



If mere mention of a destination's name stirs wonder in the soul, then we must go and learn why that is so.

*Jack Veeger, Sarasota: A Tribute in Verse and Vision**

Our Past and Future

Early photographs and written descriptions of Siesta Key depict our island home with few physical structures save an early hotel, scattered fish camp houses with brilliant expanses of white sand beach. The wide beaches extended along the north and western tip (Big Pass) south to what was then Midnight Pass, separating us from our southern barrier island neighbor of Casey Key. An aerial photograph dated approximately 1933 shows what is most likely a shell road leading west, directly to the beach.

No imagination at that time could have sculpted a vision of what has become a most unique island community. Fortunately, early residents recognized the need for *planned* sharing of this natural resource, and "*if you build it, they will come*" came true. Siesta Key is now home to more than 6,500 permanent residents, new business, and visitors from around the world. The current estimate of *people per square mile is more than 2,500*. The number of households with people ranging in age from 40-60 now exceeds the 65 and up population.

More than ever, our stewardship for this piece of paradise is essential.

The questions of how to steward our resources have been, and will continue to be, best answered by those with a "long view" vision for our island. Citizens who offer their time, talents and passion ensure Siesta Key is a safe, beautiful, and desirable place to bring family. This is the purpose for our Siesta Key Association of Sarasota.

The Siesta Key Association shares this work with everyone willing to maintain our scenic and natural beauty and our neighborhood character, securing our island as a destination and home for future generations. The results of our good work will be evident in memories and stories of all who enjoy our island.

Thank you for continued support of the Siesta Key Association of Sarasota.

Catherine Luckner, President

SKA Annual Breakfast Meeting

Saturday, March 23, 2013

Open at 8:00 A.M. for Coffee, Tea, Juice

Breakfast Buffet opens at 8:30 A.M.

Annual Meeting from 9:20 - 11:00 A.M.

St. Boniface Episcopal Church, Community Room

TWO FREE breakfast tickets with your 2013 SKA Membership and advance reservation.

\$10 for Visitors (*You may become a member of SKA at our Breakfast Meeting*)

Reservations: by email: info@siestakeyassociation.com
by phone: 941-364-4880

Speaking at our Breakfast

The Honorable Nora Patterson, Commissioner, Sarasota Co.
Randall Reid, Administrator, Sarasota Co. Government

**** SKA contributed more than 1,200 volunteer hours for our community, January-December 2012 ****

THANK YOU SKA MEMBERS!

SKA Working for You!

Adopt-A-Road

The SKA Adopt-A-Road program had its “birth” in August 2003 when Russell James “cleaned” Midnight Pass Road from Stickney Point Road south to its end. Peter van Roekens continued this effort, taking responsibility for Ocean Blvd. from Beach Road to Higel. To date, our volunteers have completed **35** trash pickups, collecting more than **315** bags of garbage and recyclables. SKA partners with SKVA as official Adopt-A-Road sponsors of Ocean Blvd. Siesta Key Bay Island Association was also added as “unofficial sponsors” of Higel Ave. from the North Bridge to Ocean Blvd. Members and visitors continue the spirit, unofficially adopting sections of roadway in their neighborhoods. In a generous spirit of recognition and support, the Village Café owners, Tom and Kay Kouvatso, continue to donate free breakfast for cleanup participants (*with heavy tipping*). In time for Thanksgiving, we welcomed visitors and returning residents with the results of our Nov. 17 end of the year cleanup. A beautiful day out, great breakfast, good company, and a feeling of contribution is a win/win volunteer activity. For information, call Michael Shay at 941-349-4466.

Monitor-A-Beach Access Program

A new volunteer effort began at the July SKA monthly meeting. One of our members noted trash was exceeding receptacles along beach access paths, many near Siesta Village. We investigated these as well as all beach access paths extending to Stickney Point Road. Our survey verified this to be a recurring problem. With assistance from Sarasota County Parks staff, modification of collection intervals was successfully initiated. SKA now offers an official “Monitor-A-Beach Access” volunteer project. We currently have volunteer coverage along five of the beach access pathways and hope to grow our effort. Our monitor program is very simple: “If you see something, say something.”

