hiring of new employees, Dougher said.



Karin Carl, CEO at Sandy Pines

Since youngsters stay at the facility from 30 to 90 days, depending on their treatment, Sandy Pines has historically offered school classes taught by Martin County teachers, but McCarthy had set a goal prior to his death that these children should have a separate school, attending classes just as their peers do, and in the same type of learning environment, according to Hudson.

In addition to school, of course, youngsters also receive individual therapy, family therapy, R.O.P.E.S. Course,

independent living skills therapy, basic living skills group, animal assisted therapy, chemical dependency therapies, and activities therapy, depending on their needs and diagnoses.

"This was his dream," Hudson told the audience, "but soon it was our dream, too. Whenever we would question him, he would remind us, 'It's all about the kids.'...His vision reminds us that today, this groundbreaking, our celebration, is all about the kids." ■

—Barbara Clowdus



The Sandy Pines groundbreaking "crew", from left: Roz Hudson, VP of UHS of Delaware; Laurie Gaylord, superintendent of Martin County Schools; Tim Dougher, BDB executive director, Karin Carl, Sandy Pines CEO, State Rep. MaryLynn Magar, and Martin County Commissioner Doug Smith.



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Krumbcakes Bakery & Cafe in Hobe Sound officially reopened

the first week of August after a fire unexpectedly shut its doors for five months. They served customers for about two to three weeks prior to officially reopening, however, as they “worked out the bugs” with their renovated quarters, according to owner, baker and chef, Jim Catrini, pictured here with his daughter, Jonna-Li, the official cake-decorator extraordinaire for the business. “The response to our reopening has been phenomenal,” Catrini said, “We couldn’t be happier. and the fire actually gave us a chance to remodel the way we had wanted it in the first place.” Summer hours at the cafe in the Winn-Dixie Marketplace Plaza on Bridge Road are Tuesday through Friday, 7:30 to 3 p.m. and Saturdays, 7:30 to 2 p.m. ■

St. Luke’s School of the Arts, a program of the St. Luke’s Episcopal Church

in Port Salerno, will add the KEYS Piano Studio of Palm City to its fall offerings, according to the Rev. Carol Barron of St. Luke’s. The program will offer pop, country, classical, and jazz, plus “Show Piano” that incorporates dance, costumes, and props. Students at St. Luke’s will have opportunities in reading music, piano lessons, improvisation, hearing and playing music on a keyboard, writing and performing music. Private lessons will be held at St. Luke’s School of the Arts and in the Hobe Sound area. Classes will begin in September. For more info, call KEYS Piano Studio at 772-285-2276, or go to www.keyspianostudio.com. ■

The Business Development Board of Martin County was notified recently

that two Martin County companies are finalists in the “Top 50 Florida Companies to Watch,” an initiative of the Edward Lowe Foundation to encourage and support entrepreneurship as the source and strategy for economic growth, community development and

economically independent individuals, according to its press release.

Seatorque Control Systems is a Stuart-based manufacturer of propulsion systems for the marine industry. Its innovation team currently is seeking to develop new technologies for alternate fuel sources, green propulsion and hybrid/electric power.

Custom Agronomics, Inc., of Palm City, formulates liquid nutrients, specialty chemistries and high performance wetting agents and surfactants. The products are specialized for professional turf management, agriculture, and lawn and garden, and its specialty soil health product line increases nutrient availability, stress resistance, root development and increased yields, according to the release.

“These two companies exemplify Martin County’s entrepreneurial environment,” says Tim Dougher, executive director of the Business Development Board. “Companies in this stage-two phase offer the best opportunity for growth and will continue to have a great impact on Martin County’s economy and employment.”

The Lowe Foundation offers peer-to-peer CEO mentoring to second-stage entrepreneurs—small businesses with national and global markets conducive to expansion—important to local communities because of the potential for sig-

nificant job creation and for the outside dollars coming into the county.

These companies are part of the GrowFL program of the Florida Economic Gardening Institute at the University of Central Florida, a component to the state’s economic development strategy to support second-stage entrepreneurs.

For assistance in taking advantage of these programs or to learn the resources available to small businesses, contact the Business Development Board of Martin County, at 1002 SE Monterey Commons Blvd, Suite 203, in Stuart; call 772.221.1380, email info@bdbmc.org, or visit www.bdbmc.org. ■

Brandon Woodward, P.A., announced the opening of his new office at the

corner of US 1 and Kannner/Colorado in the Bank of America Building. “We’re here to help you with all of your business legal needs,” Woodward says, including some tips he’s learned as searched for new office space about commercial leases and business insurance, as well as helping businesses navigate the Affordable Care Act. Official address: 900 S. Federal Highway, Ste. 301, Stuart. Phone: 561-281-8506. ■



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3 miles south of Cove Road; 2.7 miles north of Bridge Road



A new HoSo Chamber fundraiser on the Horizon

A fund raiser that gives patrons a chance to "Dine Around Hobe Sound" is being planned by the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce for Oct. 5 from 6 to 10 p.m. The chamber's first-ever progressive dinner party will start with a general gathering at one restaurant for cocktails and appetizers, then separate into groups to be hosted at one of 10 homes for a themed dinner party that includes unique cuisine for the main course.

