



FREE

Martin County CURRENTS

Volume 4 Issue 2 • April 2014

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AFTER



Florida NOT All Aboard launched petitions, planning protests. Pg 6



Pegasus adds elephants to wildlife conservation targets. Pg 10



Great American Clean-Up began in Rio. 17



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Martin County CURRENTS

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COMP PLAN REWRITES

A proposed settlement of landowner challenges of the

county's comprehensive growth management plan rewrites was tentatively approved by the Board of County Commissioners at its March 18 meeting, thus canceling the administrative hearing that had been scheduled to begin March 31.

County Attorney Michael Durham, along with outside counsel Linda Loomis Shelley, got approval from the county commission during an executive session to proceed with negotiations with four landowners, including Consolidated Citrus, Lake Point Phase I and Phase II, Becker Holdings and Midbrook 1st Realty for Hobe Grove, adding their suggested changes to one paragraph.

Prior to the executive session, Shelley reported that a stipulation with one of the parties (Lake Point Phase I and Phase II) has been filed with the Department of Administrative Hearings, (confirming the validity of Lake Point mining resolutions and contracts with the county and the South Florida Water Management District, as well as with the state Department of Environmental Resources), and that the attorneys have reached a potential resolution with most of the other petitioners; however, the paragraph change by the county still will need landowner approval in their settlement negotiations.

According to documents filed with the Department of Administrative Hearings, Consolidated Citrus and Becker Holdings have agreed to new language for all the amendments with the exception of the amendments relating to population density determinations and the combining of the different urban service boundaries covering the eastern and Indiantown areas of the county.

Two landowners, Becker Holdings and Midbrook 1st Realty, still are challenging the county's method of determining residential capacity and the new combination of the two boundaries, which they say will be skewed by Indiantown's largely unpopulated urban services district.

The hearing before Administrative Law Judge Suzanne Van Wyk that was scheduled to begin March 31 has been delayed without a rescheduled date.

The changes being challenged are amendments to Chapter 1, preamble; Chapter 2, definitions; Chapter 4, future land use; and Chapter 9, regarding conservation and open space elements.

The county's changes to Chapter 9 also would require adding an additional impact fee category applicable to new developments.

The amount of the fee and methods of determination are currently being consid-

ered by the county, which voted at its April 1 meeting to approve hiring an outside consultant to assist the Growth Management Department. ■

SARAH HEARD DEPOSITION

Circuit Court Judge James McCann will hear the Lake Point Phase I and Phase II

Lake Point Phase I and Phase II project's motion to compel Martin County Commission Chair Sarah Heard to submit to a deposition regarding her private email account May 29.

Attorneys for the Lake Point Water Restoration Project in western Martin County assert they they are entitled to copies of any email correspondence between Heard and former commissioner Maggy Hurchalla regarding Lake Point. They contend also that those emails should have been preserved as a public record; however, Heard reported to Lake Point that her private email account "had been hacked" and no emails are recoverable.

Heard's private attorney, Scott Zapollo, filed a motion for Protective Order before a Palm Beach Circuit Court in Au-

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continued from PAGE 3

gust, which was denied, contending that Heard's private emails are not public record, that she is not a party to Lake Point's case against Hurchalla, who is being charged by Lake Point with tortious interference (interfering with a company's ability to conduct business).

Hurchalla's attorney attempted to have the tortious interference charge dismissed on the grounds that her comments are protected under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, but the motion was denied by Judge McCann.

Lake Point filed suit against Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District for a breach of contract, as well as Hurchalla for tortious interference, following Hurchalla's public assertions that Lake Point had destroyed 60 acres of wetlands on their property, among other claims that Lake Point contends are false.

Hurchalla's public claims—as well as those in at least one private email purportedly to Commissioner Ed Fielding that has surfaced during the investigation—resulted in the county commission's refusal to revoke Lake Point's original Development Order, according to Loeb, which formed the basis for directing the county to take code enforcement action against Lake Point.

Loeb also contends in his motion that the County Commission, acting under false information from Hurchalla, pressed SFWMD officials to breach its contract with Lake Point, which had been designated part of the Northern Everglades and Estuary Protection Plan.

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 verified Lake Point's stance against Hurchalla's claims, including that no wetlands had been destroyed and that there was no evidence that its rock pits were deeper than 20 feet below sea level, as required by the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan; however, the staff was directed to file code enforcement violations against Lake Point for conducting mining activities outside of the housing development boundaries, including filling a drainage ditch, not removing all exotic plants from the preserve area, and for not installing proper signage.

Lake Point, which had been reclassified from the residential housing development, Lake Point Ranches, to a public works project by a Martin County resolution in 2008, made a public records request in February 2013 of all email correspondence of Commissioners Sarah Heard, Ed Fielding and Anne Scott with Maggy Hurchalla regarding Lake Point.

After examining the public email database, their attorneys discovered that Heard had been using her private Yahoo account routinely to conduct county business, so they expanded their request



Maggy Hurchalla



Sarah Heard

to include Heard's private emails from her home computer, her notes during the Jan. 15, 2013 county commission meeting, and her calendar of appointments for the previous year.

Judge McCann denied Lake Point's request for the meeting notes, because a commissioner's personal notes taken or brought to a commission meeting are not normally considered public records. There was too great a delay (three days) between Loeb's request (made under the civil rules of procedure following the filing of a civil suit) and Deputy Attorney Christa Storey's instruction to commissioners to preserve all records from that meeting to know that Heard's notes still exist.

In February 2013, Lake Point expanded their public records request to include text messages, and the public and private emails from all commissioners' accounts that reference Lake Point. After the county took no action over the past year to fulfill Lake Point's public records request, Loeb filed an amended complaint in January that included a claim against Martin County for failing to comply with Florida's Public Records Act.

Martin County immediately filed a motion to block the amended complaint, however, in a hearing Jan. 28, Judge McCann denied the county's motion and granted leave to Lake Point to file their second amended complaint, thus their claim against Martin County for violating the Public Records Act will stand until ruled upon by Judge McCann.

Several other motions, including a counterclaim filed against Lake Point, as well as a suit filed by Homeowner's Choice Insurance Company, Hurchalla's insurance company, which says it is not legally responsible for paying Hurchalla's attorney fees in the case. That case will go before Judge McCann on May 27 at 9:30 a.m. in the Martin County courthouse. ■

ALL ABOARD FLORIDA

Martin County's best hope for making an impact on the proposed

All Aboard Florida passenger rail service appears to be after the Federal Railroad Administration releases its Environmental Impact Statement sometime in the next two months. Public comment will be

solicited both in open forums and via electronic and regular mail, according to federal officials.

The EIS report also will divulge more precise information than is currently being released by All Aboard Florida officials, or by FECL, Inc., the sister company of All Aboard Florida.

The passenger rail service is expected to run 32 trains daily in 16 round trips from Miami to Orlando at speeds of up to 125 mph in rural areas, up to 110 in some populated areas, and around 79 mph or less through towns and cities. At times, officials have said that the speeds through Stuart will be considerably less due to the number of curves in the tracks, particularly as the train crosses the St. Lucie on the single-track bridge, but officials are not saying what speeds are anticipated.

The 235-mile trip between Florida's two largest cities, however, include stops only at Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, and will cross three bridges that will impact boat traffic on three rivers, the New River, the Loxahatchee and the St. Lucie. The Coast Guard is responsible for issuing permits in regard to the train's impact on waterways.

Stuart attorney Jody Foster, of Guy, Yudin & Foster, LLP, and representing the marine industry, questioned All Aboard Florida VP Rusty Roberts, guest speaker at a recent Stuart-Martin County Chamber of Commerce luncheon, about the federal maritime law that prohibits blocking waterways.

"How can you consider nine hours that the (St. Lucie bridge) will be closed NOT blocking our waterway," Foster asked.

Roberts insisted that the time estimates for bridge closings based on observations and calculations from the Martin County Engineering Department do not apply, because the crossings will be "upgraded" with sophisticated timing devices, but he could not offer an estimate of actual time that the bridge will be closed each hour.

Roberts added that All Aboard Florida already agreed to upgrade all the crossings for safety, "which is a significant investment that normally would be the county's responsibility." He said that proposed "quiet zones are purely aesthetic," and thus are the county's prerogative to install.

Quiet zones are double-barricaded crossings with a concrete median installed between lanes to prevent cars from swerving around crossing arms in front of oncoming trains, thus meeting federal standards for safety for trains that exceed 79 mph. They also eliminate the use of train horns in residential and downtown areas.

Safety improvements at grade crossings do not include the installation of double barricades or concrete medians, but pertain to the tracks and how they are laid within the asphalt roadway; how-

ever, the FRA already has questioned the safety of the high-speed trains at crossings, and may require not only double barricades, but in some instances, completely "contain" the train in a tunnel either above or below ground. If the government agency requires double barricades in order for the project to proceed, those costs will be borne by All Aboard Florida, not the counties.

Martin County has 28 grade crossings, and since the railroad was here prior to the establishment of cities and roads, the county pays right-of-way fees and must maintain 18 of those crossing at its own expense. The FECL right-of-way is 100 feet wide, and an additional track will be laid within its right-of-way throughout most of the county to accommodate the All Aboard Florida train.

Roberts said at the chamber meeting that the track "probably will remain a single track through Stuart," however, because of the logistics and number of curves the train will encounter.

The diagnostic field reviews from Miami through St. Lucie counties have been completed and are part of an FRA report, however, six crossings in Stuart—two immediately north of the bridge and four south of the bridge—are not included, apparently

indicating that train speeds at those locations fall

below the 79 mph mark that requires federal safety improvements, according to county officials.

In a recent email from Mike Busha, of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, to Beth Beltran, administrator of the county's Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Florida Department of Transportation also is studying the All Aboard Florida project.

"FDOT is in the middle of a freight rationalization study for both the CSX and FEC corridors," Busha wrote, "which will likely include recommendations about the distribution of freight and passengers between these two lines."

Because of the state's "heavy investment" in ports, airports, and intermodal facilities on which the railroads rely, Busha surmises that the state can leverage its position "to effect talks between the two railroads especially if it impacts success of accomplishing the AAF proposal."

Busha also suggested that moving "freight traffic off the FEC to the CSX as this is the type of rail traffic (2 mile long trains) that is expected to increase significantly in the future, is most impactful to the citizens of the Region, and is of least economic benefit locally."

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council's position on quiet zones also is to insist that the FRA require AAF to build them. The cost of a quiet zone is estimated to be around \$250,000.

"I believe the counties and cities should be very vocal in this regard," Busha added. ■

ALL ABOARD FLORIDA



WHOM TO CONTACT

To lodge complaints about the blocking of traffic by All Aboard Florida

trains crossing the St. Lucie River, contact: Gene Stratton, Bridge Management Specialist, Seventh Coast Guard District, Miami, FL 33131, or email: allen.e.stratton@uscg.mil; or Evelyn Smart, from the Bridge Management Office, currently is handling the bridge permitting work for the FEC line. She can be reached at (305) 415-6989 or Evelyn.Smart@uscg.mil.

- The Federal Railroad Administration, which targets rail safety and noise abatement, will announce the contact email and standard mailing addresses for the comment period of its Environmental Impact Statement; however, prior to that time, public comment can be entered on the FRA Facebook page at www.facebook.com/USDOTFRA. Click on "Message" and identify the project, All Aboard Florida, prior to making your comment, which will be reviewed and recorded by FRA staff during normal business hours, Monday through Friday.

- The U.S. Dept. of Transportation utilizes a team of engineers to analyze transportation routes. The issue that has arisen from All Aboard Florida's plans not to replace the St. Lucie River railroad bridge results in one Strategic Intermodal System (railroad) forcing a near-shutdown of a SIS connector, the Okeechobee Waterway/St. Lucie River, a relevant topic for the federal Transportation Industry Analysis team.

- The proposed route of All Aboard Florida will severely limit ocean access for local, state and international commerce, as well as for recreational boaters. To contact the Transportation Industry Analysis team, email John Winkle, transportation industry analyst, at john.winkle@dot.gov. ■

FLORIDA NOT ALL ABOARD

More than 6,200 signatures are now affixed to the Florida NOT ALL

Aboard petition, which is growing daily by around a dozen names. The goal is 10,000 signatures, according to organizers.

The grassroots organization has a succinct message: "Stop All Aboard Florida from using the FEC train tracks. They should build new tracks or use existing rail tracks west of our towns without the use of U.S. Government-backed loans or funds." To sign the petition, go to www.floridanotallaboard.com.

One of the organizers, Tom Rising, spoke to those who attended the Palm City Town Hall meeting, encouraging them to attend a rally Sunday, May 4, at 10am at Flagler Park in Stuart to protest the potential impacts caused by AAF's proposal.

"The only chance we have to stop this," Rising said, "is to make sure our voices are heard."

Guest speakers will include US Congressman Patrick Murphy, Radio Talk Show Host Joyce Kaufman, Martin County Commissioner Sarah Heard, and Indian River County Commissioner Bob Solari, who proposed that Indian River County hire an engineering expert to analyze the economic impact of the proposal on that county as soon as the Federal Railroad Administration's Environmental Impact Statement is released for public comment, expected within the next 60 days.

Other events include the Save Our City Flotilla on Sunday, April 27, at 10 a.m. on the west side of Roosevelt Bridge in Stuart.

