

**Mardy's Tennis and Jake's Music
Fest on this weekend. P 24**

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32963 Insider

Is the 'fix' in?

On Sunday, well before Judge Kanarek handed down his decision creating a vacancy on the Vero Beach City Council, we heard that the establishment had already come up with its choice to fill the vacant seat until the next election. The fix, we were told, is in.

While we are shocked — shocked! — to hear that this kind of Good Old Boy maneuvering still takes place in modern-day Vero Beach, we are not going to name their anointed nominee just in case our informant is wrong. But we will offer a hint: his ex-wife recently was on the ballot for a different office.

As we hear it, Sabe Abell and Tom White — in discussions with City Manager Jim Gabbard (Sabe and Tom can't conspire directly because that would be a Sunshine Law violation) — have agreed on this candidate, who has never sought public office but has lived in Vero Beach for three decades.

Now for all we know, this person might make a solid addition to the City Council. If he were actually running for the office, his qualifications would make him an impressive candidate.

But at a time of crisis for Vero Beach, replacing a dissident voice who received the most votes of any candidate on the ballot — a person committed to shaking up the City Council — with a hand-picked figure who seems highly unlikely to buck the establishment is simply wrong.

The big question is whether Mayor Kevin Sawnick will resist the temptation to become the needed third vote for this charade.

Vero electric consultants paid millions

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

A Boston consultant and her handpicked Boston law-

yers were paid more than \$840,000 by Vero Beach electric customers for their work on locking the city into the new 20-year contract with

the Orlando Utilities Commission, city records show.

By far the biggest money-maker in this deal was Sue Hersey, who was hired to lead

this effort even though earlier she had led Vero Beach's losing multi-million-dollar battle with the Florida Municipal Power Agency.

Hersey served as project manager and "expert witness" on the FMPPA case. At that time, she was employed by Navigant Consulting, which billed the city \$910,000 for battling FMPPA. Then, right after the FMPPA arbitration was over, she started her own company, and the City of Vero Beach soon became her major client.

Over a six-year period starting in 2003, Hersey, her former employer Navigant, and the out-of-state lawyers billed the City of Vero Beach \$3 million for their work on these electric projects.

During this period, Hersey herself billed more than \$60,000 for the time she spent driving to the Boston Airport, flying to Orlando and driving to Vero Beach, in addition to the nearly \$40,000 billed for airfare, hotels, parking and tolls.

On some occasions, Hersey generously paid for meals with Vero Beach's top brass — and subsequently filed for and obtained expense reimbursement from the city.

During the latest round of work on the Orlando Utility project, the City of Vero Beach paid \$244,031 through Hersey to Boston law firms



Brooklyn Dimino, 4, and Kaitlyn Bartus, 4, rehearse their routine with the rest of the Discoverettes before marching in the Christmas parade with the Children's Discovery Center. Complete Christmas parade coverage starts on page 64.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Wilson out; Council openness out too

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

A day after Charlie Wilson was removed from office, the changed dynamic of the Vero Beach City Council was immediately obvious Tuesday as the three holdovers from last

year quashed Brian Heady's efforts to keep interviews for Wilson's successor public, instead choosing to conduct most of the process in City Hall back rooms.

Heady, who along with Wilson was elected to the Council in November on a wave of vot-

er anger over the secrecy that surrounded the new 20-year electric contract with the Orlando Utilities Commission, pleaded with Council members to interview candidates to succeed Wilson on television.

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**Six pages of social
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City Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I think it is important that we do it publicly and that the public see it. The public needs to see this process happen," Heady said.

"If we go behind closed doors and do this, the public is never going to buy into this. It's public business and should be in the public eye and anything less than that I'm going to vote against," Heady said.

In the end, no one supported Heady's motion to interview all candidates in public session, so it died on the floor. And the other three Council members did not need his vote. They did the most political thing, despite a



Photos: Keith Carson

variety of speakers who pleaded with the board to either appoint the next highest vote getter in the November

election, Ken Daige, or keep interviews in the open.

Swayed by arguments from Coun-

cilman Tom White and Vice Mayor Sabin Abell that the city has used a tried-and-true process of interviewing candidates for its various boards and commissions – which are not elected offices — Mayor Kevin Sawnick fell in line opposite Heady.

"If there's nothing political going on in the backroom, then do it in front of the public," Heady said.

The eagerness of old-time City Council members and senior city staff to be rid of Wilson – whom a judge on Monday ordered removed from the Council because he did not meet the city's one-year residency requirement for office – was on clear display at Tuesday's Council meeting.

Not only had Wilson's nameplate been expunged overnight from in front of his empty seat on the Council dais, but when Councilman White suggested that perhaps they ought to wait a month before filling the seat because of his right to appeal, City Attorney Charles Vitunac quickly slapped down that proposal.

"I think you could ignore the appeal," he told the Council.

But the key element in the plan the Council adopted for choosing a successor to Wilson is no matter how many candidates step forward and apply, the Council members intend to choose three finalists in a process that will be totally invisible to the public.

Abell and White both spoke out strongly in favor of having the applicants questioned by City Council members one-on-one, eliminating the possibility of any public record of the questions that were asked of them or the positions that were taken.

Abell conceded that the three finalists might subsequently be questioned in public.

"I think that by the time we get down to the final three, we will have a humane process," he said, noting both that private interviews prevented candidates from "piggy-backing" on each others' answers and that television coverage of public meetings could be disconcerting to some candidates.

A frustrated Heady protested, saying that any potential council member should be prepared to speak and answer questions in public and on television, because that's what the council does every time it has a meeting.

City Attorney Vitunac notified Council members that, though the one-on-one meetings were, in themselves, not a matter of public record, any notes Council members took during those meetings would become public record.

Heady scoffed at this, saying facetiously, "Then I guess I won't take any notes."

Sawnick briefly wavered and said he would ask a city clerk to come in and take minutes of the interviews he conducts with candidates. Heady fired

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back at Sawnick's suggestion that having minutes was akin to on-camera interviews.

"If we are going to task the staff, then why not just do this in public?" Heady said.

Tom White described the need to conduct closed-door interviews by explaining how job interviews work in the world of private industry.

"When you apply for a job, you go in for an interview with the boss," White said. "We do that with all the boards."

In the instance of the city's many advisory boards, members are appointed by the City Council and board members serve at the pleasure of the City Council. Council members have the power to remove their own appointees if they disagree with them, are not happy with their performance or their attendance.

So, in that case, the Council members are, in fact, "the boss" to the appointee being interviewed for a volunteer post.

But the point Heady was trying to make throughout the discussion was that "the boss" in these particular job interviews for a seat on the City Council is neither the collective City Council nor any individual members. The bosses are the residents of the City of Vero Beach.

While Council members were battling over the process by which to take applicants from the larger pool of City of Vero Beach residents, another movement took hold, briefly, from the podium. Former Councilman Ken Daige, finished third to Wilson and Heady in the November election, requested that the City Council immediately appoint him to the seat.

"Please honor the vote of the people," Daige said. "Take all the politics out of it."

Daige went on to say that appointing him would allow the city to immediately get on with business.

Former Mayor Warren Winchester, who testified for the city in the Wilson case, spoke this time on behalf of all the people who summarily ousted incumbents Bill Fish and Debra Fromang and ushered in staunch critics of the city in November.

"I believe if there was a clear message given to the city during the November election, it was that they wished to see a different perspective on the city council," Winchester said.

In the Council members' discussion over when and where and how to question the people who wish to take a seat on the dais, Winchester reminded council members that an extensive interview process — with the voters — has already taken place.

"Look at the people that the people have looked at," Winchester said, gesturing to Daige, Jack Shupe and Susan Viviano, who all were seated in the gallery.

"All three of them have expressed a desire to serve. They've already been grilled by the people, grilled by the newspapers and grilled by the homeowners' associations," he said. "The process that you're talking about putting them through does not equate to the process that they were put through by the election."

Wilson's replacement will come from a list of candidates who submit a one-page resume to the city.

Those applicants will be interviewed on Jan. 6 in one-on-one private sessions with each City Council member,

where they will be ranked. The basis of how the Council members will rank the candidates they interview was not made clear.

The three top-ranked candidates — however they wind up being anointed — will then go before the full City Council for public interviews in chamber on Jan. 12.

Barring any major difficulties, the Council will choose a replacement at that meeting. Whoever is chosen will serve until the next municipal election in November 2010, when four seats will be up for grabs.

The terms of Abell, White and Sawnick all expire in 2010, and candidates for these seats will run for new two-year terms.

The seat previously held by Wilson will also be on the ballot in 2010, but candidates for that seat will seek a one-year term.

As for the man ousted by the courts earlier this week, Charlie Wilson, his future is yet to be determined.

On Monday, after Judge Kanarek ruled that Wilson was not eligible to

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Humiston Park renovation is nearing completion

BY IAN M. LOVE
STAFF WRITER

While you would never guess it from these photos, workers are hoping to have the renovation of Humiston Park completed by the end of the month – with the new, improved park finally ready to greet visitors the first of the year.

Most of the construction work, which began in September, has been completed with workers now putting in buffer landscaping to protect the bougainvilleas which will line Ocean Drive and provide a panoply of seasonal blooms.

Other work that needs to be done includes re-sodding the park and building the walkways that will connect picnic areas with the playground equipment and access to the ocean.

But visitors were able to make use of some of the park's new features during the Christmas parade as the curved retaining wall which guards the entrance to the park served as a place for viewers to sit or stand



Photos: Ian M. Love

their children to view the floats as they worked their way down Ocean Drive.

Bob McNally, whose company Palm Coast Development is doing the work on Humiston Park, says the first thing people will notice



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when they visit the park next month is the color.

There are going to be lots of flowering purples and lavenders and yellows and raspberries when the \$1 million renovation is completed.

"Most municipal parks are just green on green, but the developer here had a passion to create a thing of beauty," McNally said. "It will be highly unusual from other city parks."

McNally said the work has gone off on schedule for the most part, excepting weather delays.

Among the work completed:

- The widening of Ocean Drive
- Installation of the curved retaining wall, which was built to accommodate residents to use as seating

• Completion of the concrete curbing, pavement and pavers along Ocean Drive.

• The deconstruction of Easter Lily Lane to accommodate the shops and restaurants that anchor that part of the development

• The reconstruction of Easter Lily Lane with underground utilities and installation of cobblestone pavers.

"Other than the weather and finding some buried infrastructure from a long time ago, this has been pretty smooth sailing," McNally said. "The city has been very nice to work with."

The city, by the way, will be responsible for the upkeep of the park – including the landscaping – once the work is completed.

City Council

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run for office, Wilson was disappointed that he would not be able to return to his seat and fight for the people and the issues that got him elected. But he

asked for some time to put everything into perspective.

“I think he (Kanarek) made an error and used the wrong standard,” Wilson said. “The wrong information was presented to him, but I think he is a fair man.”

He talked feistily about considering

an appeal, then worried about how much it would cost and whether the community should be put through another battle.

“I don’t know if it’s worth it,” Wilson said.

“Armed camps don’t help anything, what we need is a complete change at

City Hall,” he added.

He issued a statement that said he had no regrets, that he did the right thing, but that the forces against him were too much. He left another run for office wide open.

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City Council

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Wilson came into the election as an old hand at politics. Not only has he run for office several times before; he's run campaigns and worked as an operative. He predicted he and Brian Heady were the likely winners before anyone else saw Heady as a viable candidate.

But even Wilson learned a few things from his run for — and short term on — the Vero Beach City Council.

"I always thought that as long as you didn't take money that didn't belong to you, you didn't sleep with someone other than your wife and you didn't take drugs, they couldn't get you," Wilson said. "Now I know that they can."

Politically, some would say, Wilson did a lot of things right in his bid for office. First of all, he took the time to get to know the issues and the players, time spent observing all of them from the outside as a citizen journalist, and also as a voter and taxpayer.

He attended just about every city and county meeting, as well as major public events. This was partially an effort to have people get to know him, but served Wilson well in what professionals call opposition research.

Wilson captured the attention — and the rage — of the public. Candidate Wilson, always accessible, always ready with biting one-liners.

But this was not enough to counteract the legal and political forces that did not want to see the white-haired rabble rouser on the council. Wilson took a shot that an ambiguously-written ordinance would not hold water if there was a legal challenge. In the end, a judge followed the intent of

those who wrote the city's ordinance.

He encourages others to run for office and to fight for change, to not be scared off by what happened to him.

"It's been a brutal, one-sided fight," he said. "So if someone does want to run for office, they'd better be ready for anything."

Despite his experience and his aptitude for issues, some of Wilson's personal choices, in hindsight, did not reflect a lot of wisdom. It is still questionable — based upon information ferreted out by attorneys — whether he was truly fully living in the city, under what an average person would consider reasonable.

Wilson stands by his actions and sees his candidacy as a populist movement against a city government that would keep its citizens and rate-payers locked into an electric utility that has shaken them down badly this summer with soaring rates and which shows no promise of being competitive in the future.

As far as taking advantage of loopholes, Wilson has something to say about that.

"Being lectured about loopholes by a city that changed its number of (electric) customers they had to get around state legislation offered by the late Rep. Stan Mayfield is disingenuous at best," Wilson said, referring to an abrupt change in the way the city counted electric customers to circumvent legislation that would have required an independent authority to govern the utility.

No matter what he decides — to appeal, to run again next year, or just to blog about city officials in his newsletter — you can bet Indian River County hasn't heard the last of Wilson.

"If I have one thing to say to the public, it's don't give up," he said.

Consultants

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

LeBeouf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae, and its successor, Dewey and LeBeouf. The firms were not required to submit time sheets directly to the City of Vero Beach detailing the work they had performed in support of hourly fees that ranged from \$470 to \$550. Instead, Hersey simply included their total fee each month on her invoices, as if the attorneys were working as a subcontractor to her.

LLGM was also used in the failed FMPA arbitration effort in 2003-2005, but during that time it billed the city separately for the \$1.1 million in legal costs. It also called in reinforcements during that earlier battle from Stuntz, Davis & Staffier in Washington, D.C., which cost Vero another \$135,000, mostly to work with key witnesses.

All of these fees — including those to the Boston and Washington, D.C. lawyers — were paid out of Vero Beach Electric Utility funds. The invoices were signed off on by top staffers and approved piecemeal on the City Council's Consent Agenda, where the amounts were not provided — just a summary of whom the city was paying and for what project.

To put the consulting costs in perspective, over six years they totaled a little less than the city spends annually for the entire Recreation Department employing 34 people and maintaining all the city's parks, pools, fountain, tennis courts, recreation buildings, classes, and beaches.

And the consultant tally is still mounting. Most recently Hersey and attorney Meabh Purcell were called into town to meet with investigators from the State Attorney's office

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Consultants

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as part of a grand jury probe into the OUC contract. Those detailed bills have yet to be brought to the council for payment.

Who was in charge? Who is to blame?

