

St. Armands Star

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Editor: Bill Rex

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Manuel Chepote

As a resident of St. Armands and a member of the Residents Association for the past 14 years, I have seen many changes around us. The ownership of properties change and homes are demolished to make room for mega structures. These change the appearance and pace of our small "Paradise Island". We cannot stop change, but we can certainly work to make it happen without disturbing the equilibrium between the business and residential spirit of our community.

When I was asked to be President of the Association I was surprised and flattered at the same time. The reason being we have many talented members with years of island history and experience. My early challenge was to assemble an

effective Board to address the different issues of rapid development on our Island.

I would like to share with you the current Board Members and Committees of the Residents Association in the event you have an idea or question; also feel free to contact one of us.

President: Manuel Chepote
First V-P: Joel May
Second V-P: Michael Losey
Secretary: Rebecca Anderson
Treasurer: Bill Rex

Membership Committee: Michael Losey
Environment and Beautification: Jim Grace, Joel May
Landowners, Merchants and Residents (LMR)
Representatives: Nancy Cook,

Joel May, Rebecca Anderson, Jim Grace
Business Improvement District (BID)
Representatives: Joel May, Carole Krohn, Rebecca Anderson
Committee for Neighborhoods representatives: Marlene Lancaster, Carole Krohn, Manuel Chepote
Lido Association Liaison: Carole Krohn
Grants: Marlene Lancaster
Social and Annual Dinner:
Barbara Campo
Stormwater Drainage: Bill Rex
Safety: Ned Parsekian
Nominating: Jim Grace, Manuel Chepote, Jim Searle and Ned Parsekian
Quadrant Captains: SW Manuel Chepote; SE Kevin Kirby; NE Jim and Judy Searle; NW Bill Rex
Neighborhood Watch: Jesse and Betsy Hannon, Carol Berg, Buck Fry
City Representatives: Lt. William Wall, Michele Mician

ANNUAL DINNER IS JANUARY 27 AT BKYC

by Barbara Campo,
Committee Chairperson

GENERAL MEETING: was held Friday, Nov. 5, '04--Welcome Back Get Together at St. Armands Lutheran Church 7-9pm. This was a Special Meeting to discuss new development projects and potential impacts on the residents of St Armands. Issues included increased traffic, noise, architecture, density, commercialization and property ownership.

ANNUAL DINNER: Mark your calendar for our Annual Dinner Meeting which will be held on Thursday, Jan. 27th, at beautiful Bird Key Yacht Club. Cocktails, dinner and wonderful entertainment--Come and have fun! Be sure to respond to the RSVP by the deadline. And, please no last day walk-ins as the Club will be honoring our submitted food counts based on RSVP.

SPRING EVENT: In April we're planning an old fashioned yummy Pot Luck Supper! (Date and place to be announced) These functions start out quietly and in the end everyone has a really wonderful time! Bake some cookies or a favorite casserole, bring a tasty salad or a warm loaf of bread etc. Be sure to join us as we share the tastings, music etc!

CITY GRANT APPROVED

by Marlene Lancaster

The St. Armands Residents Association has received a neighborhood improvement grant through the City of Sarasota, Neighborhood Partnership Office. The Association received monies to affect a logo design for the neighborhood, static cling stickers for automobiles, and two banners for events for the Association. All of these items will help create an identity and recognition for our neighborhood. The stickers for cars will

help local law enforcement identify which vehicles belong in our neighborhood and can be used when returning from storm evacuations or flooding. No more need to bring along an electric bill to prove you belong on the island!

The banners will be used for social functions and meetings and are meant to help identify our association. A total of \$1723.00 was requested by the Association with a 50% matching requirement to be made up by volunteer hours from the Board of Governors. The total benefit for the neighborhood is \$2608.00.

Future grant applications are anticipated. If there are grant writers out there who would like to participate, or those who have ideas for future requests, please contact Marlene Lancaster at malancaster@comcast.net or 388-4747.

Our Thanks to the City of Sarasota and the Neighborhood Partnership Office.

ASSOCIATION IS NOW ON THE WEB!

by Jim Grace

There is a new, easy way to stay informed about the St. Armands Residents Association, visit: WWW.STARASSOC.ORG

This month is a watershed moment in the history of the Association. By accessing WWW.STARASSOC.ORG you can learn more than ever before about what's happening on our beautiful island.

Two of the most important features in the web site are the: "Board Minutes" button on the left hand side and the "Newsletter" button. Now, even if you could not attend the monthly meetings you can visit the web and read the minutes. Now, too, if you are out of town for the season and you miss receipt of your newsletter, you can access it on the web! Keeping a comprehensive picture!

Other useful information on the web site includes: a list of board members, county and state officials as well as a list of useful phone numbers. Remember the web site is just one of an extensive list of venues provided by the volunteers who comprise the officers of the Association. These venues include: monthly Association meetings (open to the residents), tri-annual newsletters, annual dinner, annual social and quadrant captains.