Darlene Fuggetta, Republican state committeewoman, invites the community to the Republican social to hear from Phyllis Frye from All NOT Aboard Florida on Wednesday, April 30, at 5:30 p.m. at Pirate's Cove Resort with cash bar and hors d'oeuvres. For information, call Darlene at 772-285-7447. ■

RAILROAD PLANS

Not one. Not two. But three three railroad tracks will cross Monterey

Road to accommodate All Aboard Florida, according to Richard Geisinger, president of the Martin County Taxpayers Association. He carried a two-inch thick set of engineering drawings to the April meeting of the Martin Republic Women, Federated meeting on Tuesday, April 15, for his address about All Aboard Florida. The drawings also show tracks through downtown Stuart.

"I'm like a lot of people; I didn't know really know much about this until about

30 days ago," Geisinger said, "but they (All Aboard Florida) have been working on this for years."

Geisinger relayed what he'd learned from Rusty Roberts, vice president of FECI, Inc., which owns All Aboard Florida, at a recent Stuart-Martin County Chamber of Commerce luncheon. FECI also owns the tracks up the east coast of Florida, along with its attendant 100-foot right of way, which the county leases for road crossings and for parking, in some cases. The county also is responsible for paying for the cost of maintaining those crossings.

"I knew there had to be another reason for this passenger rail service," Geisinger said, because the number of passengers projected to ride the train do not justify the \$1.5 billion cost to build. "Just imagine how many riders, or what each ticket would have to cost, to pay back a billion and a half dollars, but it's real estate. FEC owns nine acres of land in downtown Miami, and they're going to develop that." They also plan developments around the stations in Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach. In addition, the Panama Canal project and deepening the Port of Miami to allow larger ship passages will result in an increase in freight traffic from Miami to northern markets, Geisinger added. ■

FIRE MERGER & CITY LAWSUIT

The City of Stuart authorized a fire assessment on all city residents,

which was ruled legally sound by a Martin County judge this month, and will go into effect Oct. 1, unless a proposed merger between the city and county fire departments is successful. A new fire district must be approved by the legislature, however, so time is running short.

The one-year tax would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home \$134.35. It would raise about \$1.3 million to cover the current city budget deficit. The merger will save \$1,000,000 annually, according to Richard Geisinger, president of the Martin County Taxpayers Association, the watchdog group that volunteered to research the issue, report its findings, and assist in formulating a merger plan. The group first proposed the merger 10 years ago.

At the April 15 meeting of the County Commission, Geisinger urged that the county continue to indicate its willingness to continue the dialog, which has been strained by legal wrangling between the city and the county over \$1.5 million in Tax Increment Funding monies that went unpaid to the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area due to an error in the tax appraiser's office.

The disagreement between the city and county focuses on the length of the statute of limitations that applies, since the error occurred over a 15-year time pe-

riod. The city contents a five-year statute of limitations, and the county based its refund offer on a three-year period.

The county also overpaid other monies to the city, which will be deleted from the total owed.

The settlement of that case will be addressed in an executive session among the county attorney and county commissioners during the County Commission meeting April 22 at noon, followed by a joint public meeting comprising the County Commission, the City of Stuart commissioner and officials, and the Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency at 3 p.m. in the Blake Library. It will be open to the public.

The public meeting is a requirement under the Florida Governmental Conflict Resolution Act. ■

CUSTOMS FACILITY

The proposed U.S. customs facility at Witham Field in Martin County,

which most residents thought had been approved by a March 4 vote of the county commission, has now been delayed after Commissioner Anne Scott rescinded her earlier vote.

"I don't think we pulled the trigger," said Scott, at the March 18 commission meeting, "and I don't know how to make that clear in the record so this thing doesn't bootstrap itself into existence."

Scott still had remaining questions about the grants, funding, and an appropriate "exit strategy" for the county should the facility not be sustainable.

Airport officials have been working on the project for about five years to process U.S. entry for air travelers and boaters, who now must clear customs in Fort Pierce or West Palm Beach. Grants and money currently in the Airport Enterprise Fund would cover construction, and airport user fees would cover the estimated \$220,000 annual operating cost.

To show their "good faith" and support of the facility, the members of both the marine and airport industries, known as the Martin Marine-Aviation Alliance--which formed a limited liability corporation at the request of Commissioner John Haddox for a more "formal" entity--to contribute \$50,000 a year of private funds for the first three years should an unexpected shortfall in collections occur.

Alex Beringer, president of the Alliance, member of the Airport Noise Advisory Committee, and vice president of operations for Fair Wind Air Charter said the group will continue its efforts, meeting individually with commissioners to provide answers to their questions.

"We think it's a smart, sound plan for Martin County," said Beringer. "We're
continued on PAGE 6

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frustrated, but hopefully we'll be successful in the long run."

Although county officials indicated the vote probably would be considered again on April 15, the Customs Facility was not on the April 15 or April 22 county commission meeting agendas. ■

UNITY PROPOSES EXPANSION

The long-abandoned Mama Mia restaurant in Hobe Sound may get new

life as a kitchen/restaurant as part of a proposed expansion of an existing drug rehabilitation and treatment center for addictions.

A design and engineering firm representing the Unity Recovery Center in Hobe Sound requested a preapplication meeting to seek input from county growth management staff April 17 on its proposed project on US 1, just north of SE Church Street, where the Center currently operates a residential housing complex for its clients.

Its classes, treatment center and offices are currently housed on the second floor of the Bank America building at Federal Highway and Bridge Road in Hobe Sound.

Two parcels totaling approximately

2.5 acres include a 38-room hotel, The Palms Inn, which is attached to the restaurant. The applicant proposes that individuals recovering from addiction would stay in the rooms, eat at the restaurant and obtain treatment from a proposed 12,180 sq. ft. two-story building planned on the adjacent lot. ■

HIGH BACTERIA LEVELS

The dreaded health department signs warning people to avoid contact

with the water went up last month at Leighton Park in Palm City by the old Palm City Bridge after tests revealed higher than normal levels of enteric bacteria.

Enteric bacteria inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals and their presence in recreational waters is an indication of fecal pollution, as a result of storm water runoff contaminated by pets, wildlife and/or human sewage. Potential health risks for those who ingest or come in contact with the water include upset stomach, diarrhea, eye irritation and skin rashes, according to the health department, which conducts tests on the water weekly.

They also sample water from the St. Lucie River at the Roosevelt Bridge, Sandspruit Park and at the Stuart sandbar

in the St. Lucie Inlet, all of which do not show elevated levels of bacteria.

River and beach water sample results can be viewed at www.floridahealth.gov/CHD/Martin/Beach_and_River_Sampling.html ■

DREDGING ST. LUCIE INLET

The most recent dredging of the St. Lucie Inlet, a combined project

of the Army Corps of Engineers and Martin County, was completed April 16, at the great relief of Martin County residents who suffered through six months of around the clock pumps, heavy equipment and floodlights at Peck's Lake, the staging area for the dredged sand.

The dredging contract was a continuation of the Army Corps of Engineers dredging project that concluded Feb. 21, a part of the federal Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts.

The dredged sand was transported via tugboat and barge down the Intracoastal Waterway to the lake, where it was pumped via pipeline across the island to restore the beaches along Jupiter Island.

A man-made federal inlet that connects the Atlantic Ocean to several waterways, including the Indian River Lagoon, the St. Lucie River, the Hobe Sound Narrows and the Intracoastal Waterway, not only provides access among inland waterways, centers of commerce, and private and commercial docks and the Atlantic Ocean, but is also critical to maintaining the brackish estuary's salinity.

Martin County Coast Engineer Kathy Fitzgerald reported to the County Commission on April 15 that the contractor had dredged an additional 150,000 cubic yards of sand from the inlet's impoundment basin, thus the inlet will remain navigable for a minimum of two years, possibly up to three years, depending on weather conditions.

The Town of Jupiter Island proposed an interlocal agreement with Martin County at the April 15 County Commission meeting that would ensure regular, timely dredging of the inlet, and also

called for an offshore staging area; however, the agreement, although copies had been supplied to commissioners, was not discussed, and neither did any of the five Jupiter Island commissioners or mayor choose to address the commission.

Director of Engineering Don Donaldson requested direction from the board as to how to proceed: iron out the differences regarding the interlocal agreement between Jupiter Island and Martin County; continue to pursue the dredging permit extension from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; develop an inlet management plan that identifies partners, and dedicated funding sources for routine dredging; or proceed with all.

After a short discussion in which Donaldson said that a dredging plan normally would take two years to develop but that he felt it could be done in 12 months, the board requested that Donaldson return in 30 days with an interim report, and to continue to pursue the permit.

They also identified the primary partners as Martin County and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, but that input would be sought also from Jupiter Island, the Loblolly community and Sailfish Point, all of which are affected directly by the dredging, or lack thereof. ■

MARTIN HIGHWAY

Adding temporarily to traffic congestion on Martin Highway in Palm City, the

Florida Department of Transportation began the utility work April 8 required to begin the highway's road-widening project, expected to be completed in July.

Following the utilities work, construction will begin on two lanes between SW Mapp Road at the foot of the Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Florida Turnpike, according to DOT officials who attended a recent town hall meeting in Palm City, sponsored by the Palm City Chamber of Commerce. The utilities work will need to be completed prior to roadwork beginning, which will necessitate intermittent lane closures between 9am and 3pm weekdays only. ■

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Road project helps lagoon...

One of the most successful projects to reduce polluted stormwater flow into the Indian River Lagoon is also one of the most criticized as a road project: the Railroad Avenue project in the Golden Gate community between Port Salerno and Stuart.

Many residents are not surprised to learn that the pollution issues of the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon that came to the forefront last summer shifted the county's emphasis in the types of projects to be undertaken in the seven Community Redevelopment Areas, but they are surprised that Railroad Avenue represents that new direction.

"There is much more to that project than first meets the eye," Community Development Director Kev Freeman told members of the Golden Gate Neighborhood Advisory Committee during a March update. "It's a project that addresses multiple issues; it reduced the amount of pollutants flowing directly into Manatee Pocket, while also reducing the amount of stormwater 'sheet flow' that is a contributing factor in the high rate of septic tank failures in Golden Gate."

Nearly 5,000 tons of contaminated soil was removed from what had been a dirt road near the FEC railroad tracks from Indian Street south for about one mile to Garden Street. Testing the stormwater runoff showed a decline in suspended solids by 78.3 percent, as well as a reduction in phosphorus by 62.5 percent and nitrogen by 56 percent.

An underutilized commercial corridor that previously consisted only of a dirt roadway was reconstructed and is now paved, with tree-lined sidewalks, curbs, streetlights and proper drainage, to provide rear access to businesses and on-street parking for those with front access to the new street. The community selected the project as a priority in both 2002 and 2010 workshops, and was funded with a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, a \$186,000 Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant, and \$25,000 from the utilities department.

Golden Gate qualified for the block grant in part because more than 60 percent of the households are low to moderate income. The \$1.16 million project was completed with less than \$250,000 of Tax Increment Financing funds from the CRA.

Already, the improvements are revitalizing the commercial businesses along Railroad Avenue, which suffered from the lack of paving, poor drainage, illegal dumping and overgrowth, Freeman added. With the increase in economic activity reported by business owners, as well as future permit fees for remodeling and expansion projects, tax revenues to the county are expected to increase.

The most significant impact, however, is attenuation of a portion of the stormwater runoff that flows from west to east in Golden Gate, from the commercial development into the residential areas.

"Golden Gate was identified several years ago as one of the areas with a significant number of septic tank failures," Freeman added. "Septic tanks fail when their drain fields are flooded. The key here, especially since it's just not economically feasible to hook up to a central sewage system for most residents of Golden Gate, is to ensure the ground is protected from flooding, so the septic tank has a chance to work properly. Even the trees help by taking up water."

CRA's UNDER SCRUTINY

During the Community Development



benefits. A quantification of the benefit gained from investing tax increment funds into capital projects can be difficult, particularly since a majority of capital projects are aimed at resolving immediate maintenance and repair issues, according to Freeman, which is not always the case with capital projects in a Community Redevelopment Area plan.

The intent of the Community Redevelopment Area Plan is "to stabilize and improve the underlying property values," thereby generating a higher quality of life. In Freeman's reports to the county over the past few months, his cumulative totals from the previous tax year show that the property values in CRAs increase more rapidly than those outside the CRA.

Rio Civic Club member Julie Preast, a Rio community activist, is encouraging members of all seven CRAs to attend the Tuesday, April 22, commission meeting to demonstrate community support of the neighborhood revitalization plans. ■

Department's meeting April 14 with the County Commission, the board asked that certain components of Community Redevelopment Agency projects be prioritized, particularly those pertaining to stormwater drainage projects.

Freeman will present an agenda item to the Board on April 22, at 4.30pm, that will identify possible measurement tools that could be used to assess a project's

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Editorial: Too much power lies in jungle drumbeat

We cheered when Commissioner Anne Scott aptly called the choreographed voices of dissension and doom that play at nearly every county commission meeting the “jungle drums.” We thought she was beginning to piece together the behind-the-scenes picture of politics in Martin County with choreographer Ginny Sherlock designing the sets, writing the scripts and conducting the music, all the while proclaiming she’s merely a bystander.

Scott’s made multiple references to the jungle drums, not just one time, yet how to explain that she herself is affected, so controlled by them whenever they begin their drumbeats?

One Sherlock email, followed by the puppetmeister’s 8 or 10 mechanical drummers at a commission meeting, and suddenly Scott changes course on the customs facility—widely sought by a broad spectrum of residents, not just the fixed-based operators at the airport, not just the very wealthy with big boats and big planes—but a vast number of residents who recognize its potential to add to Martin County’s quality of life—as well as their pocketbooks.

Scott also never questioned why Sherlock also keeps putting Pitchford’s Landing in Jensen Beach in her sights, hounding the commission meeting after meeting to shut it down, making false claims as though they were fact, and when they were fact, not telling the whole story.

