



How long the road is. But for all the time the journey has already taken,  
how you have needed every second of it in order to learn what the road passes by. ~ Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*

## Our Past and Future

Between 1942 and 1946, Sarasota provided a training ground for the U.S. Army Air Corps. British and U.S. Air Corps recruits viewed our barrier island from a perspective seldom seen. Imagine their aerial glimpse of blue-green water surrounding crystal white sand beaches of our barrier island!

This view, for some, became a life-changing invitation answered after the war's end. Many returned to Siesta Key, building homes, roads, businesses, and starting family life. Word of Siesta Key continued to circulate and Siesta Key, for many, became a family vacation spot until retirement permitted full-time residency.

No one could predict how their dreams of a life on this barrier island would be realized. What had been a limited access barrier island prior to 1940 became home to 550 permanent residents by 1953. Currently, more than 7,000 residents call Siesta Key home. It's also home to schools, churches, vacation residences, varied retail businesses, a fire station, Sheriff's station, medical care, restaurants, County parks, marinas, miles of natural coastline, and the #1 Beach in the U.S.A.

Fortunately, early residents recognized the need for planned sharing of our natural resources. Since they founded the Siesta Key Association (SKA) in 1948, the work to protect the natural and scenic beauty has not abated. Public records and news items chronicle SKA work on bridge improvements, utilities, road safety, flood protection, rules for development and building, waterway access, and conservation of our coastline and wildlife.

*What have we learned that the road passes by? What we have is worth forever keeping.*

SKA's work throughout 2013 reflects consistent themes from our history. SKA continues to advocate for our community with our elected Commissioners and Legislators, partner on solutions for responsibly sharing residential and commercial areas, take actions which protect property values and our environment, enhance conservation and protection of our coastal environments, defend our existing Siesta Key Overlay

District (SKOD) ordinance protections and improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

With Siesta Key as a global presence and destination, our collective stewardship for the "long view" of Siesta Key's future is essential. There are significant challenges ahead and with our island residents' volunteer spirit, time, and talents, we'll meet those successfully. We know "what the road passes by" and are willing to go the distance. The results of our good work today will be evident in memories, stories, and experiences of all who know Siesta Key.

Siesta Key Association is proud to have served our island community for 65 years. Thank you for your continued support and work on behalf of the Siesta Key Association of Sarasota.

Catherine Luckner, President

### SKA Annual Breakfast Meeting

**Saturday, March 1, 2014**

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

**Breakfast Buffet opens at 8:30 A.M.**

**Annual Meeting from 9:30 - 11:00 A.M.**

**St. Boniface Episcopal Church, Community Room**

TWO FREE admission tickets with your 2014 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](mailto:info@siestakeyassociation.com)

by phone: 941-364-4880

**Speaking at our Breakfast**

The Honorable Nora Patterson  
Commissioner, Sarasota County

**\*\* SKA contributed more than 2,625 volunteer hours  
for our community, January-December 2013\*\***

**THANK YOU SKA MEMBERS!**

In keeping with the original spirit of SKA's **Adopt-A-Road** program started in 2003 by Russell James and then nurtured by Peter van Roekens until 2012. With leadership of Director Michael Shay through 2013, the program boasts notable accomplishments. In partnership with Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) and the Bay Island-Siesta Association, there were three official Adopt-A-Road cleanups in 2013, starting with a full sit-down breakfast donated by Tom and Kay Kouvatso at The Village Café. Participation in these cleanups has continued to grow and on the most recent outing, Nov. 23rd, we had 24 volunteers collecting a total of 32 bags of garbage and recyclables. Our cleanup route covers all of Ocean Blvd. from Beach Road to Higel Ave., and all of Higel Ave. from Ocean Blvd. to the North Bridge.

In addition to the Adopt-A-Road cleanups, SKA also partnered with **Keep Sarasota Beautiful** (KSCB) on two cleanups in 2013: The Great American Cleanup in April and the 2013 International Coastal Cleanup in September. There was tremendous support from our cadre of SKA volunteers for both events and we covered Siesta Beach from Beach Access 2 to Point of Rocks.

SKA hosted numerous mini-cleanups in addition to the larger planned outings. These include SKA members who periodically walk the beach carrying a plastic garbage bag just in case they come across a "treasure" that should not be on the beach; after receiving complaints on July 5th about how dirty the beach was after the July 4th Fireworks display, SKA quickly recruited a few volunteers to clean up the beach on July 6th; and some of our crew cleans up Ocean Blvd. from Treasure Boat Way to Higel Ave. every 5-6 weeks.

SKA has a rich history over the last 65 years of getting involved in issues that are important to residents of the Key. One such issue was the **overflow parking onto Avenida de Mayo** from patrons of Siesta Village merchants. SKA became aware of this issue after reading about it in the *Sarasota News Leader* and contacted the residents involved to offer assistance.

