

FREE

Martin County CURRENTS

Volume 3 Issue 8 • February 2014

**Flash Beach Grille's
Robert Breinig,
between a rock
and county rules**

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Hobe Sound's manufactured home debate now before magistrate. Pg 22



Indiantown dream: A new medical center opens. Pg 28





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Martin County Commission Chair Sarah Heard may learn on Monday,

Feb. 24, if a judge will compel her to submit to a deposition regarding missing emails from her private email account. Attorneys for the Lake Point Water Restoration Project in western Martin County asserted in motions filed in the 19th Circuit Court that Heard's secret correspondence with former commissioner Maggy Hurchalla regarding Lake Point are public records that should have been preserved.

Heard's private attorney, Scott Zappolo, contended in a protective order he filed in Palm Beach County last August that Heard's private emails are not public record, that she is not a party to Lake Point's case against former County Commissioner Maggy Hurchalla, and that her service provider, Yahoo, cannot release any information regarding a private account unless it's part of a verified, official criminal investigation, which this is not.

Much of Zappolo's motion was denied by a Palm Beach County judge, and Heard was ordered to produce all her email correspondence with Hurchalla. If she was unable to do so, according to court records, then she needed to verify her actions in her failed attempts to retrieve the requested, private emails from her personal computer.



Maggy Hurchalla



Sarah Heard

The Martin County Growth Management Department staff provided information to the county commission in a public meeting and in staff memos in January 2013 that apparently verified Lake Point's stance against Hurchalla's claims, including that no wetlands had been destroyed and that there was no evidence its rock pits were deeper than 20 feet, as required by the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

The staff also produced a copy of the 2008 Martin County resolution reclassifying Lake Point from a residential housing development, Lake Point Ranches, to a public works project that Commissioner Fielding said, "wasn't worth the paper it is written on."

Following the county's resolution, the Lake Point project was designated part of the Northern Estuary Everglades Restoration Program.

According to court records, Lake Point attorneys discovered that Heard had been routinely using her private, Yahoo account to conduct county business as they

retrieved emails from the public email database referencing Lake Point, so they expanded their February 2013 public records request to include Heard's emails from her home computer, as well as her notes during the Jan. 15, 2013, county commission meeting, and her calendar of appointments for the previous year. Their request has been expanded again to include text messages with Hurchalla.

Heard informed Lake Point that her email account had been "hacked," thus she could not provide them all the emails they were requesting. After Lake Point requested Heard's permission to access her Yahoo account, Heard retained a private attorney.

Judge James McCann will preside at the hearing Feb. 24 at the Martin County Courthouse to determine if Lake Point may depose Heard. ■

Martin County's handling of public records has come under scrutiny by

a Sacramento-based public affairs law firm, the Pacific Legal Foundation, and also led to charges being filed against Martin County for tortious interference (interfering with a company's ability to do business).

After Martin County took no action over the past year to fulfill the Lake Point Water Restoration Project's public records request for public and private emails between County Commissioners and former Commissioner Maggy Hurchalla that referenced the Lake Point project, attorney Ethan Loeb filed a tortious interference claim against Martin County for failing to comply with Florida's Public Records Act.

Martin County immediately filed a motion to block the amended motion, however, in a hearing Jan. 28, Circuit Court Judge James McCann dismissed the county's motion and granted leave to Lake Point to file their amended motion, thus their tortious interference claim against Martin County will stand until ruled upon by Judge McCann.

Lake Point also charged tortious interference against Hurchalla a year ago. Hurchalla's attorney sought to have the charge dismissed in October, however Judge McCann denied their motion.

According to court records, Loeb claimed that the secret email correspondence between the county commissioners and Hurchalla regarding Lake Point are vital to Lake Point's case against Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District for breach of contract.

On Jan. 6, 2014, Lake Point expanded their public records request to include all public and private emails, all text messages and phone records from all commissioners in their communications with the Growth Management staff to and from Hurchalla regarding not only Lake Point, but any reference to the proposed amendments to the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

Lake Point also is a party to the legal challenges of the rewritten Comp Plan

amendments, which will be heard by an administrative law judge beginning April 14 in Stuart.

Pacific Legal Foundation attorney Christina Martin sent a letter Jan. 14 to all five Martin County commissioners, County Administrator Taryn Kryzda and County Attorney Michael Durham saying that PLF was tipped off about "allegations of public records violations" in the lawsuit between Martin County and landowner Lake Point.

According to the letter, "The plaintiffs' Motion to Inspect Electronic Devices to Determine if Evidence has been Spoliated suggests that various commissioners have used private email accounts to conduct public business, and these public records have not been preserved, posted on the county's public records website, and in some instances they have been altered or improperly manipulated."

"If the statements contained in the motion are accurate, Pacific Legal Foundation is concerned about how such conduct implicates Martin County landowners, their ability to freely access the government on important property rights issues, and their ability to access government records without a fear that such records will be manipulated or destroyed."

Their public records request was for meeting transcripts and emails pertaining to the county's forgiveness of court-ordered fees and sanctions for the Martin County County Conservation Alliance, all commissioners' calendars, phone calls and text messages, public and private, used to conduct public business from Nov. 1, 2012, to the present; payments made to Maggy Hurchalla, Virginia "Ginny" Sherlock, Howard Heims, or their firm, over the past 5 years; all documents in which Maggy Hurchalla is mentioned relating to the comprehensive plan amendments for Martin County; and the county's retention policy for emails, text messages, phone records, and calendars. "If the County will not produce any of the requested documents," Martin said, "please provide Pacific Legal Foundation with the stated basis for the refusal." ■

Martin County Taxpayers Association President Richard Geisinger put

"the full weight" of his organization in the middle of the Stuart City Commission's decision to levy a universal fire fee, perhaps saving Stuart residents and business owners a blow to their pocketbooks.

In the Feb. 10 packed-house City Commission meeting that lasted more than four hours, Geisinger offered to analyze an offer from Martin County Commissioner Ed Fielding to consolidate police and fire services for efficiency and cost savings, which had been part of the county's earlier strategic planning discussions.

The fire fee resolution passed, but with a one-year sunset clause in order to pursue possible consolidation with the county's services. Geisinger promised to return results of their research to the city within 60 days. ■

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Good news can be found regarding the flow of water to the Everglades,

although it's not coming from state lawmakers and policymakers. It's coming from the South Florida Water Management District.

The SFWMD Governing Board announced on Jan. 9 that it had approved a land exchange to expand Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West (STA-1W), just west of Wellington, from 6,700 acres to 11,300 acres of aquatic plants to remove phosphorus and other nutrients from water flowing south into the Everglades.

The project is one of several components in the State's Restoration Strategies plan to improve Everglades water quality. The STA will clean water flowing into the adjacent Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

By using lands adjacent to STA-1W, water managers have eliminated the need for additional major construction projects to connect the STA from a remote location, saving approximately \$32 million in construction costs.

To accomplish those objectives, according to officials, SFWMD will acquire a total of 4,604 acres of land in an agreement with Florida Crystals and Gladeview Holdings company, with 2,003 acres coming from Florida Crystals and 2,600 acres from Gladeview Holdings. The total 4,604 acres will be leased back to Florida Crystals temporarily based on construction of the STA-1W expansion project.

Florida Crystals will provide an additional 2,865 acres to Gladeview, and pay \$450,000 to the SFWMD for environmental restoration.

The SFWMD will pay \$5,978,474 to Gladeview for the company to relocate its agricultural operations on that site, and the District will extend two existing leases with Florida Crystals for approximately 1,691 acres until 2019 at the current lease rate. The land exchange closing is targeted for mid-2014. ■

Construction is now underway on the 15 billion-gallon L-8 Flow

Equalization Basin in Palm Beach County. With enough water to fill 34,000 football fields one foot deep, the storage project will deliver consistent flows needed to optimize the District's stormwater treatment areas, including STA-1W, that clean Everglades-bound water.

In addition, construction has started on the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin south of Lake Okeechobee, which is now scheduled to be completed in 2016—a decade after its original groundbreaking. With the capacity to hold



More questions than answers arise whenever residents begin to question

the details that are riding along the rails into Martin County along with All Aboard Florida's privately owned, high-speed passenger rail service from Miami to Orlando. Answers from FECI railroad executives, partners of All-Board Florida, usually comprise only the neatly packaged ones on their website.

A public meeting, now tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 4, at 6 p.m. at the John F. Armstrong wing of the Blake Library on Monterey Road, has been organized in hope of getting some answers. County Administrator Taryn Kryzda will host, Kim Delaney of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council will make the initial presentation, and representatives from Florida Department of Transportation and FECI will be present and onstage to answer questions—at least, that's the expectation.

One of the most looming questions about the rail service is the time that will be denied to large boat and barge traffic on the St. Lucie River due to the railroad bridge closings for a train that does not stop in Martin County.

All Aboard officials have said that 32 trips per day will be made during the 14 hours between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., but the number of rail cars will be far fewer

than freight trains, thus taking less than a minute to pass most crossings. Thus far, there's been no estimation of how long it will take for the trains to cross the railroad bridge, but County Engineer Don Donaldson informed the county commissioners, it takes 17 minutes to open and close the draw bridge.

If the trains require two minutes to cross the St. Lucie River because they must slow down to do so, then every 24 minutes the bridge will be closed to boat traffic for 17 minutes and open only for seven minutes—except when a freight train also must cross the river. If freight trains are forced to stop at some location north or south of the bridge to concede right-of-way to a passenger train—and no location as yet has been identified—then even more time will be lost to boat traffic.

Although the cost of upgrading the 27 railroad crossings in Martin County will be borne by FECI, the cost of maintenance for the new double-tracked crossings will be borne in the future for the 18 that currently are maintained by Martin County, but no estimation as yet of what amount that might be.

The cost of installing additional crossing arms to create "quiet zones" through residential neighborhoods that eliminate train horns blasting two or three times an hour also is unknown, but is estimated to be \$200,000-\$400,000 per crossing. Who will pay for those?

Expect seats in the auditorium to fill early and to capacity, and stay alert for changes in the date. ■



An untended boat languishes near the Jensen Beach Causeway, raising concerns among residents about the damage caused by its anchor and underlining the absence of an already funded mooring field project quashed last year by the Martin County Commission.

Jensen Beach residents continue to complain about derelict and

disabled boats in the waters off the Jensen Beach Causeway. The "unnamed" storm that blew through the county unexpectedly in January, dumping several inches of rain that flooded streets, also flooded this private boat, but not until after dragging its anchor across the Indian River Lagoon bottom. "Where is our mooring field?" a Jensen Beach resident asked. "Lots of Jensen Beach residents are asking that question." ■

The Neighborhood Advisory Committee members from the seven Community

Redevelopment Areas, Hobe Sound, Port Salerno, Rio, Jensen Beach, Old Palm City, and Indiantown, will be assisting the county's Community Development Department in its on-going effort to create a community-based code.

"We have too many pieces of a code where the same piece can be interpreted by two different people in two different ways," said Kev Freeman, director of the Community Development Department. "We want to change that—not change the code, but to more precisely define it—so that anyone can walk into the community development department or the building department, whether they're from Martin County or from anywhere else, and see exactly what is required and what their project will look like when completed...We all want to be on the same page, no surprises."

Instead of just textual descriptions of code requirements, Freeman said that graphic illustrations also will be incorporated. Although the staff began the project more than two years ago as a form-based code project, the "situation"

in Hobe Sound when a manufactured home on stacked cinder blocks was installed in a neighborhood of site-built homes spurred the county to complete the project, now calling it a community-based code.

"We will be seeking community input throughout the process," Freeman added. "Largely because of Hobe Sound's situation (with the installation of a manufactured home on stacked cinder blocks within the boundaries of an established neighborhood with largely historic, site-built homes), which clearly illustrated the need for a comprehensive community-based code sooner than later, this project has become a county priority."

Three NAC meetings to continue attention on the code and on updating individual CRA plans are scheduled in February with Old Palm City NAC on Monday, Feb. 17, at 6 p.m. at Leighton Park, the Hobe Sound NAC on Wednesday, Feb. 19, at 6 p.m. at the community building and the Rio NAC at the Rio Civic Center on Thursday, Feb. 27, at 6 p.m.

The complete NAC meeting schedule is as follows: **GOLDEN GATE** – March 10, June 9, Sept. 8 and Dec. 8. **INDIANTOWN** – April 9, July 9 and Oct. 8. **JENSEN BEACH** – March 26, May 7, August 6 and Nov. 5. **OLD PALM CITY** – Feb. 17, May 19, August 18 and Nov. 17. **PORT SALERNO** – March 20, June 19, Sept. 18 and Dec. 11. **RIO** – Feb. 27, May 29, Sept. 4 and Nov. 13. **HOBE SOUND** – Feb. 19, March 12, April 23, July 23 and Oct. 22. ■

After the County Commission abolished the Convention and

Visitors Bureau in September for what they considered a lackluster performance, its functions were moved to the county's Parks and Recreation Department directed by Kevin Abbate. They also engaged the consulting services of Zeitgeist Consulting Inc., based in Madison, Wisc., that specializes in destination marketing in order to assist in developing a new organizational structure and update the county's tourist development by developing strategic plan for tourism.

The company has organized three focus groups among industry leaders who will meet with Zeitgeist consultants at the Blake Library to provide their thoughts and share ideas on current issues during the week of Feb. 24-28.

Representatives of the restaurant/dining sector will meet Monday, Feb. 24, from 9-10:30 a.m.; leaders from the attractions industry and Stuart Main Street will meet Tuesday, Feb. 25, from 2-3:30 p.m., and a meeting with the Tourist Development Council and representatives of the hoteliers will also meet Feb. 25 from 6-7:30 p.m.

The meetings will take place in the John F. Armstrong Wing of the Blake Library on Monterey Road. ■

OBITUARY NOTICE



Elizabeth J. Rademacher, 90, passed away on Dec. 14, 2013, in Corinth, Texas, in the compassionate care of Odyssey Hospice and Autumn Oaks Assisted Living. Elizabeth was born to Margaret and Frederick Bench in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Oct. 6, 1923. She grew up in Staten Island, N.Y., and attended McKee Vocational High School, where she was a cheerleader and known as "Betty" Bench. She graduated from high school in 1942 and married her first husband, John T. Rademacher, that same year. After he returned from Burma and China as a B-25 bomber pilot, John and Elizabeth spent the next 36 years traveling and living in many places, including California, Pennsylvania, Guam, Long Island, Georgia, Florida, Virginia, The Philippines, New Jersey, United Kingdom, and Germany.

Elizabeth, also known as "Liz", was an avid golfer, a gifted artist, a great social organizer, and enjoyed playing the piano. Her family and friends knew her as a beautiful woman, both inside and out. Her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren describe her as creative, mischievous at times, strong, and determined. They also saw her as generous, kind, and gracious with a playful sense of humor. She had a way of always making things fun.

Liz was widowed from her first husband, John, in 1979. She was divorced from her second husband, Joseph Digney, in 2006 after a 15-year marriage. Elizabeth was predeceased by: her older brother Ernest, his wife Helen, and their children Bobby, Jerry, and Kenny; her older sister Margaret, her husband Kenneth Warner, and their son Kevin, and surviving daughter Deborah Warner Russell; her daughter Laura Russell Cardaro, husband John and their two children Savannah and Jake.

Elizabeth is survived by her son, John Jr., his wife Joyce, and their three children; daughter Laura, her husband Steve, and her son Joshua; daughter Sarah; and son John III: her daughter Elizabeth R. Covington, her husband Don, her son Christopher P. Williams, his wife Christina, their children Makena, Pierce, and Walker; and her son James B. Williams: her daughter Lise Mainor, her husband Brett, and their sons, Brett Andrew and Charles Adam.

She is also survived by her brother, Theodore Bench, his wife Ethel, and their children; son Theodore Jr. and wife Eunice and their children; son Ronnie and wife Grace and their children; daughter Beth Fecteau, husband Marc and their children: her nephews Billy Rademacher, his wife Marsha, and their children; Jesse Rademacher, his wife Diane, and their children; Glenn Rademacher, his wife Debra, and their children: her niece, Connie DeLeaver, and husband Roderick. She is also survived by her life-long friends Susan E. Schwarzman (70 years) of Virginia and Alice Burgrabbe (50 years) of California.