All those yelling about Pitchford’s at the commission meetings, everyone of them, were involved in lawsuits and countersuits against Pitchford’s that did not go their way, and their attorney? Ginny Sherlock. Could this be retribution that our county commissioners are choosing to allow? Shame on them. Commissioner Doug Smith called it “a witch hunt.” There are no witches at Pitchford’s, no illegal dumps, no destruction of the shoreline, yet the jungle drummers are allowed to continue their beat.

Now the jungle drummers are going after the referendum for voters to consider a one-cent sales tax for the next four years, which took three or four months of deliberation to get it on the ballot. “Voters don’t trust us,” says Commissioner Sarah Heard, “and they shouldn’t. They asked for a community pool, and instead they got a theme park.”

That’s those jungle drums playing again, because residents love Sailfish Splash Park, and it was profitable in its first year...against all odds. That water park is not the reason residents don’t trust their commissioners. Try incompetence, instead.

After the Capital Improvement Plan workshop on Monday, commissioners learned that we’re in a crisis in several areas of our infrastructure, not just roads and bridges. We learned that not only is the jail’s roof leaking, but the jail security system could suffer complete failure due to its age. We learned that the county’s data center, chocked full of expensive computers, has an air-conditioner that runs beyond its intended capacity, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but can barely reach adequate cooling levels to prevent equipment damage.

Hours and hours of testimony from department heads describing the effects of deferred maintenance since the 2008 economic bust, followed by the sharp decline in tax revenue not only from lower home values, but the state’s legislative mandate to lower property tax rates, has resulted in an infrastructure repair and maintenance

backlog that exceeds \$350 million, nearly \$400 million. And no plan exists to address that backlog, just as there’s no plan to fund inlet dredging, and no plan to address pollution abatement...because the jungle drums are playing.

The county is broke, yet it is spending hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars to hire outside attorneys to defend what should never have gone to court. The vagueness and lack of measurable standards that had been part of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan amendment language in the commission’s rewrites have now been fixed in the new “remedial amendments”—the rewrites of the rewrites. But it should never have cost taxpayers thousands of dollars to get the kind of Comp Plan that prevents arbitrary, subjective interpretation of the rules.

The super-majority vote remains, which means that two votes can stop any commission vote regarding some issues; therefore, instead of majority rules in Martin County, it will be minority rules. But, then again, we should be used to that, just as we’re growing used to hearing those jungle drums. ■

Letters to Editor

Dear Editor,

I just finished reading Maggy Hurchalla’s commentary on Wednesday’s Op-Ed Page of The Palm Beach Post. I am not getting into a debate on HB 703. I have always said that our state Legislature rides the short bus. But Martin County continues to embarrass itself by blaming absolutely all of its environmental problems on Florida Crystals and the Fanjul family.

There are 270,000 septic tanks that drain into the Indian River Lagoon. It is safe to assume that Florida Crystals does not own one of them. The counties that border the Indian River Lagoon have all taken great steps in correcting their practices that have for decades had a detrimental effect on the lagoon. The glaring exception to this is Martin County. Their fallback position is, and always has been: It’s Sugar’s fault!

Do they forget that it was Hurchalla that championed septic tanks over a centralized sewer system when she was on the Martin County Commission? The logic being it would control growth. Not very sound logic. The fact that Martin County and Hurchalla fail to accept any responsibility for the condition of the Indian River Lagoon is getting to the point of being comical.

All of their hollering and screaming that the state should clean up the Indian River Lagoon because it is a \$4.5 billion economic engine to the area has not gone unnoticed by Tallahassee. I recently attended a meeting where a representative from the Areas of Critical State Concern in the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity laid the blame squarely on the 270,000 septic tanks

within the lagoon drainage area. Their position was that, like Apalachicola Bay and the Florida Keys, the Indian River Lagoon is too valuable an asset to the state to leave it up to the five counties to fix the problem. Particularly when it was those five counties’ land use plans that contributed to the problem.

One solution is for the state to declare the Indian River Lagoon an “Area of Critical Concern.” This would focus all of the state’s resources on fixing the lagoon. This option was very successful in saving both the Florida Keys and Apalachicola Bay ecosystems from their septic tank issues.

Hurchalla and the other local officials are opposed to this because it requires them to step up to the plate and face the facts. The sticking point is it will put the state in the driver’s seat. Maybe in this case not a bad thing.

J.P. SASSER
Pahokee

J.P. Sasser is a former mayor of Pahokee.

Dear Editor,

As a businessman and resident in Indian River County, I would like to add my voice and some balance, to the dialogue we’ve been hearing along the Treasure Coast about the All Aboard Florida project.

To anyone following the local news, you would think the vast majority of residents here are against this passenger rail project. Well those voices – while they may be among the loudest at the moment and as a result getting more of the attention – certainly don’t speak for everyone.

We welcome the return of passenger rail to Florida’s east coast, because there are more positive outcomes (than negative ones) to be gained for all of us if we take a long-term view.

Visit Florida estimates that we had almost 100,000,000 visitors in our state this past year and that number will hopefully grow. Think about the added economic benefit to Florida if these visitors spend a few more vacation days here and travel to other parts of our beautiful state, including this area and the added visitors that we stand to get from All Aboard Florida’s nearby Orlando and West Palm Beach stations – our area’s two primary tourism feeders. I’m sure our local hotels, restaurants and attractions can get excited about the increased business they could expect.

How can this be a bad thing for the Treasure Coast?

While we are not getting a station right now, having passenger rail service make a comeback means a future stop here is a greater possibility than it ever was before. Sure, there are more trains through the crossings and over bridges, but from what I understand, these trains are shorter and run faster than freight trains, so wait times will be a question of seconds not hours as some have tried to suggest.

I’ve also read that All Aboard Florida will be paying for the safety upgrades needed at the crossings, and are helping communities like ours get access to funding to cover the cost of quiet zones. And from a recent meeting in Tallahassee of Treasure Coast business leaders and elected officials, our local legislative delegation is working with the Florida Department of Transportation to assist in the costs too.

This is an opportunity for our state! We need to look past our own backyards and think about what sort of dynamic, vi-

brant and economically thriving community we want for ourselves, our businesses, and our families now and for the future. As a Floridian, I want our community to have more opportunity to grow, be competitive, and flourish – not less.

So I ask our local press to be fair in how they report on the All Aboard Florida story from all sides so that we can understand both the good and bad impacts, not those of a self-interested few just because they happen to shout louder than the rest of us. And to my fellow Treasure Coast citizens I say, let’s remember how blessed we are to live and work along the Treasure Coast, and that it is because of the highways and railroad put in place decades ago, that we are able to enjoy the lifestyle we have today.

Let’s not lose sight of the possibilities a project like All Aboard Florida can bring to our area and our state, and risk stifling potential growth and prosperity for ourselves and for the next generation by focusing on the wrong things.

Sincerely,
Jim Rathbun
Vero Beach

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Losing palms akin to losing our banyans



**Barbara
Clowdus**

Unfiltered

Perhaps the launch of Stuart's Centennial celebration in March steered my thoughts lately toward Homestead, since this city, my birthplace, just finished celebrating its centennial in February.

Or perhaps it's the bloom of an email string of about 20 former classmates of mine who also grew up in Homestead. Their funny, delightful, poignant reminiscences coaxing good memories from within the folds of my brain.

Whatever the reason that Homestead occupied my mind, that pleasant reverie was jolted into coldness when I learned about the state's plan to designate and "expand" Krome Avenue in Homestead as part of its Strategic Intermodal System of transportation corridors.

I thought of Indiantown and their struggle to humanize Warfield Avenue, also part of the Florida Strategic Intermodal System, which splits the heart of that community with four lanes of major truck traffic, impeding the normal ebb and flow of life in a small town.

I thought of Bridge Road and their magnificent banyan trees planted and replanted by the Reed family as a fitting entrance to Jupiter Island and a gift to all who live here. What a tragedy if the state decided to "relocate" them in order to

widen the road as part of its strategic transportation plan. We know it could not happen here for a host of reasons, but it also would not be a battle fought by Jupiter Islanders alone.

Such trees, unquestionably respected as an intrinsic part of the ecosystem, enrich our lives by adding aesthetic and economic value to a community, but also by allowing us to tap into the aura of history left by time, much like a historic building—except these monuments live and breathe.

The Royal Palms of Homestead were planted by Homestead pioneers, businessmen and Rotary Club members in 1924, and the Rotary Club had to replant most of them again after Hurricane Andrew. Rotarians recognized their value to residents as a symbol of life and beauty and resilience at a time of unspeakable horror and destruction, the identical motivation behind building a taller, more magnificent Freedom Tower in New York City.

Americans recognize a collective, indomitable spirit that sets us apart from so many other peoples of the world, and that's why it's unimaginable to me that these majestic, towering Royal Palm trees could be deliberately removed to make room for more asphalt.

Yes, petitions are getting signed, letters to the editor and comments on the newspaper's blog are getting posted, and the Homestead City Council is considering options, if they have any. Many residents feel the only option is to designate Krome Avenue officially as a National Scenic Highway, the gateway to several national and state parks, including the Everglades. That course, as many here al-

ready know, can become an arduous, bureaucratic process taking far longer than expected, and there's not a lot of time. The state purportedly already settled on this route, and the wheels are quickly being put in motion.

The petition, which can be found at <http://goo.gl/zkyZUP> (you'll need to copy and paste it) is open to anyone to sign. It asks that you identify yourself as a current, previous, or non resident of Homestead, south Dade, or south Florida. (Another contact is Ivette Ruiz-Paz with Florida DOT at (305) 640-7462 or email Ivette.Ruiz-Paz@dot.state.FL.US.)

Not too surprising, the most signatures on both the electronic and hard-copy petitions being circulated have come from former residents, probably those like me whose best childhood memories are framed by those Royal Palm trees.

Many of us attended kindergarten at the First United Methodist Church on Krome Avenue, where my first-born son also attended decades later, in the shadow of Royal Palms.

The aptly named Royal Palm Drug Store sits at the corner of 8th Street and Krome, the first stop after school everyday for dozens of kids let loose from Homestead Junior High. The place became entrenched in our minds not only for its sodas and fries, but as the site of many budding romances, frolicking pranks and bonded friendships...under the Royal Palms.

We know that trees are essential to the eco-system, both above ground and below. They absorb carbon dioxide,

shield us from sun, capture free-floating pollutants, and create the oxygen we need to live. Below ground, their roots hold soil in place and fight erosion, as well as absorb and store rainwater, reducing runoff and sediment that ends up in our waterways.

But Homestead's palms need more signatures than they're getting. They need signatures even from those with no attachment to the place, including those professional designers and urban planners who have studied their successes and failures over the past half century, who could tell the state that their actions fly in the face of all that we now know is essential to creating safe, livable, high-quality-of-life communities.

Homestead needs petition signatures from those refugees of Andrew who have settled here, and from Martin County residents who may never have seen Homestead and its Royal Palms, but understand the vital role of trees in our environment and the awareness required to create a desirable place to live.

How is it we must still demand that our state government pay attention?

A tree-lined Krome Avenue is as grand an entrance to Homestead as Bridge Road is to Jupiter Island. Four-lane highways in either place are the antithesis of what we know provides happy, vibrant communities. It's unimaginable that these majestic, towering Royal Palm trees, so important to so many people in so many ways could be so arbitrarily dismissed to make room for more cars.

We know better, and now we must act upon that knowledge. To do otherwise just is unacceptable. ■

"The death of Lady Mondegreen"



**Gordon
Barlow**

*Outside,
Looking In*

Things aren't always what they seem, in the English language. They say ("They"!) that English is the easiest language in the world to be understood in, but one of the hardest to speak well. With only 800 words (They say), a total stranger can get by, but years of practice will usually leave him a bit short of perfection. (Surely German is fifty times more difficult. It's a wonder *anybody* speaks it well. And actually, when you think about it, we only have their word for it that anybody *does* speak it well.)

English *spelling* is a hodge-podge of folk-etymology and class eccentricities. Who else but the English upper class would identify one's nightly sleep as a dietary "fast" to the point of calling the first meal of the day "break-fast", while abbreviating it to "brekkie"? Well, until recent Centuries only upper-class clerics were literate, and claimed to know everything

there was to know about the language.

An infinitely more plausible speculation is that the word we pronounce *brekfast* is but a dialectal variant of Scandinavian *frukost*, which means a meal comprising fruit (*fruk*) and cheese (*ost*). Fruit and cheese is a *man's* brekkie. Unfortunately, that might be folk-etymology, too. A friend of mine has reminded me that a common German word for breakfast is *frueh-kost*, which translates as "early food", and which is even more plausible.

In any case, men have traditionally broken their "fast" when they get up in the middle of the night for a pee and raid the fridge on the way back to bed. I know, I know – the Vikings didn't have fridges. But they would have shared the same nocturnal habits.

Reportedly, it was an 18th-Century English Earl of Sandwich who introduced his handy snack to his aristocratic chums at the roulette wheel. That much is true. But his serfs had been munching pieces of bread with bacon + a wedge of cheese for many generations before. One can picture the chums laughing at his adoption of such peasant fare: "A sarney-wedge, my lord? More of a *Sand-wich*, what, what? Hahaha!" "Oh, jolly good, Cholmondeley! Hahaha!"

Next: why is "cupboard" spelt the way it is? A cupboard is a cubby-hole with a

door, and a *cubby* is simply a variant of a *cabi*-net. All cupboards have doors. A cupboard without a door is a *pantry*. A board that you keep cups on is a *shelf*. Sheesh! The bizarre spelling "cupboard" is folk-etymology deriving from upper-class eccentricity.