The lead-up to the FMPA arbitration began in the summer of 2003 and the case was finally ruled on in

September of 2005. In response to citizen outrage over soaring electric bills, the city made a costly gamble that it could win a feud with its power provider, the FMPA. Records show the City Council was repeatedly told by top staffers that the city's position was a good one and it could win its fight.

At the time, Mary Beth McDonald was the mayor and Tom White the vice mayor. Councilman Sabin Abell and Councilwoman Debra Fromang were serving at the time, as was Bob Solari, now a county commissioner.

Fromang and Solari came on board in March 2005, which was near the tail-end of the FMPA proceedings.

In the City Manager's office, there were a lot of people — some of whom are long-gone from the City of Vero Beach but who at different times played roles in the negotiations.

The procession of leaders requires a scorecard to keep up. City Manager Rex Taylor had been forced to resign in late 2003, ironically, over a scandal related to expenditures on consultants doing work for the electric utility. So the Interim City Manager

at the time the FMPA case started incurring charges was Tom Nason.

David Merkarski took over in the summer of 2004, but was forced out in May 2005 amid an ethics probe. Former Police Chief Jim Gabbard slid over into the interim City Manager spot and was hired on in September 2005 as City Manager, and serves in that capacity to this day.

The city has recently gone through a half dozen directors of the electric utility, with Customer Service Manager John Lee an ever-present stand in, so it's almost impossible to track the chain of command there.

Charles Vitunac was promoted from Assistant City Attorney to City Attorney in 2002 after a tragedy in the family of City Attorney Julie Schutta. Vitunac was in his post throughout the FMPA process and the subsequent OUC deal. Vitunac, White, Abell and Fromang were the continuous presences during this era in the City's history.

On July 5, 2005, records show, Vice Mayor Tom White questioned the exorbitant fees being charged by consultants and attorneys to get the city through an arbitration process to get out of the FMPA deal. White pulled the request to pay an invoice off the Consent Agenda and discussed it with then-Utilities Director Paul Thompson.

He was told that the city originally had expected to pay Navigant a total of \$250,000 and was assured that the city was nearing the end of the negotiations. Furthermore, Thompson assured White that once out of FMPA, the city would have "significant" savings.

The minutes went on to say that, at that point in July 2005:

"The cost for Navigant Consulting firm is \$960,000 and the cost for attorney's fees so far is \$966,000."

And that "both Mr. Thompson and Mr. Vitunac had good feelings that the City was going to win this case."

But the city lost the case, and then was forced to wait out the five years it had to fulfill before exiting the FMPA contract.

Fast forward about four years. Now the City of Vero Beach is getting ready to turn over its 34,000 electric customers to the Orlando Utilities Commission under another contract that has been cloaked in secrecy and is under grand jury investigation.

City Council steered and studied away from selling electric utility

Just a few months after Vero Beach lost the FMPA mediation and was left with a tab of more than \$2 million in consulting and legal bills, the City Council again hired Boston consultant Sue Hersey to embark upon the



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next expensive adventure — deciding what to do after the FMPA contract would end on Jan. 1, 2010.

Newly minted City Manager Gabbard held a workshop with the City Council on electric issues on Jan. 31, 2006.

Hersey was hired to facilitate the workshop and the council authorized the first \$6,500 for her to contact Florida Power and Light about contracting for power transmission to City of Vero Beach customers after Jan. 1, 2010.

We're not sure where those talks went, because the city soon embarked upon a market study and a base case study and put out a formal request for a new power provider who would work with — not take over or purchase — the city's electric assets..

But it was on Feb. 7, 2006 that the city every-so-briefly considered finding out how much the electric utility was worth.

From the minutes:

"Mr. Gabbard spoke to Ms. Hersey about this and she said that she would be happy to do this but it would cost between \$300,000.00 to \$500,000.00 and take several months to accomplish. Mr. Gabbard feels that the information may be valuable at some point, but at this time it is premature to do it. He advised Council at this time to hold off on this."

The Council went along with Gabbard's recommendation. This subject appears to have never come up again until the Special City Council meeting of Nov. 16, 2009.

Regarding the next three years of consultant work, how the \$6,500 approved by the City Council for one small project mushroomed into the \$842,000 that Hersey billed for her services and for legal fees between March 2006 and November 2009 is hard to understand.

While she charged Vero close to a cool million dollars for her services related to the FMPA mediation debacle, the City Council appears to have made no effort to see if alternative, possibly less costly consultants were available.

Council members instead signed onto what would become a veritable blank check made payable to Hersey and to the Boston-based law firm of Dewey & LeBeouf, the same group of lawyers, now operating under a different firm name, that lost the FMPA mediation.

The question of why the City of Vero Beach went all the way to Boston to hire a consultant and lawyers — and then kept them on the payroll after they lost a very important case — is still a matter for speculation.



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People

Cocktail party celebrates birth of Haiti Partners

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

A glitch with the air-conditioning gave the lovely Marbrisa East Clubhouse a sultry, tropical feel Thursday evening at a Haiti Partners celebration.

Several in attendance, freshly returned from a trip to Haiti, laughed that the humidity and warm ocean breezes were reminiscent of their recent experiences.

But the similarities stopped there. With plenty of delicious food, fresh water, electricity and all the other creature comforts we're used to in this country, our surroundings were a far cry from the poor living conditions in Haiti.

The cocktail party was hosted by Haiti Partners co-directors John Engle and Kent Annan to thank organization founders, board members and supporters, and to celebrate the birth of Haiti Partners, an offshoot



Haiti Partners co-director John Engle, board members Johanna Jones, Adam Bolinger and Cathy LaCroix, and co-director Kent Annan.

Photos: Mary Schenkle

of the Pennsylvania-based organization Beyond Borders.

Annan was also celebrating the



Robi Robinson, Suzanne Bolinger and Chris Hendricks



Julie Edmond, Jean Cravens and Martha Glassmeyer

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release of his new book, *Following Jesus Through the Eye of the Needle, Living Fully, Loving Dangerously*, which relates his experiences traveling and working in Haiti.

Vero Beach residents Engle and Annan have always endeavored to keep the decision making process at the ground level in Haiti, ultimately giving the people a say in their future. Similarly, they felt that a Vero Beach based board and advisory board would enable a greater connection with local supporters as the organization continues to grow.

The first three Haiti Partners

board members, Adam Bolinger, Joanna Jones and Cathy LaCroix, have supported the organization from Beyond Borders to its current status. Mingling with guests, Bolinger and Jones, along with fellow recent Haiti travelers Milt Thomas and Pastor Jack Diehl, related some of the more humorous and touching experiences from their visit last month.

Engle and Annan told the gathering of recent developments and achievements in Haiti, and showed a wonderful video that demon-

strated a partnership with the Cite Soleil Community School. Statistics show that fewer than 50 percent of school-aged children attend school; the goal is help Haitians change Haiti through education.

The thought is to train the teachers and community leaders and this current generation of students. Eventually, through those teachers, the number of students will multiply exponentially, insuring long term success.

Attendees were also made aware

of a couple of upcoming fundraisers. Sara and Ed Dessureau from the Vero Beach Theater Guild noted that Haiti Partners would be a co-beneficiary with the Guild at a special fundraising production of *Driving Miss Daisy* on Feb. 5 and 6. And on Feb. 13, there will be an "Inspired by Love" Haiti Partners Benefit Dinner at the Community Church of Vero Beach that will feature author and inspirational speaker, Tony Campolo. The dinner will also have a silent auction of beautiful Haitian artwork.



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Hibiscus Children's Center Winter Gala



Presenting Sponsor Shay Rowe, of Mercedes Benz Porsche Audi of Melbourne and Daisy Whitehill



Charlotte Kay, Lyra Mickley, Silvia Cancio and Suzanne Bertman
Photos: Mary Schenkel



Co-chairs Sue Sharpe and Carole Casey with Heloise Halcomb and Raquel Tilton

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

An air of mystique charmed guests throughout the evening at the Hibiscus Children's Center Illusions themed Winter Gala, co-chaired by Carole Casey and Sue Sharpe. From the moment cars approached the portico of The Moorings Club it was clear that the event would be special. Talented young acrobats from the Recreation Department's Performing Arts Aerial Antics Circus were executing their graceful moves outside, while dangling from shimmering waves of cloth. Inside, colorful little spandex forms



John Michael and Carla Matthews with Marge and Randy Riley

came to 'life', while several "calico cat" types lounged about in languid poses. Guests mingled during the cocktail

hour and perused more than 150 donated silent auction items collected by members of the creative gala com-



Rosemary Lowenberg, Nancy and Mel Goodes, Christine Masseau, John Lowenberg and France Kenyon

mittee. Red was most definitely the favored color of choice among the guests, with numerous ladies sporting festive red evening dresses and gentlemen donning red cummerbunds and ties.

A wine lottery featured 100 bottles of fine wines valued between \$20 and \$250. The bottles were all tightly wrapped in silver foil, no peeking allowed, and for \$20 people could put their name on what they hoped would be one of the more exceptional ones. The bottles went quickly and quite a few people were very pleased at the end of the evening when the labels were revealed.

Ladies were enticed by the Magic Keys lottery; five out of 100 keys sold throughout the evening opened the glass jewelry case which contained five stunning pieces of jewelry. Winning key-holders chose from Terri Lynn Warley's freshwater pearl necklace, donated from her Festive by Terri Lynn Collection; a sterling silver pendant necklace from Wirewrapping by Alicia, donated by Alicia Quinn; a Kumihimo Sea Bead necklace designed and donated by Lisa Dufresne, a gold and silver beaded bracelet designed and donated by Mary Winters; and 14K gold and onyx earrings from John Michael Matthews Fine Jewelry, donated by Linda and Mel Teetz.

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Private Stock Productions acrobat

Sheelah Black was elated to be the first one with a winning key and women quickly gathered around to see who would be next.

And, because the spirit of the event was truly all about the kids of the Hibiscus Children's Center, sponsorship gifts that would give a child "safety, comfort, knowledge and self-esteem" were welcomed at various levels, from \$100 for a year's worth of baby diapers to \$1,000 to sponsor a child for a month.

Carole Casey was bubbling with excitement, anticipating everyone's reaction as they slowly moved from the cocktail hour into the dining room. The entire dining room was bathed in soft hues of amethyst from gauze covered lights.

The lighting, combined with purple tablecloths and candle centerpieces set atop mirrors, gave the room an ethereal quality.

Diners were entertained by jugglers and performers from Orlando's Private Stock Productions company, who also provided an outstanding band that had people out on the dance floor at every opportunity. Additional entertainment was offered in the form of a superbly supple circus performer who appeared on stage cocooned in white diaphanous fabric. Unfurling the fabric, she proceeded to use it to punctuate her fabulous Cirque du Soleil style acrobatic routine. Also during dinner magician Mike Futch wandered from table to table amazing and puzzling guests with his sleight of hand card tricks.

Auctioneer George Blythe presided over the live auction items, which in-

cluded trips to Cancun, won by Alan and Linda Romano; Las Vegas, won by Daisy and Cliff Whitehill; and New York, won by Jan and Mike Harrell.

Closer to home, Mel and Nancy Goodes were the high bidders on the Dinner for 12 by Chef David Rodriguez and Peter and Maureen Kleinknecht were high bidders for the eye-catching diamond necklace donated by John Michael Matthews. And finally, Helen and Earl Robertson were winning bidders for Santa Claus, disguised as George Blythe (or is it the other way

around) who donated his Santa services.

After a gourmet dinner of filet mignon and lobster cakes topped by Viennese desserts and cordials served in dark chocolate cups, guests finished out the evening making last bids on the silent auction items and taking turns on the dance floor.

Proceeds from the event benefit the programs and services of the Hibiscus Children's Center.

These include the Hibiscus Children's Shelter which provides a safe

environment to children infant to age 12 who have been removed from their home because of abuse, neglect or abandonment. The Hibiscus Children's Village offers a safe haven for children up to age 17 where they can live in a family-like environment and interact with other children and teens. Each year, the Shelter and Village provide 16,000 safe nights to children. Additionally, the Child Development Center serves 77 children each day, preparing them for kindergarten and life.

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People

Atlantic Classical Orchestra Cocktails and Ensemble

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

The Atlantic Classical Orchestra, a world-class ensemble of talented musicians, is heading into its 20th Anniversary season.

Originally founded by Vero Beach resident and professional conductor, Andrew McMullan, this "jewel of the Treasure Coast" is currently under the baton of Artistic Director Stewart Robertson. Members of the board of directors have been reaching out to the community with a series of Cocktails and Ensemble gatherings, including one last Sunday at The Moorings. Robertson spoke to the group first, giving them a little insight into the upcoming season, and then guests were treated to the orchestra's String Quartet concert. Quartet leader Rafael Elvira was joined by Monica Cheveresin, Modesto Marciano and Ben Salsbury.

The Atlantic Classical Orchestra possesses what board member Virginia Kimmel describes as a European quality combined with American spontaneity. That flair might have something to do with the international makeup of the orchestra. The orchestra's musicians come from all over the world and, while most now



Stewart Robertson, conductor for the Atlantic Classical Orchestra, discusses the upcoming season before a performance by a string quartet.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

call Florida home, there are a few who have a major commute for each concert. Concertmaster Lenny Sigal flies in from Connecticut, Principal

Cellist Ian Maksin from Chicago and Principal Bassoonist Aura Trevino commutes all the way from Caracas, Venezuela.

Robertson noted that the orchestra has carved out a niche for itself playing programs that are just a little bit different, although he considers the upcoming season to be a more classical season, albeit with a twist.

The first in the series features a unique chamber version of Gustav Mahler's Fourth Symphony. He described how, in the 1920s when the arts were having a difficult time, pieces were occasionally arranged with fewer instruments because that was all they could afford. The version the orchestra will play was arranged in 2007 and gives the piece what Robertson calls a freshness and vitality. Also in that series is Vaughn Williams' *Overture to The Wasps* and Ravel's *La Tombeau de Couperin*.

The second in the series features Beethoven's bucolic Symphony #6 *Pastoral*, depicting a beautiful countryside, paired with Richard Strauss' *Tanzsuite* and Juan Francisco Sans jazz-influenced *De la Liberacion de las Formas*.

The third presents Beethoven's magnificent *Violin Concerto*, per-

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formed by Tchaikovsky Competition gold medalist Elmar Oliveira. That series also includes the jazz-influenced pieces *Adjustable Wrench* composed by Michael Torke and *La Creation du Monde* by Darius Milhaud.

The last in the series offers Schumann's romantic-era *Piano Concerto* and a completed version of Schubert's Symphony #8 *Unfinished Symphony*. It also presents a piece by Paul Dooley, a fresh, young

composer to remember. "Listen for this young man's name because you're sure to hear it again," said Robertson.

Robertson has introduced two additional programs to round out the orchestra's experience – the Chamber Music Series, now in its second year, and a new Behind the Baton Education Program. The Chamber Music Series of concerts are held in partnership with the Vero Beach Museum of Art in the Museum's Leonhardt Auditorium. The series will include Concertmaster Lenny Sigal playing an all Russian program, Principal Cellist Ian Maksin with an all Czech program and orchestra musicians, joined by vocal artists from the Florida Grand Opera, with a program of all Scandinavian works.