Elizabeth's cremated remains will be buried with those of her husband, John, in Spring 2014 at the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. Once a date has been set the family will communicate the date and time to family and friends. For those wanting to make a donation in honor of her memory, the family suggests either The American Heart Association (Go Red for Women) or the Alzheimer's Association. The family wishes to thank all those who have expressed their condolences and loving thoughts, all those who were part of Elizabeth's life, and all staff members of Autumn Oaks Assisted Living and the attending staff of Odyssey Hospice.



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Ciachi shoes from Tuscany.

A first-ever shipment of beautiful Italian leather shoes and sandals, designed by Elisa Ciachi, and handmade in her little

family factory outside Florence, Italy, arrived in January at the Juno Shoe Girl Boutique on Dixie Highway in Hobe Sound.

"This factory makes shoes for many designers in Europe," says Nina Gelardi, owner of Juno Shoe Girl, "but they allowed me to be the sole importer (pun intended) for their collection in the U.S."

How did Gelardi arrange such exclusivity? She visited Florence especially to "reconnect" with the Ciachi

Designer
Elisa Ciachi

family after an absence of 15 years while on a trip to Tuscany this past fall.

"In 1998, I had designed a collection of Italian shoes," Gelardi adds, "and had worked with this family and their factory for a summer. I did not know if they would remember me after all these years, and I was surprised when they gave me a warm Italian welcome!"

The finely crafted shoes may be purchased exclusively at Juno Shoe Girl Boutique, now open every day! ■

An established company wants to expand its operations into

Indiantown, however, the only suitable site lies atop Indiantown's fresh water supply—its water wells.

Martin County's Land Development Regulations, Article 4, prohibits the location of a business or facility on land situated near water well fields if any volume of a hazardous substance or contaminant that could impair public potable water supplies is on site.

Commissioner Anne Scott requested during a county commission meeting last month that other commissioners support her request for a review of Martin County's well field ordinances, contending that they are overly restrictive, outdated and do not consider technologies available today.

The existing ordinance was written in 1993, according to Anne Murray, hydrogeologist with Martin County Utilities and Solid Waste Department, who presented the results of her research and staff recommendations to the Local Planning Agency at a public hearing on Jan. 30.

"I checked with all the surrounding counties to compare their ordinances to Martin County's," she told the LPA, "and what I found was that Martin County's criteria were already more restrictive than neighboring counties, and, yes, they do all have special exemptions, which are similar to what Martin County requires now (without the addition of rules to meet exception requirements.)"

The county staff recommended that Martin County consider adopting a special exemption as long as the permit includes a facility site plan, a ground water monitoring plan, and environmental and hydrological site assessments as part of the process, thus county two permits would be required: an operational permit, and the other to meet the requirements for a special exemption permit. They also are required to seek a consumptive water permit from the South Florida Water Management District.

More than an hour of discussion among LPA members ensued, all agreeing that the obvious economic benefits

to Indiantown were an important consideration, as was taking what others might perceive as "extreme measures" to protect the water supply.

John Polley, director of environmental services, reminded members that each applicant is required to submit to "a thorough and rigorous application process and review," including annual site inspections and well monitoring. They also must demonstrate that updated technology exists and will be used.

"These are really high stakes," said LPA Chair Jim Moir, "and we need to proceed as carefully as we can."

The board's final recommendation for additions to the well field exemption requirements in addition to those recommended by staff include a public notice to all utility customers enclosed with their water bills; a certified letter in addition to a mailed letter to owners of the well fields whose wells could be at risk; an indemnification agreement plus a bond or additional insurance to cover environmental restoration in case of an accident; more frequent than annual inspections paid for by the company; and the adoption of a high standard of legal review during both the application process and review process (by the county commission) as each application is considered on a case by case basis.

"I'm sure if we'd had a hearing a month ago (prior to West Virginia's recent chemical spill on the Elk River)," said Moir, "we probably wouldn't be near as concerned."

The revised version of the proposed well field exemption will come before the county commission for a public hearing, review and vote prior to final adoption. ■

Martin County topped all other counties in the state in the number

of Governor's Innovators in Business Awards it earned during a Jan. 21 ceremony in Tallahassee. Recognized in three of five categories and with the greatest number of awards overall, Martin County's business image has been well polished.

"What a wonderful accomplishment and a great representation for Martin County at this year's Governor's Innovators in Business Awards," said Tim Dougher, executive director of the Business Development Board of Martin County. "Governor Scott said at the ceremony that this was 'the most competitive group of nominations in many years.'"

A statewide program that recognizes Florida companies in emerging and high-technology industries

for their contributions to Florida's economic growth, coordinated by Enterprise Florida, the awards presentation is hosted by the Governor annually in Tallahassee.

Martin County's three Innovators in Business Award winners include Ecos-

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Capt. Robert Lump, center, stops to talk with guests in his expanded Hobe Sound Art Gallery.

No one was more pleased with the Hobe Sound Festival of the Arts this month than Capt. Robert Lumpp, artist and

owner of the Hobe Sound Art Gallery on Dixie Highway in the former Payson building. He recently remodeled the building, increasing and redesigning the space inside, then filling all the rooms with an expanded and diverse collection of fine art, from delicate pen and ink drawings of nudes to an explosion of color swirled with a pallet knife on canvases like ocean waves.

One room brims with his own distinctive American Flag paintings. Another is filled with his Florida compositions of beach, palm trees and sand with a departure here and there for a lighthouse or two. Among the sunsets that dominate the room is Highwayman artist Roy McClendon's painting of a poinciana tree on the banks of the St. Lucie River, giving visitors just a glimpse of old Florida rendered in oil by the eldest of the remaining Highwaymen artists.

"Yes, I'm pleased with the way the gallery turned out," Capt. Lumpp said, "and I'm particularly pleased to be representing Roy McClendon. I really like

him, and I hope soon to be offering more of his work."

The former Mississippi River boat captain, who introduces himself as Capt. Bob, greeted a stream of Arts Festival visitors who had found his front door in spite of all the artists' booths outside. The same festival had brought Capt. Lumpp to Hobe Sound for the first time as a festival artist just a few years ago, "so I'm rather partial to the event," he added.

Many people have remarked that they'd never noticed the long-standing building previously, which is on the south side of the Hobe Sound Veterinary Clinic, just a block north of his former gallery on Dixie Highway. Perhaps it's the new paint on the outside, or the new landscaping, or even perhaps word-of-mouth around town that there's more variety in styles and artists, more choices in gifts and sculpture, and even some whimsical creations that are bringing people inside the Hobe Sound Art Gallery. Whatever the reason, Capt. Lumpp is liking Hobe Sound more everyday. ■

continued from PAGE 8

phere Technologies Inc., Sol Inc., and Seatorque Control Systems. The Business Development Board facilitated applications and wrote recommendations to the Governor for each.

Ecosphere Technologies Inc. received an award in the "Rising Star" category, recognizing the innovations in a U.S. technology licensing and manufacturing company that develops environmental solutions for global markets through a portfolio of more than 35 patented, and patent-pending products and technologies. www.ecospheretechnology.com.

Seatorque Control Systems (SCS) was recognized for its continued success in the "Export" category. SCS, a Stuart-based manufacturer of propulsive and fluid dynamic systems for the marine industry, its main product line comprises the Seatorque enclosed shaft system, Seatorque power steering systems and a variety of special application hydraulic cylinders and actuators. SCS's principals have diverse expertise, from patented fluid dynamics technologies, to participating in the America's Cup Races and custom boat manufacturing, giving them an edge in designing products from a boat manufacturer's perspective. www.seatorque.com.

Sol, Inc., recognized in the "Innovation" category, is a U.S. lighting manufacturer, a world leader in solar LED outdoor lighting with more than 60,000 custom systems installed in more than 60 countries on six continents. Founded in

1990, Sol develops, manufactures and markets commercial/industrial-grade solar lighting applications including area and security, street and roadways, signs, billboards, transit and shelter lighting. ■



The new billboard on Federal Highway, merchants hope, will help shoppers discover dining and shopping on Dixie Highway

Sometimes, the best way to get things done is to do them yourself.

That could easily be the motto of some downtown Hobe Sound merchants who grew frustrated with the lack of "official" progress over the past 18 months to get some banners onto light poles to tell passersby that a downtown shopping and dining district exists on Dixie Highway in Hobe Sound. So they bought space on a billboard to tell the world where they are.

"We're just an informal group," said Nina Gelardi, of Juno Shoe Girl Boutique. "We want to bring visitors and

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GODDESS FESTIVAL

Celebrate Juno, the Goddess of Women

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at

Juno Shoe Girl Boutique



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continued from PAGE 9

customers to our beautiful, historic Dixie Highway, which will benefit all of Hobe Sound. It truly is a gift from our group!" The billboard will be erected mid-month on Federal Highway.

"We are so excited to see how much traffic it will drive to Dixie," Gelardi added. "We met so many locals at the fair who said they NEVER knew there were any stores on Dixie. Hope this will change things for the better." ■

The Elite Salon & Gallery on Federal Highway in Hobe Sound recently



Debi HettZaug

added a California-trained cosmetologist and stylist, Debi HettZaug, a specialist in haircuts, color, high-lites, low-lites, and long hair blowouts. A native of San Diego, she first came to the Treasure Coast on vacation from Texas

and decided to stay. She and her husband bought a home in Hobe Sound.

Although first licensed in 1988, she left the beauty business to start a career in the airline industry, yet she could not stay entirely away from beauty salons. "I kept on working in them part time," HettZaug says, "just because I missed being around the business, I guess." In 2008, she made the move back to the beauty industry full time, and after moving with her husband to Texas, she got a cosmetology license in the Lone Star state.

Then came the vacation, followed by a move to Hobe Sound and getting her Florida license, because she and her husband plan to stay permanently in Hobe Sound, where they sail with friends and walk their dog, Bella, on the beach. An artist, she also enjoys making homemade soaps.

"But hair remains my favorite thing to do," she adds. "I really like people and hair. They go great together!" ■

They need the public's help. Teenagers Elora (nicknamed Ellie)

and Isabella (Bellie) Fucigna of Hobe Sound make a difference in the world. The sisters turned their love of art and literacy into a card-making business, under the tutelage of their parents, Tom and Cindy Fucigna. The proceeds go to charitable causes, which have included the Florida Oceanographic Society, the River Center (which currently carries their line of cards), Helping People Succeed and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Martin County.



Isabella and Elora Fucigna at their "EllieBellie's Sunshine Shop," a business they started to raise funds for favorite worthy causes.

Seen frequently at fairs, festivals and other gatherings, their "EllieBellie's Sunshine Shop" with dozens of creative, artful cards displayed for sale is as bright and cheerful as the girls' smiles. Now, this is where they need a boost from the public.

The girls are building an "EllieBellie's Sunshine Shop Lending Library" bookshelf at the Hobe Sound Boys & Girls Club in Hobe Sound to be stocked with books that kids can borrow....or keep. They need donations of gently used or new books suitable for youngsters from age 6 to 18. They will maintain the bookshelf after they've initially stocked it as well, so the need for books is on-going. Anyone with books to donate is urged to send an email to: elliebelliesunshine@yahoo.com, so they can make arrangements to pick them up as you help two teens do good things for others. ■

Both ends of the county will soon see new resorts. At Jensen Beach,

developers will breathe new life into the hurricane-ravaged former Holiday Inn on Hutchinson Island, an eyesore for residents and visitors since 2004. The proposed Oceanside Resort got its final site plan revisions approved recently by Martin County planners on its path to the Board of County Commissioners vote that—finally—will allow development to begin.

Nicki van Vonno, the county's growth management director, said she expects final plans for the project to be presented to the commission in March.

Robert Raynes, of Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart, anticipates the state Department of Environmental Protection will approve a coastal permit for the project in March as well, clearing the last remaining obstacle to construction.

The 182-room hotel will be developed on the site of the former Holiday Inn Oceanside on A1A, south of Jensen Public Beach. The property was sold to Ocean Properties by former Miami Dolphins owner Wayne Huizenga in 2009.

Plans call for an removing the tennis courts, expanding the parking lot, refurbishing the hotel; and adding new

Tom Wilkinson, president of Seacoast National Bank, recently installed as chairman of the board of the Economic

Development Council of St. Lucie County, also was awarded the 2014 Pete Hegener Leadership Award.

"I am proud to congratulate Tom Wilkinson for this honor and for all the work he does to help improve the lives of others in our communities," said Dennis S. Hudson, III, Seacoast National Bank's chairman and CEO. "Seacoast National Bank is privileged to have Tom as a great leader in our organization."

The Pete Hegener Leadership Award, established in 2013 with the recognition of Dr. Edwin Massey of Indian River State College, is given to an individual who understands economic development, what it takes to build a community, is a visionary, a risk-taker, a difference-maker; someone who helps people realize their full potential, and who is well respected in the community.

This person displays the ability to work with the city and county government and elected officials, educators, and a variety of private sector professionals, leading multiple disciplines to collaborative successes, according to award guidelines.

Seacoast National Bank is the operating arm of Seacoast Banking Corporation of Florida (NASDAQ: SBCF). With more than \$2 billion in assets, 34 traditional branches and five "accelerate" loan production offices, it is one of the largest community banks headquartered



From left, Dr. Edwin Massey, President, Indian River State College; Seacoast National Bank Treasure Coast President Tom Wilkinson, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County and recipient of the 2014 Pete Hegener Leadership Award; and Pete Tesch, President, St. Lucie Council Economic Development Council. Photo submitted.

in Florida. Offices stretch from Broward County, north through the Treasure Coast, into Orlando, and west to Okeechobee and surrounding counties. For more information, visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.SeacoastNational.com/"](http://www.SeacoastNational.com/) www.SeacoastNational.com. ■

pedestrian crossing to link the parcels on both sides of A1A. The plans also call for a parking garage, a two-story oceanfront pool area and a conference center. The hotel's two existing four-story guest wings will be incorporated into the design.

At the south end of the county near Tequesta, the Jupiter Pointe Marina on S. Federal Highway plans an expansion

that will add a new, 54-unit hotel in the main building, an attached restaurant building and modifying the previously approved club building.

It currently has an outdoor restaurant adjacent to a swimming pool accessible by boat, paddleboard or kayak on the Intracoastal Waterway, directly across the waterway from Blowing Rocks Preserve. ■

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Editorial: What county do commissioners inhabit?

What county, or maybe planet, do our Commissioners believe they inhabit? The disconnect between Martin County's Board of County Commissioners and their constituents regarding economic development lies somewhere within the realm of the Twilight Zone. Our Commissioners are that far removed from reality.

The majority of residents feel quite strongly that our Commission has little interest in economic development, with the exception of Commissioner Doug Smith, but now it's been verified by an outside consultant hired by the Commission at a cost of \$30,000 to study Martin County's economic climate, untapped strengths, and its shortcomings.

Based on its conclusions, the Balmoral Group was to recommend appropriate strategy, goals and objectives to improve Martin County's economic base. Considering that the county's revenue from impact fees is only 20 percent of what was budgeted this fiscal year, we've got some catching up to do.

The consultants surveyed residents first to determine a "benchmark" from which to proceed. Their findings, which they reported to the commission at its December 10 meeting, showed that two-thirds of the residents of the 750 they surveyed individually and in focus groups, which was representative of the entire community—not just the business sector or just the retired—reported that

our County Commission is "disinterested" in economic development. Two thirds of the population.

Commissioner Sarah Heard responded with denial and disbelief, rejecting the consultant's findings on the basis that 750 people were insufficient to form such a conclusion, even though the number was more than double what the consulting firm usually surveys. Commissioner Smith observed that it would not have made a difference if 5,000 people had been surveyed. The results would have been the same...and Heard still would have rejected the results.

Interesting that at that same meeting, our Commission had erased from the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan all references to the Business Development Board as a "partner" in the economic health of this county. As far as the one roadmap we use to plot what is important to the citizens of Martin County, the Comp Plan, our economic health no longer deserves inclusion. Yet she somehow disconnects those actions from the public perceptions of her intent?