My personal term for this sort of rot is "muster-bin". The imagined origins of English surnames present a long list of muster-bin falsehoods. The first person bearing the surname Smith must ha' bin a smith by trade. The first Mr Brown must ha' bin brown in skin or hair or eyes. The first Jones and Johnson were the sons of men named John. And so on. They simply must have been. Actually, as we say in the Caribbean, "they don't *must*." There are more plausible alternative explanations for those names. But plausibility finds it hard to beat out facile assumptions.

And, finally, to Lady Mondegreen. Not an example of folk-etymology, this one. It was first published by an American writer – one Sylvia Wright – in 1954, as the subject of an essay specially written for a magazine. She had remembered the word from a verse her mother used to read to her as a child, from an 18th-Century collection of ballads:

*Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands,
Oh, where have ye been?
They have slain the Earl o' Moray,*

And Lady Mondegreen.

The young Sylvia used to feel desperately sad for the poor lady who died with one of Scotland's most famous martyrs, and she (Sylvia) resented the poet's failure to mention the lady again in his story. It was one of those childhood memories that sticks in the mind forever. Several decades passed before the adult Sylvia actually read the poem for herself, where she learned to her great disappointment that the killers of the Earl o' Moray had in fact *laid him on the green*. Unaccompanied!

Wikipedia tells the story, and gives other examples of what are today called Mondegreens. We all have our favourites. Bob Dylan sang "the ants are my friends", Creedence in *Bad Moon Rising* sang "there's a bathroom on the right". And, at Number One, for me, the last verse of Psalm 23, which begins "Surely good Mrs Murphy shall follow me all the days of my life". ■

Australian-born Gordon Barlow is a former manager and sometime director of the Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce, and an occasional commentator on the Islands' public affairs. He has lived in several countries during his career, and visited more than 70. His personal website, "Barlow's Cayman," is at <http://barlows cayman.blogspot.com>.

Pegasus Foundation

honors those making a difference

Even with the picture-perfect views of the Indian River Lagoon as a backdrop, the Indian RiverSide Park's Tuckahoe Mansion was transformed into an African landscape through the artwork of Kathy Mayr Britton in honor of Azzedine Downes, president and chief executive officer of the International Fund for Animal Welfare, guest speaker for the Pegasus Foundation's Wings Awards ceremony March 27.

The intent of the awards ceremony was to acknowledge the work of local animal advocates, giving them "the recognition they deserve for helping animals in need and protecting the habitats of surrounding wildlife," according to a Pegasus release.

The major consideration for having Downes address the gathering, however, was to raise public awareness of the threatened extinction of a species of elephant found in central Africa, re-

cently adopted as one of the animals to receive the special attention and support of the international Pegasus Foundation, based in Hobe Sound.

"Elephants are in crisis," according to Downes. "One elephant is killed every 15 minutes for its ivory. It's time to stand up and say that we value living elephants more than ivory trinkets...IFAW is committed to breaking every link on the trade chain—from elephant poaching to ivory trafficking to market demand."

Once named by President Clinton to lead Peace Corps efforts in the Eurasia and Middle East Region, Downes is credited for helping expand IFAW's operations to more than 40 countries through his worldly expertise and skillful coordination.

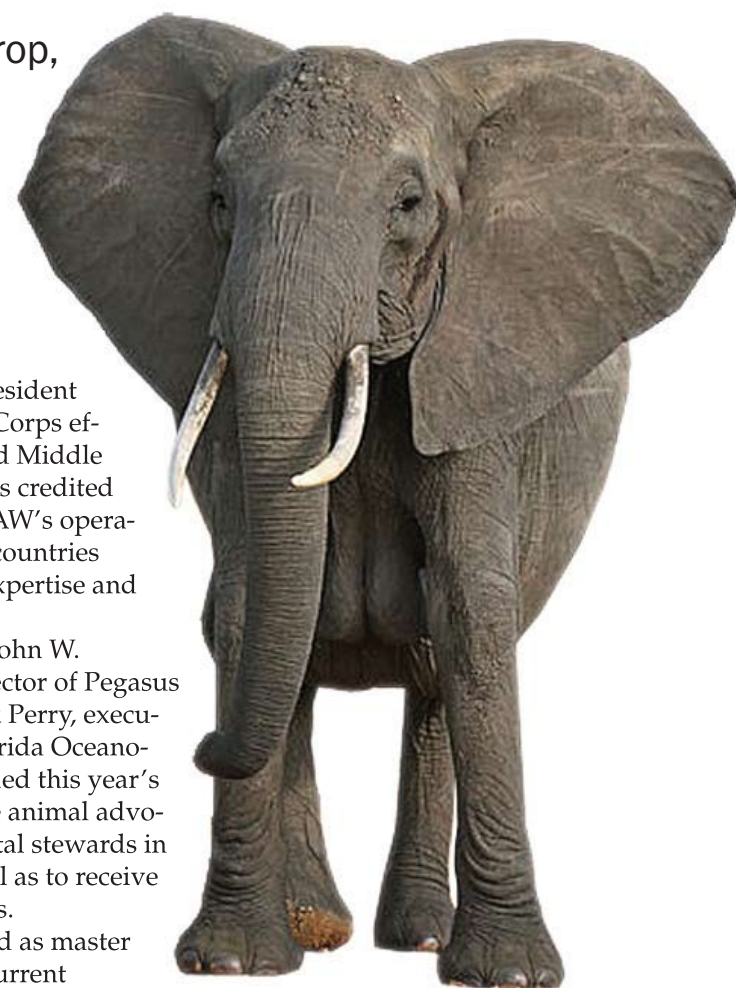
Special guests Dr. John W. Grandy, executive director of Pegasus Foundation, and Mark Perry, executive director of the Florida Oceanographic Society, attended this year's ceremony to recognize animal advocates and environmental stewards in the community, as well as to receive recognition themselves.

Grandy, who served as master of ceremonies, is the current wildlife counselor to the CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. He advises senior staff on animal welfare issues domestically and abroad. The wildlife authority, who specializes in the protection of sharks, African elephants, mute swans and national wildlife refuges, brought attention to the U.S. government's stepped-up efforts to protect wild elephants, including the crushing of seized ivory imports.

In addition, the US Fish & Wildlife Service recently announced that they will be halting all imports into the US of sport-hunted trophy tusks from Tanzania and Zimbabwe, heralded as "a bold and commendable move" by the U.S.

According to the FWS press release: "Questionable management practices, a lack of effective law enforcement and weak governance have resulted in uncontrolled poaching and catastrophic population declines of African elephants in Tanzania. In Zimbabwe, available data, though limited, indicate a significant decline in the elephant population. Anecdotal evidence, such as the widely publicized poisoning last year of 300 elephants in Hwange National Park, suggests that Zimbabwe's elephants are also under siege."

The protection of African elephants



as been added to the list of priorities of the Pegasus Foundation, which also seeks, through its partnerships with established organizations, the protection of sharks, horses and other domesticated animals, and marine mammals.

The Wings Award recipients included: **Future Animal Advocate: Caroline Nolan.** An eighth-grader at Stuart Middle School, Caroline Nolan not just questioned the cause of the toxic algae in the Indian River Lagoon, but she demonstrated the tenacity to develop a possible solution for the problem by exploring whether a filter made of a certain kind of mushroom could remove nutrients from wastewater discharging into the lagoon.

Journalist for Animals: Shannon Borrego provides helpful caretaking advice for pet owners in her "Catty Comments" column every week in Scripps Treasure Coast newspapers. Her articles have been described as entertaining, as well as educational and informative.

Foster Family of The Year: Andrea Rinder and Barbi Moline. Andrea Rinder and her husband, Matt, take in upwards of a dozen animals every year, nursing them back to health until they are ready to be adopted. Andrea

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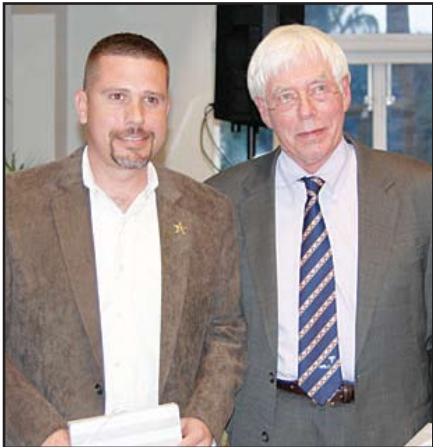
Caroline Nolan



Shannon Borrego



Mat and Andrea Kinder with Barbi Moline



Detective Ben Ferrell with John Grandy



Susan Hargreaves



Dr. Denise Herzing



Barbara Birdsey, founder of the Pegasus Foundation, with Mark Perry, on left and John Grandy.

also blogs about some of her experiences as a foster mom. Barbi Moline, founder of Nala's New Life Rescue, has taken on the responsibility of caring for abused, neglected, or abandoned dogs for more than 20 years. Last year, Barbi saved 100 animals from being put down and placed them in loving homes throughout the Treasure Coast. TC Palm recently covered her arrival at Witham Field after she traveled across the state to rescue several dogs from a high-kill shelter in Chipley, Fla., that were scheduled to be euthanized Feb. 28.

River Rescue: Mark Perry, the executive director at the Florida Oceanographic Society, testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry explaining the catastrophic impacts the sugar cane industry has on the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and Florida's coastal estuaries. Active in the Rivers Coalition, he is the voice behind the movement to move water

south out of Lake Okeechobee, instead of down the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers.

Public Safety Beyond the Call: Detective Ben Fennell with the Martin County Sheriff's Office for saving nearly one dozen neglected, malnourished and abused horses in three separate cases.

Advancing Unique Human-Animal Partnerships: Susan Hargreaves, with Animal Hero Kids, provides free, interactive humane education presentations in schools and at events along the Treasure Coast encouraging youth to be kind to all species.

2014 Friend of Wildlife: Dr. Denise Herzing with The Wild Dolphin Project, a scientific research organization that studies and reports on a specific pod of free-ranging Atlantic spotted dolphins, is developing innovative techniques for communicating with the species.

The judges, Martin County Supervisor of Elections Vicki Davis; returning judge and local veterinarian, Enrique Borrego; and two of last year's winners, volunteer Carol Dippy and Sewall's Point Commissioner Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch, selected one Pegasus Wings Award recipient in each category.

The Pegasus Foundation, created to promote animal welfare around the world, has nearly 50 "Pegasus Partners" based locally and around the world help create "a more compassionate society by laboring on behalf of animals and the people who help them" through volunteering, service and education. Their office is on Bridge Road in Hobe Sound, and their website is: www.pegasusfoundation.org. ■

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Cruisers Travel Softball Road to World Series

Sidelined before the season even begins

By Devon Clowdus

First Baseman, 14U Cruisers

The first batter of a tough team stepping into the batter's box, cheering fans (yeah, moms!), playing on a freshly groomed field, the adrenaline pumping through my veins all make me play my heart out. When the spring softball season started, those things came to an abrupt stop (well, not my mom's cheering) with a small hole. More on that in a minute.

My name is Devon Clowdus (Big D) and I play first base for the Martin County 14U Cruisers fastpitch softball team.

The Cruisers are on a crusade this year to win the USSSA FastpitchWorld

Series, and March kicks off our one-day tournaments. Now about that small hole...

After weeks of grueling practices, just before our first tournament, I stepped in a hole. A tiny, little, practically microscopic divot in the ground that sent my world into a downward spiral. Running across the field, looking up to catch a fly ball, that hole, perfectly placed, caused my knee to buckle, the pain so intense I could not walk or even stand, causing a scare that left family, friends, and most importantly my team worrying when or if I would ever be able to play again.

The diagnosis would take a while. "We have to let the swelling subside," said my doctor the next day. "Two weeks on crutches, ice therapy and then we will see." In this world of instant everything, waiting is hard. In the meantime, I raced around on my crutches, picking up another nickname, Baby G, because my dad says I looked like a baby giraffe going across the parking lot. I was not amused.

A torn meniscus is the initial diagnosis once the swelling subsides, although uncertainty exists as to how bad the tear is and



Pitcher Barbara Cook puts some smoke behind her pitches.

whether surgery is required to repair it. Having to tell my team I will probably be out the summer is hard. A lot of work and sacrifice from parents, coaches and players goes into playing at this level, and I keep going to practices and games to cheer them. I feel committed to help however I can, but I am heartbroken I can't be on the field.

And then a surprise. No surgery! Just rest and physical therapy. Finally after five weeks the news we had been hoping for: It was time to dust off the uniform and play ball! I have never been so happy to hear my real nickname, "Big Dddd," ring out across the field on my first day back. I'm definitely rusty, but I'm getting stronger everyday.

Our journey to the World Series is just beginning and it won't be easy, but nothing is impossible for the 14U Cruisers. Just watch out for those little holes. ■



Destiny Young fields a grounder



Barbara Cook
Pitcher, 3rd Base
Tequesta



Lauren Bostwick
Outfield
Okeechobee



Destiny Young
Outfield
Stuart



Shayne Hewitt
Shortstop
Vero Beach



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Local Businesses Support Girls 14U Dream

The 14U Cruisers start their journey

The Cruisers 14U team, comprising girls from throughout the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee, spent three weekends in March launching tournament play on the girls' road to the World Series.

They earned a berth last year, but were unable to attend due to the cost. This year, they are determined not only to earn a berth in the World Series event, but also to earn sufficient money for the team to make the trip for four days in July.