All of us working together will keep our island, our little piece of paradise, beautiful. If you need information or to volunteer, please contact Michael Shay at 941-349-4466 or call SKA at 941-364-4880.

Publication of SKA Activity

Special communications, news, and SKA photos can now be found through our facebook postings, our website, and the “Island Chatter” column appearing in *The Siesta Sand*, a free monthly publication found throughout Siesta Key. With initiative and talent from SKA Director, Beverly Arias, the column highlights SKA activity and includes offerings by Beverly as well as other Directors. We hope you’ll take a look or pick up a copy. <http://siestasand.net/island-chatter-ska/>

SKA Goes “Green”

SKA has moved into the 21st Century with online registration and payment options. As you may have noticed through our email advisements, mailed postcard, or our website, www.siestakeyassociation.com, members are encouraged to use this new opportunity to help SKA “go green.” This method for annual membership enrollment is designed to ease member renewal, encourage new members to join, and improve our overall efficiency. We know some of you may not have access to a computer or may not wish to pay online. We value your membership and your voice and will continue to mail full membership packets, giving you the choice. You also may print the registration form on our website and mail with your membership check. Thank you in advance for your membership and for caring about our island paradise.

SKA Board of Directors

Beverly Arias	Joyce Kouba	Joe Volpe
Helen Clifford	Catherine Luckner	Bob Waechter
Ron Flynn	Michael Shay	
Deet Jonker	Peter van Roekens	

Join the Board of Directors

We are looking for additional Board members to share this good work on behalf of our Siesta Key residents.

Your application may be sent to Bob Waechter at info@siestakeyassociation.com or call for information at 941-364-4880

Project Updates

The long awaited Beach Road Drainage Plan was permitted in November 2012 with DEP final approval. The contract bid proposal is advertised and work is scheduled to begin during the last week of February 2013. With a first phase to install pipeline for drainage, work must be completed prior to May, which begins turtle nesting season.

The Beach Park Budget and Design Plan were recently reviewed by Mark Smith, Chair of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce. With public concern growing after recent escalations in cost presented to the BCC, fears our beach park improvements would not happen increased. SKA collaborated with SKVA and the SK Chamber, approaching the original design team, Kimley-Horn. Mark Smith, an architect with 30 years of experience, reviewed several budget submissions from county staff and outlined costs which could be reduced based on industry market construction standards. His revised cost proposal was presented to the Board of County Commissioners on December 11, 2012.

The reductions in estimated construction costs could also have an added benefit for the bid process, resulting in considerable savings. The construction budget he estimated at \$13-\$14M with 20% cost added for unusual or unforeseen expenditures. SKA reviewed this proposal at our monthly meeting on December 6, 2012, and support his modified budget. While the "wedding" deck was eliminated in this revision, the reduction in costs do not eliminate any essential park design to improve facilities, parking, accessibility, or the historic restoration of the pavilion. We hope by the time you read our newsletter, BCC approval for the Siesta Beach Park Plan will be reached.

Midnight Pass and Village Crosswalk, Radar Speed Calming. **SKA is always concerned about pedestrian safety.** SKA worked successfully with the state to install crosswalks along Midnight Pass Road. Our island community worked together with FDOT to develop consensus for the design, enhancing our "walkable" island environment.

Environment, Safety, and Zoning

We are pleased to report state approval and installation of the final radar speed calming device along Midnight Pass Road. Our project was initiated in 2011 and included research, meetings with county staff and GIS mapping of strategic placement along our roads. With high marks for encouraging drivers to reduce their speed, these devices were approved by both state and county traffic specialists.