Heard also has made her position clear that she wants the Business Development Board eliminated entirely. Hers was the lone dissenting vote in the Commission's acceptance of a new BDB contract, even though it's a sound contract, was lauded by commissioners and the public, and met all the parameters to correct what could have been flaws, which had fed slickly into

the Heard/Sherlock/Melzer highly successful public smear campaign to destroy its credibility, the first step to eliminating it altogether.

Except ... the forensic audit of the BDB's books—those deeply searching audits to uncover fraud, embezzlement, and mismanagement—uncovered only minor discrepancies, thus deflating Heard's assertions of irresponsible, at the least, and more likely illegal use of taxpayer funds. Even civic activist Helen McBride of Stuart became a BDB supporter after she saw that these were the same men and women who were the volunteers, the coaches, the people deeply involved in their communities, thus she urged the commission to work with them, not destroy them.

We watched respect grow among both Commissioners John Haddox and Anne Scott, especially toward BDB President Jeff Sabin, who is particularly adept at saying "Yes, I see your point," but it also grew among residents, who simply had been unaware of the broad responsibilities, wide range of tasks and effectiveness of this small staff of earnest, dedicated employees.

Does the County Commission really believe residents would not interpret Heard's open hostility toward the BDB as indicative of her general disregard for business, or that her abject dismissal of Balmoral's economic report—which was called too CRA-centric because it had identified the Community Redevelopment Areas as of greatest untapped

potential—would not also signal further disdain for business in general?

The Balmoral Report also reported that the land available within the urban boundaries had been found by county business leaders generally inadequate for industrial or manufacturing expansions—an idea rejected by Heard.

"We have a comprehensive inventory of properties available for development," she insisted.

Heard also has proposed widely that the commission hire a financial advisor, but not from among our working businessmen and women, certainly not from among the Business Development Board, or...horrors...the Economic Council of Martin County—a privately funded economic development organization comprising some of Martin County's most successful businessmen and women.

Heard casts the Economic Council as the devil incarnate, with the Chambers of Commerce as his evil stepchildren.

Obviously she feels no one at any of those levels has the expertise she seeks. She turns instead to Jupiter Island, whose retired residents' stated mission is to maintain its "seclusion, solitude and tranquility," achievable only if the rest of Martin County remains primarily a bedroom community—or one primarily dependent on tourism—and whose jobs will serve primarily them.

How can she doubt residents' conviction that our Commission lacks interest in economic development, unless, of course, she lives someplace else?

After record losses last summer, what's in store for our manatees in 2014?

2013 went down in the manatee record books as the species' worst-ever year in Florida. In total, 829 deaths were confirmed of an endangered species whose last known minimum count was 4,831 in January 2014. That's 17% of the known population dead in a single year.

The previous record number of deaths, 766, was set in 2010 and regarded as an anomaly – a rare occurrence caused by extended cold temperatures; a level of mortality not thought likely to appear again anytime soon.

Until recently, we've been dealing with the usual suspects that threaten manatees: water control structures, entanglement in or ingestion of marine debris, and watercraft, with some cold stress, and mortality of very young calves mixed in.

Red tide often loomed offshore of southwest Florida as a potential threat. And on the rare occasion would be the

Guest Columnist Katie Tripp, Ph.D

manatee that had the privilege of dying of old age – a feat most in the population don't achieve due to the threats they face.

In the past few years, attention has been focused on bigger, more nefarious threats that no one knows how to remedy. In the southwest, red tides are finding ample food when they blow inshore, and are persisting, killing large numbers of manatees and other marine life.

For manatees, these blooms are no longer considered an unusual mortality event (UME), but an ongoing mortality event – a sign of the times. On Florida's east coast, no one has a clue what in the environment killed 127 manatees, in an on-again, off-again UME, which is now on-again, already killing several manatees in 2014.

Manatees, often regarded as robust for their ability to survive multiple watercraft strikes and continue to live on after losing flippers to entanglements, are no match for the strange cocktail of toxins that are plaguing their environment. So what can we do?

First, we need to keep@@ on trying to protect manatees from the usual suspects. Human-related causes of mortality remain largely preventable. In 2013, 85 fewer manatees would have died if we prevented human-related deaths.

Next, we all need to work more diligently to protect the flow of our ground-water and surface waters and prevent pollutants from entering waters.

One very easy thing to do is log on to www.wewantcleanwater.com and sign a petition. A coalition of Florida's environmental groups are working to send a loud and clear message to Tallahassee that we are long overdue to get serious about our state's water issues.

Finally, it's important to realize that the next water quality crisis could be coming to your hometown.

If you haven't experienced such a crisis yet, count your blessings, then get on the phone to your city and county council, and your state senators and representatives, and find out what they're doing to ensure you never do.

So what can manatees expect in 2014? That's really up to you. But one thing is for certain: they need our voices and our support now more than ever.

Dr. Tripp has been Save the Manatee Club's Director of Science and Conservation since May of 2008. She received her Ph.D. in Veterinary Medical Sciences from the University of Florida, where she conducted research on manatee physiology. For more information on manatees and to learn about the Club's Adopt-A-Manatee® program, go to www.savethemanatee.org or call 1-800-432-JOIN (5646).

Spell of Everglades lasts a lifetime

My first stepmother, Frances, was 42 when she married my father and moved to Homestead from downtown St. Louis. Formerly the manager of a bustling law firm, she gave up her career to become an instant mother to three children—3, 5 and 12 years old—whom she'd never met.

Most women ordinarily would be intimidated by inheriting so many of someone else's children, but not Frances. Instead, her great fear was the proximity of our house to the wild Everglades.

My father, an old-fashioned, country doc, assured her that we actually lived far from the Glades, much farther than the half-inch line implied on her map. Yes, he admitted, he loved to fish the back country in his flat-bottom boat and stalk frogs from an airboat in the dead of night, but she could stay safely at home in his concrete block house where alligators would never tread.

If only she would come to Homestead, he promised, she would never experience the wildness of sawgrass, mosquitoes and diamondbacks. He lied.

Much of the Glades wildlife spilled into sparsely settled, rural Homestead of the '50s. Cohabitation seemed as natural as the sunrise to anyone who'd lived there very long, which prompted Frances to call my father's distinction between our house and the Glades as "splitting hairs."

The bobcats' and the occasional panther's night time cries sent Frances scurrying in a panic to wherever my father was reading. She became a prisoner, along with us, after our relentless rainy season released massive clouds of mosquitoes, so thick we could not breathe. But the snakes terrorized her most of all.

We had learned early which snakes we could pick up and those we couldn't touch. We respected all of them, but feared none of them. Frances feared all of them.

The first morning after she moved into our house, she swung wide our wooden front door, startling the snake coiled on top that plopped onto her shoulder. The first hour of her first day, her screams woke the roosters. Her terror infected us at first, until we saw its cause was merely a corn snake now wriggling on the floor. My brother grabbed it and tossed it outside before Frances returned, armed with an ax, which she henceforth kept in the pantry.

We knew instantly that snakes were no longer safe inside our house, where we'd always ignored them. We feared especially for the Indigoes, which we could coil around our necks or our arms, their blue/black, iridescent scales transforming bits of sunlight into tiny, brilliant rainbows that danced across their cool skin.

They had no fear of humans; a snake



Barbara Clowdus

Unfiltered

whose docile nature made it easy to slaughter and easy to love to death, all the way to near extinction.

After about two or three weeks, Frances stopped screaming at the sight of snakes. Maybe she grew accustomed to them, or perhaps my brothers and I had just gotten adept at spotting them first. Even after discovering that I had climbed an overgrown guava tree shared by a diamondback, she did not scream.

But she also did not accept my rationale that the thick-bodied, poisonous snake coiled around a branch on the north side of the tree would not bite a child climbing on a different branch on the south side.

She stood under me, grabbed my ankle and pulled firmly, all the while keeping her eyes locked on the diamondback, until I loosed my grip and dropped to the ground. When we got to the house, she lit a Kent, her trembling hands causing smoky zig-zags in front of her face.

It had been a tough year for her as

she learned that our lives did feel the impact of the Everglades after all. She'd even been introduced to sawgrass and muck on a trip across the Tamiami Trail after she swerved our Buick from a sudden sneeze, dropping the sedan onto the narrow berm and popping off a hubcap. She lost her shoes in the muck retrieving it.

Tiny rivulets of blood ran down her white legs from sawgrass while she was yelling at us to watch for alligators, but she never mentioned any of it after we returned home.

Perhaps the last straw were the frogs my father brought home one morning after an airboat hunt. At dinner, Frances followed my father's instructions to rinse the skinned legs, dredge them in salted flour, and drop them into a skillet of hot grease.

Within seconds, the legs began twitching around the pan, as if swimming underwater—typical of freshly caught frog legs. Frances fainted—splat—face down on the kitchen floor.

Soon after, we moved into the "city" to our new house on the east side of Homestead, where the "civilized" people lived. My younger brother and I, however, remained a little wild, forever enamored of the Everglades, both of us subsequently spending long hours and days within its bounds, captured by a beauty and a bounty that today is just a whisper of its past.

Martin County
CURRENTS

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Website Design

Sonic Fish Studios

Printer

Southeast Offset Inc

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On a 70-foot yacht



Gordon Barlow

Outside, Looking In

Sometimes I fret about the world my granddaughters will live in. Of course they're only young yet, and one or both may work and live in foreign countries, like their father and I have done. But wherever they live, it might not be as comfortable for them as the world Linda and I have lived in, and I wonder how they'll cope. Will they find work easily? Will they find what health-care they need? Will they have pensions to look forward to in their old age?

They are Norwegians, and Norway has a huge "sovereign fund" that can be called on in tough times. But will it be enough? Several European nations have already reduced their state pensions, or have stolen money from private pension funds; and several US cities have already stolen money from their former employees' trust funds. Over-borrowing by greedy politicians has screwed everybody.

Will my girls be able to find work at all? Economic commentators tell us that the whole world economy is entering a long depression, in which employment opportunities will be severely limited. High rates of inflation may destroy the value of all paper currencies. What then?

Linda and I have never worked in any one country for long enough to

acquire government pension rights, and have never been forced to pay into company pension schemes. So now, we have no pensions at all. However, we also haven't paid Income Tax since we left Canada in 1967, and working in offshore tax-havens has allowed us to salt our savings away. In effect, we financed our own pension fund, and are drawing on it now, in our retirement. (Note to self: persuade the granddaughters to find jobs in offshore tax-havens.)

The most diligent of plans and hopes will never get it 100% right, though. I recall reading a comment made by some English woman in a newspaper interview, about how she and her husband had been forced to pull in their horns financially, after they both stopped working. "He always dreamt of spending his old age on a seventy-foot yacht with a seventeen-year-old companion," she said. "Instead, the poor

old chap has had to settle for a seventeen-foot boat with a seventy-year-old companion. Hah!"

Here's a story from fifty years ago, from my time as an auditor with Touche Ross in London... I was the sole expat, and a newbie, being lauded for my reckless bravery in having struck out on my own to see the world. It was embarrassing.

"We could never do that", one of the group said; "the company would never give us our jobs back." "Never mind: there are plenty of other jobs", I said. "I might not get my job back, when I get home." "That's all right for you", he said: "but we'd lose all our pension rights!" They all paled at the thought.

I had no answer to that. English pensions weren't portable in those days, and changing employers meant starting a pension programme on the bottom rung again, and walking away from however much had been paid into the old scheme. (Australia didn't have compulsory pensions.)

Back in our Earls Court flat, my fellow wastrels and I marvelled that a bunch of 24-year-olds would worry about benefits that lay forty years and more into the future.

Ah well... I wonder . . .

FLASH BEACH GRILLE'S UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Robert and Anita Breinig thought they were living the American dream. They worked hard, followed the rules, paid their taxes until they finally were able to establish a business from scratch, the Flash Beach Grille in Hobe Sound. Suddenly, they face losing it all.

“It’s really hard to understand how this could happen,” Robert says, shaking his head. “People would come in here and tell us that we were a true example of the American dream, and now we don’t know what’s going to happen. It’s like living with a hatchet over your head.”

A professional chef for more than 17 years, Robert and his wife, Anita, started with a small catering business, Flash in the Pan, that served Hobe Sound and Jupiter Island residents. Demand for their fresh seafood dishes grew. The business grew. They were able to purchase a large catering truck.

Insisting that only freshly caught fish be on their menu, the Breinigs bought from local fishermen and supplemented

with what they caught themselves. As demand increased, they began making plans for a brick-and-mortar restaurant in Hobe Sound—easy access for the residents who already knew their catering.

They opened the Flash Beach Grille on Bridge Road in 2006, in a building with a liquor store. They parked their mobile catering truck with its kitchen behind the building, and continued to grow that business, as well. The restaurant was open only four days a week to allow them time with their young daughter...and to fish.

“We started with breakfast and lunch,” Robert adds, “but Hobe Sound just is not a breakfast town, I guess, so we switched to serving lunch and dinner.”

Then new sewer lines were laid on Bridge Road blocking access to the restaurant. Revenues declined by more than 25 percent. “It almost put us out of business,” he says.

The owner of their building declined to hook up to the sewer line, at which time the county’s Health Department started pressuring the Breinigs either to tie into the new line, or to start serving their meals on paper plates with paper napkins and plastic forks. “We’re just not a paper-plate place,” he says.

The former French restaurant next door had not reopened after its last season, and the Breinigs considered it an ideal location and began negotiating its purchase, envisioning the entire front lawn as a beach. A formidable drawback, however, was insufficient room inside for the work area—no office space, no employee space, not even enough food storage space. They could see, however, enough room behind the restaurant to make do with the cement slab already there, and some pavers for their catering truck, until they could add onto the building.

They paid for a title search, got the mortgage, which included nearly \$30,000 the previous owner had paid to tie into the sewer line, painted, renovated, and moved in. They also purchased a large, walk-in locker for the back lot to store their bulk, canned goods and non-perishables. Their new “office” is a computer that sits on the front counter in the dining room.

“People kind of laugh when I say this is my office,” Robert adds, “but, literally,

this is it. This is all there is.”

Anita tells employees, who range in number from three during the summer to 30 in season, to lock their personal belongings in their cars. “I just don’t have any place to put their purses,” she says, with one of those grins that lights an entire room, even when she’s bearing bad news.

Typical of the couple’s grit, however, they stayed focused on their long-range plans. They appeared before the County Commission last year to obtain a liquor license, much requested by their diners and needed in order to compete with other restaurants. Along with the liquor license, however, came county inspectors.

Quite to their surprise, the Breinigs were cited for violating the terms of the Preserve Area Management Plan (commonly called a PAMP) at the back of their property, and, although exceptionally small, is part of the upland preserve area as required by the county’s Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

Property owners may not disturb the area; therefore, the inspector instructed them that their food storage locker had to be removed, as well as their mobile catering truck, their pervious pavers, and about two to three feet of the concrete slab, which had been there when they purchased the property. They also would need to plant the area with native vegetation in place of the weeds, which they’re no longer permitted to mow.

When they appealed to the Growth Management Department, planners attempted two or three different configurations trying to meet the Breinigs’ needs and still maintain the preserve area.

“Their reconfigurations will not provide what we need in order to operate our business,” Breinig says. “We’d go out of business....We would never have purchased this building if we’d



Anita Breinig asks how their restaurant could operate without a place for their food and supplies, which are stored in what they discovered is a preserve area, as is their mobile catering truck.

known about this preserve area.”

An apparent flaw in the county’s property/growth management records, which since has been addressed, had not “connected” the mandatory preserve area to the property title, neither were the previous code enforcement violations.

In November, Robert and Anita appeared before the County Commission and asked for an exemption. The County Commission is permitted to amend a preserve area, but not to eliminate it. After a heated discussion among commissioners, Commissioner Anne Scott moved to suspend the daily code enforcement fines while the Growth Management Department had time to conduct research to determine how many and where these isolated, rather ineffective “micro-PAMPs” are located within the county. The report should be ready within the next 12 months.

“We cannot really think about what might happen,” Robert says. “We’ve got to keep looking forward; we have a restaurant to run, but I also don’t know how we’d be able to sell it to anyone else, either, if...”

He does not finish his sentence. ■

—Barbara Clowdus

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FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS — Sunlight added sparkle and showed most artwork at its best.



FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS — An arts festival may be the perfect venue for creating another work of art—except for the questions.