As of April 1, the 14U Cruisers have played USSSA sanctioned tournaments in Sunrise, West Palm Beach and Wellington against 10 to 15 teams in each tournament with visiting teams from Miami to Fort Pierce. They placed third in one tournament, and in fifth place in two others.

Later in the summer when the tournaments last two days, the Cruisers will take on teams from Key West, Tampa and Vero Beach. The road is long and will be tough. ■



Coach Chris LaBella fires up the Cruisers.



Area businesses are chipping in to help send the girls of the 14-U

Cruisers travel team of the Martin County Fastpitch Softball League to the World Series this summer.

"They played in the World Series two years ago and qualified again last summer," said their coach, Chris LaBella, who helped organize Martin County's all-girl league, "but the cost was just too great for parents, and we just couldn't hold enough car washes to get it done!"

This year, the team is taking a new approach with the help of Martin County Currents. For each \$250 donation toward one MCFPS League player's World Series fees, a business receives a free 1/4 page, full-color advertisement in Currents. With one donation, a

business becomes a Bronze sponsor.

For three \$250 donations, the business becomes a Silver sponsor, and will receive a team plaque, in addition to three, free Currents advertisements.

For five \$250 donations, the business becomes a Gold sponsor, receiving a team plaque, its company logo on the team banner displayed during tournaments leading up to and during the World Series, and five free advertisements in Currents.

All sponsorship levels will receive emails and photos regarding their players' progress on the road to the World Series.

"We want to thank these businesses for sharing the faith our girls have in themselves to be able to reach their dreams," LaBella added. One hundred percent of the donations go to MCFPS.

Individuals or businesses may participate by emailing: Cruisers@hsur-rents.com, or contacting any member of the Cruisers team.



Gillian Crosby
Catcher, Pitcher
Okeechobee



Kalli Kossick
2B, Shortstop
Stuart



Alex Batton
Shortstop
Jensen Beach



Lori LaBella
Leftfield
Stuart



Hannah Toth
1B, Catcher
Hobe Sound



Breezy Layton
Pitcher
Palm City



Samantha Williams
2B, Rightfield
Hobe Sound



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Month of May Turtle Walk Reservations Now Open at Hobe Sound

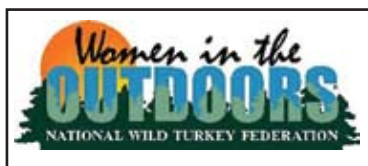
Get your reservations in early with the Hobe Sound Nature Center for its seasonal Sea Turtle Walk in May. Reservations can be made from midnight on Monday, April 14 – Tuesday, April 15 by calling the nature center at 772-546-2067 or by registering online at hobesoundnaturecenter.com. Numbers are limited to 30 spots per walk; a waiting list is available. Spots fill up quickly so make reservations early. A \$5 per attendee donation is requested.

Saturday, April 26 Hobe Sound Nature Center's Fishing Clinic

Celebrate the earth on Saturday, April 26, at the annual "Hook Kids on Fishing Clinic" co-sponsored by Anglers for Conservation and the Hobe Sound Nature Center from 9-11 a.m. The clinic is open to all kids ages 5-14 accompanied by a parent. Students receive fishing poles, tackle and attend mini-sessions to learn fishing basics from local experts. Their newly acquired skills are then put to good use by fishing along the banks of the Indian River Lagoon. At 12:30 p.m. explore the sea grasses with hand nets and seine. Participants will catch and release small marine animals that call the estuary home. This popular get-wet activity is recommended for ages 4 and up. The Center's exhibits and gift shop will also be open all day for this free event. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 727-546-2067 or go to: hobesoundnaturecenter.com.



Tuesday, April 25-26 Women in the Outdoors in Okeechobee



Women in the Outdoors, sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation, is dedicated to providing interactive educational outdoor opportunities for women age 13 and older. Registration fee is \$85 with no refunds after April 5, and the event will be held rain or shine. (That's what happens when you're outdoors!) The Friday Evening Event, becoming legendary for both guys and gals, may be attended separately, at a cost of \$25 per person for dinner, silent auction, live auction, gun raffles, and live entertainment...much more exciting than dead entertainment. Call Holiday Inn Express Okeechobee at 863-357-3529 for special rates if you want to spend the night in a real bed and take a hot shower. Choice of classes include Basic and Advanced Archery; Beginning Bird Watching; Boat Safety; Buggy Ride; Canoe/Kayak; Camping, not Glamping; Concealed Weapons (\$10 extra); Cooking with a Hottie; Cowboy Roping; Duct Tape Tote; Fire Side Cooking; Florida Cracker History; Fly Fishing; Gator Hunting; Handgun Safety (\$10 extra); Hunting She Will Go; Intro to Oil Painting; Jewelry Making; Basic and Advanced Outdoor Photography; Self Defense; Basic and Intermediate Shotgun/Sporting Clays (\$10 extra); Soap Making; Swamp Cabbage; Trailer Backing. For more information, contact Event Coordinator Denise Helms 772-475-1158. Instructor coordinator Kelli Hilterbrand, 772-370-3885, or witoquailcreekfl@yahoo.com.

Saturday, April 26 Kids Fishing Clinic & Festival in Port St. Lucie

Bring your kids to River Park Marina, 500 Prima Vista Blvd., Port St. Lucie, on Saturday, April 26, for the Kids Fishing Clinic & Festival. Registration starts at 8 a.m. and the fishing runs from 9-11 a.m. The first 50 children to complete all the learning stations receive a free rod and reel. FREE to children ages 5-17, who can participate with a guardian's permission. For more information contact David at david.kaplan@gbfine.net.

Saturday, May 3 Cinco de Mayo in Stuart!

Downtown Stuart will come alive in celebration of Cinco de Mayo with a block party at the Riverwalk Stage on St. Lucie Boulevard on Saturday, May 3. Live entertainment, margaritas, taco stands, a tequila bar, Chihuahua races, a "best-dressed" contest, a kids' corner, and much more make the event special. Tacos will be provided by the Taco Shack. Orange Theory Fitness is sponsoring an arm wrestling table – participants can challenge a friend and the winner receives a free beer! The party kicks off at 5 p.m. and lasts until 10 p.m. Tickets are available for \$5 at www.kaleidominds.com, and tickets purchased in advance include a free drink ticket. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Moustache March for the Military. To learn more, visit www.kaleidominds.com.



Saturday, May 3 Aquarium Traveling Exhibit Grand Opening

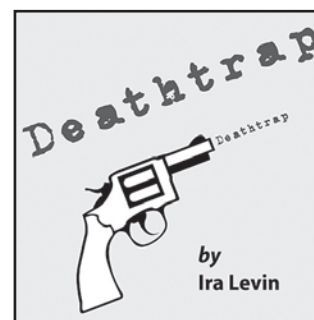
The South Florida Science Center and Aquarium's newest traveling exhibit mazes, opens to the public on the evening of Saturday, May 3, and will remain on display through September 14. To celebrate the grand opening of mazes, the Science Center will host Food Truck Fusion, a food truck event, on Saturday, May 3, from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. In addition to exploring mazes, which leads guests on an adventure through a series of interactive brain-teasers, 3-D puzzles and full body games, guests also will have the opportunity to explore local food vendors and live music and activities for the entire family. Admission to the Science Center for the special grand opening celebration will be reduced to \$10 for adults and \$7 for children ages 3 to 12. Science Center members can enjoy the special event for free. The science center is at 4801 Dreher Trail N, West Palm Beach. Call for more info: 561-832-1988

Saturday, May 3 19th Annual Golf Classic Presenting Dow Finsterwald



A signature event of the Hibiscus Children's Center, the "19th Annual Golf Classic Presenting Dow Finsterwald" will be at Mariner Sands Country Club will be Saturday, May 3, with registration at 11:30 a.m. followed by a barbecue lunch and a 1 p.m. shotgun start. The tournament is a two-person scramble format and entry fee is \$175. Golf awards, cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres will follow the tournament. There will be chances to win Chinese auction items and great drawing prizes including a flat-screen television and a mini iPad. Drawing tickets are \$20 each, \$50 for three or \$100 for seven. You can register to win by mailing or dropping off your tickets to Hibiscus Children's Center by May 2 or purchase them at the event on May 3. You do not need to be present to win. The golf tournament benefits abused, abandoned and neglected children with 100 percent of the proceeds directly impacting the lives of children in our community. Heartfelt thanks to our tournament host, Dow Finsterwald. Dow, also known as "Finsty," is a former PGA champion and 2006 PGA Hall of Fame Inductee, 2007 Memorial Tournament Honoree, PGA Player of the Year and has played on four Ryder Cup teams among receiving many other prestigious golf awards. Dow has stated that he is "committed to this tournament as long as he's alive." Visit Hibiscus Children's Center, 2400 NE Dixie Highway in Jensen Beach, or visit online at <http://HibiscusChildrensCenter.org> or call 772-334-9311, ext. 404.

April 18 - May 4 'Deathtrap' at The Barn Theatre



An ingenious comedy-thriller by Ira Levin about a devious murder plot gone awry, "Deathtrap," will be presented by The Barn Theatre from April 18 through May 4

with performances at 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and at 2 p.m. Sunday. "Deathtrap" holds the record for the longest-running comedy-thriller on Broadway and was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play. Playwright Sidney Bruhl desperately wants to be the toast of Broadway once again. He and his wife cook up an unthinkable scheme to invite fellow writer Clifford Anderson over for dinner, kill him and steal his script. But things are not at all what they seem. Tickets are \$20 and are available Mondays through Fridays at the Barn Theatre box office, 2400 S.E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart from noon to 4 p.m. Tickets can also be obtained by calling 772-287-4884 or online at www.barn-theatre.com.

Sunday, May 4

Little Miss and Little Mister Stuart

Not your typical pageant (after all, Stuart is not your "typical" city), the Little Miss and Little Mister Stuart contest is open to children ages 0-18 years to compete for the title on Sunday, May 4, at the Flagler Place in downtown Stuart. Categories include prettiest smile, most photogenic, prettiest eyes, best dressed, prettiest hair, most poised, and the titles of Miss Stuart, Mini Miss Stuart, and Mr. Stuart. No glitzy clothing, heavy makeup, or pageant experience is needed, and all are welcome. The age divisions are 0-4 years, 5-11 years, and 12-18 years. Winners will receive a crown and cash prizes, and will be featured in the Centennial Parade on May 10 in downtown Stuart. The pageant is open to the general public and tickets are \$5. The participant entry fee of \$30 includes one contestant and two parent admission tickets. Applications can be downloaded at www.flaglerplace.net and completed applications should be emailed to Weddingsbyjade@aol.com. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Friends in Pink, a local non-profit organization dedicated to providing financial support to individuals who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and who are uninsured or under-insured. Flagler Place is at 201 SW Flagler Ave. in Stuart.

Thursday, May 15

Bingo Italian Night at St. Luke's



An Italian dinner that includes salad, garlic bread, pasta, and dessert will be Thursday, May 15, at 5:30 p.m. as part of the Bingo Italian Night at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. A bingo card costs \$10. Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner is at 5:30 p.m. and bingo is at 6:30 p.m. St. Luke's Episcopal Church is at 5150 SE Railway Ave, corner of Cove and A1A. Call 772-286-5455. There will be a special jackpot of \$100. Tickets are on sale at the door and at the church office, which is open mornings, closed on Wednesday.

Weekend, May 16-18

Ladies Let's Go Fishing at Pirate's Cove

Ladies, Let's Go Fishing will host a fishing event the weekend of Friday, May 16, at Pirates Cove Resort & Marina, 4307 S.E. Bayview Street in Port Salerno. The event kicks off Friday night with a networking social from 6-8 p.m. Saturday brings a day of classes and hands-on skill practice from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The weekend caps off on Sunday with an optional charter boat fishing beginning at 7 a.m. and ending at 1 p.m. Registration is \$99 a person (charter boat fees are additional) and can be made by calling 954-475-9068. For more information, go to www.ladiesletsgofishing.com.



Saturday, May 17

Reasons to golf in Hobe Sound's tourney

The Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce's executive director, Angela Hoffman, recently gave chamber members, residents and friends five reasons for golfing in the Chamber's annual tournament May 17 at the Hobe Sound Golf Club. "Well, we have had 31 years to perfect golf tournaments," she said. They've figured out how to do it right. And her other reasons?

Contribute to a Chamber fundraiser by simply playing your favorite sport, and because this is a Hobe Sound Chamber event, you will participate in the best, top-notch networking to meet potential clients and referral sources.

In south Florida, the golf course is equivalent to the board room when it comes to getting business done!

By playing in the tournament you showcase your company to Chamber members and their guests. This is the "Who's Who" of tournaments and you won't be remembered if you aren't there to play!

This year's tournament, presented by Metz Construction Company, will be at Hobe Sound Golf Club, ranked one of Florida's top courses, and their service, facility, and catering is second to none.

The 31st Annual Hobe Sound Chamber Golf Tournament is a 4-player scramble with a shotgun start at 8 a.m. The cost is \$150 per player. Players will have chances to win a brand new car, as well as a round of golf for three with Carl Domino, Candidate for U.S. Congress, at your choice of either Medalist, Orchid Island, or The Loxahatchee Club golf courses. Guests can join us for networking and lunch. Browse the eclectic silent auction while enjoying food and beverages. Register to play at www.hobe-sound.org or call 772-546-4724.

Friday, May 30

Stuart Police Officers Golf Tournament

The 3RD Annual Stuart Police Officers Assoc. Golf Tournament at Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart. Registration will begin at 11am. Lunch will be served at 11:30.

Tee-off at 1 p.m. Four-some fee is \$150. Cocktail hour and awards immediately following. For more information, contact 772-220-3914.