With the addition of the web site, you now have one more way to access information about what's happening in the Association at anytime and from anywhere in the world. Better informed neighbors make a more responsive Association and hopefully, will allow you to better understand and participate in shaping the events that affect the whole St.Armands community.

NEIGHBORHOOD REPORTS

by Carole Krohn

BARRIER ISLAND UNITY

The St Armands Residents Association and the Lido Key Residents Association have agreed to work more closely toward our common goals. Sandy Bower from Lido will be attending the St Armands board meetings and Carole Krohn will be attending the Lido board meetings. When issues arise that affect the two keys, we will be able to discuss and stand united.

LIDO KEY

A neighborhood workshop was held to discuss a Major Conditional use for concessionaire services and site plan at South Lido Park. The concession was to include kayak and canoe rentals, educational tours, four special events per year, sale of food and beverages and the sale of nature based recreation related items. After a lengthy meeting of approximately 150 people, majority of whom did not want the proposed development, the County decided to postpone current plans for South Lido Park. Lido has also learned from Dennis Daughters, City Engineer, that there will be beach renourishment this year thanks to a FEMA decision.

The Lido Beach Facility Task Force has completed recommendations for the revitalization of the swimming pool and the pavilion. It is estimated that this project will take three to five years to complete.

CCNA

Coalition of City Neighborhoods has been discussing the need for landlord registration, vagrancy issues, homeless problems in the City and code enforcement which is at an all time high this past year. There are 57 neighborhood associations in the City of Sarasota and membership to CCNA is encouraged. CCNA is on the web at www.sarasotaccna.org.

DEVELOPMENT ON ST. ARMANDS

As part of our commitment to the residents, members of the Residential Board are also members of the Landowners, Merchants and Residents advisory board, which meets to review policy and changes that affect St. Armands. We are also guests of the BID, the taxation authority for St.Armands Circle. Within these meetings, one of our primary topics has been the St. Armands Stormwater Project, designed to reduce stormwater flows in the streets. As of late spring, the pricetag for the complete project doubled to \$7.5 million, significantly exceeding the City's budget. As a result, the Stormwater Project is being rebid by the County (on behalf of the City) as a partial fix, with two stormwater pumping stations on the north end of the Circle, and a third, dependent on bids, just west of the Bottle Shop. The Residents Association has maintained the strong position, aligned with the BID and LMR, that we want to see "dirt moved" for the partial remediation, with the position that all parties on the island will work together towards a completed project. The present schedule shows the Stormwater Project beginning in late Spring 2005. Government is currently looking at special tax assessment on properties to make up the deficit. A Stormwater Project Update meeting is planned for January 26 at Mote Aquarium for Residents.

Within St. Armand's Circle itself, the landowners and merchants are requesting changes to the city zoning code in order to expand the uses and set design parameters within the Circle. One of the proposed changes would remove the 2000 square foot restriction on the size of offices above the shops. Others would regulate awning size and signage, accept the development of housing above the main floors, change the businesses permitted to allow for hotels, and

regulate how the sidewalks may be used. In general, the City and the merchants are seeking to increase the density, traffic, and use of the Circle for profit from the residential perspective. While a healthy Circle is very important to the residents, we are also concerned about the balance. Issues on the table include increased traffic on residential streets, building height and density, a growing parking shortage and quality of life issues for all of us as the Circle becomes more intensively used.

As these issues surface we will be calling general meetings. Also we invite you to attend the Residential Board meetings to voice your opinions on these items to your Board and to LMR representatives, Jim Grace, Nancy Cook, Rebecca Anderson, and Joel May. We plan to utilize the new WEB (WWW.STARASSOC.ORG) site and emails to keep residents advised by bulletins, announcements and The STAR Newsletter.

ST. ARMANDS TREE CANOPY PROGRAM

by Joanna Grace

Hurray! The "St. Armands Tree Canopy Program" led to the installation of fifteen new 12 foot high Royal Palms on Monroe Drive fronting the Fillmore parking lot. These palms were a group effort by residents on Monroe and the City. This endeavor did cost the residents \$140.00 per tree but was well worth it. The City paid for the balance. Everyone should visit this wonderful improvement to our island. If you are interested in coordinating or participating in a similar treescape effort on your street please call Jim or Joanna Grace and learn about the "St. Armands Tree Canopy Program". A little effort can go a long way. Let's turn St. Armands into the idyllic paradise John Ringling would be proud of.

A VISION FOR ST ARMANDS RESIDENTS

by Joel May

Late Spring the St. Armands Residents Board embarked on a vision for our neighborhood. Our intention was to create a document which could be used for identifying our goals, planning neighborhood projects and representing our residential viewpoints to the Commissioners and developers when new projects arise that impact the neighborhood. The Residents' Board identified how the commercial core of St. Armands Circle influences homeowners within 150' of the commercial zone, and how residential rebuilding along the water and on south Lido is changing the residential context. We dove into issues such as density, revitalization of and interaction with St. Armands Circle, noise, parking, increased traffic, environmental impact, and safety on the Key...all as a means to identify what we could do as residents to guide the forces around us by presenting our goals to the City and development as part of the mix. With increased speculation around us, we suggested some projects of our own such as traffic calming measures, burying power lines, tree planting and landscaping programs, porch lighting, and finding a place of our own for community meetings.