Following dinner, at an appointed time, guests will convene at Harry and the Natives for its award-winning orange cake dessert with a nightcap.

Organizers know that the night will still be young, so Scooters Fun, Food & Spirits in the Winn-Dixie Marketplace Plaza plans to host an official after-party that will end at 10 p.m....or maybe later.

The volunteer hosts, whose names have not yet been revealed, have promised to serve a variety of delicacies with themes that include Backyard BBQ's, a night in New Orleans, and "Luck be a Lady" Italian Dinners.

Tickets are \$50 per person and include all the evening's activities. They should be purchased at the Chamber office or directly from one of the cuisine hosts, after the Chamber announces who they are.

"Our board was thrilled with the idea of a progressive dinner party," said Jennifer Ahern, committee chair, and communications director for Lesser, Lesser, Landy & Smith. "It's a nice way to involve our

local restaurants, as well as our Chamber members."

The small group gatherings at a host's home offers an paralleled oppor-



Jan Otten, Patrice Drennan-Smith, Wayne Lewis, Jennifer Ferrari, Trent Steele, Jennifer Ahern, Angela Hoffman, Wayne Klick, Lea Tate, and Shane Ahern. Photo: Leo Arbezniik

tunity to become better acquainted and to build relationships, Ahern added.

"We already have several hosts with delicious themes chosen, multiple sponsors and a waiting list for ticket purchases," she said.

To help support the Hobe Sound Chamber's Progressive Dinner Party, sponsorship levels are available to members and range in cost from \$150-\$750. Contact Angela Hoffman for more details or to purchase tickets.

For those who would be willing to volunteer as a cuisine host, contact Jennifer Ahern at 772-486-8008. ■

Cover artwork for new directory unveiled

Hobe Sound Chamber members were first to see the cover of the Chamber's new business directory at a formal unveiling July 31 at the First Citizens Bank in Stuart. Since the artwork was by renowned artist Dan Mackin, no one was surprised that it had a tropical theme, neither were they disappointed.

"Mr. Mackin, a long time member of the Hobe Sound Chamber, has so generously donated an original giclee of the cover image to be raffled off," announced Angela Hoffman, the Chamber's executive director, at the Business After Hours event. "He also will attend Chamber events in September and October so he can sign the beautiful cover image."

A copy of the official Hobe Sound Community Guide & Preferred Business Directory that features visitor, resident and relocation information will be available to the public, as well as Chamber members, in September. A copy can be reserved by calling 772.546.4724.

An award-winning artist, Mackin is a Wyland featured artist and a member of the Surfing Hall of Fame. He collaborated with Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, depicting eight of his songs on canvas, and is one of 29 artists in the world to have a Disney License. His



Angela Hoffman, executive director of the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce, unveils the artwork by Dan Mackin for the cover of the Chamber's latest business directory, available in September. Photo: Leo Arbezniik

posters and prints sell in more than 3,000 stores throughout the world. He sailed a small boat to Central America from 1971 to 1973. During this trek he lost his camera overboard and started recording his travels by drawing and painting scenes, but he says he's always had a fascination with tropical foliage and water. His paintings, indeed, communicate a sense of being in paradise, the perfect image for a Chamber of Commerce directory. ■

HOBE SOUND CHAMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wildly Successful Women's Wednesday Luncheon

Wednesday, August 21, Noon

The Hunters Grill

5687 SE Crooked Oak Avenue, Hobe Sound

Sponsored by Seacoast National Bank

Guest Speaker: Linda Frost, Seacoast VP of Wealth Management

Topic: Women and Investing

Bring a post card or photo of the place you would dream of visiting or living upon retirement.

Cost: \$20

Business After Hours

Wednesday, August 28, 5:30-7 p.m.

Miles Grant Country Club

5101 SE Miles Grant Road, Stuart

Sponsored by: Miles Grant Country Club and Lesser, Lesser, Landy & Smith

Music by Dancensound

\$7 Members; \$10 Non-Members

Council of Chambers Luncheon

Wednesday, August 14, at 11:45 a.m.

Council of Chambers Luncheon

RESERVATIONS ARE NECESSARY

Chamber Members \$25

Prospective Members \$35

Non-Members \$50

Reserve on-line at www.stuartmartinchamber.org or Call 287-1088 (ext. 101).

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Regular hours: 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Beginning Sept. 9, on Monday nights too, 5-8 p.m.

Plans underway now for annual Indiantown rodeo

In a place like Indiantown, where some wear cowboy boots year round, a rodeo means more than a street festival or even a circus coming to town. A rodeo is serious business. It honors a way of life fast disappearing in this country, and tests the mettle and skill of some of the finest riders in the country, including the ones in your own backyard.