The Behind the Baton program is offered through the Indian River State College Lifelong Learning Institute and gives music lovers the opportunity to get an in-depth study in the morning of the pieces being played in concert that same evening. Concert-goers have appreciated Robertson's brief pre-concert presentations and this provides an opportunity for a more comprehensive version.



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Incoming Tide

Loving life: One cupcake at a time

BY MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

Like frosting in a layer cake, Ashlee and Ryan Wykoff's extremely close Italian family ties hold the brother and sister together, even as they labor through the intensity of starting their own business. Though they are five years apart, they have in fact been

close forever. Their strong sense of family is in part what brought them back to Vero Beach, both of them leaving college unfinished to open Frosting, a new cake shop on Cardinal Drive.

Ashlee and Ryan have been living with their parents, Barbara Lee and Rick Monday, just around the corner from the shop. Though Ryan has plans to move into an apartment on his own soon, that likely won't change

the family dynamic: this is a family so close that the Wykoff kids' dad, Rick Wykoff, who also lives in Vero, plays golf with their sportscaster stepdad, Barbara Lee's husband, former Dodger Rick Monday. In this week's Incoming Tide, we look at another case of second-generation Vero-ites who leave only to realize they don't want to live anywhere else.

There's a photo in Ashlee Wykoff's baby album from her first birthday. Her parents have just set a spectacular and very expensive hand-painted cake in front of her. Before the shutter could snap, tiny Ashlee dove in face first, coming up with a mouthful of what would forevermore be her favorite substance on earth: frosting.

Today, Ashlee, 20, and her big brother Ryan, 25, have made frosting their business. Their tiny Cardinal Drive shop, Frosting, opened its doors in August to an explosion of color, laughter and soul-satisfying smells.

For the Wykoffs, it is the very embodiment of the old adage about choosing a career: Love what you do.

It's a lesson they put into play earlier than most: both decided to at least temporarily give up college in order to come home to Vero Beach and live their dream.

Now, in the cramped kitchen behind the party-like scene in the front of the shop, they are learning real-life business lessons, elbow to elbow in a spoon-licker's paradise, mixing batter, filling pans, cutting out fondant and carving cake.

"I've always loved art," says Ashlee. "I just never knew you could make art out of cake."

Born in Fort Lauderdale, the children came to Vero when Ashlee was a baby and Ryan was 5. Barbara Lee Monday herself grew up here, and was a cheerleader at St. Edward's School.

Ashlee Wykoff, a 2007 cum laude graduate of St. Ed's, was studying at the University of Miami when she decided to come home. "I missed that small-town atmosphere where the whole town is your family, and you go to all the same places and everyone knows you."

Ryan was a 2003 graduate of St. Ed's



Ashlee Wykoff tops off a cupcake with a sugar flower.
Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

who lettered in three sports, and left to play football at Marshall University. After a year, he developed a herniated disk in his back, and came home to Vero for a year of rehabilitation. He then transferred to Virginia Tech, majoring in economics, and played for two more years, before leaving to travel around the country. In the end, he too came back to Vero.

"I've lived in big cities," says Ryan. "But there is a great 'comfortability' here that is not afforded everywhere. That's why we came back."

Though the product is sweet, the work is tough. Days start at 7 a.m. and they've been known to return late at night to bake, often in their pajama pants and T-shirts, their mom says. Still, it would be hard to imagine a happier career.

"My whole life I've known I wanted to do my own thing," says Ashlee. "I didn't want to be in a cubicle. Now I have my own business and use my creativity."

Though neither Ashlee nor Ryan has any formal training in culinary arts, the cakes the pair are making are indeed "sugar art," as it is known in the business.

Their creations are astonishing, invented out of whole, well, batter: mixed, baked, sculpted, shaped, stacked, iced, etched and painted. They are designed and made entirely



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Incoming Tide

by the Wykoffs, with the help of their mom, Barbara Lee Monday and their one employee: Ryan's best friend, graphic designer Andy Capak.

Along with an endless array of decorated cupcakes, the cake cases these days include a murky-green alligator's head, a fighter pilot's helmet, a precariously topsy-turvy pink-and-black polka-dotted tower, and an ivory evening shoe looking for all the world like the softest kid and satin, made for a memorial for the late local shoe designer Shannon Britt Miller.

This week, Ashlee is making a wedding cake for a best friend that's in the shape of a Christmas tree.

And they do not tolerate a taste that is less than sumptuous. They constantly tweak recipes and ingredients to expand on what is already a 65-flavor repertoire, and refuse to sell day-old cupcakes for fear of damaging their reputation for rich moist cakes. Even wedding cakes are baked the day before the event – as opposed to a week before, as is common in the business, preserved in a cooler or frozen as the multi-step process of decorating takes

place over several days.

For Ashlee and Ryan, it takes place in 24 hours.

"People don't understand how much planning goes into a cake," says Ashlee.

"It's like building a house," interjects Ryan. "The structure, the composition and the facets from A to Z."

Since the shop opened, the brother and sister have barely had a day off. On day one, the buzz was enough to have lines out the door. "When Ashlee took the paper off the windows, we didn't even know if people would come," says their mom. "It got so busy we had to call Andy in from upstairs."

Andy Capak was designing graphics for the shop in an office upstairs. Now he is working full time baking.

"Baking is hard," says Ryan. "I'm used to cooking dinner, where you just throw good stuff together and it works. Ashlee introduced me to the baking world and it's a lot of chemistry. You put too much of something in the batter and you've either got a little tiny hockey puck or a giant humungous cupcake."

In a few weeks, the togetherness is going to become slightly less congested, when the Wykoffs open a sec-

ond space for a storefront kitchen two doors down, with picture windows so passers-by can watch the works in progress. "We're calling it a cake studio," says Barbara Lee Monday. "We want people to see the art that goes into this."

The new space for the kitchen should greatly increase production. On a single day over the Thanksgiving weekend, the shop sold 500 cupcakes.

"I've noticed a similarity between sports and this," he says. "When we get so busy, it's like crunch time on the field. I'm nervous, you've got anxiety, because it's just us back here. We're the whole team, and it's game time."

And there is an added perk: call it the Frosting pheromone. "Girls come up to me and say, 'Mmm, you smell like cake,' " Ryan says. "I have better luck telling them I bake cakes than telling them I play football."

Meanwhile, Ashlee is working on her bachelor's degree in business from University of Florida, taking her courses online. "It's a lot of time management," she says. "But it's kind of fun to take what I'm learning and reading, and relate it to stuff that's actually happening."



Ryan Wykoff adds some sprinkles to one of his cupcake creations at Frosting.

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Arts/Theatre

Christmas at the Museum brings smiles and Santa



Ernest Frazier, 5, tells Santa his Christmas wishes during Christmas at the Museum at the Vero Beach Museum of Art. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY JULIE TARASOVIC
CORRESPONDENT

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" chuckled the man in the red suit as he greeted hundreds of children on Sunday afternoon at the Vero Beach Museum of Art.

Waiting patiently in line for their turn to sit on Santa's lap, parents hovering to make sure the holiday outfits were photo-ready, children leaned around each other to get a

closer look.

"I want lots and lots of toys," said one 5-year-old named Taylor, her red velvet dress twirling as she got closer to the front of the line. "This is my favorite part of Christmas - getting to tell Santa how much I love him and that I've been such a good girl all year!" Her younger brother looked a bit more fearful of the big guy but bravely sat on his lap with a little coaxing.

"We love to see all the kids so ex-



Friends of the Vero Beach Museum of Art: Joan Black, Terry Sullivan, Diane Wilhelm, Cathy Walker, Leigh Bennett and Cherie Thompson.



Students from Osceola Magnet School perform a song.

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cited for the holidays," said Cherie Thompson, chairperson for Christmas at the Museum. "The event draws thousands of people each year and is definitely the largest public event held at the Museum."

Free to everyone, Christmas at the Museum in Vero Beach just puts you in the holiday spirit.

"You can feel the festive atmosphere here and just look at all the happy kids," said Thompson. "The smiles and giggles from the children when Santa walks in are just precious."

Besides getting a photo op with Santa, the Friends of the Vero Beach Museum of Art provide free cookies and refreshments outdoors around the Wahlstrom Sculpture Garden. "Volunteers (Friends) of the Museum brought over 120 dozen cookies this year," said Thompson. "And they are here to serve punch as well for everyone."

The Christmas event has been held every year since 1986 as a way for the Museum to give back to the community. "This is my second year chairing the event," said Thompson. "A lot of planning goes into the prep-

Arts/Theatre



Mia, 4, and Sam Girard, 7, wait for Vero Beach Museum of Art volunteer Eileen Schwartz to say that it's their turn to see Santa.



Visitors to Christmas at the Museum snack on punch and cookies around the courtyard fountain.



Jordan, 8, and Jade Ferguson, 4, make Christmas cards for their mother with help from their grandfather Jim Ferguson.



Museum volunteer Gladys Baldwin sets out a plate of cookies.

aration and organizing.”

Decorating for the event takes a long time but Thompson truly enjoys this part of getting ready being an interior designer herself in town. “We got a later start this year but it takes a good two to three months of work leading up to the day. Last year we had 4,000 people attend and this year looks to be the same or more.”

Holiday singing and dancing performances were also there to put attendees in the spirit during the three-hour event in the Holmes Great Hall. “We usually have the same performers each year including the Serendipity Dancers, Vero Beach High School, Riverside Star Troop, Osceola Magnet School and Beachland Elementary,” said Thompson.

After your children divulged their Christmas lists to Santa, and indulged on yummy cookies and punch, the Museum also provided holiday crafts in the art school studios. Volunteers were on hand to help children design and create their own Holiday cards.

Rounding out the Christmas at the Museum Friends committee this year were Diane Wilhelm, Leigh Bennett, Joan Black, Cathy Walker and Terry Sullivan.

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Cynci Cutter creating art of vibrant magical layers

BY L. L. ANGELL
COLUMNIST

Cynci Cutter makes magical art in a house just as magical, a Central Beach hideaway that from the outside, offers little hint of the artist's inspiration inside.

of paradise. Cutter paints spellbinding layers upon layers of saturated colors in vivid designs filling every inch of the canvas.

Artist and teacher, Cutter helped pioneer the school district's first art curriculum back in 1982, a year after moving here. She continues teaching the county's school children.



Artist Cynci Cutter works on one of her new paintings at her home studio. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Filled with art, plants, a 150-year-old blue-and-white quilt her great grandmother made and a dainty white cat named Lilly-Belle, this purposefully serene sanctuary is where Cutter creates her glorious paintings: large oils that silently zoom in on private glimpses

Meanwhile, she manages to find the time and energy to paint. She describes her oil paintings this way: "I paint tropical vegetation and flora and fauna. People want to call them landscapes but there is no horizon, no specific time of day, no particular location."

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Maybe that's why they refuse to be stereotyped. Many are hyper-realistic, painted from photographs she has taken during nature walks. But they never feel like *National Geographic* photos because in every painting of shrimp-pink ginger plants, and deepest green hammock and leafy canopy, Cutter has captured a shimmer of mystery, that indefinable thing that makes nature so seductive.

There's a tranquility here that's seductive too. It's no accident that this hideaway fits her like a glove. Living here since 1990, she has made the house her oasis—a place where she can work and work and work.

From the outside, one could easily drive by without a second glance at this gray stone house on Date Palm. But, step inside and feel the difference. An artist lives here. Every room is a carefully cut jewel.

Cutter has been making original art as well as teaching art here in the public schools since 1981 when she moved here, at 28, from Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

"My dad bought a boat business here," she says.

Cutter was the first of four art teachers to create the elementary art curriculum in 1982. Her accomplishments as an artist and as a teacher are legendary, her influence on thousands of students as well as the school district's art program is incalculable.

"I'm the last of the four to still be teaching. One year, I taught 800 students a week. I was teaching at Osceola two days a week and at Thompson three days a week."

Back in 1980, Cutter became involved with the Vero Beach Museum of Art's Children's Art Festival in Riverside Park, along with fellow teacher Wendy Alexander and museum volunteer Toni Hamner.

"Toni and Wendy and I would buy all the materials, then divide them up between us and set up the booths, teach the volunteers how to do the booth's particular art project, then knock it all down, help clean up and put it away for next year."

Cutter's own luscious paintings are certainly out there, recognized and appreciated.

A banner moment was her 2005 show, *Efflorescent Dreamscapes*, at the Amsterdam Whitney Gallery in New York City. Last month, Cutter's work was part of the Merrill Lynch Invitational art show in Vero. Then there's the upcoming show at the A. E. Backus Museum in Ft. Pierce, *Through Women's Eyes—By Women's Hands*, opening Jan. 6.

When Cutter isn't painting she's

teaching and when she isn't teaching she's painting.

Her studio with southern, eastern, and northern exposures, is always filled with music, Cutter says. She puts her canvas directly on the wall and paints sitting in a rolling chair.

Tubes of oils are spread out on a drafting table where they are squeezed onto a large glass palette. Sliding glass doors open onto a pool and inner patio.

Today, three big oils are on view and

a fourth, a work in progress, hangs on the wall by her drafting table. She stands before "Two Pink Gingers," a 30 by 42-inch painting she made in 2006. It's a classic Cutter: the ginger plants are sharply defined, vivid, with crisp edges. But something is different. Her work is in transition.

"You can see these are softer," Cutter says, pointing to some leaves in the foreground. "The transition was starting in 2006. But overall, this painting is indicative of my work for

many years."

She shows a number of paintings, the more recent, the more different.

"For so many years, I didn't know if I was a painter or not," she says. "I had to make things realistic. An audience thinks when you make something realistic, you've arrived as a painter. I don't care about that anymore."

Cutter has grown beyond caring what people think. "I know I have all those skills in my bag, but now I want to have fun."

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Arts/Theatre

Rain didn't dampen Christmas in the Park

Arts and Crafts show a big hit among locals



Patta and Kate Conboy, 8, take a break from perusing the booths to pet four-legged show goer Henry Higgins Smither's. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



Mark Feldner of Feldner's Etched Glass Studios, Inc. positions a glass door for display at his tent.



Braving the overcast weather, Chris and Steve Thurlow look through the artwork of Morris Johnson Mixed Media at the Christmas in the Park arts and crafts show at Riverside Park on Saturday.

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My Vero

Lots of fun to keep families busy in December

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

A little culture, especially when performed by the younger generation, is always a good choice and the **Holiday Winter Wonderland Concerts** might be just the ticket. The concerts, presented by members of the Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Department, will be held on Sunday, **Dec. 13** at 2 p.m. and Monday, **Dec. 14** at 7 p.m. in the VBHS Performing Arts Center. Budding artists should enjoy listening to traditional pieces such as the *Procession of Nobles*, as well as contemporary arrangements like the *Festive Sounds of Hanukkah* performed by the symphonic and jazz bands. The VBHS Symphony Orchestra will perform a Celtic Christmas Medley and the VBHS Concert and Show Choirs will sing various pieces including *Pachelbel's Canon*, *Jingle Bell Rock*, *Silent Night*, and *Silver Bells*. Call 564-5537 for tickets.