SEAFOOD FEST — Cooking and eating seafood forms the heart of the Port Salerno Seafood Festival.



THE GREEK FESTIVAL — People drive from throughout south Florida to attend the Greek Festival in Hobe Sound, where they find authentic Greek food and traditional dance...in a shady spot!

Three local festivals just one week apart gave residents and visitors much to enjoy as January edged into February. The annual Port Salerno Seafood Fest served a crowd estimated to top 40,000 people, with two venues for live bands, dizzying options in seafood entrees, and any beverage on your list. More than 100 crafters topped the list of things to do, which this year, included some midway rides.

Hobe Sound Festival of the Arts organizers had their fingers crossed on Jan. 30 that the rains would stop, and they did. The weekend arts fest drew around 30,000 people to two, picture-perfect days for indulging in fine arts, an expanded Kids' Zone, and to stop by local merchants, too. Many of these festi- goers left Bridge Road only to stop at the Greek Festival at the St. John Chrysostom Greek Orthodox Church to enjoy an after- noon of Greek food and dance. The perfect end to a perfect day.



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Feb. 14-March 30

The Spark: Three Generations of Inspiration

The Elliot Museum announced the opening of a compelling new art exhibit, **The Spark: Three Generations of Inspiration**—John Calderwood Whorf, Nancy Whorf, Julia Whorf Kelly. Grandfather John Calderwood Whorf, mother Nancy Whorf, and daughter Julia Whorf Kelly explore the "spark" of artistic inspiration and the evolution of the creative process. The three artists, distinctively different in style and execution, share commonalities in their process capturing a moment in time first as a sketch and later as a painting. This exhibit presents some original pencil sketches alongside finished pieces, revealing the profound leap of the artists' creativity. All three are exhibited widely throughout the country. For ticket information or hours, contact Lisa Djahed, Marketing Coordinator, 772-225-1961 or go to www.elliottmuseumfl.org.



Feb. 14-March 22

The 2014 Martin County Fair

Everything you could ever ask from a county fair—and more—will be at the 2014 Martin County Fair on Old Dixie Highway across from the Witham Field Airport. Opening ceremonies will be 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 14, for sweethearts who want a perfect evening of country music, country crafts, and cotton candy. Exceptional livestock shows, a variety of gospel, country and Latin bands, including favorite local bands, a petting zoo, trained wolves, a pie-baking contest, and a midway can be found at the Martin County Fairgrounds, 2616 S.E. Dixie Highway, through March 22. Tickets: \$3-\$15. For more information, call 772-220-3247 or visit: www.martincountyfair.com.

Saturday, Feb. 15 Shade in the Sunshine State: Reflections on Segregation in Florida

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act and in partnership with Smithsonian's Journey Stories, author Elizabeth Coursen will present first-person stories from her new anthology, *Shade in the Sunshine State: Reflections on Segregation in Florida*, concerning what people observed during the times of segregation in Florida on Saturday, Feb. 15, at 3 p.m. at the Morgade Library on Salerno Road. It is a thoughtful exploration of segregated Florida, its laws and its customs. For more information, call 772-221-1403 or visit the library website at www.library.martin.fl.us.

Sunday, Feb. 16 A Conversation with Queen of Suspense



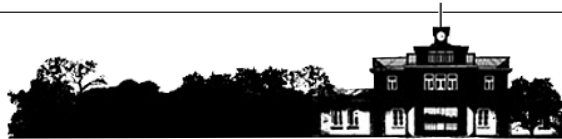
A Conversation with Mary Higgins Clark is a benefit for House of Hope. The Lyric Theatre will host a special matinee appearance by "The Queen of Suspense," best-selling author Mary Higgins Clark, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16. Regular-price tickets at \$50 each are on sale through the Lyric box office and at www.lyrictheatre.com; premium tickets are \$75. Chairwomen are Connie Bass, Michele Trout and Catherine Heretick. The Education Foundation of Martin

County is a partner in the event. Widowed in 1964 and with five children to care for, Clark decided to try her hand at books. Her first suspense novel, *Where Are the Children?* was an instant bestseller. Clark, former president of Mystery Writers of America, has an award named for her. She lives in Saddle River, New Jersey.

Wednesday, Feb. 19 Tropical Garden Card Party

A Tropical Garden Card Party/Luncheon, hosted by the Jensen Beach Garden Club, will be at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the Jensen Beach Women's Association, 3550 Sugar Hill Road, in Jensen Beach. Tickets are \$20, which will assist in providing scholarships for young campers to attend the Environmental Studies Council and Martin County Parks & Recreation Department's summer camps. For tickets, call 772-232-9603. For more info, go to www.jensenbeachgardenclub.com.

Friday, Feb. 21 Kinderblock 66



The film, *Kinderblock 66*, will be shown at the Coastal Life Church, 460 SW 34th Street, in Palm City on Friday, Feb. 21, at 6:30 p.m., followed by a Q&A period with Alex Moscovic, a holocaust survivor.

Alex, as a 13-year-old, survived Mengele, the "Angel of Death," in concentration camps: Auschwitz-Birkenau in Nazi-occupied Poland and the Death March. After his release and coming to America, Alex led a successful life in the film business winning 10 Emmys for editing the Olympics and ABC Wide World of Sports broadcasts. After retirement he has spent much time visiting schools, organizations & community groups throughout south Florida. www.kinderblock66thefilm.com.

Saturday, Feb. 22 Families Helping Heroes



The first Annual Families Helping Heroes will help address the needs of returning combat veterans, help them reconnect with their families, and cope with symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—even matching them with companion dogs rescued from local shelters—will be 2 to 8 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 22, at Paradise Park, 1 Main Street, in Tequesta. Event attendees will enjoy a live demonstration by military personnel, working dog demonstrations and a "Panther" kid zone featuring an obstacle course created by an Army drill instructor. Popular local bands Seagrape Souljahs and Rouge Theory Band will perform. More than 15 food trucks will be on hand with beer and wine available. For questions or additional information, contact Ike Crumpler at 772.201.9996 or Courtney Zanetti at 772. 486.7458. Proceeds benefit three non-profit organizations serving returning veterans.

Weekend, Feb. 22-23 Downtown Stuart Art Festival

It's the season for your pick of art festivals, and here's the popular Stuart Festival of the Arts, which is set up along Osceola Street in Stuart's historic downtown area. This event brings together some of the best artists in the nation, displaying life-size sculptures, spectacular paintings, one-of-a-kind jewels, photography and more. Admission is free and the festival is open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 22-23, along Osceola Street in downtown Stuart. This year's show features the artwork of Susan Painter. Stop by Susan's booth for a chance to win the giveaway. For more info, go to www.artfestival.com.

Saturday, Feb. 22 American Tradition Piano Trio at Blake

Second in the Atlantic Classical Orchestra Chamber Concert Series, the American Tradition Piano Trio will perform at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Blake Library, 2351 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart. Free and open to the public. No tickets or reservations required. For more information, call 772-221-1403 or go to www.library.martin.fl.us.

Thursday, Feb. 27 Sheriff Snyder to address Indiantown

Martin County Sheriff William D. Snyder will be guest speaker at the February Indiantown Chamber of Commerce Breakfast on Thursday, Feb. 27, at the Indianwood Golf Recreation Hall. The Sheriff will review his first year in office as Martin County's eighth sheriff, touching on some of the changes he has incorporated as well as highlight some of the events he has faced in his first year in office. He will be accompanied by Osbaldo Salis, a 4th grade student at Hobe Rural School, one of several students who wrote stories as part of the "Museum on Main Street: Journey Stories" traveling exhibition. Osbaldo wrote of his dream to become a member of the Martin County Sheriff's SWAT Team "to protect Indiantown, his country and the flag." As a result Sheriff Snyder, along with members of the SWAT Team, surprised Osbaldo in front of his classmates, by making him an honorary Junior SWAT Team Member. Make reservations by going to the Indiantown Chamber website calendar at www.indiantownchamber.com.

Thursday, Feb. 27 Food Historian Barbara Haber at Blake

An Uncommon History of American Cooks and Meals: Luncheon & Presentation featuring notable



food historian Barbara Haber will be Thursday, Feb. 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Blake Library, 2351 S.E. Monterey Road in Stuart. Tickets are \$50, including the luncheon, and will benefit the Treasure Coast Food Bank. How appropriate! To reserve your spot, email RSVP@tcfoodbank.org or call 772-489-3034.

Weekend, Feb. 28-March 1 Treasure Coast BBQ & Blues Marathon Festival



The 2nd annual Jensen Beach BBQ & Blues Festival will come alive with the soulful sound of blues and the sweet smell of barbe-

cue. This year, BBQ & Blues will align with The Marathon of the Treasure Coast to create a weekend festival on the waterfront featuring mouthwatering BBQ, ear-pleasing blues, local artists, half- and full-marathon road races, and a runners expo. A concert kicks off the BBQ festival Friday night at Indian RiverSide Park, and road races will kick off Saturday & Sunday mornings, followed by a full day of BBQ, great music and shopping along the Indian River at the Indian RiverSide Park. For more info, go to bbqbluesfestivals.com.



St. Luke's fashionistas, from left: Debbie Gilman, Gail St. Philip, Arlene Brammer, Edwina Dunworth, Pat Isaacs, Mitzi Slater, Vicki Zambardino, and Susan Auld.

Saturday, March 1 Fashions in Paradise at St. Luke's

Celebrate "Fashions in Paradise" at St. Luke's Annual Fashion Show on Saturday, March 1, 11 a.m. at the Miles Grant Country Club on Cove Road. The Fashion Coordinator of Evelyn and Arthur's in the Harbour Bay Plaza will host models as they wear the latest fashions in St. Luke's annual celebration of good works and community outreach. Tickets are \$45, and include the fashion show, lunch, door prizes and raffle baskets. Reserve with Vicki Zambardino at 221-8345.



presentation. Call the Museum or sign up on line to participate: www.elliottmuseum.org, click on Education then The Studio. Class is filling quickly. Museum Members: \$45; non-members: \$65.

Saturday, March 8 BookMania is Back!

Martin County Library System's annual BookMania! festival, the most prestigious book event on the Treasure Coast, will be Saturday, March 8, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Martin County High School, 2801 W. Kanner Highway, Stuart. The free event features panel discussions, readings and book signings with a dozen nationally recognized authors of every genre—some favorites and some new. A portion of book proceeds benefits the library system. Call 772-221-1409 for additional information, or go to www.libraryfoundationMC.org.

Saturday, March 15 – Stuart Sunday, March 16 – Jensen Beach St. Patrick's Day Celebration & Parade

Take your pick: Saturday night, March 15, is the 2nd Annual Shamrock Fest from 6-10 p.m. in Gazebo Park with live Irish music by Uproot Hootenanny, Irish Step Dancers, Bagpipers, an Irish Whiskey Bar, Cold Green Beer and delicious Irish fare. Admission is \$5. Go to <http://www.kaleidominds.com>, or spend Sunday at the Jensen Beach St. Patrick's Day Celebration from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., with a genuine St. Paddy's Day Parade at 3 p.m. on Jensen Beach Blvd., courtesy of Mulligan's Beach House Bar & Grill and the Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce. For more information, call 772-600-7377, 772-334-3444 or email: mullymary@gmail.com, or go to www.jbstpatricksparade.com.



Weekend, March 22-23 Home & Garden Show



The 28th Annual Home & Garden Show, presented by the Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce and the Martin County Fair Association, returns to the Martin County Fairgrounds March 22-23 for the area's largest, most comprehensive home & garden showcase of local businesses. Admission is free. More than 90 exhibitors showcase everything from cookware and fine art to recreation & leisure, remodeling specialties, interior design and orchids. The Home & Garden Show weekend will kick off with a Chamber Business after Hours on Friday, March 21, 5:30-7:30, where members and exhibitors can sample food from area restaurants and get a sneak peek of the show. For more information or to register, contact LisaT@stuartmartinchamber.org.

Saturday, March 8 iPhoneography at the Elliott

Currently showing at The Studio is the iPhoneography Exhibit running through the end of February featuring work by students who took the Basic iPhoneography Workshop with Livia Kropf DeBonet in January. Students were invited to each submit one image either taken only with their iPhones during the course or edited on the iPhone with skills learned in the class. The Basic iPhoneography Workshop will repeat March 8 from 1-4pm in the Heritage Theater at the Elliott, followed by iPhoneography: The Next Step on March 22. The Next Step, for students who took the first class, will take their iPhotos to the next level by focusing on composition, cropping, and

Saturday, March 22 Every Woman is My Sister

Florida's former first lady, Columba Bush, will be an honored guest at the annual Every Woman Is My Sister event on March 22 at 5:30 at Willoughby Golf Club. Bush has been a champion of domestic violence for many years and is actively involved with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Tiffany Carr, President/CEO of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, will be the keynote speaker and tell her own personal survival story. Every Woman is My Sister is hosted annually to benefit SafeSpace, a local non-profit organization and the only Certified Domestic Violence Center on the Treasure Coast. Tickets are \$150. For reservations: 772-223-2399, or go to www.safespacefl.org.

Weekend, March 22-23 Secret Gardens Tour & Garden Ramble Bazaar

The Garden Club of Stuart's Secret Gardens Tour happens only every two years, and 2014 is the year! The self-guided tour of seven private home gardens and outdoor living spaces is Saturday and Sunday, March 22-23, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and is the largest fund-raising event for the Garden Club. Tour tickets are \$25, available at area garden centers and online at www.gardenclubofstuart.org. Free admission to the Garden Ramble Bazaar at the Audubon of Martin County and Possum Long Nature Center is part of the tour with numerous vendors selling garden-related items. Proceeds goes toward youth gardening programs, high school scholarships, library books and youth camp programs. The Garden Ramble is free and open to the public.

Saturday, March 29 Century in Review Gala: Celebration of Stuart's Centennial



With tickets priced at only \$20 each, you'll want to get yours early before they're sold out! The Century in Review Gala: Celebration of Stuart's Centennial will be Saturday, March

29, at 7 p.m. at the Lyric Theatre, 59 S.W. Flagler Ave. in downtown Stuart. A warning: You must be over 18 to purchase a ticket. A joint project of the Stuart Heritage Museum and the Woman's Club of Stuart—and we don't know whose members are having more fun putting this event together—the entertainment gala celebrating the City of Stuart's founding 100 years ago, which coincides with the founding of the Woman's Club of Stuart, will feature music, singing, dancing, skits, a fashion show and a narrated photographic retrospective. For tickets or for more information, call 772-220-4600 or email stuartheritage1@yahoo.com.

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Two events distinguish Jensen Beach from all

Right on the heels of the highly successful "Taste of Jensen" event in December, came another Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce event: the Jensen Beach Fine Art & Craft Show Jan. 11-12 in downtown Jensen Beach.

With a reputation for offering exquisite works in watercolor, sculpture, photography, pottery, jewelry and other media from more than 100 artists throughout the state and beyond, the Jensen Beach Fine Art & Craft Show distinguished itself in another regard as well. No outside food vendors are allowed.

The food available during the festival comes only from local restaurants, but judging by the record-breaking response to the Taste of Jensen event in December, that's probably most appreciated by residents and visitors alike who voted to award first place to Tony Roma's for its menu of Filet Medallions, Loaded Mashed Potatoes, Baby Back Ribs and Baked Potato Soup. The restaurant also won the Best Presentation and Best Featured Entree during the popular event.

The Best Dessert was awarded to Conchy Joe's for its key lime pie, and Best Beverage went to Baha Grill & Latitudes at Hutchinson Island Marriott for

its Goombay Smash. Roosters Daytime Cafe took the Best Soup award with its Potato Leek and Chicken Noodle soups.

