



MAYA ANGELOU DIES AT 86

The celebrated poet and author died Wednesday at her home in Winston-Salem, N.C., according to her son. THE WIRE PAGE 1

BUCCANEERS OWNER DIES AT 85

Under self-made billionaire Macolm Glazer, Tampa Bay enjoyed its greatest NFL success, including a Super Bowl triumph. SPORTS PAGE 1



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PUBLISHER'S INBOX

Here and now

Our elected officials seem to spend their time in the exact opposite proportion that we hope they will. The issues of the few instead of the opportunities for the many. The here and now instead of building a better community for tomorrow. Our elected officials appear to be focused primarily on busy work. Making sure the customer is seated, the food served, the tables bused. Much less time is invested in improving the menu and attracting more customers.

Here's an example of a failure to plan. Laurel Road is approximately the halfway line dividing north and south Sarasota. Although the population of south Sarasota County is moderately less than the northern half, the southern half of Sarasota County is clearly the fastest-growing part of the county and soon will be the largest population base.

One would expect about half of the 2,320 county employees to work in the northern half of Sarasota County and about half of the employees work in the southern half. Yet only 10 percent of Sarasota employees are located in the southern half of the county.

If the Sarasota County commissioners evenly distributed the workforce, there would be 1,000 more highly paid white collar jobs in the southern half of Sarasota. Imagine the economic impact of 1,000 high-paying jobs added to the southern half of Sarasota County. How did this incredible disproportionate distribution of employees get created?

This problem was created because Sarasota County commissioners are busy solving day-to-day issues. While they try hard to work on the future, building a better community for tomorrow is only a relatively small part of their time.

I'm not trying to pick on Sarasota County commissioners. Every city, county, state and national government has the same issue — working on the problem of the day instead of focusing time on the key strategic issues for the future. Why do elected officials spend such a large amount of their time on the small issues?

I believe it is our fault — the voters. Elected officials respond to the loudest voters and those voters with the biggest checks. Elected officials' emails and voice mails are inundated with voters requesting a problem be solved. Time is spent on issues affecting the few rather than issues affecting the many.

If an elected official chooses to focus on a long-term important issue to make our community a better place for tomorrow, they take great risks with their career. Creating positive long-term change, even if beneficial for the community as a whole, is potentially career limiting.

Sometimes, covering the news of the day, we contribute to the risk avoidance behavior of elected officials. As your community paper, we want to help create a climate where elected officials can make long-term improvements to the vitality of our community.

All public servants, including a community newspaper, have an obligation to help create a better community in our future. We are grateful for your support that allows us to be your community newspaper.

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David DUNN-RANKIN
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

North Port to renew Bayflite

Commission OKs lease renewal in spite of infighting, confusion

By IAN ROSS
STAFF WRITER

NORTH PORT — After a tumultuous meeting of hissing, heckling and gaveling, the City Commission on Tuesday night approved renewal of the Bayflite helicopter's lease in the city for another two-year term.

North Port City Commissioner Linda Yates made the motion to renew the life-saving helicopter service's lease until the end of 2016, which eventually passed 3-2 with Commissioner Cheryl Cook and Rhonda DiFranco dissenting.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Members of the North Port Huskies youth football team pose with the Bayflite helicopter near City Hall last week.

BYFLITE | 6



SUN PHOTO BY BRENDA BARBOSA

Gov. Rick Scott touted Florida's employment gains during a campaign stop in Charlotte County Wednesday. The governor addressed a group of small business leaders at Ultra-Tech Enterprises, a company specializing in technology solutions for the railroad industry.

Scott touts job creation

By BRENDA BARBOSA
STAFF WRITER

PUNTA GORDA — Gov. Rick Scott touted Florida's employment gains Wednesday during a campaign stop in Charlotte County, at which dozens of business and government leaders gathered.