At the September 7 Board meeting, we adopted the vision as a working document. We are in the process of expanding it to look at the potential of higher density development adjacent to the neighborhood, and to address both "flow-through" traffic between downtown, Lido, and Longboat Key and internal traffic. Within the next several months, your Residents' Board will be discussing how we may address these items with developers and the City. Meanwhile, we invite your comments

on the vision, which is available on our website, or by contacting Joel May at 894-0165 or JMAYARCH@aol.com.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING POWER LINES SAFE AND CLEAR AT ST. ARMANDS.

by Jim Grace

This has been a pretty busy hurricane season at St Armands. Around the circle there were winds severe enough to do minor damage to trees, shrubs, awnings and POWER LINES.

While some power outages were caused by circumstances many miles away, some of the St Armands outages were caused nearby and symptomatic of limbs growing too close to our power lines. In other words, power was lost because a tree in your backyard or a nearby neighbors shorted out electricity to your home!

Because we all share power from various transformers around St. Armands, we will all benefit by keeping errant limbs and shrubs clear of FPLs power lines.

Here are some tips to help you maintain good clearances from power lines.

- A. Never cut limbs near power lines on your own.
- B. Phone FPL with any concerns you may have about possible trouble spots you see near power lines. They will inspect the area and decide what to do. (They may choose to perform maintenance or maybe not) FPL's number is 917-0708.
- C. If you want to trim trees that are dangerously close to power lines by hiring your own contractor,

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phone FPL and they will disconnect the power line so pruning and cutting can be performed safely. (This they will do for free)

- D. While FPL does not provide free tree pruning services at the whim of the homeowner, they do still come into neighborhoods to maintain local grids (every few years). They do rely on homeowners to alert them to imminent emergencies. In these cases they may still perform preemptive maintenance.

Keeping our local power lines clear and free of tree limbs can save all of us the discomfort of living in our homes without A/C, water, light and refrigeration come the next hurricane season.

OUR INDIGENOUS OSPREYS

by Michael Losey

Locally on St. Armands we have at least two (2) of these large birds of prey, sometimes called sea eagles or fish-hawks. The osprey is a large raptor with a body length of about two feet and a wingspan of five feet, replete with large talons for grasping its favorite prey, live fish. The birds, which can be seen hovering over the Sarasota Bay to the Northeast quadrant of N Washington Drive, mostly appear colored brown with white head and stomach feathers. Frequently the birds can be seen atop a boat lift pylon (sometimes as small as two inches in diameter), atop a light pole on the bridge to Longboat Key, or on a larger dock piling eating a seatrout as large as two feet in length. The bird will hold the live fish in its talons until the fish dies and then ceremoniously rip it to shreds with its curved beak while devouring the fish in small pieces.

Some of the ospreys characteristics are:

- Its back and long arched wings are brown while it has white plumage on its breast and upper legs.
- A characteristic M-shaped crook in its wings
- The female is generally larger than the male
- Replete with a long curved beak and talons.

Twenty years ago the ospreys were considered endangered mostly because of DDT usage. Luckily, the stoppage of DDT usage has resulted in the birds recovery and its presence here on St. Armands.

HABITAT AND LIFE CYCLE

- Ospreys generally mate for life while breeding generally starts at age 5 to 7.
- They are spectacular divers: once they have located their prey (generally by soaring over shallow water for schooling or spawning fish) they fold their wings tightly, descend swiftly and enter the water feet-first, often submerging completely.
- Building their nests on channel markers, large poles or lights, the female osprey generally lays three to four eggs in Spring.
- After hatching, the 2-ounce chicks become fliers within eight weeks. Sometimes only one chick will survive.
- Like humans, the males forage far from home while the females stay near the "nest".

THE NEW PHONE DIRECTORY IS OUT

by Marlene Lancaster

After many months of preparation, the St. Armands Neighborhood Phone Directory is out. The 2005 directory lists property owners, addresses and phone numbers. The committee considered adding e-mail addresses in the future. Let us know when you pay your membership dues for 2005 if you would like to have yours included with the next directory. This project was accomplished with the help of a grant from the **City of Sarasota, Neighborhood Grant Program** and sponsors from the St. Armands community. Please make note of those who support our Residents Association and use their services when you can. We would like to thank **Andrew Vac Realty, Realtors Larry and Barb Shapiro, Rebecca Anderson(Rebecca's Shop), Garden Argosy Shop, Realtor Louise Tessier, and Jen Pierson.**

We would also like to thank Sharon Kenworthy of the Membership Committee for her work in proof reading and ad solicitation. She did all of the word processing and applied for the grant that made this beautiful directory possible. If you have not received your copy of the directory, please give your quadrant captain a call.

NOMINATIONS DUE

Nominations for the Residents Board and for specific committee seats are due shortly. Please Contact Jim Grace if you have an interest!