Organized by the Indiantown Chamber of Commerce, plans for the next Indiantown Rodeo on Oct. 25-26 at Timer Powers Park on Citrus Boulevard are well underway.

"We wish we had gotten that roof over the stands this year just in case it rains," says Hilary McKeich, executive



Indiantown is beginning to speak rodeo.

director of the Indiantown Chamber of Commerce. "But, it's fun, rain or shine, and some of these riders are just amazing to watch. They're the best. Of course, my favorite is the clown."

A professional event sanctioned by the Professional Cowboy Rodeo Association and Women's Pro Rodeo Association, the Indiantown Rodeo always draws some of the top participants in the sport as points earned count toward qualification for the National Finals Rodeo.

Seven events will be contested each night, including bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, bull riding, tie-down roping, steer wrestling, team roping and women's barrel riding.

Gates open at 5 p.m., a live band

will perform, and concessions will be available. The rodeo competition begins at 7:30 p.m.

Advance tickets (\$10 for adults, \$5 for children under 12) can be purchased at any Seacoast National Bank branch. Tickets at the gate will be \$15 for adults and \$8 for children.

"We also have great sponsorship packages for businesses who want a great opportunity to get their name out in front of thousands of people," McKeich adds, "and we'll be announcing their name during the rodeo competition, too. It's just incredible what we have planned for our sponsors. Just call, and I'll give you all the details." Call McKeich at 772-597-2184. ■

FPL: Florida's natural gas lines getting filled up

Perhaps every now and then it's good to be reminded what we take for granted in Martin County. Cheap power—though not one of the first things to jump to mind—is one of them. Nick Blount, external affairs manager at Florida Power & Light reminded residents of that in his recent presentation to the Indiantown Chamber of Commerce meeting at Indianwood.

"Not many people realize that there are 55 utility companies in Florida," Blount said, "and FPL has the lowest rate—\$25 per kilowatt-hour—of all of them." The highest rates were more than \$100 per kilowatt-hour, according to Blount.

He said that the reason lies at the heart of FPL's philosophy of seeking efficient energy production and tapping into alternative energy sources, such as the solar plant at Indiantown, the largest solar plant in Florida and

one of the largest in the country.

"We have been converting some of our other plants to natural gas," he added, "which is more efficient and burns cleaner than oil."

The Port Everglades plant has been "imploded," with plans for it to be back on line in 2016.

"No more stacks," he said.

They've replaced oil at the Melbourne plant with natural gas, and the Riviera Beach plant, as well as the Port Everglades plant, is next. FPL also has added significant capacity with upgrades at two nuclear plants, one at Port St. Lucie and the other at Turkey Point in southern Miami-Dade County.

The demand for natural gas is increasing, Blount added, but Florida has only two transmission lines coming into the state.

"These are getting to be close to full capacity," Blount said. "We need to



FPL's Nick Blount addresses iTown Chamber

build another line, and believe it or not, it's going to come from Alabama. We'll build a hub in the central part of the

state, which will connect all the lines, then from the hub, we'll build another line to our plant here in Indiantown."

Since the meeting, FPL officials announced that Sabal Trail Transmission and Florida Southeast Connection will build the new pipeline system, which is expected to be completed in 2017. The Florida Southeast Connection project will include approximately 126 miles of interstate natural gas pipeline. The new line from Sabal Trail's Central Florida Hub south of Orlando to FPL's Martin Clean Energy Center in Indiantown will be capable of transporting 400 million cubic feet or more of natural gas per day, according to the FPL release.

"This is going to give us a different source for natural gas," Blount said, "which is important when we get a hurricane. It's going to be adding reliability, as well as reducing costs for our customers." ■

A high school for young adults 16-22 opens in Indiantown in time for class

When school starts this month, a new Martin County School District high school in Indiantown also will open—not for traditional high school students, but for adult students between the ages of 16 and 22. Indiantown Chamber members got a glimpse of the program during its regular monthly meeting in July. It's an innovative concept that focuses on those students for whom traditional schooling did not work. They can attain their high school diploma through this computer-based program that allows students to work at their own pace. Indiantown Adult High semesters are the same as other schools in the district,



The Indiantown Adult High School will enroll students ages 16-22 beginning this month.

FCAT requirements are the same, but a student may take up to nine credit

hours a year, rather than the typical four to six. ■

Indiantown Calendar

Business & Breakfast

Thursday, August 22

7:45 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Indianwood on Warfield Avenue

Sponsored and catered by

Good Samaritan Medical Centers
Imaging Centers.

Reservations: Call 772.221.1380.

Tuesday, August 13 Laugh at a Toastmaster

The Hobe Sound Toastmasters will once again host one of the most popular events in the area, the Humorist and Evaluator Contest, on Tuesday, August 13, beginning promptly at 7 p.m. at the Hobe Sound Bible College on Gomez Avenue in Hobe Sound. Members of the local Toastmasters Club will make humorous speeches, which then are evaluated by other members. Not only is the event free of charge, but the local Toastmasters have earned a reputation for providing the county's best refreshments at any club event. The public is always welcome.