The Chamber also held its 64th Annual Installation of Officers in January, sponsored by FPL, at Pietro's On The River on Jan. 15. Its new board includes: President Todd Doss, Welcome Home Realty International; Vice President P.J. Anson, Jr., STS Aviation Group; Vice President Andres Castellanos, Safe & Sound Storage Center; Treasurer Chris Egan, Vistana's Beach Club; Secretary June Meehan. Directors include Jason Carr, WHLG Coast 101.3 fm; Dr. Jewell Chang, Osceola Optique; Cindy Collins, PNC Bank; Pat Caudill, Wenco South; Ed Griffith, Courtyard by Marriott, Hutchinson Island; Lorie Shekailo, St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church; Steve Leighton, Martin County Sheriff's Office; Sue Zachman, Harbor Community Bank; Bill Reily, Pitchford's RV Resort; Devin Teal, Welcome Home Realty International; Mike Winters, Bagel Break Deli; John Yudin, Guy, Yudin & Foster LLP; U.S. Congressman Patrick Murphy; State Senator Joe Negron; State Representative Gayle Harrell; Martin County Commissioner Doug Smith and Mike Busha, Martin County School Board. ■

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Chamber President Niki Norton, an architect with Crossroads Architecture, offers a toast to each member's rekindling passion.



Niki Norton, new president of the 2014 Palm City Chamber of Commerce surrounded by the men in her life, the Chamber board members and officers: seated, from left, outgoing president Michael DiTerlizzi, on left, and board member John Fox. Back row, from left: Board members Mike Searle, Don Cuzzo, Jeff Teach, President-Elect Jon Campion, Board members Barrie Brown, Rick Hartman, Peter Wernick, and Stephen Wood.

Palm City Chamber celebrates 'Night of the Light'

Every detail of the 2014 Palm City Chamber of Commerce Installation of Officers at Piper's Landing Yacht & Country Club bore the personal, "southern comfort" stamp of Niki Norton, the incoming president, whose natural drawl reminded more than 150 guests that with her presidency, she was bringing the best of the South to subtropical Palm City.

With the assistance of Piper's Landing General Manager Brian Reich and a bevy of Chamber volunteers, the evening's "Night of the Light" celebration included a succession of venues, from the lounge, to the outside terrace, back inside to the dining room complete with a band and dance floor.

She toasted the year 2014, still new, with champagne under the stars as glowing lanterns floated into the night.

"This is a toast to your light, will it shine bright this year?" she said. "That light comes from your passion, and that's how all of us are able to accomplish what we have....we step out of our comfort zones to follow our passion, to do what we feel passionate about....Ask yourself, what word are you: Bright light? Passionate? Bold? How about all three?"

Dancing paused only long enough for John Lass, president/CEO of the YMCA of the Treasure Coast, to install the 2014 Chamber Board of Directors: President Niki Norton; President-Elect Jon Campion; Vice-President Jenny Yingling; Treasurer John Fedorek; and board members Michael DiTerlizzi, Mike Searle, John Fox, Stephen Wood, Don Cuzzo, Rick Hartman, Brandon Tucker, Jeff Teach, Peter Wernick, Barrie Brown, and Barbara Essenwine.

Event sponsors included Piper's Landing, Crossroads Architecture, Tami Karol Insurance, Seacoast National Bank, A T & T, Florida Crystals, Oculina Bank, Harbor Community Bank, Back in Action, European Kitchen & Bath, B & A Flea Market, Armellini on-Site Storage, Palm City Animal Medical Center, Kirchman Construction, Pharus Group, and Peter's Hardware & Paint.

Martin Downs Florist designed extraordinary table arrangements, Kaleido Minds Marketing assisted in event planning and Stone Photography provided photography. ■



The evening's favorite attire? The president's BE BOLD message tee-shirt.



Stuart-Martin Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Joseph A. Catrambone spins his wife, Barb, around the dance floor.



Outgoing President Michael DeTerlizzi gets 'boutineered'

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Best for your business: show up for 'Benefits'

Like most chambers of commerce in Martin County, the Palm City Chamber hosts a monthly networking breakfast (or luncheon) for its members. At Palm City, all the members introduce themselves with a quick 30-second narration about their business, which is why it's called: "Breakfast with Benefits."

The Chamber itself assists you with introductions, so instead of just one or two learning who you are and a bit about your company—usually those at your table—dozens hear about you and your business.

Breakfast sponsors, as anyone would expect, get a longer spot on the stage. Every now and then, however, Palm City Chamber Membership & Events Coordinator Florence Howe will change it up a bit. One month she called for everyone to tell the group something about his or her personal life. Members learned about one who had adopted a child, a businessman who played in a band, another who skydived on weekends. If all the chatter among members as they were leaving was evidence of a successful event, that one qualified.

Niki Norton, the newly installed Palm City Chamber president reminded members of the Chamber's mission dur-



Martin Downs Golf Club is site of next Palm City Chamber's Breakfast with Benefits on Feb. 26 at 7:30 a.m.

ing her installation, which is to serve as an advocate of the community and its businesses, to promote the economic development of the Palm City area, stimulate jobs, which in turn improves the quality of life for everyone.

"I'm reminded of what (Chamber member) Toby Overdorf said: 'Just show up.'," Norton reminded members. "That really is all there is to it. Just show up."

With more than 400 members and growing, the Palm City Chamber is the only Chamber organization that routinely offers private tours of their members' businesses. That's in addition to the

other events they organize and host, including the Fall Fest, the Everything Around the Home Expo and More, and their premier event, a gala installation and awards dinner for their new officers.

Those are in addition to member ribbon-cuttings and open houses, Chamber "After Hours" gatherings, and additional exposure in the Palm City Spotlight, Out2Martin online blog and the Martin County Currents newsmagazine.

The next Palm City Chamber Breakfast with Benefits will be Wednesday, Feb. 26, at the Martin Downs Golf Club from 7:30-9 a.m., 3801



Palm City Chamber President Niki Norton presents the Ambassador of the Month award to Ildiko Haidacher at the chamber's January breakfast. Photo: out2Martin.com

SW Greenwood Way, in Palm City. Non-members always are welcome, too.

For more information about membership benefits and events, call Flo Howe at 772.286.8121, email her at flo@palmcitychamber.com, or visit their Palm City Chamber of Commerce office at 880 SW Martin Downs Blvd. It's an investment in your business that is returned many times over—as long as you show up. ■

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Speech contest challenges best of two worlds

The gauntlet had been thrown down—a challenge issued—to the Hobe Sound International Toastmasters Club by a club one of their members had initiated, the Collective Minds Gavel Club of the Martin Correctional Institution near Indiantown.

The Gavel Club, an offshoot of the Toastmasters that follows their same procedures and roles, proposed a speech contest in December between the members of the two clubs—the inside club challenging its sponsoring outside club—to be held at the correctional facility. No prizes, just for fun, and maybe for some bragging rights.

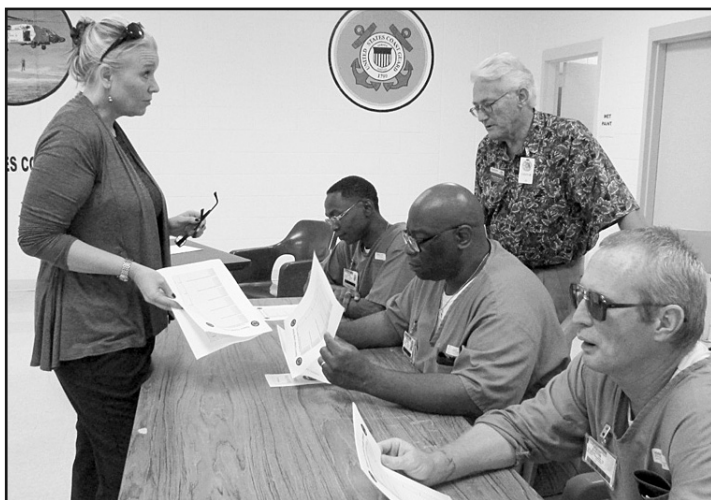
"We've never done this before," said Rich Otten, a Toastmaster who has earned the organization's highest level, the Distinguished Toastmaster. "This is a first, maybe anywhere in the state. I was a little surprised at the invitation, but then I thought, well, why not?"

Otten, who led the formation of the Collective Minds, began a personal mission a few years ago to share the opportunity for personal growth that Toastmasters provides with a population most in need of it—the incarcerated.

He helped establish clubs in several prisons, including Okeechobee, Belle Glade, Moorehaven, and Martin, and routinely treks across the state to ensure that he "checks in" with the members and prison officials at his own expense, putting hundreds of travel miles on both his own body and that of his truck.

"I don't mind the drives," he said. "They're relaxing, and it's really important that a Gavel Club has someone on the outside to ensure the members have what they need to function properly and fulfill the Toastmasters' mission," Otten says. "Otherwise, there's always a chance that it will just get lost in the system and disappear."

The aspect of the program, an arm of Toastmasters International, most touted has been the reduction in the recidivism



Region 8 Director of the International Toastmasters Club and Contest Judge Kristina Kihlberg gives instructions to the other judges, from left, Charles Donaldson, Daniel Williams and Dwight Sams, of the Collective Minds Gavel Club, and standing behind them, Rich Otten, of the Hobe Sound Toasters.

rate by about 90 percent among those who participate. Consequently, new clubs have been launched at other correctional facilities throughout the state as more Toastmasters Clubs begin to sponsor Gavel Clubs among the state's prison populations. The wardens have welcomed them and are eager for more.

"It's amazing the difference it makes in attitude and in reducing discipline problems," said one Okeechobee prison official, "not just among the members of the club, but prison-wide, because they treat our guards and officers with respect. They set an example for everyone else, and you can see that it's because they have begun to respect themselves....They look you straight in the eye; they're not shaking in their shoes anymore."

Another Distinguished Toastmaster in the Tallahassee area, Chuck Rabaut, has helped start 17 clubs with about 450 ac-



Kathleen Gemme, Hobe Sound Toasters, tells of the "surprise" waiting for her at the end of a long road trip.



Contest Master Mathew Adams, far right, of the Collective Minds Gavel Club recognizes the winners, from left: Joseph Pasquince, 3rd place; Jef Otten, 2nd place; and First Place went to Rodger Thomas, president of the Collective Minds Gavel Club.



While the judges were compiling their scores, a member of the Collective Minds was called on to give a 2-minute, impromptu speech to a room of about 50 people.

tive members over the past two years, and more facilities, which struggle with overcrowding, are asking for Toastmaster Clubs to step forward and agree to sponsor a Gavel Club. It's a program that works, and requires no taxpayer funding, just community support. "Our hope is that one day," Otten adds, "we'll have a Gavel Club in every prison in the state to help provide some skills and some hope to these men. For the most part, they're good men who just made a mistake, and who among us has not made a mistake in judgment at some time in our lives?..."

"They've accepted responsibility for it," he added, "and now they're just trying to improve their chances of staying out of prison...to improve their lives both inside prison walls and after they're released."

The incarcerated men take their membership responsibilities seriously, which was revealed in the quality of their speeches, the effort they put into conducting a well-organized event, and a cordiality toward the Hobe Sound club members that had been somewhat unexpected, according to Kathleen Gemme, an experienced member of the Hobe Sound Toastmasters making her first trip to a prison facility.

"I'm not sure what I expected," she said, "but I wasn't expecting this...these guys were good—really, really good."

Gemme, who presented a humorous account of an around-the-state road trip with her husband, was joined by fellow

Hobe Sound Toasters members Carol Labuhn, Marty Post and Jef Otten, who took second place for his humorous account of the consequences of skinny dipping off a boat without a plan to get back.

The Third Place Award went to Joseph Pasquince, who talked about the lessons learned as a father separated from his young daughter.

The First Place award went to Rodger Thomas, president of the Collective Minds Gavel Club, who recounted a lively story of searching for, then finding, his Christmas gift prior to Christmas, which he and his brother joyfully played with until caught—acting out each scene authentically—and suffering the consequences when his parents returned the toy to the store.

A Christmas memory that had influenced their lives was the theme of all the speeches by the men in blue at the contest held just before Christmas.

"I cannot imagine spending Christmas in this place with all this barbed-wire fencing and such," said Chief Contest Judge Kristina Kihlberg, also a Distinguished Toastmaster, past District 47 Director, and now the Toastmaster International Director for Region 8, which includes the southeastern U.S., the Caribbean islands and South America.

"I must say, I didn't know what to expect," she added, "yet what I found here among these men was inspiring. There is redeeming grace in this place, and it was worth the hour-and-a-half drive to get here." ■

--Barbara Clowdus

Memorable quotes from the speech contest

"Detroit is a great place to be...from. Period."
--Carol Labuhn, Hobe Sound Toasters

"We all huddled together on the mattress in front of the fire, my brother, mother, father and I, warm and cozy under a blanket, and that moment helped me recognize that my dad—and myself—were not all bad. Sometimes that may be all we need to cultivate the good."
--Earl Hinson, Collective Minds Gavel Club

"Did you know that the number-one fear of 75 percent of all Americans is speaking in front of a crowd? I was one of them."
--Marty Post, Hobe Sound Toasters

"My husband sticks his head around the corner and says, 'We bought a Jeep!' We did? ...Do you really think I was born with hair like this?"
--Kathleen Gemme, Hobe Sound Toasters

"My daughter runs to me, grabs my leg, crying, 'My Joe, my Joe', that's what she calls me, not Daddy, then she crawls into my lap...What defines us are not the lessons we learn, but what we do with them."
--Joseph Pasquince, Collective Minds Gavel Club

"Yes, go for it! Jump in with both feet, but first check where the ladder is."
--Jef Otten, Hobe Sound Toasters

Hobe Sound's Bridge Road plans now obsolete?

Perhaps no other project among the county's seven Community Redevelopment Areas had been more studied or anticipated than the redesign of Bridge Road in the Hobe Sound CRA. Now, it appears, the community may be required to start over.

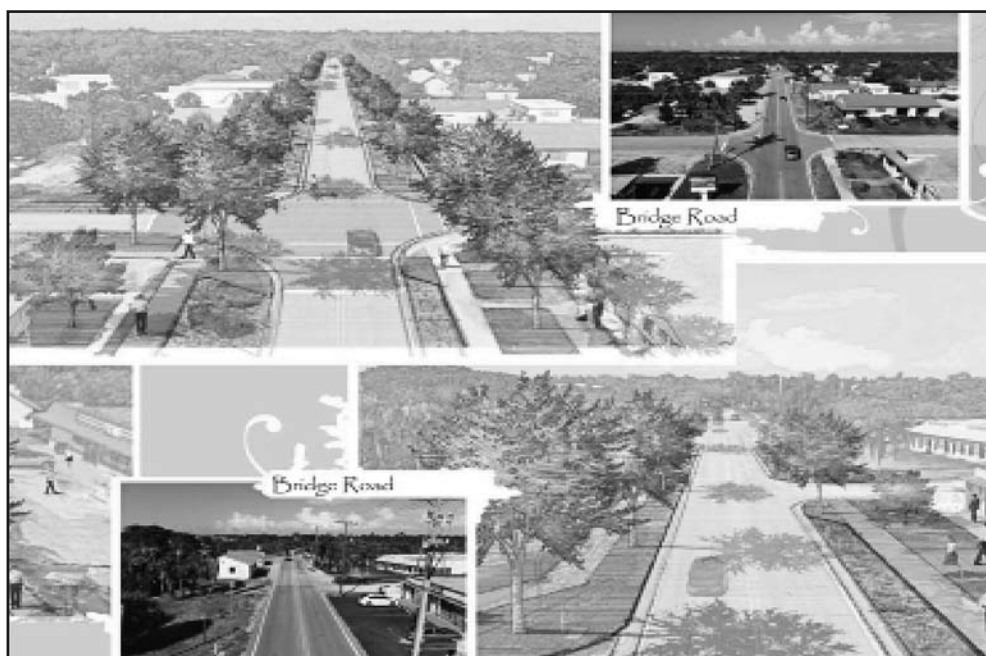
Engineering plans were in the process of being drawn as the Community Development Department staff finalized the last remaining right-of-way donations to accommodate a safer, walkable, pedestrian-friendly downtown Hobe Sound. That was January 2013.

One year later—after a year of forced inactivity—the new members of the Hobe Sound Neighborhood Advisory Committee, convening for the second time since reactivation of all seven NACs by the County Commission, which dismantled them in February 2013, were told the Bridge Road retrofit plans are now outdated and obsolete.

"What do you mean the plans are outdated?" asked Angela Hoffman, chair of the Hobe Sound NAC. "They were approved; we had the drawings already; we had community support. We all thought we were ready to go. Nothing has changed."