SKA is currently working with the county, Siesta Key Village Association, and the Chamber of Commerce to have "bollard" LED lighting approved and funded for seven of the Siesta Village crosswalks. With well lit crosswalks in our most highly used pedestrian and traffic areas of Siesta Key, we enhance safety during busy evenings. County staff recently approved these devices for funding and report the bid will begin during the month of December 2012.

Inlet Management. . . We continue to survey depths in Big Pass as we have done for the past 10 years. Although we have taken 4.5 million soundings, only the latest ones are significant due to the ever-shifting sands. We provide this information to the county who uses it for buoy placement. Additionally, we post the most recently obtained information on the Sarasota Yacht Club website so boaters have safe transit into Sarasota.

Noise/Code Enforcement. . . SKA worked with the county to ensure partial code enforcement staffing during evenings and weekends. This added part-time staff assist during hours most typical for violation and residential complaints. We are working together with the Village Association and have already seen some improvement. An updated Sarasota County Noise Ordinance will be developed during 2013. We look forward to our collaboration with business, residents, and county staff to further improve the Siesta Key experience as tourist season begins in earnest.

(continued)

Environmental and Zoning Protections. . . Throughout 2012, SKA responded to your requests for assistance. Our advocacy during County Commission meetings protected our Siesta Key Overlay District (SKOD). By maintaining the SKOD ordinance, we support property values, environmental protections and the natural beauty of our island neighborhoods. We have advocated for you on issues including parking, noise and variance requests for building that were inconsistent with the SKOD ordinance. In April 2012, we appeared before the BCC to request modification of building official permit process. Property owners are now able to seek FL certified independent property appraisals of home valuation for remodeling or rebuild. Previously, the Building Official of Sarasota County retained authority to determine home valuation. This enhances homeowner choices and could expedite rebuild options after storm damage as well as permit applications to improve your property under the 50% rule.

We were active advocates, collaborating with many partners to maintain environmental regulations governing the beach habitat and wildlife unique to Siesta Key. This includes monitoring of protected species such as the Snowy Plover, maintaining safe use of the Beach Park with collaborative assistance from Sarasota County Natural Resources, Sheriff's Office, County Parks staff, The Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, and Sarasota Audubon. These management and conservation efforts were instrumental for Siesta Beach Park becoming #1 Beach USA 2011-12.

Barrier Island League: Post Disaster Redevelopment Planning. . . To ensure homeowner preparations and readiness for potential post disaster rebuilding, SKA collaborates with our barrier island neighbor associations of Casey Key, Manasota Key, and North Manasota Key. We are working to develop policy and rebuild guidelines for the Sarasota County Post Disaster Rebuild Plan. Our barrier islands provide a perfect model of highly vulnerable coastal conditions with unique zoning and building regulations. Our hope is this model can be utilized by all homeowners in advance action for their unique rebuild circumstance. Our collaborative work process, including expert review of the Florida Building Code enacted in March 2012, was approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Our work continues into 2013 with a goal of completion prior to the next storm season. This work product will be further developed with county staff for policy inclusion under the current draft of the Post Disaster Redevelopment Policy.

We end 2012 with our recent sponsorship of "Light up the Village" parade and find this a perfect reflection of our collaborative island life spirit. Directors Joe Volpe and Peter van Roekens worked alongside organizers from Siesta Key Village Association and Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce. "Chief" Bob Waechter provided his fire truck, leading the parade with Commissioner Nora Patterson sharing the ride with SKA Directors and volunteers. The festivities are a volunteer effort of many who love Siesta Key, all working together throughout the year to share this island we love.

Your membership, time, talent, expertise, and enthusiasm make our Siesta island home a great place to live, vacation, and work. We look forward to sharing more of this important work with you in 2013.

** Sarasota: A Tribute in Verse and Vision*
is the work of Jack Veeger and Patricia Nebel
www.windvanearths.com

We are fortunate to have Patricia and Gary Nebel
as our website developers, consultants, and generous photo contributors.
www.studio16.com