Thursday, August 15 Italian Dinner Bingo Night

What could go together better than one of America's favorite meals, an Italian dinner, and a favorite pastime, bingo. St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Port Salerno will put the two together to create an Italian Dinner Bingo Night on Thursday, August 15. Come in out of the heat to enjoy a summer fun event with friends and neighbors that includes pasta, salad, dessert and a bingo card, all for \$10. Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner at 5:30 p.m., bingo at 6:30 p.m. St. Luke's is at the corner of Cove Road and A1A. For info, call: 772 286-5455.

Weekend, August 17-18 International Lighthouse- Lightship Weekend

The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse and Museum will take part in International Lighthouse-Lightship Weekend August 17 and 18 by hosting two local amateur radio operating groups, the Jupiter-Tequesta Repeater Group and the Martin County Amateur Radio Association. Tents with free fun activities and demonstrations for children and adults will be on the lighthouse grounds, and tour admission will be reduced to \$5. For more info, visit www.jupiterlighthouse.org.

Saturday, August 17 Special Car Sales-Charity Event



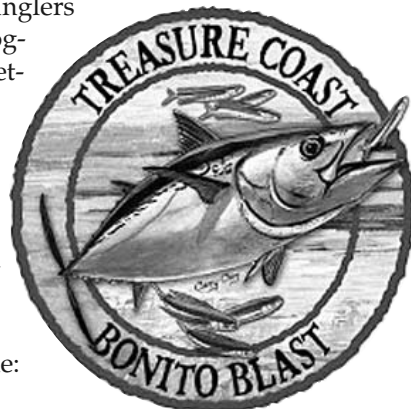
We know that Delray Beach is somewhat of a hike, but what if this was your daughter who had had a double kidney transplant? Can you imagine THOSE medical bills? That's what this is all about when the Presidential Auto Sales & Leasing dealership in Delray Beach offered to hold a special car sale with special prices and lots of music, food and fun at its dealership August 17 from noon to 5 p.m. to help the family of Talia Bennardo with their extraordinary, out-of-pocket medical expenses. A silent auction will offer loads of items, including a diamond and ruby pendant, a tabletop fireplace, weekend get-a-ways, restaurant gift cards, golf foursomes, Botox treatments, a cute puppy...a puppy? There'll also be a meatball-eating contest, a photo booth, car washes, and loads more....stuff! 3201 S. Federal Hwy, Delray Beach. Call for more info: 562.266.0009, or go to www.presidentialautoleasing.com.



ior. Acct. # 6008450442; Tax ID # 46-6889242. For more information, contact the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce at 772.546.

Saturday, August 24 Bonito Blast Fishing Tournament

A new fishing tournament in Port Salerno that perhaps only locals will love, the Bonito Blast Fishing Tournament will offer a \$2,500 in cash prizes with proceeds going to benefit the Wounded Warriors of South Florida. Registration is \$100 per boat and includes fishing and dinner Saturday for up to four people. Junior anglers (under 12) can fish free, but will be recognized for their catch. The Captain's Meeting will be Friday night at the Manatee Island Bar and Grill in Port Salerno, as will the Saturday night recognition dinner. Sponsorships are still available. Registration forms are at Port Salerno businesses and all the details and information to register are on the website at www.TreasureCoastBonitoBlast.com. Email: TCBonitoBlast@gmail.com Phone: 772-919-5577.



Saturday, August 31 Sand Sculpting Contest

Florida Oceanographic Society will celebrate sea turtle nesting season on Saturday, August 31, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with an inaugural Sand Sculpting Contest at Stuart Beach for "Building Awareness While Leaving No Trace." The event includes a three-hour window for teams to build a sand creation, 45 minutes for judging and public viewing, followed by a leveling of the field at 1 p.m. focused on removing man-made obstacles and protecting marine life. Florida Oceanographic invites businesses, families, friends and coworkers to pre-register as a team. There are three competition categories: Best Themed, Most Creative and Best Marine Animal. Registration is a tax-deductible donation of \$25 for teams of six or less, and pre-registration is required. Visit www.FloridaOcean.org for details, or call 772-225-0505.

Saturday, Sept. 7 Sporting Clay Shoot

This charity event starts with a bang! The Visiting Nurse Association's 1st Annual Charity Sporting Clay Shoot begins at 8:30 a.m. followed by a shotgun start at 9:30 a.m. on Sept. 7 at Quail Creek Plantation, 12399 Northeast 224th Street in Okeechobee. Funds help cover medicine costs for people struggling financially, provide equipment to severely disabled children at Challenger School in Stuart, build wheelchair ramps in the homes of indigent and disabled patients, and fuel the Florence Nightingale Express, a 38-foot-long, medically staffed, fully equipped mobile medical clinic. During the shoot participants will fire away at sporting clays manually launched by Quail Creek employees from multiple platforms positioned throughout the woodland grounds' winding trails. One shooter is \$160 and a foursome is \$600. Both levels include golf cart usage, ammo, and the team photo. Tickets include a light breakfast and a hearty country lunch. Purchase your ticket by contacting Jennifer Crow at (772) 286-1844, extension 1040 or jennifer.crow@vnaflorida.org.