Standing in the parts room of Ultra-Tech Enterprises Inc., a company that designs and manufactures safety devices for the railroad industry, Scott credited small businesses for the rise in private-sector jobs.

In the last three years alone, Scott said, Florida has gained 120,000 trade jobs, and small businesses can be credited for the majority of the state's job creation.

"We've got to make sure our small businesses can prosper better than any small businesses in the world," Scott said.

Ultra-Tech CEO Paul Benton started his company in 1991 with just 11 employees. Now the Charlotte County-based company boasts 24 full-time employees, with three more on the way, Benton said. Many of the positions are high-skilled, high-paying jobs, he noted.

"Last year, we did close to \$3 million in sales. It was our best year ever," Benton said. "But this year, we're going to be almost double that."

Benton credited an improving economy for the rise in sales.

"There's no doubt in my mind. It's definitely getting better," he said.

But while the local job market continues to improve — Charlotte County's unemployment rate dropped to 5.5 percent last month — the number of working poor across the county remains staggering.

CREATION | 6

Arcadia torn over city administrator's background check

By STEVE BAUER
ARCADIAN ASSISTANT EDITOR

ARCADIA — A three-year-old investigation report about City Administrator Tom Slaughter has become the center of controversy in Arcadia barely a week after city officials approved his hire. The report, conducted by the city of Venice where Slaughter worked for 13 years, outlines allegations of sexual harassment, intimidation and favoritism by Slaughter toward Venice city staffers.

Arcadia's City Council has been searching for a permanent administrator since October 2013, when Judith Jankosky resigned and led a mass exodus of high-level staffers on her final day with the city. Jankosky was the city's

fifth administrator in the past five years, and the council promised residents it would make a concerted effort to find an experienced, qualified administrator to bring stability to city hall.

Part of that effort included an in-depth vetting process, led by a search committee that narrowed applicants down to five finalists based on qualifications. The council also conducted interviews with each finalist, and after permanently hiring Slaughter May 6 (he had been serving as interim administrator since Jankosky's departure) ordered a federal and state criminal background check and education verification. While at least two council members confirm they were

CHECK | 7

Charlotte sheriff endorses anti-pot push

By ADAM KREGER
STAFF WRITER

PORT CHARLOTTE — When the Rev. Peter Burnett, 48, was growing up in Jamaica, he saw the negative results marijuana use had on friends and family members. So, after he learned a constitutional amendment would be placed on the Florida ballot aimed at legalizing the drug for medical use, the current pastor of Port Charlotte International Church helped to create a local coalition against the proposed law.

"It's a very important issue," said Burnett, who helped to found the Don't Let Charlotte County Go To Pot Coalition in April. "We're small right now, but we're trying to get some more supporters to help us do the heavy lifting."

Charlotte County Sheriff Bill Prummell showed he is one of those supporters Wednesday, when he spoke during a special luncheon sponsored by the coalition at Peace Lutheran Church in Port Charlotte. About two dozen turned out, including pastors from other churches hoping to learn more about Amendment 2 to pass on to their congregations.



PRUMMELL

"Marijuana is made up of over 400 different chemicals," Prummell said during his presentation. "Some of those chemicals have shown they can be beneficial for certain ailments. Raw marijuana, as a whole, has no medicinal value. That's why it's a schedule 1 narcotic. It's an illegal drug."

He believes proposed language for Amendment 2 — which can be read

SHERIFF | 7

WHAT YOU'LL SEE ON NOV. 4 BALLOT

Title: Use of marijuana for certain medical conditions

Summary: Allows the medical use of marijuana for individuals with debilitating diseases as determined by a licensed Florida physician. Allows caregivers to assist patients' medical use of marijuana. The Department of Health shall register and regulate centers that produce and distribute marijuana for medical purposes, and shall issue identification cards to patients and caregivers. Applies only to Florida law. Does not authorize violations of federal law or any nonmedical use, possession or production of marijuana.

— Source: Florida Division of Elections

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