From the very beginning, we viewed this issue as one of safety for the residents as well as the visitors to our beautiful Key. While the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) initially turned down our request for some parking limitation on Avenida de Mayo, they finally reinforced that uncontrolled parking on Avenida de Mayo is a safety issue. Following Fire Chief Tobias' recommendations, there will now be staggered "No Parking" zones on Avenida de Mayo.

As in the past, SKA continues to report non-functioning street lights by involving FPL for lighting on our County and State roads, as well as SKVA for lights in Siesta Village.

### SIESTA BEACH PROJECT

**Delayed after unusually heavy rainfall** (more than 30 inches of rain between late June and early August), **the Beach Road Drainage Plan with drainage pond excavation and pipe placement is back on track.** SKA answered many calls for help with questions about pooling, brown colored water on the beach and concerns about mosquitoes. With significant amounts of tree removal, the brown coloration was likely from Mangrove and other root systems now exposed in surface water. County Stormwater and Mosquito Control staff continued to monitor the water quality with frequent testing and verified its safety. The project is scheduled for completion the first week of April 2014. The next phase of construction at the beach park will have work overlap by more than three months. We've been advised this may yield cost reductions since equipment currently used may remain on-site for the next phase. The drainage pond filters water by UV and aeration, collecting stormwater run-off from the Siesta Beach parking lot. Once treated and filtered, the stormwater is discharged underground by pipe more than 3,000 feet into the Gulf.

**For those concerned about the walking trail to the beach from the sidewalk at Midnight Pass Road and the fire station,** we received assurance for its continued use. Many residents walk to the beach from nearby neighborhoods. SKA received many e-mail inquiries and calls reporting that the path was closed and had been removed during the recent drainage excavation. While many considered this path a "Beach Access", it was not a dedicated park path. We've been assured that there is no design plan to eliminate this beach path.

### NOISE PROBLEMS

**The noise problems remain unresolved** with the Sheriff saying that the current ordinance is not enforceable and the County is not enforcing their own ordinance either. Unfortunately, because these problems only impact a relatively small percentage of residents, it is easy for the County staff to conclude that the problems do not really exist. There are reasonable solutions to these problems that take into account both the needs of the bars and the residents. Today with no enforcement, there is no incentive to comply and every incentive to compete with the other bars for having the loudest band.

## SKA Working for You!

This fall, SKA has been busy supporting various activities on Siesta Key. SKA donated once again to the Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpture Competition and to the Siesta Village Christmas Parade funding. This year, SKA again supported the Audubon Society to protect the nesting birds on the Key as well as the Junior Lifeguard program.

Joe Volpe, representing SKA, has been working with the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce (SKCC) and the Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) since last summer to work out all the details needed to bring the Christmas Parade to a great conclusion on Nov. 30th of this year. Thanks go to Sgt. Osborne and his law enforcement officers for helping to work out the logistics, and of course our island fire department for their lead position in the parade. It is just a great, old fashioned, small town parade with fire trucks, antique cars, marching groups, boats, ponies and baby lambs.

SKA was also proud to announce that our VP, Michael Shay, won the Volunteer of the Year Award for 2013 from Sarasota County and "Keep Sarasota County Beautiful/KSCB". Michael, the SKA volunteers, and others joined in to help keep our island clean and well lit this year. Special thanks to the Village Café for treating the Adopt-A-Road volunteers to a free breakfast each time a cleanup took place.

Special recognition also goes to SKA Director, Peter van Roekens, for his tireless effort in working with SKVA and SKCC to get crosswalk lighting installed in the Village to make the Boulevard safer for both pedestrians and drivers at night.

SKA President, Catherine Luckner, has continued to guide the organization, now in its 65th year on the island. It is a never ending job to represent the residents from the island and work hand in hand with the Siesta Chamber, SKVA, our Commissioner Nora Patterson, and Sarasota County.

The Publicity Committee, led by SKA Director Joe Volpe, continues to post meeting notices in local publications every month to encourage members and non-members to participate in SKA monthly meetings and volunteer events. The local *Siesta Sand* publication also prints a regular column called Island Chatter that highlights SKA meeting discussions and guest speaker presentations. Monthly SKA meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, 4:30pm in Room F at St. Boniface Church.

**Visit our SKA website, [www.siestakeyassociation.com](http://www.siestakeyassociation.com)  
Look for Siesta Key Association on Facebook and "Like" us!**

### CROSSWALKS

**Ocean Blvd. crosswalk bollards are installed** and providing excellent lighting so the street is safer for pedestrian crossing. The flashing crosswalk lights for Beach Way Drive and Avenida del Mar should be installed by late December or early January.