McKee model railroad

McKee Botanical Garden is beautiful any time of year, but when it is decorated in its premium holiday finery and lit by thousands of twinkling lights it is simply magical.

Christmas music and luminaria-lit pathways only add to the festive ambiance. Holidays at McKee runs from **Friday, Dec. 18 through Monday Dec. 21** from 6 to 8 p.m. Kids will enjoy the large scale model train and miniature Christmas village and a chance to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. Adults will be tempted by hundreds of unique gifts in the Garden Gift Shop, and the mouth-watering sweets served at the Garden Cafe will entice young and old alike. It will be interesting to see what sort of decorations the 30 life-sized dinosaurs – part of a current display – will sport for the holidays but it's sure to be spectacular. Regular admission prices apply. 794.0601 or www.mckee-garden.org.

Take the family west of town to see some Florida snow at the Sixth Annual **WinterFest at Pointe West** event, 2 to 6 p.m. on **Saturday, Dec. 19**. Twenty-five tons of snow will be piled high for kids to take a ride down a giant snow slide. A smaller bunny slope will give

littler ones a chance to slosh around (quite literally) in the white stuff. The Penguin Pond ice skating rink is open to all ages; no need to bring your own skates. And, of course, that ubiquitous Santa Claus will be making an appearance so bring your camera.

Co-hosted by Pointe West and the Indian River County Recreation Department, there will also be live entertainment and all sorts of other kid-friendly activities. Members of the Exchange Club of Indian River Foundation will

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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My Vero

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

be at WinterFest holding a Merry Christmas Winner-Fest Raffle, with all sorts of prizes including this year's hottest ZhuZhu "smart" hamster pets (considerably less messy than the real thing), an iPod Nano, Nintendo DSi systems and bikes. Stay for the Fire & Ice Fireworks Celebration that begins at 6 p.m. It's one of the best fireworks displays Vero has to offer.

Fabulous Fundraisers

Mardy's Tennis and Jake's Music Fest to benefit the Mardy Fish Foundation has announced that some of Nashville's best country songwriters will open for Owen at the Jake Owen concert at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11 at the Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Center. Joining Owen will be 2004 Songwriter of the Year Casey Beathard, known for up-tempo party anthems, who has written Top 10 songs for artists including Kenny Chesney, Trace Atkins, Gary Allen, Tracy Byrd, and Billy Currington.

Kevin Denney produced the Top 20 hit *That's Just Jessie*, and is known for his songwriting talents displayed on Tracy Byrd's *A Cowboy and a Dancer*

and on Craig Morgan's *Bonfire*. Kendall Marvel penned hits such as *Right Where I Need to Be*, recorded by Gary Allen, along with the Jake Owen hits *Startin' With Me*, *Yee Haw*, *Hard Not To Love You*, *Places to Run*, *You Can Thank Dixie* and *Don't Think I Can't Love You*. Jimmy Ritchey wrote George Strait's *Twang*, five songs off of Mark Chesnutt's *Savin' the Honky Tonk*, and *Strong* by Tracy Lawrence. He has worked with Owen since the beginning of his career, co-writing over 15 songs with him. Some of Phillip White's Top 10 songs include the Rascal Flatts hit *I'm Moving On*, Reba McEntire's *I'm a Survivor* and *He Gets That From Me*, and Neal McCoy's *Billy's Got His Beer Goggles On*.

Organizers have also announced that sportscaster Brett Haber will be the live auction emcee at the 12:30 p.m. Barbeque Luncheon at Grand Harbor, Saturday, Dec. 12.

Following the luncheon at 2:30 p.m., a singles match will feature Mardy Fish vs. James Blake. Dave Martin has joined the tennis exhibition and will face off in a doubles match pairing with Fish against Blake and Jesse Levine. (866) 333-7623.

Hagood: The visiting artist at Artist Guild Gallery



Featured artist Dr. Johnson Hagood

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

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Pilots make life-saving trips happen through Angel Flight

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

For patients who must travel across the state or across the country for medical treatments or surgery, taking to the highway may not be the best or even a viable option. That's where Angel Flight and pilots like Randy Rolf, Don Lindell and Michael Smith come in.

The trio of local men — retirees Rolf and Lindell who live on the barrier island and Smith who lives in Sebastian and works at Indian River Medical Center — make a difference by helping people and supplies get to their destinations.

"I've had people who I've flown say to me, 'You really are an angel,'" the 77-year-old Lindell chuckled, adding that his wife Barbara takes issue with that characterization of her husband.

Angels or not, the volunteer pilots provide a great service for sick

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Michael Smith, Don Lindell and Randy Rolf stand in front of Rolf's 58 Beechcraft Baron.
Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

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Health

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

people in need, and sometimes their actions are downright inspiring. In fact, Smith got started in Angel Flight because of Lindell and other Command Pilots, as the 47-year-old was once on the receiving end of a very important Angel Flight.

"I got a call at about 8 a.m. from Angel Flight asking if I was available immediately for a flight, they said we had to get a patient to Gainesville for

an organ transplant," Lindell said.

Smith was on the list to receive a kidney-pancreas transplant at Shands Hospital in Gainesville and on Nov. 16, 2005 they'd found what they thought were compatible organs and needed him to get there within a few hours. A type one diabetic diagnosed during a pre-enlistment military physical, Smith had been on dialysis and his health was rapidly failing. He said he went from someone who was working full time,

running a small business on the side and raising a stepson to being nearly homebound, watching television and doing word puzzles to pass the time.

"I was pretty calm, I was getting ready to go to dialysis when I got the call to go have my transplant instead," Smith said. "I had to get my life back and I had faith that it would all come out for the best. I had been praying that I could buy enough time to get the call."

Lindell, who has 43 years of flight experience and more than 6,000 hours in the air, accepted the "mission," as the flights are called. All the pilots who had committed to fly Smith were already out on missions and Lindell agreed to take the last-minute assignment.

He met Smith and his mother, Nancy Cran, who is retired from the John's Island Club catering department, at the Vero Beach Municipal Airport and took off for Gainesville. Smith's antigen tests showed that the surgery was "a go" and he had the transplant at 7 p.m. that evening.

Never having flown a transplant patient before, Lindell was curious how it all turned out.

"I called the next day and they put me through to Michael's room and I talked to him," he said. "He kept telling me how I had saved his life. I told him that all I did was get him there, it was the doctors and nurses who saved his life."

Post-transplant and throughout his recovery, Smith again called on Angel Flight to take him back to Gainesville for follow-up care six times. Being able to avoid the long drives in his condition was a huge relief, he said. But just finding out about Angel Flight from a nurse at Holmes Regional Medical Center, Smith said, was an unexpected Godsend for which he will always be grateful.

"I had always wanted to fly, my dad flew remote control airplanes and I remember wanting to fly as a kid," Smith said. "I got my single-engine license in April 2008."

After his new organs enabled him to resume an active life, Smith began volunteering with Angel flight while taking flying lessons. He has been working as an Earth Angel — meaning a ground support person — and as a pilot flying supplies for booths at festivals and flying around the state making speeches about Angel Flight. He met with executives at Piper this week to drum up support for the program among the local aviation community.

Very soon, when he gets a few more flight hours under his belt to meet the 250 Pilot in Command hours required, Smith will be authorized to transport patients. He rents time in a Piper Cherokee PA-28 at the Vero Beach Airport.

"I can't wait until I fly my first mission with a patient," Smith said. "It's like that movie, 'Pay it Forward' and I don't need any recognition because I love doing it."

Lindell said flying patients like

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Health

Smith really opened his eyes to the plight of people with chronic diseases and to the need for safe, quick transportation to medical facilities. Lindell is a retired educator who also worked for the New York State Education Department prior to moving to Vero's barrier island full time in 1993 and signing on with Angel Flight. It was a way to keep his skills up as a pilot and get more use out of his plane. Lindell recently gave up missions when he sold his plane.

His years with Angel Flight have given Lindell memories of flying young and old to destinations all over the southeastern United States.

"The youngest was a baby who I flew to Miami to have treatments on its head because it was born with an elongated shape. I didn't even know they could do that," he said. "And the oldest was a blind veteran that I flew to the Veterans Administration hospital."

Randy Rolf, a John's Island resident who moved to Vero Beach from Missouri where he ran a multi-national industrial uniform business, got his pilot license when he was 22 years old in 1964 through the Reserve Officers Training Corps at the University of Missouri. He then enlisted in the U.S. Army, but instead of becoming a pilot, he worked at the Pentagon.

Rolf doesn't remember how he first heard about Angel Flight, but he said the organization takes out ads in flight magazines and does booths at air shows, so he's known it existed for a long time.

He finally signed up in 2001 after he and his wife, Sandy, retired and moved to Vero Beach full time in 1999.

Angel Flight Southeast pilots are part of a cadre of 500 pilots in Florida and about 7,000 volunteers nationwide. When they communicate on the radio or file a flight plan, they use a special call sign NGL to identify them. Rolf said the program is widely known and respected in the aviation world and that most airports give Angel Flight pilots a break on fuel because they know they're donating their time and their planes for a good cause. A trip back and forth to Tampa costs Rolf about \$200 in fuel, but the missions keep him up in the air so his skills stay sharp and they keep his plane in the air more and in the hangar less.

Rolf said Angel Flight Southeast coordinates with other regional organizations if patients need to fly farther than Georgia. They call those flights multi-leg missions and one Angel Flight pilot takes the patient

part of the way, meets another pilot at the airport and hands off the patient for the next leg of the trip. Much of the time, the patients and their family members have not taken a long trip in a small, private plane before, so the mission is an adventure for them.

"Occasionally you'll get someone who is a little scared. Once I had a 14-year-old girl and we were flying the first leg of a three-leg mission in rain and clouds and she was a little

shook up," Rolf said. "Almost everyone has been very appreciative, it's nice when they appreciate what we're doing."

Having Angel Flight to rely upon allows the patient to feel, if only for a short time, less dependent on family and friends who may have sacrificed a great deal to care for them and transport them for medical care. Even for patients requiring multiple flights, the volunteer pilots can split up the missions so no one person

feels he has to fly the same patient to all their treatments.

Missions are posted on a website where pilots can log in, look at what is needed and respond if they are available. They then coordinate a date, time and place to meet and, most of the time, never see the patient again. It's the perfect way to make a difference for someone who travels a lot, is a seasonal resident or has a busy schedule due to work or

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



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Cary L. Stowe, M.D.

Mark A. Malias, M.D.

Health

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

family obligations, as pilots can pick and choose the missions to accept.

For those who do not have airplanes but still want to help, Angel Flight accepts donations, which pay for the operation of the headquarters and go to what they call a Rainy Day Fund, out of which Angel Flight purchases commercial airline tickets for patients when weather conditions will not permit its pilots and

their small craft to safely fly.

For Rolf, donating his time and the use of his six-seater Beech Baron twin-engine airplane is something unique that he can do.

"A lot of people can write a check," he said. "But not a lot of people can fly a plane and I'm happy that I'm able to do this."

More pilots are always needed and, Rolf said, an increased demand for missions through awareness in the Vero Beach area might create

the excitement needed to get more Command Pilots on board.

"Part of the issue is that we don't have a lot of missions in close prox-

imity to Vero," he said. "By the number of planes that there are at the Vero Beach airport, there are definitely people here who could do this."

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It's ... snowtime!

On a Colorado mountain, the resort of his dreams



Photos: Casey Day

BY NATHAN BORCHELT
WASHINGTON POST

Arapahoe Basin. When I was a kid, it was the place where I most loved to ski. I moved from Denver to Houston when I was 2, but every winter my parents — die-hard skiers and Coloradans at heart — took me and my sister back to the Mile High City, where we'd bed down with relatives and resort-hop for a week.

Back then, reaching A Basin, which sits on the western side of 11,990-foot Loveland Pass, required commitment. The drive bypassed other resorts on Interstate 70 west of Denver and linked up with Route 6, which carved over the Continental Divide via a series of hairpin turns that were perilous in winter.

We could have used the Eisenhower Tunnel, which cuts under the pass,

but it was typically choked with near-standstill truck traffic. So the dedicated would brave the Divide, drop down and roll into the resort parking lot. In my parents' mind, the treacherous route was justified.

Unlike the easier-to-reach resorts, Arapahoe Basin was a true skier's mountain. No day spas or faux-fur boutique shops, no magic carpets or ice skating rinks. Just 2,270 vertical feet of epic, snow-covered terrain.

Half of the mountain rises above the timberline and offers a dizzying series of steep bowls, cornices and chutes, with runs for all skill sets zigzagging down to the base, some hidden in the trees, some groomed to a smooth corduroy, some slicing between sheets of exposed rock.

A no-frills lodge anchored the resort, and a relaxed, local vibe perme-

ated the scene, typified by the spontaneous party that often erupted in the early-bird parking lot. We'd park, stash soda and beer in the snowbanks, ski all day and retire to the Beach — as the lot was affectionately called — at day's end.

The annual pilgrimages ended when my family moved to the East Coast. But A Basin stayed on my mind.

For more than a decade, I wasn't able to make it back. Until January 2008, when Arapahoe Basin forced the issue by nearly doubling its size. The 400-acre expansion, dubbed the Montezuma Bowl, was the first in the resort's 63-year history and the largest in North America that year, increasing the skiable terrain by 80 percent. To me, it was a personalized invitation to return.


Arapahoe Basin traces its origins to a veteran of the Army's 10th Mountain Division and two Winter Olympians, who in 1946 secured a special-use per-

mit from the U.S. Forest Service for skiing on the mountain. A single mid-mountain tow rope accessed the summit, and an old Army weapons carrier towed by a 4x4 truck shuttled skiers to the rope from the parking lot.

Today, the resort is awash in superlatives; at 13,050 feet it's the highest-elevation resort in North America, with a marathon season that stretches from mid-October to June. It boasts the continent's highest terrain park, it gets more than 350 inches of snow a year, and the 900 skiable acres don't include the 110 acres off the legendary East Wall, a vertiginous series of hike-to runs that stare you down as you ride up the resort's front side.

The summit panorama overwhelms, with the Continental Divide at your feet and all around you views of such iconic Rocky Mountain peaks as Independence Mountain, Peak 10 and Bald Mountain, as well as the Keystone and

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Travel

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

Breckenridge ski resorts.

Reverence for this monumental landscape underscored much of the \$3 million expansion, which forwent traditional construction techniques in an attempt to retain the existing landscape rather than transform it.

Working closely with White River

Instead, a Sky Crane helicopter transported and installed the lift towers, cables and chairs while the rest of the construction material was brought in by hand.