Hoffman turned to long-time NAC member Gretchen Reich, who confirmed Hoffman's assertions to Kev Freeman, director of the Community Redevelopment Department.

"That was a year ago," Freeman answered, "and in the interim, circumstances have changed, costs have changed, technology has changed, particularly with how we treat road drainage...we still do not have all the rights-of-way needed to complete the project...What we must do now is to reconcile what the community wants to do with the funds that are available to do it...The community must set its priorities, which could be the same, or there could be new priorities."



In order to proceed, Freeman added, the Community Development Department would need to convene community workshops and gather community input.

"We've had plenty of community workshops," said Reich. "We know what the community wants. We've had open meetings and plenty of community input, not for just a year, but over the past 10 years. We've spent 10 years, or more, deciding that this plan is what we want."

Freeman assured the NAC members and about 15 members of the Hobe Sound community attending that the County Commission is ensuring only that the previous CRA plans are viable and that they match the communities' current priorities. All NACs are being required to review their previous plans and reestablish priorities.

He also concurred that the Bridge Road retrofit had been designed in modules, so that sections of the project could proceed without funding for the full

project, and that the design had already incorporated updated stormwater technology by incorporating pervious pavers. The right-of-way donations, however, had not been completed.

"I'm sure that after our property owners see some real progress from the county, after they some actual work getting done," Hoffman interjected, "that

they'll be willing to do their part to see the redesign completed. We can't very well blame them for wanting to hold off on giving their property to the county."

Hoffman requested that Freeman proceed immediately with securing permission from the County Commission to install banners on the Florida Department of Transportation light poles lining Federal Highway through Hobe Sound, which have brackets that do not conform to the county's code.

"We don't need a workshop for that," Hoffman said; however, an ordinance would need to be written by county staff to change the county code, requiring a public hearing before the Local Planning Agency that requires a published public notice, before it goes before the County Commission for final approval, which also requires a public notice.

"I've been working on this for weeks, months," Hoffman said. "I cannot believe that no one ever took the time to explain those steps...all I was told was that the County Commission had to approve it." The NAC committee requested that Freeman bring the proposed ordinance back to them in one month.

The next meeting of the Hobe Sound NAC is Wednesday, Feb. 19, at 6 p.m. at the Hobe Sound Community Center. ■

Hobe Sound NAC to meet monthly

Only one of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees among the seven Community Redevelopment Areas successfully scheduled monthly meetings, yet nearly all have requested either monthly or bi-monthly meetings.

The Hobe Sound NAC chose Wednesday nights to conduct monthly meetings, and to set the dates according to the Community Development Department staff schedule.

"Even if staff is not available to come to our meetings," said Hobe Sound NAC Chair Angela Hoffman, "I think it's important that we meet monthly, because there's so much that needs to be done, and quarterly meetings will not be effective in getting anything accomplished anytime soon."

The next three meetings will be Wednesdays, Feb. 19, March 12 and April 23 at 6 p.m. in the Hobe Sound Community Center, 8980 Olympus Street, in Hobe Sound.

Magistrate hears Apollo house building code case

If you follow the rules, and the county grants you a permit, how can the same county say you didn't follow the rules, and now wants to fine you....for following their rules? But, oops, those are not the right rules.

The situation is more than frustrating, according to Stuart Greenberg, who along with his wife, Jane Greenberg, own the manufactured home that dropped like a bomb in the Zeus Park neighborhood of Hobe Sound last fall. The federally protected manufactured home, built to withstand up to 170-mph hurricane-force winds, was moved into Hobe Sound and installed on dry-stacked cinder blocks on a lot at the corner of Apollo Street and the Old Post Office Alley.

The following day, the lot was surrounded by homemade signs from resentful neighbors who feared their property values, already hard hit after the real estate bubble burst of 2008,

would again be hit hard by the presence of a mobile home in their historic neighborhood of site-built homes.

At a community meeting attended by District 3 Commissioner Anne Scott, County Attorney Michael Durham, and Community Development Director Kev Freeman residents vented their outrage and voted to form the Olympia Plat Defense Fund, to gather donations, and to hire attorney Virginia Sherlock to pursue removal of the building, or at minimum that it be required to be reinstalled on a solid concrete foundation. Soon after, Sherlock appealed the Building Department's decision to award the permit.

The county's Growth Management Department reviewed the building permit and concluded that it was issued in violation of county code, since the code specifies a "permanent foundation" for manufactured homes. The Greenbergs were ordered to remove the building or to install it on a poured concrete slab

within 30 days, after which time a fine of \$100 a day could be levied. The Greenbergs appealed, and the case went before Martin County Code Enforcement Magistrate Paul Nicoletti on Jan. 29.

At issue is the definition of a "permanent foundation" required by the county code; however, the "engineered foundation" with footer pads, dry-stacked concrete blocks and tie-downs had been approved as an "alternative foundation" by Building Department staff, and approved by county Community Development Department staff prior to issuing Greenberg's permit.

County Attorney Michael Durham and Growth Management Department Director Nikki VanVonne, however, interpret the definition of a permanent foundation as meaning one comprising a poured, concrete slab (or something similar) that cannot be moved. Nicoletti must determine if theirs is a "reasonable" interpretation of the code, and if so, then

the Greenbergs are obligated to follow it.

According to Building Department records, five other manufactured homes in the county were granted permits and Certificates of Occupancy over the past year, two of which (on Blue Heron Lane) are connected to a concrete slab with anchors mechanically fastened to the slab, and three of which were installed (on Monterey and Kanner) as was the Greenberg's home on dry stacked, masonry piers on pier pads, with tie-down straps connected to ground anchors in undisturbed soil.

The Greenbergs' attorney had planned to call Martin County Building Official Larry Massing as a witness, but the magistrate ran out of time. To avoid further delay, the Greenbergs declined postponement, so the hearing concluded without Massing's testimony. The attorneys on both sides will submit written arguments, and a decision on the code violation is expected by the end of March. ■



Artist April Davis, left, assists Yvonne Stutzke, R.N., owner of Nightingale Private Care, presenting sponsor of the 2014 Hobe Sound Festival of the Arts, in the unveiling of the original artwork for the official Festival of the Arts poster. Raffle tickets for a giclee of Davis' painting will be on sale until Feb. 13 at the Hobe Sound Chamber office: 772.472.4724. Photo: Leo Arbezniak

Raffle tickets for giclee of festival art on sale till Feb. 13

Perhaps one of the most anticipated events of each winter in Hobe Sound, in addition to the Hobe Sound Festival of the Arts, is the unveiling of its "official" poster by a local artist. Some have been wildly received, others not so enthusiastically.

This year's official festival artwork by artist April W. Davis of Jupiter easily won the hearts of an appreciative Hobe Sound populace. Her depiction of manatees gathered near a dock jutting into the Intracoastal Waterway could have come straight from the photo albums of dozens of Hobe Sound families.

"It is nothing short of spectacular," said Hobe Sound resident George Kleine, who attended the unveiling. "It's a winner!"

The so-familiar scene struck at the hearts of many locals, and the skill of the artist spoke to dozens of others as they eagerly bought a \$5 raffle ticket during the Festival of the Arts for a chance to receive a high-quality, giclee print of the original painting.

The good news is that the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce still is offering tickets for sale at \$5 each or three for \$10 through Feb. 12 at the Chamber office. Call 472.546.4724.

The drawing will be at the breakfast meeting of the Hobe Sound Chamber on Thursday, Feb. 13. The breakfast begins at 8 a.m. at the Indian River State College, Chastain Campus on Salerno Road, in the Wolf Technology Center. Guest speaker is Suzanne Wentley of the Children Services Council, and the new Hobe Sound Chamber videos will be shown.

Davis, an award-winning artist who moved to the area 15 years ago, gained recognition quickly for her lush tropical landscapes, including depictions of the uniqueness of the Everglades, as well as

her cityscapes set in tropical locations, such as South Beach.

Chamber officials are asking that anyone who bought a raffle ticket at the Official Unveiling to bring it with them to the Chamber breakfast; however, if you're not attending the breakfast, call the chamber office with your ticket number and the staff will record your name and phone number on the back of the ticket. You also may email Jan Otten at HYPERLINK "mailto:jotten@hobesound.org"jotten@hobesound.org with the ticket number, your name, and phone number.

Tickets to the breakfast, sponsored by the Fur Seasons Pet Resort, are \$12 for Chamber members and \$15 for non-members. The public always is welcome to attend. For reservations or for raffle ticket information, call 772.546.4724. ■

NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE HOBE SOUND CHAMBER



**Children's Services Council
of Martin County**
101 SE Central Parkway
Stuart
772-288-5758
www.csmc.org



**A & B Aquarium
Services LLC**
7375 SE Craig Street
Hobe Sound
561-756-1480
www.abaaquariumservices.com

Jrc
CONSULTING GROUP

4440 PGA Blvd., Ste. 600
Palm Beach Gardens
561-623-5349
www.jrcconsultinggroup.com



**Pamela Sothern
Antiques LLC**
11764 SE Dixie Highway, Ste. 1
Hobe Sound
914-319-5530
psothernantiques@gmail.com

Treasure Coast Med Ride, Inc.

7756 SE Needle Palm Circle
Hobe Sound
772-204-5347
www.treasurecoastmedride.com

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Jacqueline Morgan, VP of Marketing
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Bobk270@yahoo.com

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**Brett and Katharina
Nordmann**
Palm City
brettnordmann@gmail.com
and
Lou Ann Prestgard
Hobe Sound
secretaryplus@outlook.com

Exemplary HoSo businesses, citizens honored



Blake Capps, of Capps Roofing and recipient of the Small Business of the Year Award.



The prestigious Pelican Award went to Eric Wesel, center, of Jupiter Island Pools, presented by Chamber Executive Director Angela Hoffman and 2013 President Dan Hulen.



Yvonne Stutzke, R.N., owner of Nightingale Private Care and recipient of the Large Business of the Year Award.



Charlene Oakowsky, left, the new president of the Hobe Sound Chamber, with Dan Hulen, immediate past president, and Angela Hoffman, executive director.

Perhaps the person most surprised at the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce installation dinner at Mariner Sands on Dec. 13 was Melinda Brault, of the Geminie Design Group, who won a \$1,000 travel voucher from The Travel Gallery for being one of 100 members who participated in the Chamber's 2013 member referral program.

No other surprises came during an evening set aside to recognize the contributions made by Chamber members and to install the business organization's new leaders for 2014.

"It was really nice to look out into the audience and to see people's heads nod in agreement with each award," said Angela Hoffman, the Hobe Sound Chamber's executive director. "Not just once or twice, but throughout the entire event."

The Chamber hosted more than 100 guests for the luncheon, which was sponsored by Dennis Root & Associates, Fenton Services, Jupiter Medical Center and Metz Construction Company.

The companies selected as the 2013 Business of the Year were Nightingale Private Care as Large Business of the Year

and Capps Roofing, which recently celebrated its 20th year in business, as Small Business of the Year, according to a Chamber press release. Nightingale was recognized for its successful expansion and growth over the past year.

"The coveted Pelican Award, which is a Hobe Sound Chamber tradition and honor," Hoffman said, "was presented to Eric Wesel, owner of Jupiter Island Pools, in recognition of his participation with the Hobe Sound Community Chest, Habitat for Humanity, The Pine School, South Fork High School and his leadership roles held in the Hobe Sound Chamber."

Other awards included:

- Ambassador of the Year to Kim Toth, of Edward Jones-Andy Andersen's Office, for her commitment to helping the Chamber reach its mission.

- Committee Chairperson of the Year to Wayne Klick, of EyeMarketing, for his leadership with chamber functions.

- Bette Evans was recognized as the Volunteer of the Year to acknowledge her 25 years as a Hobe Sound Chamber volunteer.

- Philanthropist and Hobe Sound community leader Trent Steele, of the Law Offices of W. Trent Steele, was honored as Sponsor of the Year.

- The Community Enhancement & Service Award was presented to Hap Harrington, founder of the Hobe Sound non-profit organization, Floridians Fighting Falls.

- The United Way of Martin County's Executive Director, Jim Vojcsik, presented the Unsung Hero Award to Jim Freitas of Bottom's Up Beverages for his behind-the-scenes help and donations to multiple non-profit fundraisers in Martin County.



Hap Harrington, center, who was recognized for founding the non-profit organization, Floridians Fighting Falls. All photos by Matt Stone Photography.



Suzy Hutcheson, CEO of Helping People Succeed, with Commissioner Doug Smith, who installed the new officers.

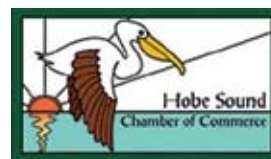
The new officers of the Hobe Sound Chamber were installed, including President Charlene Oakowsky, Oakowsky Properties; Vice President Steve Fenton, Fenton Services; Treasurer Jennifer Ahern, Lesser, Lesser, Landy & Smith PLLC; Secretary Ike Crumpler, Upstairs Communications.

Also on the board is Past President Dan Hulen, Fifth Third Pro-

cessing Solutions, and Historian Advisor Ralph Davino, Secure Storage of Martin County LLC.

Chamber board members include: Kim Biancardi, Reelgraphics.com; Stacey Brandt, Jupiter Medical Center; Melinda Brault, Geminie Design Group; Jac Crawford, Strategic Realty Services; Michael Ennis, Michael Ennis Construction; Mike McCoy, M&K Publishing; Bob McLean, Avalon Air, Inc.; Pete Morello, The UPS Store; Derreck Ogden, Word of Mouth Computers & Electronics, LLC; Dennis Root, Dennis Root & Associates; and Brandon Woodward, The Law Offices of Brandon Woodward.

To become a member of the Hobe Sound Chamber, call 772-546-4724, or visit www.hobesound.org. ■



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Kwik Stop's bounce house and slide helped kept youngsters distracted while waiting for the parade to start.



The Art Stroll brought lots of vendors to Mars Street, including Deb Aldrich of Palm City, along with her American Girl and Barbie doll clothes.



No one had more fun at the Kwik Stop party than owner Moe Nasser.



One of the winning floats, Spongebob Squarepants, by our Tax Collector Ruth Pietruszewski.



South Fork High School Band.



Hobe Sound Elementary School float was a crowd-pleasing winner!

Jason Hoffman & Laney.

Hobe Sound Chamber Christmas Parade won praise

Many of the 75 units comprising the 28th Annual Hobe Sound Christmas Parade were of such exceptional quality and demonstrated such creativity that comments flowed constantly from the crowd of 4,000 onlookers in December: "Wow, look how high he can kick!" "Can you believe that's from an elementary school?" "Anne Scott sure shows she's got a sense of humor...I'd never wear that."

The praise for the parade entries extended to the balcony of the Mancuso building on Bridge Road, where the judges had gathered to observe and select winners. It's also where Chamber volunteer Lillian Johnson, who solicits parade entrants each fall, stood next to the announcer to identify participants, whisper names in his ear and give the facts that add color to the event.

Prior to the parade, Christmas music floated along Hobe Sound sidewalks compliments of DancenSound, adding significantly to the festive air.

The end of the parade was punctuated by the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus seated in a vintage wagon pulled by parade sponsor Scott Fey of Treasure Coast Irrigation/Rood Landscape like a period at the end of a sentence—except it wasn't the end. Following Santa and Mrs. Claus was the much-anticipated Treasure Coast Irrigation Truck, spilling thousands of souvenir beach balls for parade goers.

Several local businesses opened their doors to offer treats, snacks and beverages to visitors, and the Kwik Stop parking lot teemed with laughing youngsters in the bounce house and on the inflatable slide, while their parents enjoyed Kwik Stop's free craft beer and wine tastings from among the store's vast inventory.

"Each year, this parade gets better and better," said Moe Nasser, owner of Kwik Stop. "People just love coming here, not for an hour or two, but to spend the whole day."

The parade awards included: Most Humorous to Sponge Bob Fan Club Float by Martin County Tax Collector Ruth Pietruszewski and her staff. Hidden Oaks Middle School Band & Color Guard was selected the Best Marching Band. The Most Original float went to the Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida, Martin County, led by Merribeth Manning. The Best Religious entry went to Kids Kickin' for Christ; and the Best Overall went to Hobe Sound Elementary School for its holiday float.