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State House 119-1

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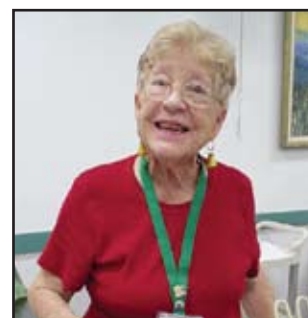
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Successful Everglades Restoration

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Master bingo player Carol Plude has lived in Hobe Sound for 30 years.



Peggy Deitz, of Heritage Ridge, serves up the hot dogs each week.



Lori Campbell gets into the Christmas in July spirit.



Even a White Elephant sale had a Christmas theme



Every bingo parlor needs an official, deep-throated caller wearing a Santa hat!

Better than arcades: B_I_N_G_O!

Each Wednesday like clockwork, dozens of seniors gather at St. Christopher's Catholic Church hall at 11 a.m. for lunch, a little camaraderie, great desserts and lots of fun. Bingo numbers start being called at 12:30. says Joanne Greco, of Hobe Sound, who volunteers her time to help out.

"We have such a great time," she

says, "People here are so friendly, and they're funny. I laugh a lot."

In addition to the free desserts and coffee—lots of desserts—they have organized a free book exchange, as well. Just bring a book to take a book.

"Just come on by," Greco adds. "After you spend some time with us here, you'll want to come back." ■



Pictured from left to right are: Shannon Lewis, SFHS graduate who will be attending IRSC. Rachel Van Kirk, Clark Advanced Learning Center graduate will be attending the University of Florida. Michelle Watts, current IRSC student. Flavia Ballino, current IRSC student. Kelsey Kennelly, South Fork High School graduate who will be attending IRSC.

Women's Club helps students with college expenses

The GFWC Hobe Sound Women's Club awarded scholarships at its regular monthly meeting in June to five outstanding students for their superior academic and personal achievements. From left, Shannon Lewis, a South Fork High School graduate who will at-

tend IRSC; Rachel Van Kirk, a Clark Advanced Learning Center graduate, who will attend the University of Florida; Michelle Watts, a current IRSC student; Flavia Ballino, a current IRSC student; and Kelsey Kennelly, a South Fork High School graduate who will attend IRSC. ■

Counterclockwise sorcery of miniature carousels



**Maya
Ellenson**

*Art
Kaleidoscope*

Who does not remember a childhood ride on the carousel, and its unfathomable grip that never fades? Frank Caracci's miniature, one-of-a-kind carousels revitalizes that wonderful world of colorful wooden horses, spinning and prancing in a magical circle of innocent joy.

Following the counterclockwise rotation of the American carousel, we slide back to the pre-digital era of amusement, with its genuine colors and sensations, to a retired tool-and-die maker from the Grumman Corp. and WWII veteran Frank Caracci, of Hobe Sound.

He served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 through 1946 in the South Pacific. Some dramatic episodes of his military past were commemorated in his beautifully penned guest column for *The Stuart News* in its May 31, 2010, issue.

At age 86, Frank is full of creative energy, enthusiasm and contagious vitality. After retirement from Grumman, Frank and his wife, Barbara, settled in North Carolina where they managed a farm and visited Florida occasionally. In 2010, they decided to settle in Hobe Sound for good. He and Barbara, married for 40 years, have seven children, nine grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

In May of 2012, Frank flew to Washington D.C. on the Honor Flight, and while standing at the WWII Memorial, he was approached by a little boy who saluted him and uttered: "Sir, thank you for serving our country."

He commemorated this poignant event in his life by creating a charming, small-size wooden sculpture of an elderly veteran and a little boy, saluting him. The figurine has an inscription: "The Day the Young Boy Brought Tears to an Old Man's Eyes."

"I don't enjoy twitting and texting,"



Artist Frank Carraci in his Hobe Sound workshop surrounded by the tools he uses to create some counterclockwise magic. Photo: Maya Ellenson