"The terrain is very conducive to skiing," Roger Poirier, winter sports program manager at the White River National Forest, said in an e-mail. It's "an ideal location, since it would require

Minus the central lift and two groomed intermediate slopes, Montezuma Bowl today looks much as it did when the resort first opened; 36 new runs are hidden among the trees. Zuma Cornice dominates the ridgeline to the skier's right, with steep double-black runs that cut between exposed rock. To the left, the Mountain Goat Traverse leads to a small cache of ad-

highest peak, the quad-burning slope consistently ranks as one of the most challenging runs in the world.

I flirted with exhaustion for two runs before being sufficiently humbled. Then we headed back up and dropped into Montezuma. And there I stayed, carving wide turns in the loose snow that filled the bowl and then delving deeper into the narrow runs concealed by the trees, which revealed the real charm of the expansion.

Forget those energy-drink images of the sport as all extreme, all the time. Arapahoe Basin has always promised a true skier's experience, and Montezuma Bowl delivers. Drop into the trees below the bowl, and you enter a quiet, all-natural realm that invites exploration that's simultaneously riveting, exciting and meditative. Skiing at its finest.

Later in the day I met up with two friends who'd relocated to Vail. They'd never skied Arapahoe Basin, even though their season pass afforded free entry to A Basin as well as nearby Keystone and Breckenridge resorts. By day's end, they were plotting their visit.

Two years later, Montezuma Bowl's impact has been felt. Annual visitation at Arapahoe Basin was up by 70,000 within the first year, and despite the economic downturn, the resort clocked 410,000 skiers and snowboarders last season, the second-biggest season on record. (Impressive numbers, but modest when compared with such higher-profile resorts as Winter Park, which saw nearly 950,000 visitors in 2008-09.)

"Now we find that the resort doesn't feel complete until the back bowl is opened," Hierholzer told me over the phone last week.

And the locals — often the crowd most resistant to change and a significant cog in A Basin's overall personality — seem to love it as well. Not only do they have lift access to terrain previously reserved for those with back-country experience, but the crowds all seem to gravitate toward Montezuma once it opens each January.

"Everyone goes to the back bowl," Hierholzer said. "And the locals have their Pallavicini that they love so much. . . . The scene, the crowd, the vibe hasn't changed."

The resort still has no on-mountain lodging, drawing instead from the nearby infrastructure of its sister resorts Keystone and Breckenridge as well as the towns in Summit County. Ski bums still crash in their cars to catch the first lift, and locals still congregate at Sixth Alley, the bar in the lodge at the base, for après grub. People still host birthday and anniversary parties at the Beach.



National Forest, the resort drastically minimized the environmental impact of the expansion. Only 1 percent of the trees within Montezuma Bowl were felled to create intermediate groomer runs, and no roads were built, an atypical scenario in slope development.

minimal grading, vegetation disturbance and tree clearing to implement. This project is a leading example of balancing a high-quality skiing experience with progressive design features and construction techniques that minimize natural resource impacts."

vanced and intermediate runs.

Both routes funnel toward the center, which is dominated by Columbine and Larkspur, two groomed blue runs that take most of the traffic coming out of the central, above-treeline bowl. You can stick to these groomers or cut off into the trees to hit narrow runs such as Independence and Placer Junction before reaching the base of the Zuma lift.

The new high-speed transport shuttles skiers and riders 1,100 vertical feet back to the top — in nine minutes. Or stay wide of the lift lines and penetrate the expert and advanced hike-back terrain such as Lower Elephant's Trunk, Black Forest and Lightning Trees. Here the crowds thin out, the turns get tight and the legs turn to rubber — before you make the trek back to the lift.

On an uncharacteristically warm February day, I met up with Leigh Hierholzer, director of marketing at the resort for the past 12 years. We hopped the Exhibition lift from the mountain base and yo-yoed over Lenawee Mountain lift, one of two that access the summit.

After carving a few groomers under a bluebird sky with about two inches of fresh snow, we returned to the summit and looped our way over the Pallavicini lift. This two-person lift climbs up the steep face that shoots up from the northern section of the parking lot and is largely responsible for Arapahoe Basin's rep as one of the gnarliest resorts in North America.

More than 15 advanced and expert runs branch off this nose in the ridge, including the famed Pallavicini, a double black with a 40-degree pitch. Named after Pallavicini Couloir, a similarly shaped feature on Austria's

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St. Edward's twins take girls basketball by storm

BY RON HOLUB
CORRESPONDENT

The St. Edward's varsity girls basketball team is packing a one-two punch in the form of twin sisters Tyiesha and Myiesha McLendon.

Athletic and talented, the sisters have become the cornerstone of head coach Rebekah Conti's game plan. In her fourth year as varsity girls head coach at St. Ed's, she leads a band of 10 young women into each contest knowing that the fortunes of her team will likely rest in the quick hands of the sophomore sisters.

"It's pretty incredible to watch them play," Conti said. "Our strength is in our half-court defense. This is the best part of their game. They pressure the ball with outstanding quickness and generate a lot of steals."

At that point, the game plan crystallizes. Those turnovers often lead to scoring opportunities at the other end.

"By far the twins are the catalyst for the team," the coach continued. "The steals enable us to calm down and get into the flow of our offense."

When that happens, Conti turns to the sisters once again.

"I count on them for scoring. Not only do they have basketball talent, they're athletes. They visualize the court and understand the game of basketball."

This basic blueprint by no means excludes other vital elements. Six returnees from last year constitute the core of the team. A nice roster balance exists with three seniors, three juniors and four sophomores.

Seniors Ebony Gunn and Katie Marr are co-captains.

On paper, Conti employs a three guard set with Marr joining the twins in the backcourt and Gunn anchoring the frontcourt with junior Danielle Pierone. But once the action starts, the twins will be prowling the perimeter on defense looking to close down passing lanes and pounce on loose balls.

Gunn and Pierone are accomplished rebounders and capable of adding scoring punch. The two frontcourt veterans also communicate with less experienced teammates regarding positioning and responsibilities on the court. Junior Allie Peed has the ability to provide a nice outside shooting touch as the first substitute off the bench.

The team opened with two close losses as Gunn and Pierone concluded the volleyball season and made the



Tyiesha McLendon

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

transition to basketball. Since then, the Lady Pirates have begun to gel on the court. They reeled off four straight wins through the first week of December.

Tyiesha McLendon was the leading scorer in four of the first six games and has earned the confidence of her coach.

"She is the most consistent player that we have out there," Conti said.

Myiesha is right there as well. She topped the scoring chart once, but the sisters bring a complete game every time by flying all over the court for rebounds and steals.

The McLendons are a team within a team and count on each other in a special way.

"It's fun to have her around because she's always there," Tyiesha McLendon said about the intangible connection she has with her sister on the floor. "We still have a lot to learn but we're growing as time goes on."

Her sister echoed those sentiments with a big grin.

"Like she said, I'm always there, she's always there. Every time I look, she's in my face," said Myiesha McLendon.

In nothing but a reassuring way for Myiesha, no doubt.

They also see themselves as a family within a family. "It's really fun to be playing with this team because everyone comes together as a family," Tyiesha McLendon said. "We all have a strong connection with each other."

Perhaps the signature moment for the team through the early part of the schedule occurred when Gunn spearheaded a comeback win over Holy Trinity Episcopal on Dec. 3 with a



Myiesha McLendon

game high 19 points and 16 rebounds. It was a performance that thrilled her coach on several fronts.

"It was definitely one of my top three favorite wins because we played

so well as a team," Conti noted. "We had 15 assists on the night. Ebony had an unbelievable game."

Gunn plays a critical role underneath the basket, but she prepares for an equally valuable contribution at crunch time that won't be recorded in the final statistics.

"We have a strong group of girls out there," Gunn said, talking about leadership. "We really enjoy playing and have a passion for the game. It's important to have a good leader on the team. When you are in a tough situation in a game, you really need to be in charge and act as a role model for the younger girls."

Assistant coaches Sam Block and Delbra Williams have been with Conti all four years.

For Block and Conti, it's still another example of family within a family. Block is Conti's father.

Conti would like to crack the double digit win barrier for the varsity this year. The Lady Pirates finished at 8-13 last year. Conti is working hard to reach the 10 win mark.

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Style

Beachside merchants offer the best of the season The drizzle didn't dampen the dazzle

MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

It's what everyone wishes would happen on a regular basis, the rare opportunity to shop after dark on Ocean Drive, the traditional evening hours open house, or Friday Night Lights, on the first Friday in December. But this year, blustery winds and drizzle drove everyone back in again, and if they weren't already on the Drive, they likely drove straight home.

Alas, the merchandise set out to sparkle seemed to shine even more in the dreary weather, as a handful of brave souls ventured out to shop and sip wine or nibble cookies.

At best, it made for an evocative evening, imagining how the rest of the country suffers through this season's chill. Trenchcoats seemed a fitting item to scavenge for, the sort that's dressy enough to throw over evening clothes, and Pineapples produced a bunch right up front. There were trenches silky enough to throw over the barest dress, others more substantial to offer a little more protection – if there's ever another night like that one.



Above left: A sparkly reindeer ornament from Raz Imports, Inc. at Veranda. Top right: Veranda storefront, middle left: Roman -Greco inspired jewelry from Elizabeth Locke Jewels, bottom left: Hope Brovont browses the shelves at Veranda in search of Christmas gifts. "This place decorates my house," she said.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



Blondies On Ocean storefront.

Favorites were in black, another in a subtle metallic gold, still another with a scrunchy ruched effect within a shimmering taupe pajama-soft fabric. Carolyn Redfield, the boutique’s owner for 20 years, manages to hit the sort of price point that doesn’t make you wince at not wearing something more than once. Exactly on point with the season’s trends, she showed a group of jewel-toned beauties in silk: strapless short dresses with pleated bodices.

Another standout: a one-shouldered draped jersey dress to the floor, in a print of trees silhouetted against gunmetal grey. Other minimalist designs hit the mark as well, mostly in black, many asymmetrical, nearly all in the range of \$125 to \$200. Redfield also pulled out a swatch book of gorgeous colors for her house silk line of kimono wrap tops and a variety of pant styles.

“I have to have so many different things here because I have such different customers. A 13-year-old girl, a 90-year-old woman.”

Down the way, in Veranda, Hope and Glen Brovont of Dale Sorenson Realty were expounding on the importance of supporting local merchants, and looking like they were loving doing it. Newly named store manager Allison Livingston was raving over a new designer for Veranda, Elizabeth Locke, once


CONTINUED ON PAGE 58




A necklace from Blondies On Ocean.



Shoes from Blondies On Ocean.





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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57

exclusive to Neiman Marcus. Veranda is one of a handful of shops in the country carrying her Roman-Greco inspired pieces. "She bought the rights to 17th century intaglia molds and she's using them with 19K gold, which is unusual," says Livingston. "When the line came in, we couldn't even unpack them. We sold pieces out of the box before we could get them into the case."

Standing guard over the charming children's wing of Very Fitting was a giant Harlequin Great Dane, jowly-faced and quizzical, looking like something



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Question: What hairbrush is the best to give my hair volume?
- Anjie V. of Vero Beach

Answer: Well, I would need to know more about you and your hair to really answer this one, so I invite you to stop in and visit me, let me look at you and I'll give you the correct brush for your hair type, my gift to you. For everyone else, here we go. Hairbrushes are broken into 3 major categories The Paddle, The Vent And The Round and about a million Hybrids thereof. On the issue of Volume lets talk about the undisputed champion, The Round Brush! The three major types in the round family are the (Thermal Brush) generally metal or metal with a ceramic coating and plastic bristles, the (Natural Hair Bristle Brush) generally wood handled with boar hair bristles and the (Hybrid Brush) consisting of any combination you can imagine. Thermals get nice and hot to bend the hair and make bounce, but can be hard on the hair with the plastic bristles.

The Naturals with their boar hair bristles are the greatest for shine and gentle touch, but sometimes don't heat up enough to maximize the body. I personally have fallen in love with the half sister of brushes the half bread the Hybrid, in particular the Natural 100% Boar Hair Bristle with a metallic insert to heat and bend your hair. Oh how I love her! Hope this helps. Word of warning however, you really must assess your personal skill level before you make the purchase. A good brush can cost a few bucks and won't do you much good if you can't maneuver it. Get a few gals together, book a ladies night at my salon and we can sit around with you and your friends and have fun learning and playing with Hair. I Love My Job!!

Thanks for asking The Hair Guy.
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A necklace from Blondies on Ocean.



Some Juicy Couture shoes from Penelope's.



A purse from Penelope's.



A colorful ensemble from Penelope's.



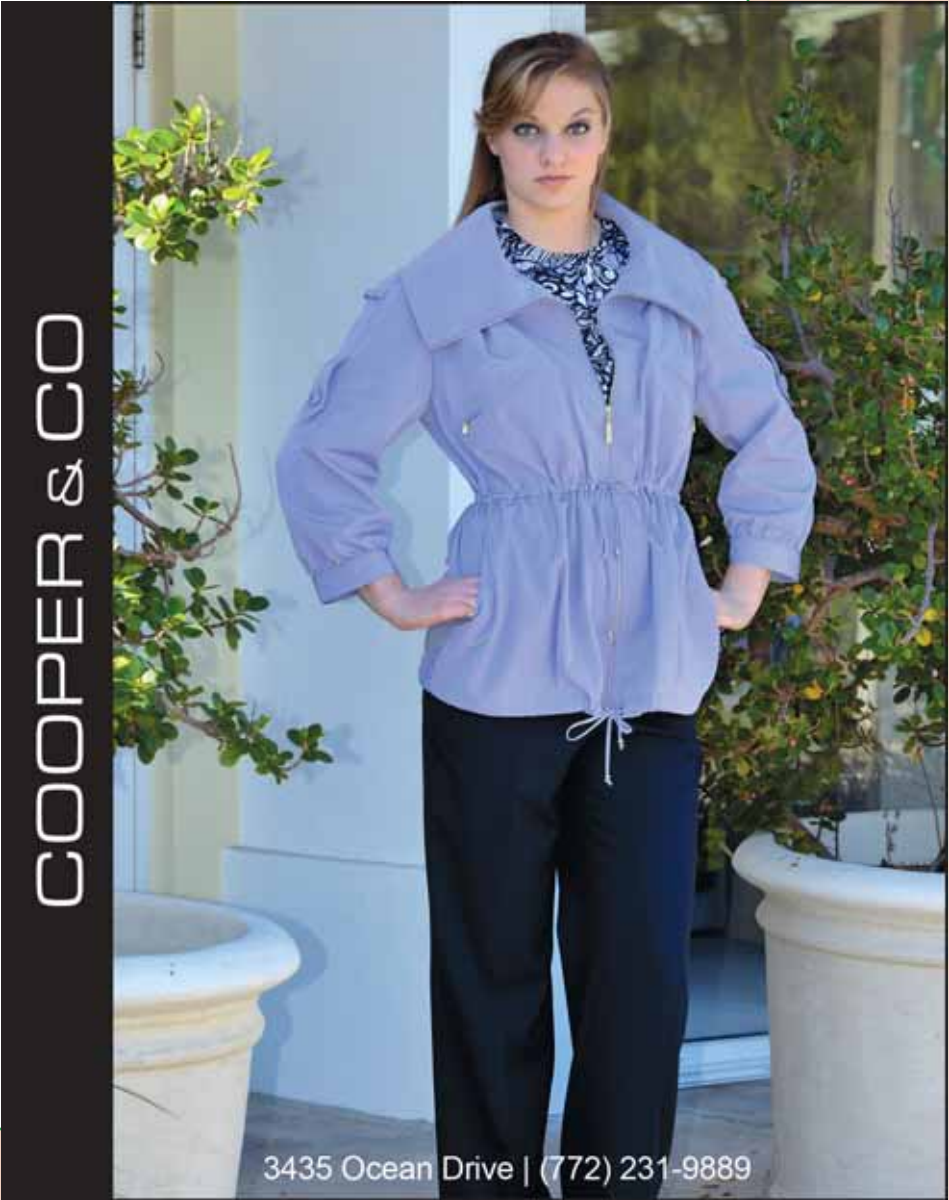
Dresses in assorted colors at Pineapples.