Saturday, May 10

City of Stuart's Birthday Celebration

The City of Stuart will officially be 100 years old Wednesday, May 7! To celebrate, the City of Stuart will host a huge, family-friendly Centennial Celebration free to the public on May 10. The festivities for the day include a pancake breakfast, parade, car show and party in the park. The event also will include nostalgic festivities such as Mason jar lemonade, an apple-pie-eating contest, police and fire tug of war, a water balloon contest, wheelbarrow races, carousel rides and a performance by the Stuart Middle School marching band.



Saturday, May 17

Stuart Sailfish Regatta at Stuart Causeway

Feel the Rush, Hear the Roar! The FASTEST event on the Treasure Coast returns May 16, 17 & 18 at the Stuart Causeway and Ernie Lyons Bridge! Get ready for an adrenaline pumping weekend filled with hydroplanes, race boats, powerboats, and bragging rights. Organizers are planning an event filled with speed, excitement, and community involvement. The races will once again be held on the Stuart Causeway on a 1.1 mile oval racecourse in the Indian River Lagoon on the northern side of the Ernie Lyons Bridge. Ticket Prices range from \$10-\$50.

Friday, May 17 - June 28

Fine Art Photographer exhibit in Indiantown

Funded by the Women Supporting the Arts of Martin County and supported by the Martin County Library System, the photography of Kevin Boldenow will be exhibited May 17 through June 28 at the Elizabeth Lahti Library in Indiantown. As a fine art photographer in Palm City, Boldenow has been creating a pictorial history of Indiantown. The reception will be Friday, May 17, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. To preview some of Boldenow's art, go to www.krbphotoimagery.com.

New Hobe Sound mural creates tricky illusion

Hobe Sound's 14th mural, painted on the south side of the Hobe Sound Retail Center building on Federal Highway at Pine Circle, likely will be a favorite illusion of residents: glass-paned doors opened partially to a tropical beach scene.

The building, recently transformed with a bright coat of orange paint and a teal roof, had already caused a buzz around town, but the new mural tops off its appeal with an unexpected flourish—the doorway looks real.

Owned by Suzi Realty, and managed by Nick Cioffi, Hobe Sound Retail Center houses Hobe Sound Deli, Sweet Tiers and Quick Lube. Also located in the two-building complex are Matthew Stone Photography and Katrina's Kreations Inc.

The mural titled, "Sea to Shining Sea," came to life under the brushes of



Artists Eddie Drake, Katrina Gracon and Nadia Utto put the finishing touches on the 14th Hobe Sound mural.

local artists, including Katrina Gracon, a faux-finish painter whose artistic sensibilities brought a life-like touch to the

surface illusions, artist and project coordinator Nadia Utto, and artist Eddie Drake of Eddie Drake Painting, Inc., who created the palm trees.

The Hobe Sound Murals Project first began transforming the downtown area in 2009, installing creative murals on

Bridge Road with its stated mission of "Creating an outdoor gallery of beautiful walls, honoring our past history,

present vitality and future promise."

Four years later, 14 unique murals along Bridge Road, Dixie Highway, Federal Highway and in Banner Lake Park are complete through the sponsorships of building owners and tenants, general public support and the efforts of 32 local artists.

The Mural Projects intend to focus primarily on Federal Highway this year, working towards visually connecting the main business corridors and, ultimately, offering mural tours, according to organizers. Hobe Sound Murals is part of Landmark Arts, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to "Creating Community Culture."

For more information, or to make a contribution, contact project coordinator Nadia Utto at 561-762-9202, or email nadiautto@comcast.net. The organization's website is: www.landmarkarts.us. ■

Remembering 'Mom' with songs, poems, love

Still weaving through tables to fill patrons' cups with coffee at age 95, Pauline MacArthur often dumbfounded first-time customers of Harry and the Natives, an iconic restaurant in Hobe Sound, by the number of children she had.

The hostess called her Mom, a couple of cooks in the kitchen called her Mom, the servers called her Mom, and even some customers called her Mom.

What they soon learned was that half the town called her Mom—not just her own five kids—so it was no surprise when, four years later, more than 300 people filled the pews of the Hobe Sound Bible College chapel to celebrate her life and to say good-bye to "their" Mom. She died March 10 at 99.

"Some knew her as a teacher, a neighbor, a friend, an employer, and all knew her as Mom," said her daughter, Sally McNeilan, "....and I know...I hit the jackpot in the Mom lottery."

Pauline and her late husband, Jack MacArthur, met and married in Michigan, eventually settling in Hobe Sound

in 1952 with their three daughters, establishing a one-stop hub called The Farm—a motel with rooms of pecky cypress, a Western Union post, a Greyhound bus stop and a gas station. Later, they had two sons, the younger of whom now is the restaurant's namesake, Harry, who traveled the world, became a hotel executive chef before returning to his birthplace in 1986, three years after the death of his father.

He convinced his mother to remodel, add a kitchen to tackle Harry's revamped menu, change the name to Harry & the Natives, and with Mom at his side, they fashioned a business that became part of the everyday life and texture of Hobe Sound.

"We were open for breakfast and lunch, and we tried to be open for dinner at one time," Harry said, with a chuckle, "but Mom would tell diners to hurry up and finish, 'cause I've got to be back here at 5 a.m.'" It would be nearly



Pauline MacArthur, 99

two decades later that the restaurant successfully launched dinner hours.

Mom came to work six days a week until she was nearly 95, keeping the books, manning the register with the help of her daughter, Paula Cooper, and serving sunshine and songs with the coffee.

"She was a classic example of the old truth that hard work never killed anyone," said Father Aidan Hynes, of St. Christopher's Catholic Church directly across U.S.1 from the restaurant. "She raised a family, taught school, ran a restaurant and still found time to visit the old and lonely."

Full of energy and life, she volunteered at The Manors in Hobe Sound on her one day off each week until she was 94, earning numerous volunteer service awards, setting the bar of service high as an example to her children and to her community.

She wore flowers in her hair so often

they became her trademark, along with her soprano voice that lilted above those in the Hobe Sound Community Presbyterian Church choir each Sunday, and over tables at Harry & the Natives, where she unabashedly crooned for customers...or anyplace else for anyone else she felt needed a little sunshine.

Her biggest regret, according to Harry, is that she never got that call from Willard Scott to be on the Today Show.

"She wanted to live to be 100," he said, before his voice broke and exposed his deep grief...Composing himself, he added: "She just texted me to 'get it going.'" He did.

The service—the celebration—continued, featuring many of her favorite songs sung by the Finney family of Hobe Sound and others, and although her voice is now silent, Hobe Sound will long remember Mom, with a red hibiscus in her hair, singing a tune that epitomized her life: "When you're smiling, when you're smiling, the whole world smiles with you..." ■

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Mario Mangone
Architect, P.A.

Mario Mangone

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561-743-5111



The volunteers who assisted in the Rio clean up. Photo: Jessica Layne



Brush was cleared along the path from Alice Street to the gazebo Photo: Julie Preast

Rio volunteers lop brush, clean debris from trail

The largest group of volunteers ever organized to clean up Rio Nature Park, a semi-annual project of the Rio Civic Club, came together March 29 for the Great American Cleanup organized by Keep Martin Beautiful. Thirty-two volunteers picked up debris and trimmed vegetation for more than six hours.

"The Rio Civic Club has been hosting these cleanups since the park was dedicated," said Julie Preast, a Rio Civic Club member. "Thanks to the participation of the members of Torch South Church recruited by Jessica Layne of Keep Martin Beautiful, we accomplished a huge amount of work."

The stack of tree limbs and vegetation was estimated to be 40 feet long and five feet high, according to Preast. Volunteers also collected eight bags of

debris, an abandoned laundry tub and a boat/dock bumper.

"The focus was to open up the path from the street to the gazebo/shoreline by trimming vegetation and removing dead vegetation and vines along the path and the park's street frontage," Preast added. "The Rio Civic Club adopted Rio Nature Park, and volunteers have been almost totally responsible for its maintenance."

Rio Nature Park, off Alice Street in Rio, is the only public waterfront park/preserve on the north shore of the St. Lucie River. The park's next cleanup will be Nov. 22, and club members have asked for donations of garden clippers and loppers for these events.

OTHER CLEAN UPS

Keep Martin Beautiful has been encouraging neighborhood groups, civic clubs,

schools, businesses and individuals to be a part of the Great American Clean Up. They may organize their own cleanup activity or sign up for a site already identified by Keep Martin Beautiful. All cleanup projects through May will be provided with supplies that include trashbags, water and T-shirts (while supplies last). Other cleanups conducted by community groups and organized by Keep Martin Beautiful were held in Banner Lake, East Stuart and Golden Gate communities on April 12. A beach cleanup will be at Stuart Beach in Stuart on May 3.

EXTREME MAKEOVER

In addition to community cleanups that occur during the three-month campaign, KMB hosts the Extreme Martin Makeover, a series of projects that focus on litter removal, revitalization and

beautification efforts in specific neighborhoods throughout Martin County. This year the Extreme Martin Makeover will focus on the New Monrovia neighborhood in Port Salerno on April 5.

"It is our goal to beautify and improve our community but we can't do it without our dedicated volunteers," KMB President Jim Dragseth said. "We are fortunate in Martin County to have such a strong community of volunteers who support the Keep Martin Beautiful mission and we're hoping they'll join us for the Great American Cleanup this year."

Keep Martin Beautiful was recognized during the Keep America Beautiful national conference in Washington DC on March 1 as the "Best of the Best" affiliates nationwide, earning the prestigious Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Award. ■

Community help needed to build playground

Volunteers are being recruited to help build the new community playground at Jensen Beach Elementary School from April 29-May 4. Morning, afternoon and evening shifts are being arranged for those who want

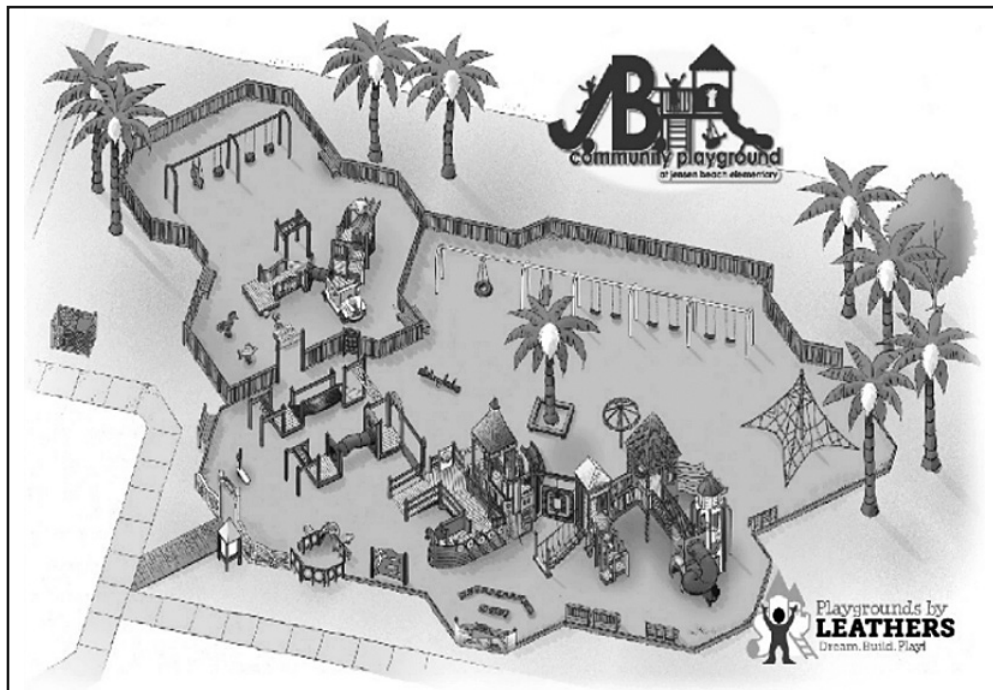
to help, including children from 10-13 (with an adult on site). Children 14-17 may volunteer independently, but may not use power tools.

The playground got a major boost on March 18 when the Martin County

Commission voted unanimously to provide \$151,755 to the project, after the Jensen Beach Community Playground Committee pledged to pay for additional maintenance above the county's current budget of \$19,000 annually. The committee is planning more fund-raising events for maintenance funds, which are relatively insignificant compared to the \$300,000 they targeted to raise over the past year. With the county's contribution, the group was only \$5,000 short of its goal.

The new playground, designed by Leathers & Associates, was created based on sketches submitted by Jensen Beach children. The elementary school is a hub for Martin County's Autism Spectrum Disorder Unit, and the playground will incorporate features that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, including wheelchair accessible ground cover, therapeutic swings, activity panels, accessible parallel bars and telephone systems. Once constructed, the playground will be open to the public after school hours and on the weekends.

Childcare will be available for the children (age 2-9 years) of volunteers, and volunteers will be provided beverages, snacks, and a meal. To volunteer, go to www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4. For more information about the Jensen Beach Community Playground Project, visit www.JBPlayground.com. ■



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S.P.A.M. robot, students head to St. Louis after win

After two days of intense competition. S.P.A.M., along with robotics teams from Cocoa, Florida, and South Carolina, won the FIRST tournament in Orlando, and will be advancing to the FIRST Championship in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 24-27. This year, S.P.A.M. comprises 67 students from Jensen Beach High School, Martin County High School, South Fork High

School, Clark Advanced Learning Center and home schools. The team is dependent on donations and is supported by businesses and individuals throughout the community. For more information about making a contribution to help with travel expenses, contact S.P.A.M. Board Members Nancy Peavler, 772-285-9249, or Richard Brooks, 772-341-1973, or email frcteam180@gmail.com.