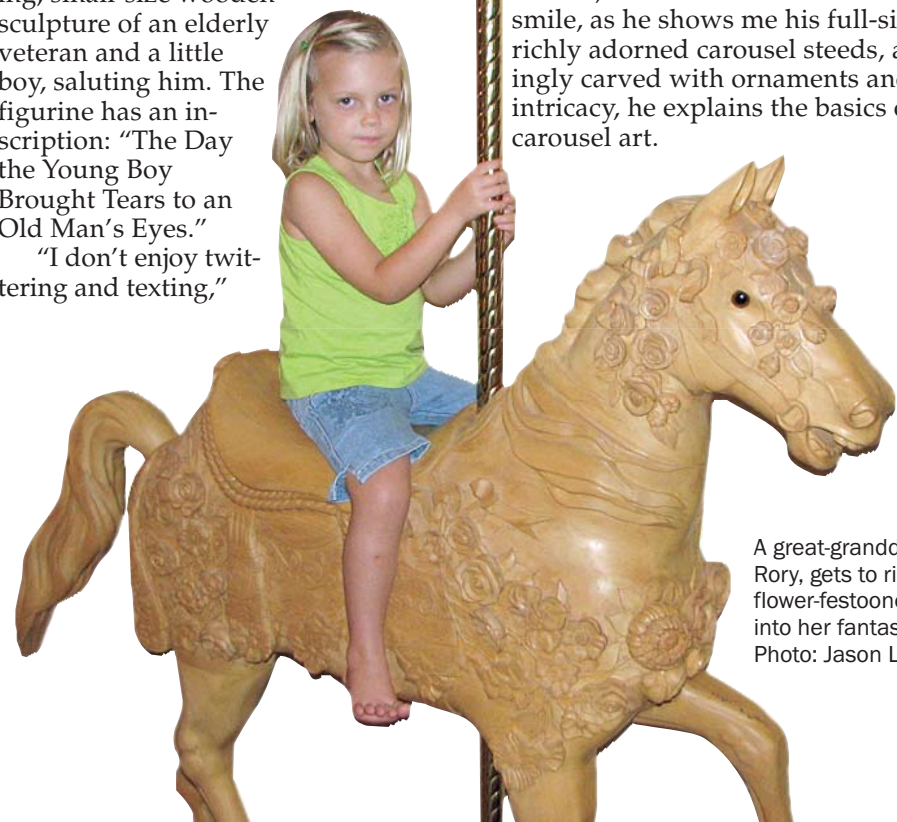


Ferris wheels, as well as carousels, come to life in Carraci's workshop.

Frank says, activities he calls "shallow" thinking. "For me, the art of woodcarving is the best way of escaping from life's hustle and bustle. Besides, art runs in our genes."

When his father once traveled to Italy, he saw the paintings of two famous Renaissance painters, brothers Caracci.

"Who knows, maybe we are even related," he utters with a cheerful smile, as he shows me his full-sized, richly adorned carousel steeds, amazingly carved with ornaments and great intricacy, he explains the basics of carousel art.



A great-granddaughter, Rory, gets to ride a flower-festooned horse into her fantasies. Photo: Jason Landis

"When the carousel rotates," he explains, "the public sees only the outer row and, respectively, the front side of the horse. It's called the 'romance side.' As you see, my stallions are evenly decorated on both sides. Also, each horse contains a very specific message, explaining how to put the sculpture together should it become damaged."

Frank Caracci's carousel horses have been featured in numerous North Carolina papers and in the *Palm Beach Post*. The

Asheville Times reported on May, 1989, that one of his carousel horses had won "Best of Show" in the High County Arts & Craft Guild annual senior citizen competition. Caracci had used basswood, which was air dried for three years, for the carving he began in June 1988. He completed it in April 1989 after 800 hours of carving. He finished the sculpture with two coats of sealer, five coats of thinned gesso acrylic paint, and two coats of lacquer and wax.

The carousel, as a very special component of the American cultural landscape, always intrigued Frank, he says. Before embarking on his carousel odyssey, he perused its history, falling in love with its vibrant designs from the Golden Age. He studied all the master carvers of that era, but says that Dentzel's realistic and elaborate style inspired him the most.

Finally, Frank ushers us to his workshop where his miniature carousels are displayed—all handmade, including the mechanics with all its gears, shifting and moving parts. Unique in both shape and design, all his exhibits emanate the glamorous aura of the carousel's glorious past; however, one of the carousels is very special.

As Frank turns it on, the small-scale expressive figurines start rotating to Louis Armstrong's tune, "What a Wonderful World" with Franklin Roosevelt in a wheelchair, Fred Astaire, Marilyn Monroe and other iconic American cultural figures.



American icon Fred Astaire dances eternally on one of Frank Carraci's spinning carousels.

We stood speechless around the counterclockwise sorcery: Frank, Barbara, their grandson, Jason, his 5-year old daughter, Rory, and me, not daring to move, totally transfixed by this purely American magic. As poet Nicole Baker writes in her poem, "Carousel": "You never grow too old for a carousel. And the carousel never grows tired of going around in the same old circle. It is its job. That's what it is created for."

And, if so, then it's Frank Caracci's job to keep it spinning. ■

Russian-American Maya Ellenson, who holds M.A. and PhD degrees in Russian language and literature from Moscow State University, has lived in Martin County for eight years. A free-lance writer, she has a particular interest in world culture and art.

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To be inspired as an artist, visit Monet's garden



**Suzanne
Briley**

Hopscotch

"The World is a great book, of which they who never stir from home read only a page."