Cruella DeVille would have stolen. The stuffed animal line Hansa has long been a staple at the shop, but this is by far the most extravagant piece, at \$600 and probably 6 feet tall, rivaling the spoil-them-rotten temptations at the FAO Schwarz of old. The rest of the Hansa line there was much more reasonable, if smaller in scale, all hand-wrought in the Philippines; they have an irresistible realism, for cozying up to them on a blustery night that puts you in the mood for pajamas.

As touchable as the stuffed animals were the stunning Chinese inspired print jersey gown and robe by Natori. Warmth, schwarmth. Turn up the heat.

And at Blondies on Ocean, no amount of weather could dampen the spirits of the unstoppable Trish Hickey-Reid, who happened to be popping corks in celebration of her own birthday. Blondies was as packed as ever with friends and "fabo" stuff – Trish's coinage. These days, she has three local de-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60



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Assorted decorative pieces from S and K Limited, Inc.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 59

signers supplying her with accessories; worth seeing in particular are the fat silver-tone links from Kristen Knudsen, and Kim Lopez's chunky little \$45 evening bags with bracelet handles. One client just bought six, Trish says.

Next day, the raindrops slowed to a drizzle but the chill still made things miserable for the crowds anxious to see the new Chelsea's gourmet market at the Village Shops. Owner Scanlan Buckley has high hopes for a menu that is more "restaurant-like," as she put it, than that in her Cardinal Drive store.

With a coffee bar that turns into a wine bar when the mood strikes, and black-and-white umbrellas on order for the terrace, she's hoping it's as much hang-out as carry-out. Chef Kathy Rancatore is offering, among other things, a new line of energy bars developed with her sister, an emergency medicine physician in Fort Lauderdale. Her specs for the delicious little nuggets include only heart-healthy oils, and no refined sugar. They're working at marketing them to schools to get children to eat breakfast once they're already there.



A Harlequin Great Dane stuffed animal from Hansa Toys at Very Fitting.



A gift basket from Chelsea's gourmet market at the Village Shops.



Hand-painted dog dishes at Provenance.



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Andrea Allen does some Christmas shopping for teachers and friends at Christine in the Village Shops.

They probably work for early risers on the golf course too.

Hope is palpable among the Village Shops retailers that Scanlan and her take-away will lead the way to increased foot traffic at the oak-shaded plaza.

Somewhat rearranged and hopefully resurging on the retail scene, the Shops include some relative newcomers along with the long-standing Shores favorites like Vernon Scott and Trafalgar Square.

Vero native Heather Semon has been open only a year in her welcoming home accessories shop, Provenance. Carefully chosen pieces give the place an uncluttered air, as Dudley the King Charles Spaniel greets guests (Heather welcomes canine visitors). Ask Dudley for help with the Christmas list, and he will no doubt steer you to an enchanting line of dog dishes from a Jackson Hole artist, each hand-painted with whimsical garden flowers and studded with porcelain lady bugs. The bowls range in sizes and start at around \$75.

Long-time retailer Nancy Cooper, who owns Sigrid's of Vero in the Village Shops, has the perfect prescription for the holiday bulge blues: absolutely great-fitting black pants in a lightweight washable microfiber. At \$295, you have to divide how many hundreds of times you'll wear them to realize they're probably a bargain.

And at Vernon Scott, where tangerine is the new black, menswear still means Crayon brights, even in \$1200 cashmere blazers. In particular, the argyle sweaters in a watercolor palette would be a great look with a tennis tan, and the hand of all the merchandise is just irresistibly fine. Though the seasonless spring hues are no doubt a sort of sartorial Prozac, owner Vernon Roschach fully acknowledges this is not a look that translates well off-island: What sells in Vero, stays in Vero. But it sure is cheering on a rainy day.



A colorful selection of ties from Vernon Scott Menswear.



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Dining

Restaurant Review

Ti Amo Sempre: A new menu for the season

BY TINA RONDEAU
COLUMNIST

Ti Amo Sempre, which every few years seems to repot itself, is standing pat in its South Beach location this year – focusing its efforts on further improving its charming trattoria and its tempting menu.

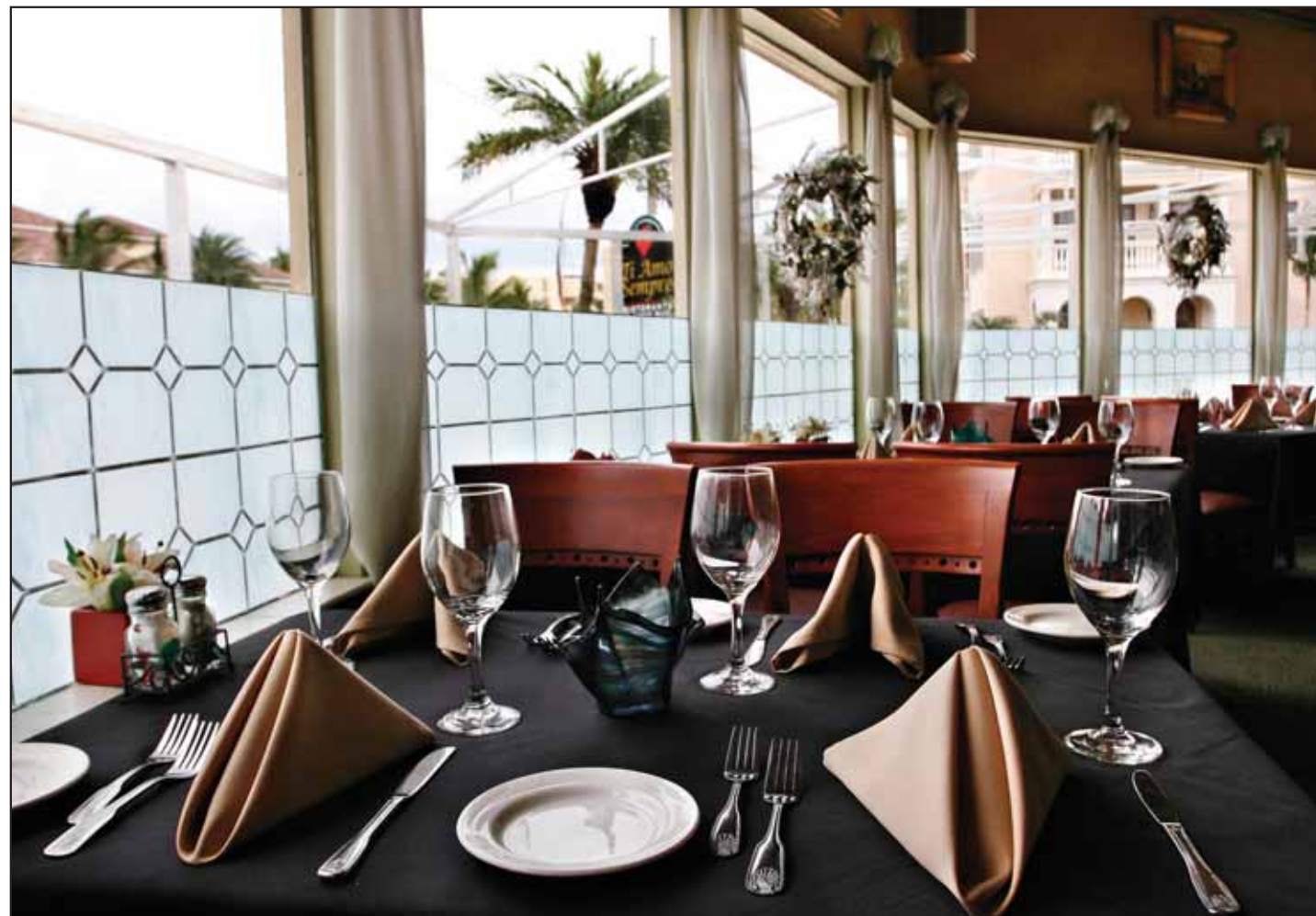
Last year at about this time, Ti Amo – which we first encountered in 2005 in its original home on Royal Palm Pointe – was in the process of moving from its Central Beach location in the spot that once was Tango's to a new South Ocean Drive location that once was Monte's.

The good news is that the renovation of the building that formerly was Monte's has produced a Ti Amo Sempre that is a far more open and charming restaurant than its predecessor. When the outside patio area finally is finished around the turn of the year, the dining ambience of Ti Amo will be hard to beat.

Even better news is that Ti Amo is in the process of introducing a new, updated "Winter Menu" for the 2010 season, and while many longtime favorites are still offered, some enticing new dishes are being presented as well.

On a recent visit, we passed up some favorites to sample several of Ti Amo's new dishes. Predictably, we came away impressed.

This time, we decided to skip our two favorite appetizers – the cozze o vongole al martini (\$12.95, clams sautéed in dry vermouth, garlic, shallots, and parsley in a lemon butter sauce



The window wrapped dining room at Ti Amo Sempre

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

and the calamari fritti (\$12.95), lightly fried squid, spinach and lemon slices served in a spicy marinara sauce – and go straight to the salads.

Two of my companions ordered the Caesar salad (\$5.95), topped by two small anchovies with an extremely

light dressing. I opted for the spinach salad (\$7.95), spinach nicely sautéed with olive oil, garlic, red onions and mushrooms, which was quite tasty.

For main courses, my husband ordered the aragosta e capensante (\$25.95), a grilled Florida lobster tail and a jumbo sea scallop on a bed of fresh marbled pappardelle pasta with a vodka cream sauce and cherry tomatoes.

The lobster tail was cooked perfectly, and this addition to the menu should not be missed.

I ordered the capensante alla griglia (\$23.95), grilled jumbo sea scallops served on a bed of risotto with sundried tomatoes, artichoke hearts and peas. This was a very flavorful dish and again is highly recommended.

One of our companions ordered the pesce del Giorno alla Livornese (\$19.95), the fish of the day which on this evening turned out to be black drum.

This is the second time we have encountered black drum in upscale Vero restaurants in recent weeks. Something is going on here.

While flounder, grouper, red snap-

per, and dolphin are far more commonly found in Vero restaurants, many fishermen have long contended that black drum may be better than any of them.

Our companion, who had never had it before, had high praise for the drum, a firm white fish, grilled perfectly, topped with a tomato, kalamata olive, caper and feta cheese relish and served over parmesan risotto.

She did note (and I confirmed by stealing a forkful) that the kalamata olives, capers and feta cheese combined to make the topping a trifle too salty.

Our other companion had the gnocchi principessa (\$16.95), gnocchi made with spinach, potatoes, carrots, parmesan cheese and sautéed with a creamy roasted walnut, prosciutto, gorgonzola sauce. Very tasty. Ti Amo's pasta dishes always have been delicious.

While the new menu includes such old favorites as the piccata di vitello (\$19.95), veal scaloppini sautéed with lemon butter and capers served over linguini, there are a variety of new additions which we look forward to trying on future visits.



Part of Ti Amo Sempre's new winter menu: beef short ribs, braised and cooked Ossobuco style and served over saffron risotto and grilled asparagus.

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One that certainly sounds interesting is the cinghiale brasato al chianti (\$18.95), chianti braised wild boar served with braised cabbage.

One that I suspect I am more likely to order is the costini di manzo (\$24.95), beef short ribs, braised and cooked Osobuco style and served over saffron risotto and grilled asparagus. Yum.

For desserts, two top choices remain the very tasty tiramisu (\$5.00) or the crepe with fresh strawberries, a surprisingly light confection given

that it is drizzled with Neutella and topped with whipped cream (\$6.95). Both go very well with a cup of espresso (\$3.00).

Dinner for two with a nice bottle of wine comes to about \$130 before tip.

Ti Amo Sempre is a very well run restaurant with hands-on, caring owners and an inventive cuisine that on many occasions has delighted.

Vincenzo (Enzo) Perucchini, the male half of the ownership couple (Lisa is in the kitchen), often drops

by the tables during dinner to insure you are enjoying the meal, and to chat about the wines and food of his native Verona.

In the years since the Perucchins first launched Ti Amo, Italian restaurant competition in Vero Beach has certainly grown stiffer. But Ti Amo is clearly moving to meet the challenge, and seems well positioned this season to welcome back old customers and lure new ones.

I welcome your comments, and encourage you to send feedback to me at

tina@verobeach32963.com.

The reviewer dines anonymously at restaurants at the expense of Vero Beach 32963.

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Lauren Savage and Ava Knight watch as the Christmas parade makes its way up Ocean Drive.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Christmas parade puts Vero in the holiday mood

BY ALINA LAMBIET
STAFF WRITER

The rain held off just in time, the cold snap arrived made to order.

Under the sparkle of Christmas palm trees, Vero Beach shook the sand from its shoes and dipped its toe right into Christmas.

Locals came from every corner – some newcomers, some long-timers – to catch the 27th annual Christmas parade in full color this past Saturday night.

Mercifully, there was no rain to soak the revelry (though it had rained most of the morning and afternoon) and there was no harsh cold to dampen the holiday spirit.

This was the moment – our special tradition – one that brings the generations together for one night, a celebration of life in small town America. This was our annual



Parade participants aboard the Dubose Sons float wait for the parade begin as the sun sets on the barrier island.



A float from the Master's Academy makes it's way along Ocean Drive during the Vero Beach Christmas Parade.

Norman Rockwell postcard, our Mayberry come to life, our Main Street sweetness born of life in this tiny spec of a coastal community, where things are done in small-town fashion but with big-city heart.

The streets of Ocean Drive were packed for the parade, sometimes four people deep, to watch neighbors and friends and the children of their children march down the island's main street, some of them on floats, or dancing, or twirling, karate-chopping and on horseback.

Yes, the storms had raged the night before, and downpours made most of the morning miserable, but made way for thick cloudy skies – none of the wet stuff – by late afternoon. The temperature dipped into the low 60s, but that, Vero Beachers can handle.

Word trickled to families and friends in the way news spreads in a small town, by word of mouth, that the parade was a go – and who was bringing the soft drinks, chips, the hummus and crackers? Someone, please bring umbrellas, just in case.