Parade supporting sponsors included Bridge Boat and RV Storage, the Hobe Sound Soccer Club, Coast 101.3 and the Stuart News. ■

A parade sponsor, the Hobe Sound Soccer League.

Presenting sponsor Scott Fey on his little green tractor pulling the Treasure Coast Irrigation/Rood Landscape vintage wagon.

Rural flavor reflected in Indiantown parade

Cast against a setting sun on Saturday, Dec. 7, the Indiantown Christmas celebratory kick-off included a parade full of surprises, laughter, swamp buggies, livestock, tractors and a long line of brightly decorated golf carts. Schoolchildren donned costumes to sing Christmas carols, the Sailfish Splash mascot handed out free passes to the waterpark, and a midway on Warfield Blvd. beckoned those attending the Christmas-tree lighting ceremony in Post Family Park to linger a while longer. "It was a beautiful day," said Hillary McKeich, executive director of the iTown Chamber of Commerce, which organized the parade. "You just could not get a more beautiful day than this in beautiful Indiantown." ■

Miss Indiantown Ashley Guerre.

Hope Rural School Principal Sister Kate Kinnally.

A decked-out swamp buggy from DuPuis Wildlife Management Area.

Even Santa rides a swamp buggy in Indiantown.

Mike Pasqual and Jeffrey.

Martin County Commissioner Doug Smith rides on the Indiantown Chamber of Commerce swamp-buggy float with Executive Director Hillary McKeich holding a young hitchhiker.

A midway full of rides added more lights and sound to the Indiantown celebration.

End of the day, the parade over, the crowds dispersed, but the lighted Christmas tree remains. Photo: Jennifer Dubey

Abel and Maribel Padilla enjoy the day with their children, Brianna, 10, Anahi, 8 and Kamilla, 5.

NAC members to consider proposed Heritage Center; public workshop Feb 15

Brian Powers, a former representative of Indiantown on the now-disbanded Community Redevelopment Agency, addressed the Jan. 8 meeting of the Indiantown Neighborhood Advisory Committee like an old friend who's come back home.

"We've talked about preserving Indiantown's heritage for a long time," he told the group, "but we had other priorities....710 was number one and preserving our history and the Cracker House was about number four...now we have an opportunity to gather community input and figure out how to get a path going forward."

A community meeting, sponsored by Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, will be Saturday, Feb. 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Indianwood Clubhouse to get local input on how to renovate and incorporate the Cracker House into a larger venue that might include a chickee hut, in addition to other historical buildings.

"This is a beginning," said NAC member Donna Carman, of Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, "not an end..." Many residents interested in the Cracker House have formed an historical preservation committee, which has met with the Historical Preservation Board of Martin County to seek their support, as well.

"We'll discuss what we have, what we need, what we want," Car-

man added, "and what's the plan to get there."

Currently on Farm Road on land owned by the King Ranch, the Cracker House is one of the oldest structures in the county, according to Powers. Another building being considered for renovation is the feed store, which originally served Indiantown as a warehouse for the railroad.

"Our biggest piece of history is the 'Cracker' piece," Powers added. "We just want to get it on your radar screen...we want you to come to the meeting, but please don't bring your artifacts."

Over the next few weeks, the Indiantown NAC will be reviewing their Community Redevelopment Plans to update them, and will consider whether to include the Indiantown Heritage Center as an "official" CRA project.

"It must be part of the CRA plan if it's going to be a CRA project," said Edward Erfurt, of the county Community Development Department. He told the group that many of the original NOW visioning plans had never been officially incorporated into the CRA plans, which also must be in compliance with both the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and its Land Development Regulations.

In some cases, such as the Carter Park development, Erfurt added, the county had to change its code in order

to permit the project. He recommended that the NAC hold a community workshop to gather public input as to what they want established as priorities in the CRA plan.

"We've already held a lot of workshops," said NAC Chair Art Matson, "and we pretty much feel that we know what the community wants...they've told us that already, but it sounds like we're being asked to go back to the beginning. I think we need to start first with the members of the NAC, to give us a chance to review what we have, then we'll have a workshop with the community, if that's what it takes to get County Commission approval...."

"We have a lot of work to do," Matson added, "and since we cannot talk to each other about this outside of our meetings, we're going to need to meet a lot more often than every three months."

Matson requested that hard copies of the CRA plans be provided to each member, as well as a monthly meeting date; however, Erfurt responded that the county Community Development Staff, which now is one staff member short following the resignation of planner Nakeishea Smith, would prefer to call for meetings as required.

The next meeting has been scheduled for 6 p.m., April 9, by the Community Development Department at the Indiantown Civic Center on Osceola Street. ■

FPL's new natural gas transmission line will bring economic benefits to area

Nick Blount, FPL vice president, external relations, visited the Indiantown Neighborhood Advisory meeting Jan. 8 to give the members an update regarding an underground natural gas pipeline that will connect their Indiantown plant to the Sabal Trail Transmission Central Florida Hub just south of Orlando.

The Florida Southeast Connection project will include approximately 126 miles of interstate natural gas pipeline in Florida and is expected to cost ap-

proximately \$550 million to construct. The pipeline will initially be capable of transporting 400 million cubic feet or more of natural gas per day from Sabal Trail's Central Florida Hub to FPL's Martin Clean Energy Center in Indiantown.

Construction of the 10-15 mile Florida Southeast Connection through Martin County is expected to begin in 2016 and will provide an estimated economic impact of around \$17 million during construction. FPL customers,

however, will not see an increase in the bills in order to pay for construction.

FPL's current transmission lines are reaching near capacity, according to Blount, which will be relieved by the addition of the new line, at the same time improving the region's natural gas reliability. Construction of the Florida Southeast Connection line, as well as the interstate line from Alabama, is expected to be completed in 2017.

The Indiantown NAC voted to support the project. ■

Sign up now for iTown Business Expo on April 10

Businesses and vendors are now being sought by the iTown Chamber of Commerce for its 2014 Business Expo on April 10 at the Indiantown Recreation Hall, from 5-7 p.m.

"We had a fantastic event last year," said Hilary McKeich, "with dozens of people attending from throughout the county, who got to visit booths hosted by 30 businesses. It's a great way to introduce your business to new markets

for as little as \$100 and a door prize for the drawing."

Call the Indiantown Chamber of Commerce for more information at 772-597-2185, or visit their website: www.indiantownchamber.com. ■

INDIANTOWN CHAMBER'S NEW MEMBERS



Chuck Barrowclough

PO Box 2596
Stuart
772-475-5346
www.treasuredlands.org



Louise Murtaugh

430 SE Osceola Street
Stuart
772-223-6659
www.mollyshouse.org



PET PROTECTOR

Kim Murphy

Indiantown
772-342-6880
www.petprotector.org



Marybeth Parker

16205 SW Warfield Blvd.
Indiantown
772-597-2337



Guyton Stone

17362 SW Reliance St.
Indiantown, FL
772.260.8670
www.ghscww.com

The iTown Medical Center now open, finally

Each time Indiantown community activist Donna Carman could get a county or state official's attention over the past decade, she pleaded the case for establishing a medical center in Indiantown, a community of about 11,000 people in western Martin County who had at least a 20-minute drive to reach the nearest medical facility.

As executive director of Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, Inc., a member of the Indiantown Neighborhood Advisory Committee, the Indiantown Chamber and other organizations, Carman never wavered in her advocacy, which was shared by other Indiantown residents, including David Powers of Indiantown Realty Corp. and president of the Indiantown Non-Profit Housing Board of Directors.

"This has been a long time coming," Powers told a gathering of business and community leaders at a Dec. 12 luncheon hosted by the non-profit organization at Indiantown's Seminole Inn to announce the iTown Medical Center's opening.

"Now that we have it," he added, "we've got to make sure we can keep it open."



The Indiantown Community Service Center at 15516 SW Osceola Street in Indiantown that will house the new iTown Medical Center.



Donna Carman, executive director, Indiantown Non-Profit Housing



M. Kamal Syed, M.D.



Muhammed Nooruddin, RPT



David Powers, of Indiantown Realty, president of Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, Inc.

Powers lauded Carman and others for their vision of purchasing and renovating the former Badcock Furniture Co. building on Osceola Street to create a center for Indiantown's social services

and affordable housing authority, the weatherization program, and, now, medical care for Indiantown residents and employees whose income falls above the limit required to qualify for care at the local health clinic.

"If you have not seen what has been done with this building," he added, "be sure to stop by and see for yourself. It's beautiful....and having a medical center is critical to the future of this community...we are relying on you, particularly our large industrial partners in Indiantown, to help us."

Powers recounted the incentives and attributes that Indiantown offers new businesses, which include its Enterprise Zone status, an already existing infrastructure that include broadband and a marina on the only waterway to link the state's east and west coasts, a rail line, a variety of housing options, good schools, adequate workforce, parks, library, etc.

"We could check off all those boxes important to companies looking to relocate," he said, "except for the box beside medical."

One of the first tasks of Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, owner and landlord of the new clinic, was to survey the businesses with employees working within a 15-minute radius of Indiantown, the potential patients who may need medical services in Indiantown, the results of which will assist in obtaining grants to purchase additional medical equipment and supplies, said Carman.

"We have purchased much of the equipment," she added, "but there's still more that's needed...we'll be applying for additional grants."

The delay in the opening, which had been anticipated in January, was due to the electrical loads required by some of the new equipment, said a spokesperson, consequently the building required upgraded electrical wiring.

Powers introduced the physicians who will staff the iTown Medical Center, M. Kamal Syed, M.D., a general practitioner on staff at Martin Memorial Hospitals in Tradition and Stuart, as well as at Raulerson Hospital in Okeechobee, and his brother, Muhammed Nooruddin, RPT, a physical therapist who has served the Indiantown community part time for the past three years.

"How fortunate is it that Indiantown's physical therapist has a brother who is a medical doctor?" Powers added.

Educated at the privately owned Baqai Medical University in Pakistan, Dr. Syed graduated in 1999 and established his first practice in Okeechobee.

"Being already on staff at Martin Memorial," he told the group, "allows me to offer a continuum of care for my patients here should anyone need hospitalization."

The iTown Medical Center, which will accept all major health insurance plans, will be able to offer medical, radiology and rehabilitative services for primary

care, disease management, blood workups, women's healthcare, X-rays, echocardiograms, EKGs, ultrasound, lab services, injections, cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, occupational and vestibular therapy and more.

The doctors will also offer services for local employers including pre-employment physicals, drug testing, and Workers Compensation-related services. It is anticipated that the medical center will employ 14 full-time and 14 part-time workers with an estimated total annual payroll of more than \$1.1 million that will include two part-time nurse practitioners, two full-time licensed practical nurses, additional therapists, and other professional staff.

"I am so excited to move to a bigger place and be open five days instead of three half days," said

Nooruddin, who has 20 years' experience in physical therapy. "The small office space I had before limited what therapies could be offered, and that's no longer going to be the case."

According to the clinic's press release announcing the opening, an employment and economic impact study by Strategic Development Initiatives found that the clinic would create a positive economic impact of \$1.48 million during its development phase and an annual operating budget of \$1.5 million when in full operation.

Indiantown residents expect that to be multiplied by being more attractive now to other new business.

"A company's ability to attract a skilled workforce is one of the top factors for business site selection," Powers added, "and employees want to live in places with easy access to quality healthcare."

That empty box beside "medical facilities" in Indiantown can now be checked. ■

—Barbara Clowdus

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Ah, the dreaded New Year's weightloss resolution



**George
Kleine**

*The Right
Bite*

With the onset of the New Year comes the onset of resolutions. We all tend to make little (or not so little) commitments—commitments to ourselves, commitments to better ourselves, our lives, our health and, most assuredly, our WAISTLINES!

We often resolve to eat better and healthier. We resolve to exercise and to do so REGULARLY. In the heat of the moment, we are sincere in our resolutions. We really intend to follow through. But remember what your grandmother said about good intentions paving a certain road?

In the case of our ill-fated, yet serious resolutions that road leads not to Perdition, but to the health club, the gym or a “diet center.”

A friend of mine who managed a health club in Vermont said he wished he could make his members’ cards out of barbell plates. That way, he said, he would be sure they got some benefit from carrying the unused cards around day after day. He related that during the last of January, and by the start of February, the parking lot, the gym and the locker room were all filled to capacity. Once the

winds of March blew in, however, the just-born fervor of his new members cooled, and the Ides of March saw them drop as surely as Caesar fell at the “cruelest blow” of Marc Anthony.

My question to myself—and to all of you who are making the same ill-fated resolution you (and I) have made year after year—is this: How can the cycle of disappointment (I won’t say failure) be broken? The first step, I have learned, is to make a firm commitment, not a dreamy promise or a maybe commitment, but a hard-core promise to yourself: A promise to do your level best to be realistic, to be dedicated and to measure your success in small steps.

If I had started out on my weight-loss journey focusing on the total weight I was trying to shed, I would have drowned myself in tears of frustration within two weeks, but because I focused on small steps, I needed only to shed three pounds those first two weeks—and when I did, I was successful! That first success helped to keep me motivated. I never focused on the “BIG PICTURE” (and believe you me, it was a BIG picture) and could, instead, see even small results as success, and success breeds more success.

Next, and this is really important, do NOT forbid yourself anything. You can eat what you like—you just can’t eat a lot of anything. Limit portions, eat logically and enjoy what you eat. Talk to your health-care provider about your general health and your goals, and how best to achieve a healthy balance between them. Ask about

your optimum caloric intake. Talk about an exercise program (but forget that no pain, no gain stuff). If you are pretty inactive even a few minutes of walking will be a good start. You’ll get stronger, and as it works you’ll want to do more.

When I first started, I could walk for about 15 minutes and never got very far from home. Now it’s an hour of walking, and I see the sights of Ridgeway, where I live, AND Cambridge, next door.

Here is a new recipe for a supper favorite that I recently “discovered,” shared and enjoyed. I think you will like it as well. It is low cal, low fat but high flavor. Try it!

POACHED CHICKEN BREAST ALA CREOLE

The shining star of New Orleans cooking is creole. A blending of French, Spanish and African cooking, it maximizes flavor, and in this version, it epitomizes healthy eating.

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp. olive oil
2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
½ carrot, chopped
1 can crushed tomatoes (14-16 ounce)
½ cup chicken stock or broth (low sodium)
2 TBS chopped fresh parsley
1 tsp. ground thyme
Dash coarse salt
2 or more drops hot sauce (to taste)
4 four-ounce, skinless, boneless chicken breasts

Heat oil in non-stick skillet, add and sauté the onions, celery, peppers and carrot until tender but not browned (5-7 minutes). Stir in the tomatoes, broth, herbs, pepper sauce and salt. Do not add salt if you are using packaged frozen chicken breasts which a “flavor enhancing” solution injected, which contains sodium.

Bring the sauce to a boil, stir, reduce heat and add the chicken. Partially cover the skillet (use a piece of wax paper or a loose fitting lid). Continue simmering the chicken and sauce 8-10 minutes, and check the temperature of the chicken with an instant read thermometer. Remove the chicken to serving platter at 160 degrees and allow to continue “carry-over cooking” on the platter as the sauce thickens in the skillet. You can add “gumbo file,” if you have it, to help thicken the sauce. When sauce is reduced by half, spoon it over the chicken. Serve with a tossed salad and rice (1/2 cup).

There are approximately 180-190 calories (chicken and ½ cup of sauce) in the dish. The rice adds another 110 calories, and the salad with a low-fat, low-cal dressing adds about 50 calories to the meal.

You look and feel better already! ■

George Kleine, a professional chef, writer and entrepreneur in Hobe Sound, recently lost a few tons of extra weight. He won’t say how many pounds, but enough to make him an expert on healthy cooking and eating. Send your questions, comments and recipes to TheRightBite@MartinCountyCurrents.com.

Now I know: shingles turns your life upside down



**Suzanne
Briley**

Hopscotch

Not long ago, a working man stopped in to see a doctor, signing in at the reception desk. He was asked what he wanted. He answered, “I have the shingles.” He was then told to wait. Later he was called into an examining room and was told to remove his clothes. He complied, and after waiting for some time, a doctor appeared and enquired about the purpose of his visit. The man told him that he had the shingles, and the doctor asked where? The man told him that they had been delivered and were outside in his truck waiting to be unloaded!