### BIG PASS

**The proposal for Groins/Jetties to be installed on South Lido Key and the first ever dredge of Big Pass has raised concerns from the community and the residents of Siesta Key.** As this is being written, there are currently no plans for a peer review of the plan or a public hearing at the Commission. Petitions are being circulated that ask for both of these action items to take place as well as requesting letters be sent to the Commissioners. The SKA meeting held on Dec. 5th was to allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the City to present their plans and answer questions submitted to the Corps, and those questions and some generated by residents will be on the SKA website along with the Corps' answers. Based on the questions asked and the comments given, it is safe to say that the majority of those present had major concerns with the plans to dredge Big Pass and install groins on South Lido. Once the USACE applies for permits, it may be much more difficult to get this process reversed, similar to what SKA had faced in its previous lawsuit during the attempt by Venice to dredge Big Pass.

### POST DISASTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

**The Post Disaster Redevelopment guidelines for residential rebuilding will be reviewed in the first quarter of 2014** with direction from Scott Montgomery, Emergency Services, Sarasota County. Over a two-year period, Siesta Key Association collaborated with Casey Key, Manasota Key, and North Manasota Key Associations to ensure that rebuild criteria, advance planning guidelines, and procedures for permitting in times of emergency would be available to County residents. Our **Barrier Island League (BIL)** of our Associations completed and finalized our recommendations upon meeting with each County Commissioner. Our goal is policy which guides advance preparations and steps for post-disaster rebuilding throughout Sarasota County. County staff are scheduled to provide a draft in the first quarter of 2014. Once approved, the document will be part of Chapter Five of the Sarasota County Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP). We expect implementation prior to the 2014 hurricane season.

## Environment and Zoning

**A significant challenge to our Gulf Beach Setback Line (GBSL) protection was successfully met when a variance request for building was denied.** On January 9, 2013, the Board of County Commissioners, in a unanimous vote, denied two variance petitions for building 100% beyond the GBSL. SKA petitioned the Commissioners, attended the Hearing on Land Use Variance Requests, and were joined by many residents in Chambers. Our letter detailed the purpose and history of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) and the GBSL, legislation establishing the CCCL and GBSL, the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan related to coastal development, and a few past variance requests from existing property owners along Beach Road.

At no time in the history of the GBSL has a request been approved to build on previously undeveloped property beyond the GBSL. The petitions did not meet criteria for approval in several aspects. Of note, the ordinance requirement of minimum variance for reasonable use was not met. The GBSL Ordinance, as it applies to undeveloped property **without previous residential structures and within an area of historic flooding and critical erosion**, was upheld. The united action of many individuals made the difference in this outcome. SKA anticipates another application for permitted building on this same parcel will occur. For our SKA members, neighbors, and all who participated, thank you!

**SKA had an active year as advocates for our beach environment and the wildlife unique to Siesta Key.** With daily monitoring for beach nesting birds, our **volunteers accumulated more than 1,250 hours of stewardship.** The daily morning observations of SKA members **Dick Miles** and **Dr. Allan Worms** became “watch words” for the day between March

and September. Their diligence, logging, and engagement of beachgoers created a culture for success for beach conservation and wildlife protection. With a fourfold increase in fledgling Snowy Plovers, we also found imperiled Least Terns successfully nesting on Siesta Beach this year. The struggles to attain such achievements are many. SKA will continue extended education and engagement of our beach community.

**Dune vegetation and dune accretion is essential for shoreline stability and property protection** during times of storm surge. With SKA members as stewards, several incidents of dune destruction in violation of conservation easements were reported to Natural Resources. In particular, the mechanical destruction of dune and dune vegetation is in violation of County granted conservation easements. We ask for your continued awareness and reporting of incidents in violation of coastal environmental regulations which protect our beach dune and grass. A most recent incident involved a landscaper spraying an herbicide along the beach path as it enters the sandy shore. Herbicides are prohibited in beach habitat.

**With collaborative efforts from Natural Resources and property owners, SKA volunteers Dr. Bob Luckner and Dr. Allan Worms developed a protocol for identification, location, and safe removal of Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA).** Fire ants are not native and require specific procedures for removal from the dune and upper vegetated beach areas. Removal of these pests is essential for the safety of beachgoers as well as the survival of imperiled ground nesting bird species. SKA supported this effort with a contribution for treatment applications and will continue to monitor the infestation of RIFA. Please contact SKA to inquire about permitted, effective, and safe treatment for RIFA.

Tell your Siesta Key Friends and Neighbors! Become an SKA Member by joining on-line at [www.siestakeyassociation.com](http://www.siestakeyassociation.com).

\$30 Member fee includes 2 free tickets to the Annual SKA Member Breakfast.

### SKA Board of Directors

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

### 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 Joyce Kouba, Nominating Committee Chair at [info@siestakeyassociation.com](mailto:info@siestakeyassociation.com) or call for information at 941-364-4880

**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\**

\* *Sarasota: A Tribute in Verse and Vision* is the work of Jack Veeger and Patricia Nebel [www.windvanearns.com](http://www.windvanearns.com)

We are fortunate to have Patricia and Gary Nebel as our website developers, consultants, and generous photo contributors. [www.studio16.com](http://www.studio16.com)