The crowds were not wet, or disappointed, not here along Ocean Drive, where the Ocean-side Business Association had organized this year's parade, with some 50-plus entries – including floats made by schools and businesses, decorated private cars, blinking Jeeps, souped up Harleys and a few hand-pulled wagons.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 66



A line of diesel trucks pulls the orange-shaped sleigh on Natalie's Orchid Island Juice Company's float.



A motorized, illuminate Christmas Alligator hitches a ride aboard the float of Jim Rott Home Improvements and Air Conditioning.



Gracie, 3, and Jack, 6, Foster wave to the larger than life dog aboard the Humane Society's float as it passes them on Ocean Drive.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

John Lobmeyer and his friend and fellow Vero Beach American Legion Post 39 member Paul Zminkowski brought their Harleys – bedecked with Christmas décor — and were posing for pictures next to them. They had hoped a few more riders would have made it, but the weather had kept them away.

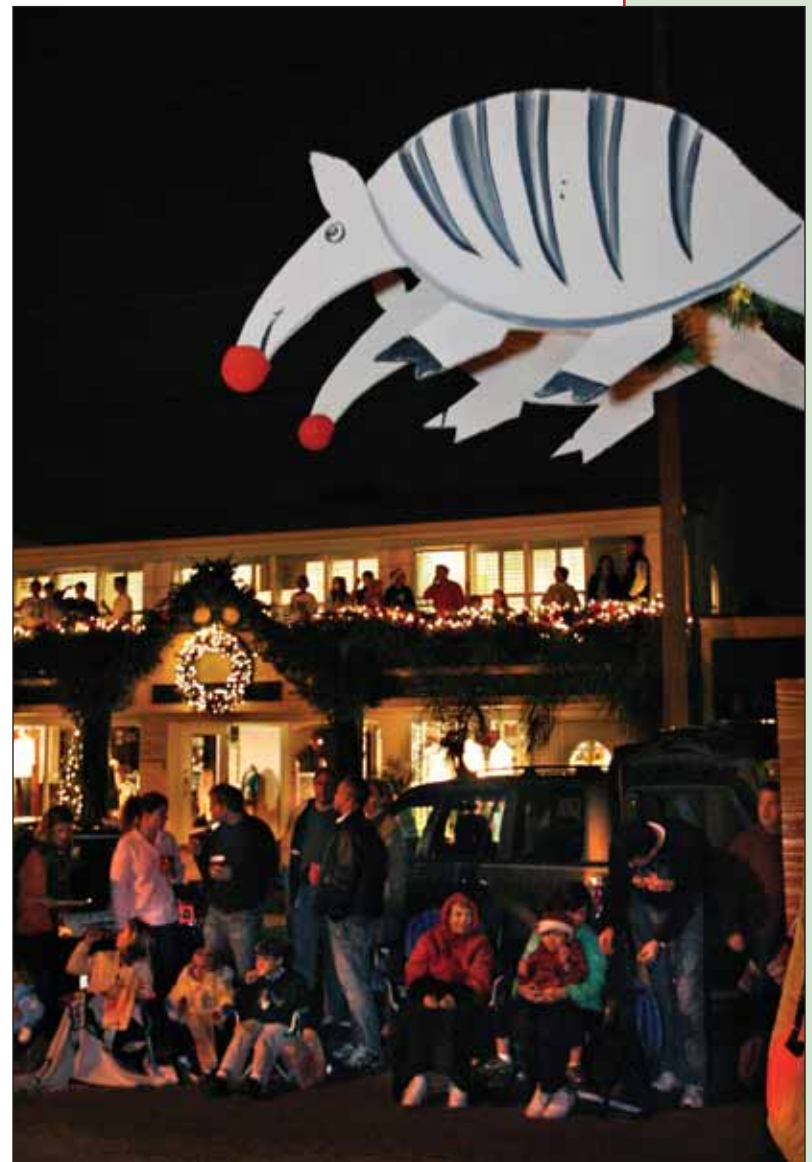
“We decided to come anyway,” said Lobmeyer, adjusting the last Christmas lights on his Harley.

“And we’re having a great time,” said Zminkowski.

The floats, the costumes, the sparkling lights atop home-made wagons, were labors of love — the culmination of weeks or months of planning, of thinking up new ways to rig car batteries for power, of borrowing that antique truck, of creating a bigger, better display for your wagon, your float so that it would be just that more special this year.

“So many of our traditions are being forgotten,” said Deborah Dillon, principal of Rosewood Magnet School, behind her an impressive “Candyland” float made by parent volunteers, teachers and students. “We are so big on family traditions; we just see that doing these kinds of things together is one of the greatest opportunities we have to keep some of those traditions alive.”

On the float – which eventually took the Best in Show prize — were the adults and children who helped make the board game come to life – some 42 families represented



A red-nosed armadillo pulls the sleigh on Citrus Elementary's Rootin' Tootin' Cowboy Christmas float as it passes parade watchers.



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Tanner Marchant, 8, Elizabeth Zoltak, 9, Caroline Zoltak, 3, and Alexandra Marshall, 10, share a blanket to keep warm as they watch the Christmas parade from atop an SUV.



Members of the Vero Beach High School marching band perform on illuminated instruments as the head up Ocean Drive.

altogether, underneath signs that pointed to Lollipop Woods and the Gingerbread house.

Nearby, as preparations got underway, 22 tiny elves – the Discoverettes – of the Children’s Discovery Center were making their own impression on passersby.

Imagine this: count them, 22 squealing, squirming preschoolers, all students at the child care center, all armed with batons, ready to twirl.

How does one get 22 little princesses, primed and dressed as elves to twirl in unison?

“We have a majorette teacher,” chuckled Mary Jane Mills, the director of the school. “The girls practice every week.”

Sure enough, there was Kim Morgan, the majorette teacher, doing last minute costume adjusting and reminding the girls “don’t worry, when you’re in the parade, you won’t be so bunched together” and “look ahead to see where you’re going.”

Mills doesn’t seem to bat an eye over the work of orchestrating little twirlers. “We’ve been in the parade for 13 years,” she said with pride.

Then there are the moments that would stop everyone’s heart, if only those on the street knew about them.

That great, big, bright Indian River Habitat for Humanity float? Jam packed with more than 40 families – all homeowners of houses built by the sweat and love of volunteers. The happy faces beaming from atop the float, toddlers on knees and babies bundled for the cold ride, all grateful to be home for Christmas.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68



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St. Edward's School's Beauty and the Beast float.



A man-sized dog waves from the back of the Humane Society's parade float.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

Small town, big heart.

The parade though, is mostly a gathering place, a time to for fun, a time to be Vero Beach.

Kimmmie Lamm has been making the trek from the mainland to the holiday parade for some 20 years. This is one woman who comes prepared. With the back of her SUV wide open – the 'Bama -Florida game on the radio – she brought fixins' for her brood, some family and friends of friends and the roughly 15 kids they lined up along the parade route on lawn chairs and with blankets.

"My kids were bummed because of the rain. But then we found out it was a go rain or shine. I have ponchos in the car, and beach towels just in case," said Lamm, a realtor with Weichert Realtors on the mainland.

Did we mention she had the game on for the men and food for, well, the men and everyone else in her group?

"We come to get into the holiday spirit," she said, stopping to think about this little parade, in this little town, and should she have brought the pigs in a blanket like she had originally planned? Oh well. Next year. "We need this parade. My family loves it."

And if there is a king of the holiday tailgate, suspicion would point to Bob Faller, a barrier island resident and realtor with Norris & Co. He had a card table in between two cars with enough food to feed a small army of elves. He's been coming to the parade for some 20 years,

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including in 1989 when he marched with his daughter's Indian Princess troop (He was "Big Foot," she was "Hair of Fire").

"It's just fun to come every year," he said.

Behind him were a gaggle of clients and friends, all transplants who have, over the years, fallen in love with little Vero Beach.

There was Mercy San Miguel, a Miami resident who comes up year round and is proud to say she's into her "third house" here in Vero, that the past eight years have been a great experience.

And Cindy and Mark Galant of Warren, N.J., who've been in their new home for just over a month, and this was their first parade.

They had to take an early flight "just to catch the parade in time," said Mark Galant.

And Vicki and Bob Stratton of the Moorings, whose first parade was Christmas 2004 - after Jeanne and Frances had torn the community in ways that for decades seemed unimaginable.

"It was such a devastating thing and everyone was beside themselves with their own personal problems," said Bob Stratton. "There was no time to celebrate but when the Christmas parade came, it was beautiful and everyone was happy. It was a tremendous celebration of the beginning of normalcy."

Five years later, we are normal again.

When Santa eventually rode by, in an antique 1965 Ford fire truck, the high-point of a night everyone knew had ended too soon, the season had arrived, finally.



Rosewood Magnet School's dazzling Candyland float lumbers along Ocean drive on its way to winning the Best in Show prize.



A crew of angels hold down the rear of The Salvation Army's parade float.



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Pets

Archie: Favorite lapdog and king of hearts

BY CISSY SUMNER
COLUMNIST

This week our island pet is Archie, a tricolor Cavalier King Charles Spaniel who lives an active life with Carol and Hank Pena.

Among the many roles that dogs have played in history, none has proved more valuable than that of companion at which this breed excels. These lapdogs were inseparable companions to royalty as well as attracting fleas from their owners' bodies, and warming laps and feet on cold winter evenings.

Archie who is 10 years old, recently retired from the sport of dog agility in which he has four titles as well as his AKC certification as a Canine Good Citizen. He is also retired from the "Read to Dogs" program in which he was an attentive listener.

At home Archie is a working dog. Daily he performs pool and yard patrol, monitors windows, warms rugs and cleans the kitchen floor. His



Archie enjoying the outdoors



Archie and his favorite toy bone

specialties are lap warming, back-up alarm clock, pest exterminator,

alarm dog and greeter.

At his leisure Archie's passion is to retrieve his Frisbee or tennis ball, hurling himself into the air to catch them on the fly.

At the beach he chases birds and sea foam; on land, geckos, rabbits and squirrels. Archie is a ham who enjoys parlor tricks. If one sneezes he will be happy to bring a Kleenex from a box and place it on one's lap. He's a tidy dog who picks up his toys and puts them in a toy basket. In addition, he rings bells on the door when he wants to go out, fetches his leash before a walk and waves good-bye. He loves Florida's fauna, but misses romping in the snow.

Archie has appeared on local television and YouTube. His handsome face has been in the newspaper and on the cover of a magazine, *The Clicker Journal*.

Archie's an all around good guy whose demands are simple: feed me, take me for walks, let me warm your lap, and give me lots of love. That's Archie, the King of Hearts.



Archie's birthday

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YOUR PET'S HEALTH

By Dr. Randy Divine and Associates



Tracheal Collapse

Many small breed dogs suffer from a potentially life-threatening condition which leaves them struggling to breathe. Yorkshire terrier, Pomeranians, and other toy and miniature breeds develop this condition most commonly in middle-age. Although not present in all cases, obesity exacerbates the condition. This condition is caused by a weakening of tracheal cartilage followed by a gradually flattening trachea and a progressively narrowed airway.

The most common signs are a loud honking cough sometimes followed by gagging or retching. Excitement or stress can make the condition worse along with activity. Coughing episodes can occur after eating or drinking or exposure to very hot or very cold temperatures. Severe cases can cause the patient to present in respiratory arrest and the patient may have cyanotic (purple to bluish) mucous membranes or episodes of collapse. If a dog has these signs, they need immediate life-saving care.

At Divine Animal Hospital, we offer 24-hour emergency service and treat many cases of tracheal collapse successfully. Pets with these signs should see a veterinarian as soon as the first signs of cough are present in order to ensure a better prognosis. Patients receive a comprehensive physical exam and digital x-rays. On a lateral view x-ray, the tracheal lumen will appear narrowed typically in the cervical or thoracic region. X-rays both diagnose this condition and allow for staging of the disease. Bronchoscopy may be performed in-house to identify the severity of the collapse and allows for collection of samples from the airway to treat secondary infections that are common in the disease.

Although referral for tracheal stents or implanted tracheal rings; however, most patients may be medically managed. Patients in acute crisis need oxygen therapy, cough suppressants, and sedation. Rarely, tracheostomies are necessary to save the patient's lives. Steroids are given short-term in order to decrease inflammation and bronchodilators may be given long-term to manage the condition. In addition, laser therapy is beneficial for decreasing inflammation. Weight control is implemented for patients that are obese. It is essential that patients with this condition do not wear neck leads as this places added pressure on the trachea worsening the condition. We recommend that small breed dogs at risk avoid them altogether.



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On Faith

What would you do in five minutes with God?



BY REV. DRs. CASEY AND BOB BAGGOTT
COLUMNISTS

If by some miraculous means, you were granted five minutes with God, face to face, what would you ask of God? What would you do? What would you say? Have you ever wondered such things?

Scripture tells the story of such an encounter between God and a young man named Solomon, who was about to be elevated to the position of king. We are told that God encouraged Solomon to ask for what he wanted God to give to him. And what did Solomon ask for? Solomon, in his five minutes with God, asked God for only one thing: wisdom. He asked for the wisdom to differentiate good from evil, so he could lead God's people. God, we are told, was pleased with this request.

So, given an opportunity such as Solomon received, what would you ask of God? Well, we can tell you that if we were granted five minutes with God, we wouldn't waste a moment of it asking God the sticky questions that we people of faith have puzzled over for so many centuries. For example, we wouldn't ask what the practical purpose of religion is. Yes, we see that religious people get just as sick, and get hurt just as badly, and know just as many tragedies as non-religious people do. But, we wouldn't ask God to clarify and defend the fairness of this. Because it appears to us that the purpose of our faith and our religious practice is not to remove our burdens. It is to help us work our way through them.

If we had five minutes with God we also wouldn't ask why there is evil in the world. We have come to see that God loved human-kind so very much that God gave human beings a mind with which to think, and the freedom to put our thoughts to work. Some of us will choose wrongly, will act foolishly, and will do terrible, hurtful, inhuman things. But if we lacked this freedom, including the freedom to do wrong, we would no longer be free to do good and to choose God's good and loving ways without coercion.

In fact, if we had five minutes with

God, face to face, we don't think we would ask God a single thing. Nothing. Rather we would say something like this. We would thank God for the years of life given to us on this beautiful earth. It hasn't always been easy, but it has still been wonderful! We would say that we are grateful beyond belief for friends who have helped us along the way, for inspiration, and for encouragement that has helped us to stay fo-

cused and committed. We would say thanks for our children whom we love so very much. We would thank God for reaching out to us in love. That is what we would say in our five minutes with God!

What would you say? What would you do? It doesn't need to remain an academic question. Find a quiet place, and start talking to God. Then be still and listen. We can be granted

more than five minutes with God. In fact, each of us is granted as much time as we want with God every single day. We hope you'll take advantage of every minute.