—Augustine of Hippo

Artist Claude Monet's house and garden in Giverny, France, is a large pink manse with dark green shutters and windows to the floor. It is in Normandy, not far from Rouen and near the river, Epte, which flows through the garden.

Monet himself lived in the house during the last century, and his studio adjoined it so that thousands of yearly visitors can see his living and working environment, along with its world-famous garden. A bamboo hedge, with a little running stream flowing alongside, leads to a handrail of bamboo on the bridge crossing over to the two-story house. A path of colorful flowers line the

walkway. There are white lace curtains at the windows that look out over the garden. It's easy to imagine happy children's faces there.

Humming bees, blue bottle flies, and dragonflies with double wings skim over the pond at the center of a green space of lilies. There are clusters of white and pink ones forming a flotilla of reflective beauty. The pond is still. The white light is exquisite. The dark bridge is covered with wisteria cascading over arches and topping them with winding vines of magic.

Glimmering shining colors lie in masses of flowers such as creamy holly hocks of pale apricot, burgundy, cherry and red. I loved the hot pink zinnias, spikes of dark pink salvias, astrameries and gladioli of salmon and white. My artist's eye was filled with the delights of color! The flowers were breathing and sending me their lovely scents. There was not an inch of open space for them, and all were shouting, "paint me, paint me!"

Some of my life has been spent as a flower painter, and the entrancing garden of Monet, born in 1840 and considered the father of French Impressionism, was a true paradise. Rows and rows of

iris flanked the white gravel path holding their white, blue and lavender heads high. Flower beds were crammed with every kind and description in my botanical world, and as I looked back from the places I had walked, I noticed the Weeping Willow trees and large chestnuts providing shade from the white hot sun. They added a magnificence of peace and perfection that only shade trees can give a garden.

There was such happiness there, and an added joy of being present as an artist. I stood on the bridge for a long while, so that I would be able to mentally carry away a treasured memory. Monet's famous studio has a high vaulted ceiling of brilliant light and measured space. There were many tourists there buying prints of paintings, the most famous of which probably is "The Water Lilies," as well as many souvenirs. I departed quickly and left to see the house itself.

Each charming room projected the color of an artist's eye. A robin's egg blue entrance with a matching tall clock and writing desk. There were Japanese prints all through the entire house in gray mats and black frames. The dining room,

where many happy hours were spent, was a cadmium yellow, like marigolds. Blue and white plates decorated the walls adjacent to a large blue-and-white tiled kitchen with shiny copper pots. The cabinets were painted blue, and a large black soapstone sink and drainboard stood waiting for service.

Very French and very cozy!

A pale green foyer led from the kitchen to narrow wooden stairs winding to the upstairs bedrooms. Monet's bed was a lumpy mattress covered by a white, hand-crocheted spread. The floors were worn, honey-color pine, swept clean, abutting creamy-colored tiles leading to a small wash area. Once again the views overlooked the garden, bringing it into the house, creating an intimacy with it in every room.

I loved it all. The unending magical feelings of the past, and best of all, I rushed back to Florida with a determination and enthusiasm to paint what I had remembered! ■

Suzanne Briley, who lives in Hobe Sound, is an artist, author, entrepreneur, environmentalist and world traveler. She may be contacted at hopsotch@hscurrents.com.

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We must raise our voices to save both our rivers



**Rich
Vidulich**
*Pompano
Reporter*

No doubt the Lake O discharges are going to continue until—and perhaps through—the winter months. In fact, The Farmers' Almanac 2013 forecast for south Florida is colder AND wetter than 2012, and farmers forecast a colder and snowier hit by far this winter in the Northeast. Meteorologists are forecasting an active tropical storm pattern well into October.

Definitely a tough forecast for a fishing reporter to budget. If we have a very wet December, the Lake O discharges of fresh water may continue even through our optimum fishing months.

One thing I've learned is that Lake O has two big-volume outlets for dramatic "safety discharges." We know one of them is the St. Lucie River via the C-44 Canal, but we tend to be deaf to the western outlet into the massive Caloosahatchee River system, which suffers greater discharges than the St. Lucie River.

In the early '90s, my dad took 80% of his life's earnings and bought a 50-year-old, 900 sq. ft. house on the Caloosahatchee, which was on the water and cost him \$90,000. At age 78, he and I got in the mud and built a jerry-rigged dock through a mangroved beachfront. He also bought a \$3,000 pontoon boat and fished his passion daily. His Ft. Myers property was four miles south of where the Gulf of Mexico meets the Caloosahatchee by the famed Sanibel Island lighthouse.

Twice a year, the Mrs. and I would visit and go fishing with Pops. He was of northern Italian descent and knew how to harvest the fishery. We'd get on the pontoon, ride out the canal and follow the cuts to trout heaven. Sea grass everywhere! If trout bite not so good, we'd go find channel bass!