Robots competed in teams of three to win the FIRST tournament in Orlando.

The answer is, yes. Yes, it is on my diet, by golly!

I am frequently asked: "Is that on your diet?" "Can you eat this or that?" The whole key to eating a healthy, balanced, lower-calorie diet is avoiding restrictive constraints. Rather, you should try to be selective and aware of what you are eating and HOW MUCH you are eating. If you are anything like I am (that is a scary thought) you immediately crave any food you are told you can't have.

I have seen articles warning me of the dangers in eating bananas; the horrific consequences of eating the dreaded



George Kleine
The Right Bite

carbs; the after effects of artificial sweeteners; and the ever-changing menu of dos and don'ts that are thrown at us by "experts," gurus and "diet plans." I have heard the endless and often contradictory words of wisdom thrown at me on those interminable infomercials on late night TV or Sunday morning TV slow-time.

I may not know everything about diet and nutrition, but I do know what works for me: eat light, eat right, eat smart. Move my body. Cook good, sensible food. Eat sensible portions. Enjoy it! Balance the plate using these "MY PLATE" guidelines:

- Balance Calories
- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Avoid oversized portions.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Make at least half your grains

whole grains

- Compare sodium (salt) in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals, and choose foods with lower numbers.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Remember this, no matter what Mom or Dad or whomever said it, you do NOT have to "clean your plate," "eat it all up" like a good boy or girl, or remember "the poor starving children" in some third-world country. All you need to do is THINK. Think about your own health. Think about your own heart. Think about how much better you will feel when you are not lugging those extra pounds around on sore feet with aching knees and a sore back.

One thing I have learned (the hard way) is this: Everything your doctor says about being overweight is true. Take my word for it. Plus you'll love the new you that emerges. Try this recipe tonight.

ROAST PORK SIRLOIN

with Braised Cabbage & Tomatoes

Quarter and chop a small head of green cabbage.

One (14.5 oz.) can diced NSA tomatoes

One (8 oz.) Can Tomato Sauce

Place cabbage, tomatoes and sauce in medium sauce pan on medium heat, covered, and allow it to simmer (check to keep from cooking dry) while you prepare the roast.

Pre-heat oven to 450 degrees

Purchase one, small pork sirloin (avoid the pre-packed heavily salted, flavor "ENHANCED" brand).

Three small carrots, quartered

One yellow onion, quartered

One stalk of celery, cut in several pieces.

1 Tbs. Mrs. Dash Garlic Herb Seasoning.

Spray a small roasting pan with non-



stick spray, layer the onions, carrots and celery in the pan. Season the roast with Mrs. Dash and place in pan atop the vegetables. Put pan in oven, uncovered, and immediately reduce the oven temperature to 400. Roast for 20 minutes per pound until internal temperature reaches 145 on an instant read thermometer.

While the roast is roasting and the cabbage is braising, prepare a salad (I use sliced tomatoes and pickled cucumbers) and add a vegetable or starch. I used broccoli (a mistake that made me glad I live alone, even the dog was unhappy with me). A small portion of rice or two small boiled redskin potatoes would have been better.

Allow the roast to stand for 10 minutes before slicing. Trim off any fat before slicing into thin slices (portion should be 3-3½ ounces). Use pan drippings for au jus. Serve with your vegetable/starch choice and 1-1½ cups cabbage and tomatoes, with sparkling water to drink. Enjoy! ■

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.

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The Whorf family's 'spark' explored, celebrated

A creative fire works in mysterious ways, confirmed by Dante: "A mighty flame follows a tiny spark." The state-of-the art Elliott Museum on Hutchinson Island in Stuart unveiled to art lovers precisely this kind of metamorphosis in a recent exhibition, "The Spark," which showcased three Generations of artistic expression in one family.

The works of John Calderwood Whorf, Nancy Whorf, Julia Whorf Kelly, voices of three epochs of American impressionism, were selected that expressed each artist's unique pictorial style and tonality. And yet in spite of differences, there is some inner alchemy they all shared, and its name is . . . a key.

This simple, mysterious and intriguing symbol, so semantically diverse and at the same time so all-embracing, reappears from painting to painting as a meaningful leitmotif. It beckons us to open the door to the very source from where the first burst of creativity sparked the complete work.

As Julia Whorf Kelly, both the featured artist and curator of the art show, explained, "a key is an initial impulse that inspires the artwork. While a sketch suggests a certain planning in capturing the object, a 'key' is the first spark that has to be recorded immediately on anything handy, like a piece of paper, napkin or shopping list, so that the artist can go back in time and re-ignite it." To illustrate, she ushered me to her grandfather's penciled "keys" displayed alongside his paintings that heralded the appearance of complete watercolors of luminous beauty and clarity.

One of the best American watercolorists of the twentieth century, John Whorf was inspired by the works of John Sargent and Winslow Homer. John Whorf started as an oil painter but eventually became particularly attuned to watercolor.

"Strange how it happened," John Whorf said, recalled by journalist Frank Crotty in his memoirs, Provincetown Profiles and others on Cape Cod.

"I was living in Paris at the time and had decided to go down to Pamplona, Spain, for the bull fights," Whorf added. "Instead of oils, I took watercolors along because they were light and easy to carry. And since then it's been watercolors."

Diaphanous and fluid, flowing in perfect balance of lucid and opaque tones, John Whorf's seascapes and landscapes, nudes and still lifes, spill out the very soul of watercolor, drifting between the immaterial and visual in a fluid melody of colors.

Influenced by her father and the art instructor, Vollian Burr Rann, Nancy Whorf finds her own keys and develops her own painterly technique. A dense, highly vibrating impasto, laid mostly by a palette-knife, has an amazing capacity to open up like a flower -- petal after petal -- or to spread wings like a bird as



Maya Ellenson
Art Kaleidoscope



"Brittany, France," a watercolor by John Whorf

we step back to see in order to allow the space to tell the whole story.

Both Nancy Whorf's oil and watercolor palettes appear reminiscent of that of fauvists, whose vivid colors hijack the object to create emotionally charged imagery and composition.

"I wanted to simplify, to suggest," said the artist, who captured the very essence of Provincetown with its rainy- and snow-clad streets, secret gardens and landscapes, wrapped in a mysteriously enchanting light.

Julia Whorf Kelly, a prolific and well-known in Stuart, explores her own dimensions in impressionism, adding to the immediacy of its poetic lyricism and mystery. A native of Provincetown, Julia, since an early age, tapped into a creative and artistic ambience of the Provincetown art colony, being encouraged by her grandfather and mother to manifest her talent. After graduation from Boston Art Institute, she taught at the Brookline Center for the Arts. A member of The Oil Painters of America and The American Watercolor Society, Julia Whorf Kelly's work has been widely exhibited nationally and abroad.

She utilizes both oil and watercolor, depicting scenes from New England, Tuscany, Florida and various places she visits. She prefers to create the "keys" en plein air, and later redesigns them in her studio into large formats.

"I have a deep passion for color I cannot put in words," she says. "What I feel for it can be expressed only in pagan dance and ecstasy."

If Nancy Whorf's landscapes require space to appreciate the atmosphere and visual narrative, where wholeness emerges from the emotionally magnified objects, Julia's texture is much lighter, and the plane is more aerial. The vector of our perception, therefore, shifts to a "bird's eye" perspective, where the landscape is no longer pinned to the earth but appears



"Daggett Lane in the Snow," an oil painting by Nancy Whorf



"The Long Row Home," an oil by Julia Whorf Kelly of Stuart

floating with every breath we take.

While "La Strada de Val D'Orcia" or watercolor "Tuscan Road" stun the spectator with their high-key lucid tones,

"The Long Row Home" is a purely nocturnal masterpiece.

The day her mother, Nancy, died, Julia sketched the keys, loaded with her grief. Six month later, she created a composition reflecting catharsis rising in her soul, in a tender music of colors. As the figure rows through a soothing shroud of night towards the unknown, the light starts emerging from the dusk. A crow, representing Nancy's three pet crows, escorts the

rower, like a wise harbinger of solace and acceptance.

As our illuminating tour through The Spark exhibit came to an end, Julia concluded, with a dazzling, contagious smile, "Sterling Elliott also had his own keys, materialized in his mind-blowing inventions, which, in their turn, sparked the Elliott Museum where history, art and technology come together. It's all about the spark. As long as we keep our keys alive, we are all artists." ■

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

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Churches can make an environmental statement



**Suzanne
Briley**

Hopscotch

What can churches do to help our environment, and, indeed, what are they doing now that we may be unaware of? These are questions I often ask myself as I think about our dwindling resources and their importance.

Churches carry a responsibility. They often occupy large buildings and own large pieces of land. In Hobe Sound, where I live, the Hobe Sound Bible Church sits on 21 acres of prime space. St. Christopher's Catholic Church is on a corner (Federal Highway and Bridge Road) of some of the most desirable commercial land in this area, as are both the First United Methodist Church and the Chrysostom Greek Orthodox Church, which also command Federal Highway frontage.

The Hobe Sound Community Presbyterian Church is nestled among the historic homes of the Olympia Plat on



As Martin County's environmental awareness increases, so does residents' attention to regulating the amount of water runoff from lawn irrigation.

Zeus Circle, and on Jupiter Island, the Episcopal Church occupies its center.

All of these houses of God can make a real difference in their environmental impact and in the example they choose to set for their neighborhoods, I think to myself on my early-morning walks. Instead, I frequently am dismayed when I see sprinklers using excessive amounts of water, which runs off into the street, as well as poisons and pesticides being sprayed on lawns only as preventative care. Often the land is being used for massive parking lots that are rarely

filled, adding even more to our stormwater runoff issues.

With all this in mind, I decided to make a few inquiries, asking what churches are doing to help our environment. I found that most of them are indifferent, unconcerned, and not interested. A few are trying to be good stewards of the environment, but they could do much more!

St. Christopher's reported that they cut their water usage, and they planted trees in the parking lot; however, they also removed most of the limbs from the Florida oaks on their property, which provide shade during the hot summer months.

Hobe Sound Presbyterian celebrates "Earth Day" each April to raise environmental awareness, and yet uses a massive amount of water for irrigation. Palm City Presbyterian reported that they have adopted a recycling program, and Grace Place reported having no programs in place.

Many of my calls were not returned or went unanswered, including Beit Ha Yam Temple by the Sea, Hobe Sound Bible Church, Trinity United Methodist Church in Jensen Beach, and the Community Baptist Church in Stuart.

All of my dreams came true, however, when I found the Generation Church in Jupiter! This wonderful group of people reach out to help the community and to help the environment as well. Some of their programs include helping to start a mini-community garden project. Members are composting and sharing plants, organic fertilizers, and have a seed bank. The project provides worm farming and starting a farm project for children.

The Generation Church use minimal printing, they recycle, they use LED lighting, and use only eco-friendly cleaning products. Most of their staff will share a car. As they expand, they plan to use an empty storefront, rather than acquire land for a new building.

This church also has an outreach program in inner city Broadway (West Palm Beach), and they host a community Easter egg outreach in Jupiter. (They are

at 401 Maplewood Drive, Jupiter. Phone 561.745.3035.)

What do you think we could suggest to our churches to become part of the solution? Really, many simple steps can make a major impact, such as using drip irrigation when possible, instead of shooting sprinklers that allow far too much water to evaporate, as well as simply to run off into our streets. They could plant native trees and vegetation on their properties, and encourage their members to share rides.

If they don't already have low-flow toilets, they could place a brick or two into the toilet tanks to reduce the water required to flush.

They need to repair water leaks quickly, use solar energy when possible, use LED light bulbs, and print on both sides of the paper, as well as limit how much and how often they print. They also can make church land more productive by creating a community plot to grow vegetables, an ideal way of motivating young people, not only to become more aware of the environment, but to eat healthy foods.

Churches also could install bird boxes on church sites or in local parks, and of course, they should recycle the paper, ink cartridges, and toner used in church offices.

Instead of using plastic bottles, which wind up in our landfills 90 percent of the time, they could encourage the use of glass bottles, refilling them when needed. Their members could take part in litter clean-up along roads and streets, creating a synergy between saving people and saving the planet.

Would it not be wonderful if each church prepared its own environmental policy or a statement of values to suit their situation. This would encourage young people to take part, as this is the future world they must live in. Remember that "faith without works is dead." (James 2:17)

Spring in England, where I lived for many years, is a time of shared beauty. Quite a few of the church graveyards are left deliberately untended, wild and overgrown with brambles and uncut grasses providing shelter and a habitat for small creatures like hedgehogs, rabbits and birds. During the autumn, churches are filled with local produce for Harvest Festival, a celebration of the harvest and a time to share with the less fortunate.

This is a time to praise and ... a time for "food for thought," about what our very own church can do and what we ourselves can do to make a difference in our world. ■

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



TEACHERS & TURTLES

Kelly Bond Pelletier, of the Environmental Studies Council,

presented a \$50,000 donation to the Martin County School Board at the April 15 school board meeting to support a teaching position at the Environmental Studies Center (ESC) in Jensen Beach.

The Environmental Studies Council, a not-for-profit organization established in 1978 that supports the Environmental Studies Center's programs and operations, also has raised nearly \$190,000 toward the \$247,000 cost of a new sea turtle tank.

The existing 8-foot by 4-foot tank accommodates only one turtle, Scuttle, but the new tank will be large enough to ac-

commodate a second turtle and includes a water filtration system. A team of teachers, biologists and contractors associated with the Environmental Studies Center designed the turtle habitat, which will be sunk into the ground for easy access. Construction on the tank and filtration system is expected to start in July and end in September or October, according to school officials.