When I heard this story, I laughed, but my own story of shingles is anything but funny: Instead, it is a story of of pain, despair and one of extreme discomfort. I am recovering from the shingles virus.

Anyone who has experienced chicken pox, has the herpes zoster virus already in his or her system. As we age, we have a much greater possibility of it suddenly breaking out and disrupting our lives.

I ignored the fact that I could have taken the shingles vaccine as a preventiva-

tive measure, thinking that I far too healthy, even immune, to the virus. A fool, I was! Let me tell you how it happened:

One day, out of the blue, my head was on fire with electric pulses of pain, tingling through the nerves of my face, eyes and scalp. Blisters had appeared along along my hairline and across one eye and the eyelid, down my face and into the side of my nose. The itching and pain were excruciating.

The “shingles” are actually tiny festoons of a rash that looks similar to poison ivy. Nothing would alleviate my pain, however. No cream, pill or anything else that I could find would help, forcing me finally to the emergency room, where I was vomiting from the desperate pain. The physician prescribed an anti-viral medication to stop the shingles from spreading. (There is a seven-day window for this to be effective.)

I wound up living with the itching and pain every second, minute, hour, day and week for three months. It was devastating. There were times I wanted to die. Thankfully, my friends and neighbors supported me, bringing me food, giving me encouragement, and providing me with transportation.

Now I am left with scars on the cornea of one of my eyes resulting in impaired vision, as well as post-hermetic neuralgia, a nerve impairment causing constant nerve tingling. Having been a shingles sufferer, I now hear the stories of many other fellow sufferers. One

thing I’ve learned—and understand—is that shingles sufferers commit the highest number of suicides among the older population. The damage can last for years. Shingles can occur in the brain, throat, and in other organs throughout the body. It needs to be taken much more seriously.

I can attest to the fact that my life has drastically changed since the onslaught of shingles. Yes, the immunization costs around \$200, and most insurance plans cover only a portion of that, but consider that the cost of my medications to treat

shingles exceeded \$900. The preventative shot is a bargain in comparison.

Talk to your doctor when you get your annual physical, if not before. Find out if you are a candidate for the immunization, which greatly reduces your odds of ever having to go through what I just did. And don’t procrastinate, because shingles is no laughing matter. ■

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

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Kagan provides us a healing symphony of color



**Maya
Ellenson**
*Art
Kaleidoscope*

Helen Kagan's "healing" art resonates anywhere due to its dramatic outburst of colors, powerful pictorial syntax and a uniquely unforgettable style, which gives it universal appeal. Her paintings have been featured nationally at numerous, prestigious art exhibitions and juried art shows and can be found at various private collections in the US and Europe.

In December, Helen's art was exhibited at the "Spectrum" during Art Basel week in Miami, and her recent piece, "In Search of Meaning," won a front cover contest in the "Art & Beyond" magazine. Her painting, "Big City Light," won second prize in a Kinetic Pointillism contest held recently at the coffee bar, Blue Door, in Stuart.

Beautiful as it is, her art is so much more than just a feast for the eyes. Imbued with a profound spiritual energy, it connects us with our inner self with its immense potential for self-healing, mind-opening and creative growth, according to Helen.

"Communicating on subliminal levels," she explains on her website, "my art delivers this message through positively charged intention, healing frequencies of color, and energetically balanced composition. My 'Healing Art' is better experienced 'in-person' due to deep texture, large size and vibrant colors."

Helen came to the United States in 1990 as a refugee from Russia with a PhD in science and a master's degree in psychology. She moved to Stuart a few years ago as a full-time artist from New York where she had worked for many years as a psychotherapist, although she has been painting as long as she remembers, she says.

A rich Jewish heritage is intertwined with what is called the "Russian intelligentsia" for whom the art is as sacred as an icon for a religious person. She describes her childhood as growing up



Artist Helen Kagan with her painting of the Roosevelt Bridge in Stuart, "Bridge to Hope."

among physicists and lyricists who were "tuned into each other," like her father, a renowned scientist, and mother, a talented short story writer.

This deep cultural archetype of a cosmic, holistic mindset with bits and pieces of collective planetary knowledge converging—rather than being ripped apart individualistically—shaped Helen's intellectual "venue" for both painting and



"Eternal Portal"

mic energy the canvas exudes with every hue and the slightest detail, such as the couple watching the sunset from the deck and being consumed with something irresistibly powerful. As Stuart's flaming sunset drops its multi-hued feathers into deep waters beneath, Helen's bridge seems to breathe a breeze of hope that "perches" everywhere because of the totality of its nature.

As a painter, Helen was inspired by impressionism and expressionism. In her art, these two aesthetics are bridged with ground-breaking novelty, although historically the two excluded and somewhat diminished each other. As a great German expressionist, Emil Nolde, stated, "Whoever paints flowers paints their deeper-lying life, the soul." For him, just the sheer fleeting beauty of a flower, trapped in the back-and-forth of shade and light, right now and right here – the pictorial grammar cherished by impressionists – was less meaningful than its inner, everlasting essence.

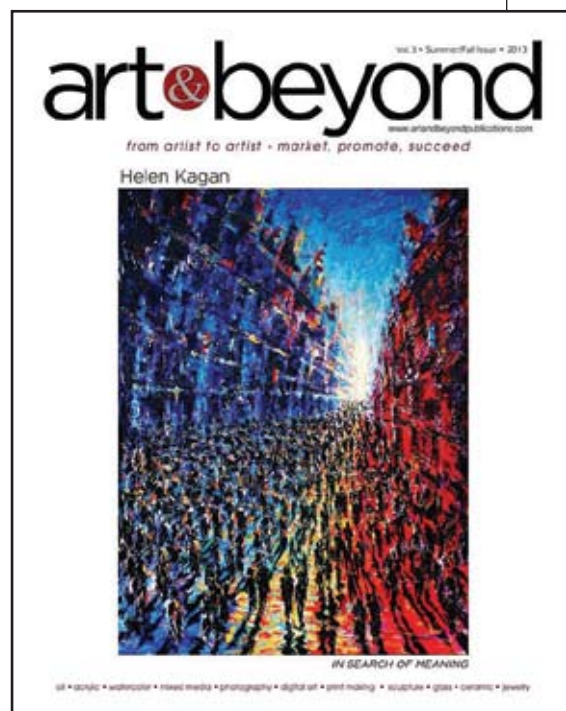
For Helen, both tonalities are harmonized. Impressionist joie de vivre with its emphasis on the now is gracefully entwined with

the inner, undying luminous essence valued by expressionists.

In her recent "gothic" cityscapes of stunning power and integrity, "In Search of Meaning" and "Eternal Portal," light as the ultimate manifestation of hope engulfs everyone who happens to view either from both inside and outside the canvas, showing the way in and out. The deep, multi-layered meaning of each piece is conveyed through the dense texture and intense polyphony of close and contrasting values that releases a floating, healing aura we take with us as we walk away.

The light as the apex of Helen Kagan's art is so strong that it reminds us of the sunshine that breaks through the closed window of our visions and compels us to finally open it . . . for self-healing and self-discovery. ■

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.



"In Search of Meaning" was the featured artwork on the cover of the Art & Beyond magazine.

for healing, expressed in her recurring symbol of a bridge, Helen's "Holy of Holies," which unifies that which seems disconnected and broken.

Her painting, "Bridge to Hope," was donated to the Treasure Coast Hospice last January. During the unveiling ceremony at the Osceola32 Gallery, Helen said that "hope, no matter what, is always there," the words that invoke Emily Dickinson's well-known stanza: "Hope is the thing with feathers, That perches in the soul, And sings the tunes without the words, And never stops – at all."

And neither does Helen's art, which translates the tunes of hope into a universal language of mind-blowing colors and vivid imagery. Even though we all recognize the Roosevelt Bridge in her painting, it appears totally transformed, ablaze with the purple-red sunset, never seen before though we may traverse the bridge daily. Yet it's not just the colors and the striking setting that stun the viewer utmost, but rather the pure cos-



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What none of us got for Christmas in 2013



**Rich
Vidulich**
*Pompano
Reporter*

It's a lovely, touristy 70-degree tropical day in south Florida. That being said, are we really experiencing the phenomena that we Floridians call "winter"? I don't mind not having any snow anymore in my life, but couldn't Santa have brought me something I would have liked for Christmas? It didn't have to be under my tree; I just wanted to open the door and feel chilly! Ho, Ho, Ho: NO cold air means NO cold seas, and NO pompano! And I used to believe....instead, we're back to "square zero."

Since I have been forecasting the sea temps for the Florida region for years, I feel that I'm "regionally oriented." For example, on Dec. 10, a lackluster local catch indicated a definitive need to pull anchor and try to pull off a REEL CATCH! Nothing like being the local "Pompano Reporter" and needing to prove—at least to myself—that I still have what it takes to be regarded as a true, goateed mariner. A week of planning for a pre-frontal harvest during an anticipated sea-temperature drop in New Smyrna Beach panned out. A photo that captured the results became my Christmas card!

Indeed, my Ponce Inlet fishing buddies announced that the "Silver Arrival"



Surf fisherman, CJ, "smokin' the bones" two at a time at North Federal Preserve in Hobe Sound. Photo: Rich Vidulich

was igniting, but the "Final Jeopardy" questions included: Will I need live sand fleas, fresh sea clams, or live blue crabs? Fishing a natural seashore involves more preparation than fishing local, as I do, with frozen fleas and shrimp, so the only solution was to arm myself with all three. What a nightmare! The bait safari included two, late-evening partial moon rakes for fleas and having to await the Cod and Caper deliveries for clams.

I've been at Ponce Inlet before and already knew that my Fluorocarbon Pompano Catcher Rigs would not attract those northern fish. The mental archives finally awoke, and I settled on the single-strand, light leader with 5mm gold and yellow sparkle beads. They were the ticket.

The beach gates opened at 7 a.m., and seeing 10 miles of an early-sunlit horizon blew my watery mind. Numerous trucks raced to areas of wider and deeper troughs that resident anglers well understood. I drove my Tundra north towards Ponce Inlet, staked my parcel and quickly learned that the blue crab's meaty knuckles was the off-the-walls best bait that day! (And I'm too modest to offer another photo of me with my pompano haul from that "northern" beach.)

Meanwhile, my local fishing buddy, CJ, demonstrated in this photo of him with a double header bonefish dangling during a huge southeaster of 20 knots of what is running the waters this winter from Jupiter to Sebastian, a mere 110 miles of Key West fish.

The bones love pompano rigs adorned by blanching and or live fleas. I have to

admit they provide a wonderful, zippy fight pumping on the low water flats. For those of you who want to charter for these guys in the Keys, save the gas and expense and fish right around here! (My apologies to the guides down south. I'm often a face-tious tiger shark with a one-track mind. I don't much care about anything except catchin' pompanoos, and helping others learn the where's and the how's.)

A cold winter is happening everywhere but here, it seems. The extremely cold February 2014 forecast is weakening, and the fishing reports are evolving into scribbles such as I have just scribbled. No, I'm not depressed, because I'm optimistic. I know these fish will show up out of the blue!

Come on, I dare you, Pompano. Don't remake me into the "Tropical Surf-Casting Reporter!" I defy you. Make all of us a believer again.

Now we've had a few REALLY cold days this month, and it's even colder in the northeast. Will that make a difference to our silver bullets? I'll be sure to let you know next month. ■

Rich Vidulich, a commercial pompano surf fisherman who traverses the beaches of Martin County and points north for his "golden nuggets," lives in Jupiter. Send comments or questions to Pompano@MartinCountyCurrents.com.

Coastal lectures continue at Blake

Mark Perry, executive director of the Florida Oceanographic Society, kicked-off the free Florida Oceanographic Society's

Coastal Lecture Series at the Blake Library that launched in January. Perry discussed the Society's past 50 years of environmental stewardship, along with a display of photographs, and an explanation of Plan 6 to move water south from Lake Okeechobee.

The lectures, held in the library's John F. Armstrong Wing, 2351 SE Monterey Road in Stuart in partnership with the Martin County Library System, will feature the area's leading coastal experts on two

Mondays a month through April, beginning at 6:30p.m. Reservations are not required.

The next lecture will be Feb. 10 with Dr. Joshua Voss, assistant research professor at Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. He works to discover, characterize and protect coral reef ecosystems. He has completed more than 1,100 scientific dives and led more than 30 scientific expeditions.

Feb. 24 - Gene Lemire, "Mosquito Management"

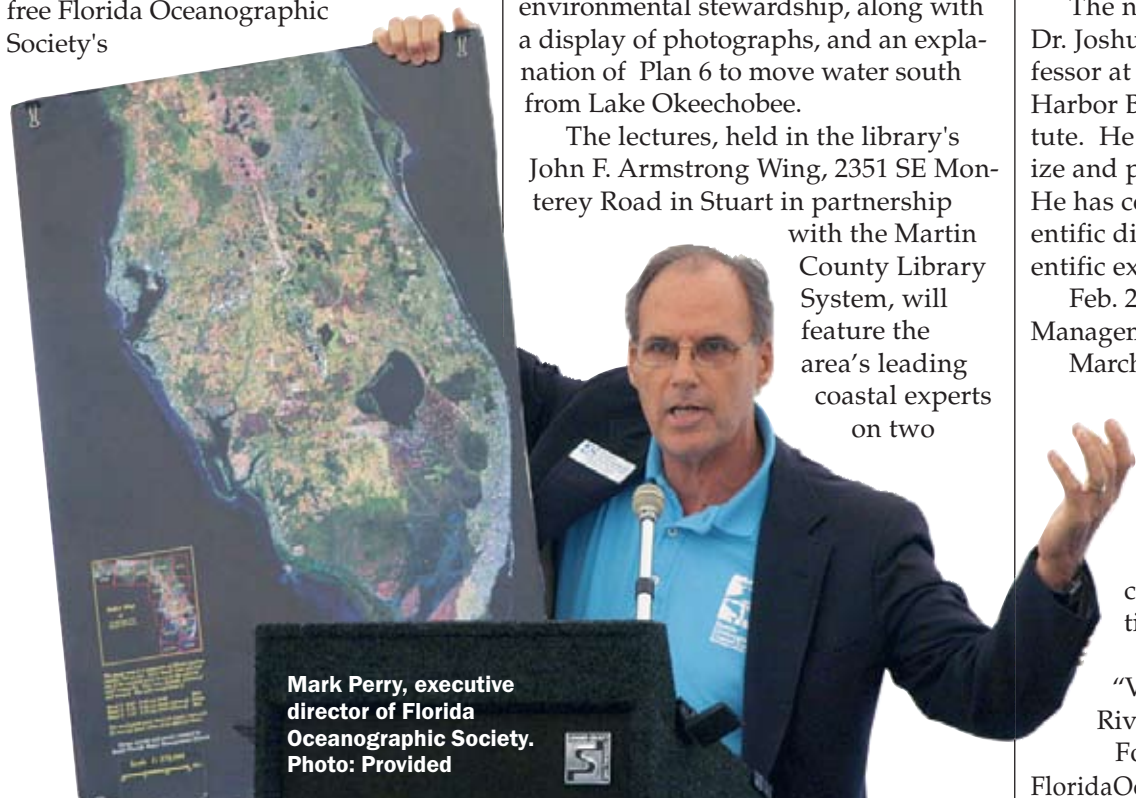
March 10 - Blair and Dawn Witherington, "Florida's Living Beaches"

March 24 - Nicole Kirchoff, "The Making of a Happy, Healthy Southern Bluefin Tuna"

April 7 - Scott Taylor, "Specialized Habitat and Adaptations of the Mangrove Rivulus"

April 21 - Gabby Barbarite, "Vibrio Bacteria in the Indian River Lagoon"

For more information, visit FloridaOcean.org or call 772-225-0505. ■



**Mark Perry, executive
director of Florida
Oceanographic Society.**
Photo: Provided

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The voices of angels

The holiday season in Indiantown was enriched by the December performance of youngest of holiday choirs, the kindergarten students of the Hope Rural School of Indiantown. The private school students sang several traditional Christmas carols during the Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the Homer Wall Gazebo next to the Elisabeth Lahti Library. The happy day was capped by more student performances under a setting sun.