Anchored up, we'd eat Dad's traditional pontoon lunch: a Genoa salami sandwich on white bread topped with cooked green peppers, and a hard boiled egg, a side of salt, with half of a Kosher pickle; douse it with a Bud Lite and listen to a Mario Lanza tape. Back at the dock, Dad would say, "Richie pull up the trap." Sure enough, the one trap we had held the antipasto for dinner: blue crab steamers with more Bud.

Update to 2005: Made the call for our Easter vacation with Pops, and he said, "Don't come. No fish!"

When he first moved in, only about 10 homes were on the canal, all owned by very average people who enjoyed



Two important rivers are suffering from the Lake O discharges, the St. Lucie here on the Treasure Coast, and the Caloosahatchee River on the west coast, shown here at the Franklin lock as the polluted water is blanketed by a massive algae bloom during the summer of 2011. Photo courtesy of the Florida Water Coalition.

the dream of surrounding their family and later generations with an almost surrealistic Mother Nature. The position of Dad's house at the end of the canal allowed visitors to peer through arching trees across the river at beautiful Pine Island.

As the river declined and the land drained, property across the 75 ft. canal was permitted for a gated community. Mangroves were surgically reduced and million-dollar homes were built. Docks and davits worth more than Dad's place were installed.

Fantastic boats harbored there, and occasionally went out 50 to 100 miles to catch species that other people only dream about. Dad lost his view and his European lady friend of 10 years, as he started a terminal struggle for life.

I made a special visit to cheer him up one day and maybe to cast a line off his dock to land a jack. Dad was depressed. He had painted homes all his life and at 82, he was still doing odd jobs. The pontoon was sold. The dock we built was caving in. We went to pull the crab trap and there was a dead otter in it. His best friend had passed away.

The river had stunk for years, and the nostalgia of good times had retreated into silence. Dad never liked freshwater fish, hated snakes and was afraid of gators, which was his new reality. My life-long mentor was destroyed.

In due respect to the multitude of other stories of the river, this one was particularly personal and important to me. I needed solace and started signing "Save the River" petitions, but needed to do more. I met with environmentalist and marine scientist Mark Perry, executive director of the Florida Oceanographic Society on Hutchinson Island in Stuart. He confirmed what most of us know: Florida politicians have prospered from Big Sugar, from the early days to

the present day. Once the natural flow of water from the south end of the lake was impeded by agriculture, the Everglades and all of the east and west coastal areas were doomed to experience toxic algae, pesticides, and muck sediment.

Nitrogen and phosphoric materials from agricultural and lawn fertilizers killed dolphins, manatees and stymied migratory fish from entering our estuary. He pointed out that around 70 percent of these materials come from Lake O discharges and 30 percent from local runoff. He said we need soil entrapment reservoir filters to stop at least 118 cubic yards of muck entering our ecosystem daily. These filters must be maintained and regulated. The southern flow of water also must eventually be achieved if we are ever to see the return of our rivers' health.

Mr. Perry referred me also to Lt. Col. Thomas Greco of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for more data. To my delight, Col. Greco responded quickly. We discussed the earthen berms surrounding the 80-year-old Hoover Dike that wraps Lake Okeechobee. He answered many questions with ease and a sense of responsibility. He updated me on the Stormwater Treatment Areas (STA) and reservoir projects. He did not know of any sediment entrapment plans under current guidelines, however.

He informed me that the joint state-and-federal plan to open the Lake to properly discharge into the Everglades must be introduced quickly to Congress in order to make a Water Act deadline in reference to Everglades Restoration. If the plan isn't adopted, this committee won't meet again until 2020.

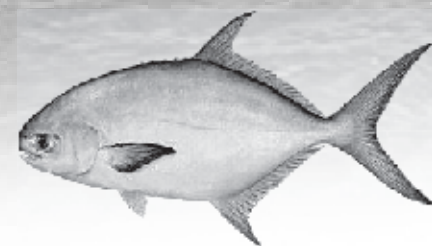
What we need to understand is that the Army Corp of Engineers provides safety, and the state is to provide water quality. We must use our voices and votes to achieve the Congressional vote we must have in order to restore the

Everglades and save our rivers.

There are 730 square miles of dangerous water in Lake O, and we've got approximately 40 square miles of estuary between Ft. Pierce and St. Lucie inlets. Drop the lake a foot and we match last October's record outfall.

It's up to us to make our voices heard to save our rivers. ■

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Clean up the river!
Oh, please clean up the river!

Everyone, Scouts, Teachers, Parents,
Tourists and Entrepreneurs,
Let us make sure we have the ears
of the Army Corps,

"Every mickle makes a muckle"*,
So buckle down tight,
We are fighting for the river with all
our might!

Save our river! Oh please save our river!
Clean up the river!
Oh, PLEASE CLEAN UP THE RIVER!



— Eula R. Clarke, Esq.
Mayor of the City of Stuart
July 25, 2013
Rivers Coalition Meeting
Stuart City Hall

** From a Jamaican proverb of Scottish
origin meaning that each small thing we
do compounds to make a big difference.*