Rev. Dr. Robert Baggott is Senior Minister of Community Church of Vero Beach. Rev. Dr. Casey Baggott is Executive Minister. The Baggotts write a regular faith column for Vero Beach 32963.



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Real Estate

Rent for the season, stay for good

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

Last December, investors guarding their pocketbooks after October's stock market crash were re-thinking grand vacations in Florida if they weren't already booked and paid for in advance.

This year, with the Dow back in the the 10,000-plus range and deep discounts to be had in Vero's real estate market, seasonal visitors are renting not only to have a beachside retreat, but also to investigate an area that's ripe for the picking.

"Many of my customers who are seasonal residents are also buyers hoping to get lower prices on something to buy this year," said Christine McLaughlin, broker/owner of Shamrock Realty, which focuses on the Central Beach area. "The people who have committed to come to Vero are coming to Vero, not only to get out of the weather, but to start seriously looking to buy."

Bob Gibb, president of John's Island Real Estate, said the market for vacation rentals in John's Island has shown marked improvement this year so far.

"Our rentals for Thanksgiving and Christmas are the best they have been in four years," Gibb said. "It looks like spring is shaping up to be the same."

Gibb said there are a good number of homes, condominiums and cottages which are available each year for seasonal rental in the exclusive resort community. Some renters are seriously looking to buy in the area this season, while others are biding their time to see what happens to the local market.

Teena Jackson, co-owner of Beach



Realtor Carol J. Eisenmann from Norris and Company sits in one of the furnished condominiums at The Village Spires. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

and Beyond Rentals for the past 17 years said that booking numbers for January seasonal rentals are very close to last year's and that a lot of people are still working on booking for February.

"They are coming in later, we're having a lot of repeats and they're looking for a little negotiation here and there," she said. "They're telling me the weather has been too nice up north."

Carol Eisenmann, who heads up the new rental division at Norris & Company which launched on Nov. 1, has specialized in this market for many years. She said the same unique qualities draw people to vacation in Vero Beach as draw them to buy here.

"We attract different people than go to Daytona, Cocoa Beach or Sarasota, we're still a small town and we're not a touristy type area," she said. "We don't have the heavy traffic and you can't beat our oceanfront as we don't have the huge condos because of the height restrictions. Those are the things people love about Vero."

Extended "season" is November to April 15, but the condensed "mini season" which attracts the most renters is January through April, with March and April being the most popular months.

Baseball used to account for about one-third of her "short season" rentals when the Dodgers were here for spring training and Eisenmann owned

Executive Properties of Vero Beach. Now, people note the cultural opportunities, including Riverside Theatre and the Vero Beach Museum of Art as activities that keep them coming back to Vero Beach.

Eisenmann rents a great number of condos and she said the people who wish to spend their Florida winters in a condo setting don't mind the hoops they have to jump through.

"Most condos have minimum durations that you can rent, 30, 60 or 90 days — most 60 or 90 days — and renters have to fill out an application and sometimes have to be interviewed by the condo association because they don't want the turnover," she said. "But

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Real Estate



people aren't bothered by it, they expect it if they want to stay in a condo."

Some associations limit the number of units or homes which can be rented out or the number of months or number of times per year an owner can rent out the home or unit.

"Owners really try to get renters who will stay for 60 or 90 days, because if an owner is limited to renting out twice a year and they rent to someone for the month of January and someone else for the month of February, that's twice and they won't be able to rent to anyone in November or December," Eisenmann said.

As a result of all these restrictions and the preference for continuity, if renters find a condo that they like and get used to the amenities and the location, they will often book the same unit a year in advance or book later but wish to return to the same property. Eisenmann said seasonal residents become "part of the community" while they're here as they get to know and socialize with neighbors by participating in the goings on. This social factor can make a seasonal condo rental, even more than a rental house, truly a home away from home for our snowbirds.

Damage from the 2004 hurricanes took rental condos off the market, but Eisenmann said the buildings that were damaged, including the Village Spires, the Gables and the Del Mar condos have now been rebuilt and refurbished and are back on the rental market.

"So many people have had to put a lot of money into the units to make repairs and upgrades," Eisenmann said.

Despite the increase in the condo in-

ventory, the Realtors agree that the inventory is moving swiftly. Clients are coming in from referrals and calling after seeing properties on their websites.

"Bookings are up, but people are still looking for bargains," Eisenmann said. "Prices are probably back to 2003-2004 prices."

That bargain shopping, according to McLaughlin, may leave some renters out in the cold and unable to get into their preferred locations, or after all that haggling, they may end up paying the full price if they do want to spend the season in Vero.

"People are under the misconception that the Vero Beach market is in distress like it is in the rest of Florida and they have the right to negotiate," she said. "In my opinion, they're misinformed."

"Historically, some owners will negotiate when it gets closer to the height of season,

but there are owners who would rather not rent it out than to let it go for a lot less than they think it's worth. The Vero barrier island, in my estimation, is not distressed."

McLaughlin began noticing rentals picking up over the summer when we interviewed her about the market in general. She's seen a marked increase in the interest in seasonal rentals over the past seven weeks and now gets an average of three serious calls per day about renting her listings.

Angela Waldrop partners with Elizabeth Sorensen to run the rental division at Dale Sorensen Real Estate, with locations on Cardinal Drive and Highway A-1-A. She agreed that many renters are trying out the barrier island lifestyle and hope to figure out what part of the island they like and buy a home this season.

"It's so much busier than it was last year and we don't have as much inventory available," she said. "There are still things left, but not like last year. It's not like last year when people can wait and have the pick of whatever they want."

Waldrop said some owners who haven't rented their properties out before are offering them up for the season in the hopes of being able to both generate some income and to hold out for a better sale price once the market rebounds.

If there is a home for sale in an area where visitors would like to rent, Waldrop said it never hurts to ask.

"It's definitely a new world, in that anything that is for sale, this year especially, I would make a call to any owner to ask them if they would be willing to rent," she said.

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Calendar

DECEMBER

December 11

Vero Beach Boat Parade, between the two bridges, ending at the Vero Beach City Marina, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., following the 5 p.m. tree lighting ceremony at Royal Palm Pointe.

December 11 - 12

Mardy's Tennis & Jake's Music Fest to Benefit the Mardy Fish Foundation returns to Vero Beach December 11 & 12. December 11 features a Kids Clinic 4 - 5 p.m. at Grand Harbor Golf Club and the Jake Owen Concert at 8 p.m. at the Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Center. December 12 begins at 12:30 p.m. with a Barbeque Luncheon, followed at 2:30 by a Tennis Exhibition. (866) 333.7623

December 11 - 12

The Comedy Zone at Riverside Theatre featuring Tim Statum and Derrick Tenant, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. on the Waxlax Stage. Tickets \$15. 231-6990

December 11 and 13

The Vero Beach Choral Society will celebrate its 25th Anniversary with a Winter Concert featuring John Rutter's Magnificat at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11 and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13 at the Trinity Episcopal Church. 563-0627

December 12

Vero Beach Holiday Home Tour, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. presented by Christ by the Sea United Methodist Church to benefit Homeless Family Center, Indian River Habitat for Humanity and the Source. Tickets \$25 in advance, \$30 event day. 231-1661, ext. 302 or www.verobeachholidayhometour.com.

December 12

Treasure Coast Jazz Society's Jazz at Noon concert, An Afternoon of Ellington, at the Vero Beach Yacht Club. Doors open at 11 a.m., concert begins at 12:30 p.m. 234-4600 or www.treasurecoastjazzsociety.org

December 13

The Vero Beach Art Club presents Art in the Park - Outdoor Art Exhibit & Sale, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Humiston Park on Ocean Drive. 231-0303

December 13

Author Debbie Macomber presents The Perfect Christmas, 1 p.m. at the Vero Beach Book Center. 569 2050

December 13 - 14

The Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Department presents their holiday Winter Wonderland concerts on Sunday at 2 pm and Monday at 7 pm in the

VBHS Performing Arts Center. Tickets \$10 and \$12. 564-5537

December 16

Lighting up Our House of Peace Hanukkah Concert, 7 p.m. at Temple Beth Shalom featuring Beth Schafer. 569-4700

December 18 - 21

Holidays at McKee with thousands of twinkling lights, a large scale model train and miniature Christmas Village, 6 to 8 p.m. Adults \$9, seniors \$8, children \$5, members free. 794.0601 or www.mckeegarden.org

December 19

6th Annual WinterFest at Heritage Park in Pointe West, 2 to 6 p.m., hosted by the Recreation Department and Pointe West with 25 tons of snow, ice skating rink, Santa, children's activities, entertainment and a grand finale fireworks display at 6 p.m. Free. www.pointewest-florida.com

December 19 & 20

40th annual presentation of Handel's Messiah performed by the Treasure Coast Chorale, Atlantic Classical Orchestra and world class soloists, 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church. Free (772) 567-4311

December 26 - January 3

Snoopy!!! A musical sequel to You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, at Riverside Children's Theatre. 231-6990

December 31

New Year's Eve Celebration at Riverside Theatre with food, fun and live entertainment on the Waxlax Stage and in the Orchid Lobby begins at 10:30 p.m. Tickets \$100. 231-6990

December 31 - January 17

Riverside Theatre presents Ella, featuring over two dozen of Fitzgerald's biggest hits, on the Stark Mainstage. 231-6990

JANUARY

January 2

Saturday in the Park with Authors and Artists, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the grounds of the Heritage Center.

January 3

The Vero Beach Art Club presents Art in the Park - Outdoor Art Exhibit & Sale, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Humiston Park on Ocean Drive. 231-0303 or www.VeroBeachArtClub.org

January 7

The Emerson Center Humanities Series presents Gary Mormino's Emmy-winning PBS documentary, The Florida Dream, a history of Florida since WWII based on his book Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams. 7 p.m. lecture is complimentary. 778-5249

January 7

Atlantic Classical Orchestra presents Vaughn Williams Overture to The Wasps, Ravel La Tombeau de Couperin and Mahler Symphony #4 (Chamber

Version). 8 p.m. at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts at St. Edwards School. (866) 310-7521

January 7 - 10

18th Annual Antiques Show & Sale to benefit the Vero Beach Museum of Art. Preview Party is 5 - 8:30 p.m. Jan. 7, tickets start at \$100. Weekend Show & Sale is 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Jan. 8-12, tickets \$10. 231-0707

January 9 - 16

Quail Valley Charities Fundraising Week. Jan. 9 - 5K Walk/Run and Kids fun-run, Jan. 10 - Gourmet Wine & Guest Chef Dinner, Jan. 13 - Duplicate Bridge Tournament & Luncheon, Jan. 14 - 16 - Tennis Tournament, Jan. 15 & 16 - Golf Tournament, Jan. 16 - Grand Gala Cocktail Buffet, Auction and Awards Night. 492-2020

January 9

Oceanside Business Association's free beachside concert series, 5:30 - 8:30 featuring Bobby and the Blisters.

January 11

Riverside Theatre's Distinguished Lecturer Series features Washington political insider Vernon Jordon, at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. on the Stark Mainstage. 231-6990

January 11

Bass & Birdies Golf and Fishing Tournament at the Indian River Golf Club, to benefit the Education Foundation. Participants play a full round of golf and also fish four lakes on the course. Registration \$300. 564-0034

January 14 - 24

The comedy, Sin, Sex and the CIA will be performed at the Vero Beach Theatre Guild. 562-8300

January 15- 17

Art by the Sea, an exhibition and sale of artwork by members of the Vero Beach Art Club and the Vero Beach Museum of Art, held at the Vero Beach Museum of Art. Reception 5 - 8 p.m. January 15 and show 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. January 16-17 are both free and open to the public. 231-0303 or www.VeroBeachArtClub.org

January 16

See 30 life-sized dinosaurs in a whole new light at Dino Nights at McKee Garden, 6 to 8 p.m. Adults \$9, seniors \$8, children \$5, members free. 794.0601 or www.mckeegarden.org

January 17

Indian River Symphonic Association presents the Brevard Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Christopher Confessore, 7:30 p.m. at the Community Church of Vero Beach. The Singin' and Swingin' themed Pops Concert features vocalist Michael Andrew. 778-1070

January 19 - 31

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Classifieds

Real Estate

Featured Real Estate Sales on the Barrier Island: Nov. 26 to Dec. 2, 2009



An old Riomar home at 877 Sandfly Lane was one of a dozen barrier island sales recorded in the days right after Thanksgiving.

The 4,244-square-foot home, which was originally built in 1957, was placed on the market just before Labor Day with an asking price of \$1.3 million.

The sale closed on December 2nd for \$1.24 million.

The seller of the home was represented by Gena Grove of Norris & Company Real Estate. The buyer in the transaction was represented by Gretchen Hanson, also of Norris & Company.

Single Family Residences and Lots

Subdivision	Address	Listed	Original Asking Price	Sold	Selling Price
ISLAND CLUB RVRSD E	1396 ISLAND CLUB SQ W	9/18/2009	\$490,000	12/2/2009	\$450,000
BETHEL BY THE SEA	266 LIVE OAK RD	7/16/2009	\$385,000	12/1/2009	\$327,000
SEASONS	2134 AUTUMN LANE	10/7/2009	\$480,000	12/1/2009	\$430,000
MARBRISA	102 CARMEL CT S	6/4/2009	\$415,000	11/30/2009	\$375,000
SUMMERPLACE	1980 CAYMAN RD W	11/26/2008	\$399,000	11/30/2009	\$250,000
VERO BEACH ESTATES	655 BOUGAINVILLEA LANE	7/2/2009	\$325,000	11/30/2009	\$270,000

Townhomes, Villas and Condos

Subdivision	Address	Listed	Original Asking Price	Sold	Selling Price
SOUTH PASSAGE	603 SPYGLASS LN	2/2/2009	\$389,000	12/2/2009	\$340,000
GABLES OF VERO BEACH	2700 OCEAN DRIVE B-205	1/3/2008	\$550,000	12/1/2009	\$450,000
SEA OAKS	8815 ORCHID ISLAND CR W #402	1/22/2009	\$579,000	12/1/2009	\$510,000
HARBOUR SIDE WEST	1815 MOORINGLINE DR #2G	2/8/2008	\$275,000	11/30/2009	\$160,000

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120 SEASPRAY LANE—GOLF ESTATE
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698 GROVE PLACE—GOLF COTTAGE
Charming 3BR/3ba residence on spacious, lushly-landscaped corner homesite with golf views. Lanai, summer kitchen, heated pool \$1,000,000



20 BEACHSIDE DR, #101—3,810 A/C SQ. FT.
3BR/Study/4BA oceanfront residence with private elevator entry, French doors, stone terrace with summer kitchen. \$2,050,000 **New Listing**



51 CARIBE WAY—COURTYARD LIVING
3BR/Study/3.BA courtyard home includes separate 1BR/1BA guest cabana. Golf and lake views. \$875,000 (Furn. Avail.) **New Price**



406 INDIES DRIVE—GOLF ESTATE
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514 WHITE PELICAN CIRCLE—GOLF ESTATE
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