The Environmental Studies Center is operated by the Martin County School District. Students in kindergarten through seventh grade and high school marine biology and environmental science classes visit the Center each year to participate in hands-on field investigations. Students explore the St. Lucie Estuary, Indian River Lagoon, Hutchinson Island's beaches, mangrove swamps and freshwater ponds and wetlands.

The Environmental Studies Center is at 2900 NE Indian River Drive in Jensen Beach. ■

New column to explore area's culinary delights

No doubt about it: Martin County residents enjoy an abundance of dining options. Whether you prefer grab-and-dash fast food in the front seat of the trusty pick-up truck, or five-star cuisine in a posh salon, our area offers you an array of choices. What and why we choose to dine at a particular establishment is a matter of personal taste, dictated and controlled by many factors, including financial, the occasion, and of course personal food preferences. Undoubtedly you want—and deserve—the best possible dining experience within the style and the price you have selected, regardless of your dining choice. That's the purpose of this newest *Currents* column.

We intend to help you make informed decisions to increase your enjoyment of all your dining experiences, and perhaps to uncover an unknown gem or two along the way. With today's steadily increasing menu prices and "creative promotions," diners are bombarded with tempting choices. After the tab is paid—taking a chunk from your entertainment budget—we often go home disappointed, but just as often, we find a place to cheer about. We intend to make to let you know about the ones that make us cheer.

Tips on Tables will offer advice to fellow diners based on the results of the Tipster's anonymous visits to local eateries to see, sample, savor and report on food preparation, restaurant ambiance, price, value, and service—an overall sensory response—to share with residents, guests and visitors. You also may give feedback on your own experiences at Tipster's reviewed eateries.

Categories of restaurants include fine dining, casual, fast casual, and fast food. Fine-dining restaurants are full-service restaurants with specific, dedicated meal courses, and they almost always are small businesses with generally single or limited locations. The chef and kitchen staff are, or should be, formally trained, assigned specific preparation duties, and usually are formally attired in traditional garb. The meals are usually prepared to order or on demand, and the presentation on the plate is visually appealing. The fine-dining restaurant also features higher-quality decor with a nod toward an elegant ambiance.

The wait staff also is usually highly trained and often wears more formal attire than in any other restaurant. These restaurants abide by particular rules of dining, which visitors are generally expected to follow, and often include a dress code. Cloth or linen table coverings and napkins are *de-rigueur*. Servers are formal, well-versed in the menu offerings, knowledgeable of food in general and prepared to offer suggestions regarding menu choices and appropriate wine choices.



TIPS ON TABLES

Dining Reviews by "The Tipster"

A casual-dining restaurant serves moderately priced food in a casual atmosphere, and they typically provide table service. Casual dining establishments are a step down from fine-dining restaurants, but often have a full bar with separate bar staff, a larger beer menu and a limited wine menu. They can, but are not necessarily, part of a wider chain.

Table service is not formal; usually a table top placemat is accompanied by lighter weight tableware and paper or light fabric napkins. Servers are casually attired or wearing a "corporate" uniform. The menu is designed to appeal to a wide spectrum of tastes, and the food is often prepared in the restaurant to a standard recipe with corporate-approved or provided ingredients.

Fast-casual restaurants are primarily chain restaurants. More of the food is prepared at the restaurant than is the case at fast-food chains. Fast-casual restaurants usually do not offer full table service; usually an "order-pick-up system" serves the customer, as well as non-disposable plates and cutlery. The quality of food and prices tend to be higher than those of a conventional fast-food restaurant but may be lower than casual dining. The menu is usually standardized and the prices set at the corporate level.

Fast-food establishments typically place emphasis on the speed and ease of service. Food is ordered from a short, preset menu, served in and on paper, often at a drive-through window. Fast-casual and fast-food restaurants expect diners to carry their food to the table and clear the table when finished.

General categories are intended as guidelines for ease only, are not rigidly definitive, and are the categories in which dining experiences will be listed and compared in future columns.

Ratings will be on a scale of 1 – 5, poor to excellent, for Service (friendliness, knowledge about menu and dishes, and accuracy in filling order), Food (freshness, skill in preparation, a satisfying presentation, and the overall taste experience for each dish, from appetizers through dessert), Ambiance (a fitting décor, cleanliness of tables, floor, and tableware, and comfort while seated), Wait Time (time from being seated to being waited upon; time from placing order to receiving it).



The price of entrees will be indicated by dollar signs based on a restaurant's "average" price. Only entrees will be considered: \$ (One dollar sign means that the average price of an entree is less than \$10.); \$\$ - (average is less than \$18); \$\$\$ (average is less than \$24); \$\$\$\$ (average is greater than \$24). Each issue of *Currents* will include a synopsis of previously reviewed restaurants that will be printed each month to become a convenient dining guide.

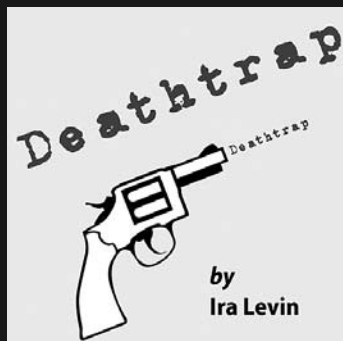
The Tipster, a professionally trained chef, will visit area restaurants only

during routine hours of operation and cannot be arranged. The reviews, which are intended only to expand *Currents* readers' sense of adventure when it comes to Martin County's dining scene, will be based on one person's visits. (Yes, if we feel that we need to make an additional visit to make a fair assessment, we will do that.) We also welcome readers' own observations and recommendations, which may be sent to Tipster@MartinCountyCurrents.com. We can hardly wait for the next issue of *Currents*! ■

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**Rich
Vidulich**
*Pompano
Reporter*

Zoom! Bam! Out of nowhere, the silver nuggets show in huge numbers! No lack of pompano in our backyards. Yessir, they found our coastline, and are feeding on every reef and sand bar that exists. Bag limits were too easy to fill, and no one left the beaches without at least an exquisite dinner. For the first time in months I was spending time handing out recipes.

In fact, it's time that I reveal a gourmet recipe that the local high-end restaurants have used for years. I don't profess to be a cook, but this one is easy! The ingredients are as follows: a bottle of a solid grade Chardonnay wine, a stick of natural butter, some plain ole flour, sliced almonds, parsley, lemon and the desire to eat a great fish meal!



At 92 years of age, Emmanuel Palermo of Jupiter sets an example for all of us by hitting the beach to fish for pompano, instead of sitting in an easy chair at home.

First, fillet the pompano and leave the skin on. Cut out the stomach bones and "V" cut the bloodline out of the central part of the fillet. Get the skillet out and melt some butter, along with a little virgin olive oil, at a low heat. Next heat the oven to 400 degrees and keep it on standby for step two. Man, I'm already wanting this in my tummy! Okay, focus, Rich. Stop drinking the wine; you're gonna need it! Next, dry the fillets and lightly flour them. When the pan has reached a medium heat, place the fillets skin down in the sauté-ready skillet. Lightly cook one side but not golden, just a light tan shade. Now flip them onto meat side down and re-up the fluids if necessary. Remove when flesh assumes a light tannish

color and place onto an aluminum pan.

Step two is ready for launch provided you have enough wine left over to cook with. Place fillets skin side down and douse with the Chardonnay just enough to cover the bottom of the pan, approximately a 1/4 of an inch. Don't use too big a pan or you won't have any wine to drink with the meal! (Sometimes my problem!) Top off the pompano with almond slices, parsley and any garnish or herb you really enjoy, and slip this madness into the oven and bake for 4 minutes.

At this point, call me (or maybe call Barbara Clowdus, a pompano fanatic), and we will be there exceptionally fast, almost like there's an emergency.

Personally I can't describe the taste,

but I can assure you I always buy two bottles of wine and try not to entertain anyone, so I can greedily eat all this and watch the "March Madness NCAA Basketball" finals. Not really true at all...but a very good thought.

Now that I have positive data, I feel pretty good about the future April/spring pompano run. Nor'easters will prevail the first few weeks of April, thus maintaining cooler surf temps. This will push the fish south and come back on every south blow we get for the next four weeks. It's a healthy problem that only exists once a year.

If you missed last year's run, you should dust off the spinners, clean and reline the reels and spike in the first available fishing moment. Hobe Sound beaches will require medium to high tide and the first three hours of the outgoing tide for the optimal bite. Just because you didn't get up this morning, doesn't mean you missed the bite.

Watch the tides and go whenever these facts match up! Don't worry, Spring Break will be over no matter where in the country it's happening, and parking at Hobe Sound will be instantly easier. **NO EXCUSES, NOW. GO FISHING!**

Possible negatives, though, always exist with all this goodness. One we will be encountering is a ton of seaweed and Portuguese Man O' War jellyfish on the beaches. Step on one of these, and it will become a second degree burn. The answer? Carry some ammonia with you (or...yeah, I know this is disgusting, but it works: Men with weak bladders will already have storage and can counter immediately on the sidelines.) You can consider this some real "Doc Oz" stuff, huh?

Over the past two weeks, the big shark migration also is approaching Palm Beach County. The shark charter boats are seeing them recede back south on every cold front we get, so pray we get as many as Nature will bless us with. When the sharks do arrive, the bite maybe become virtually non-existent for the extent the sharks maintain their offshore position. This results in the widespread posture that the poms are gone...but keep reading this column, and the truth shall be revealed! ■

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.



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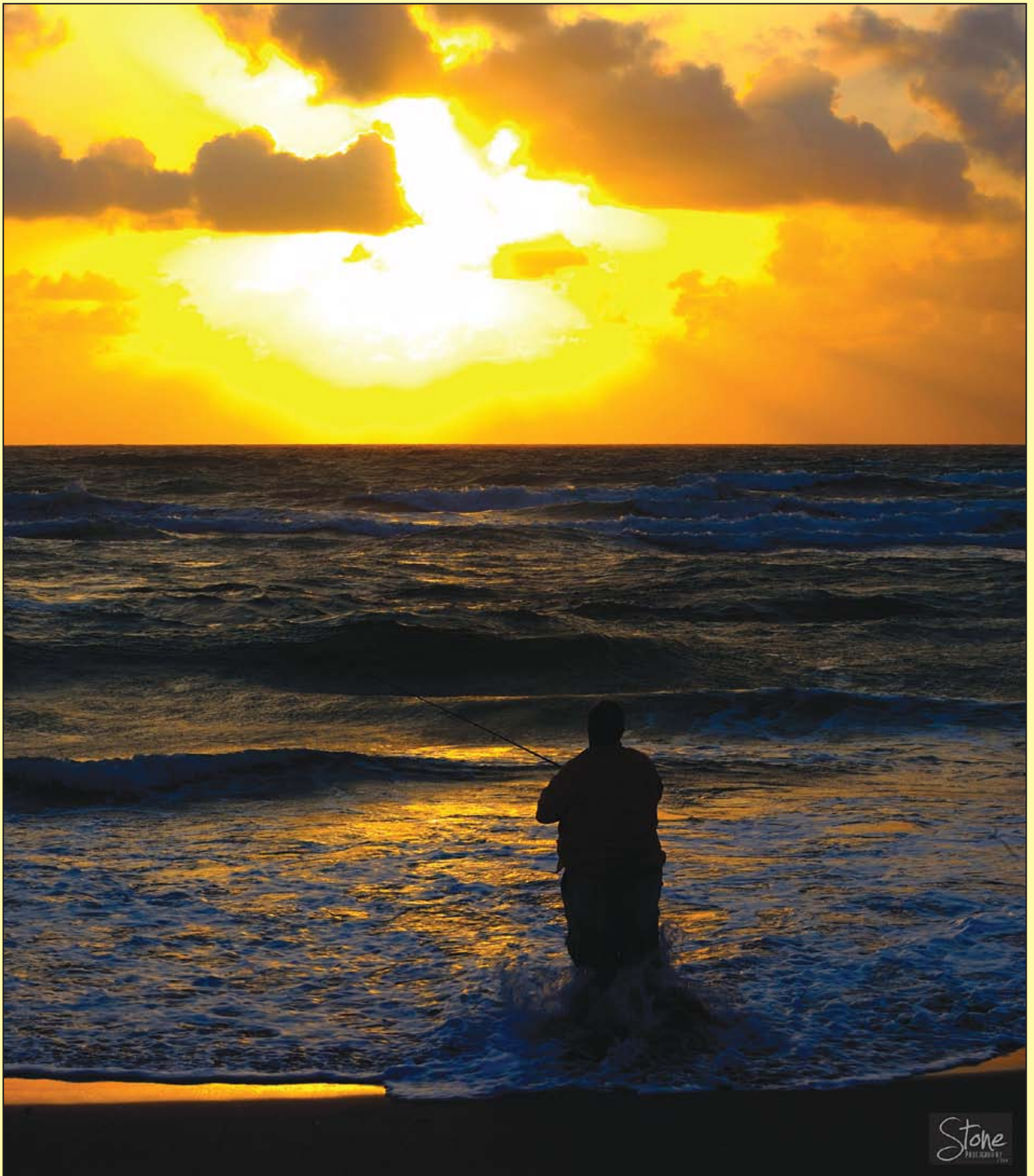
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Sunrise at Hobe Sound Beach

Hobe Sound Photographer Matt Stone captured this iconic scene at sunrise on Hobe Sound Beach, a favorite site of surf fishermen who have enjoyed a resurgence of migratory fish offshore with the recent onset of cold weather in the Northeast.