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**Voters to choose among strong candidates in Martin County Schools race.**  
**See Election 2016, beginning on Page 13.**

FREE

# Martin County CURRENTS

ONLINE EDITION  
August/September 2016

**First Hobe Sound, now Indiantown on the path to being a town!** pg 6



**Vote 30**  
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# John Haddox.... the Commissioner for ALL of Martin County!

*"I'm very blessed and very humbled to have earned the support of so many pillars of leadership in our community, and I will continue doing everything I can to serve the Martin County we all love so dearly."*

**- MARTIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER JOHN HADDOX**



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1) Left to right: Don Johnson (Army), Art Boinay (Army), Bo Carlson (Army), John Haddox (Navy), Ed Maxwell (Army), Bob Rydzewski (Army), Bob Sarubbi (Navy), Bill Isadore (Army) 2) Alex Beringer, Aviation Professional, Chair of Airport Noise Advisory Committee 3) Bob Langevin, Retired Pilot 4) Brian Sala, Green Vets and Sublime Soil 5) Butch Bayley, Sailfish Marina 6) Calvin Turnquest, Executive Director, Council for Concerned Bahamians Abroad 7) Elmira Gainey, REALTOR and former county commissioner 8) George Kleine, Community Volunteer 9) Jennifer Atkisson-Lovett, Owner RE/MAX of Stuart 10) Jim Dragseth, Whittcar Boats 11) Joe Crankshaw, Former Stuart News Columnist 12) Joe Ferarra, Martin County Fire Rescue Chief (Ret.) 13) John Gonzales, REALTOR 14) John Leighton, Construction, pioneering Martin County family 15) John Payson, Retired Businessman and Environmental Leader 16) KC Ingram, Florida NOT All Aboard 17) Keri Burgess, animal advocate, RE/MAX of Stuart 18) Len Sucsy, Retired Business Leader 19) Michael Dadko, former Army captain 20) Mike Roberts, Organizer, Stuart Air Show 21) Nathaniel Reed, Former US Secretary of Interior 22) Rick Hartman, Seventh-Generation Martin County Resident 23) Scott Watson, Indiantown Marina 24) Stephen Leighton, law enforcement, pioneering Martin County family 25) Tom Campenni, Stuart City Commissioner 26) Tom Whittington, Manatee Pocket Yacht Sales 27) Hobe Sounders supporting John Haddox



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Political advertisement approved and paid for by the campaign to reelect John Haddox Republican candidate for Martin County Commission District 5.



# County's support of non-profits in future jeopardy

Eliminating the county's partial funding of some non-profits got a reprieve for the 2017 budget – with a promise by Chair Anne Scott last spring to revisit the issue again during budget hearings next year.

The county's policy toward continuing its nominal building-lease policy for nonprofits, however, may end prior by the 2018 budget year.

"We can't do anything about it this year, because of how the leases are written," said Commissioner Ed Fielding, during the August 16 county commission meeting, "but maybe we can by next year."

During various commission meetings over the past six months, Commissioners Fielding, Anne Scott and Sarah Heard have criticized the practice of providing unused county property to nonprofits, revealing their intent through comments that range from Heard's declaration that she's "tired of picking winners and losers," to Scott's, "The county needs a tightly written lease policy," and on August 16, Fielding saying that the leases are "All bad."

Often disagreeing with the commission majority in regard to ending or severely restricting support to nonprofits are Commissioners John Haddox and Doug Smith, both of whom have spoken in support of continuing what they consider to be "investments" in the county's nonprofits.

They continued their advocacy during the Aug. 16 meeting, during which

Jeff Dougherty, county real property manager, presented a new county lease policy divided into five categories of leases, including one for the airport, non-profits and the county as lessee. Dougherty also devised a rating system for nonprofits.

"I think having a framework (for leasing) is good," Haddox continued, "but we've got to leave room in there for five county commissioners to do what they're paid to do, and that's to make the decisions based on their best judgment and common sense."

He also questioned how the county could realistically measure the value of non-profits' contributions to the county's quality of life, referring particularly to the Treasure Coast Rowing Club as an example of a public-nonprofit partnership that ordinarily would be a Parks and Recreation Department function, just as the county provides and maintains soccer, baseball, lacrosse and softball fields, providing coaches, equipment and training in return for a lease.

In addition to the Rowing Club, other affected organizations include the Children's Museum, the YMCA, the U.S. Sailing Center, the Martin County Arts Council, Florida Oceanographic Society, the Treasure Coast Rowing Club, the Martin County Fair, the Maritime Museum and 9 others.

Scott seems to favor Fielding's recommendation of either charging "market"

lease rates for the buildings that the non-profits themselves renovated – in some cases spending millions of dollars – or to sell the buildings to the non-profits at current appraised values, many of which are waterfront properties. She has often criticized the Martin County Fair's \$20 annual lease rate, although dozens of other non-profit organizations also use the fairgrounds for events or staging areas at no charge.

Fielding and Heard also questioned the high number of leases in Martin County, as compared to surrounding counties that all have fewer than six leases with non-profits, including Miami-Dade County. Haddox countered that a more relevant statistic is the value of the community services

that the county would have to provide if non-profits were not providing them, which he said he "suspects is a low number" per capita in Martin County, as compared to other counties.

The "value" of non-profits' contributions to Martin County's quality of life also was questioned by Commissioner Doug Smith, who considers non-profits "an industry wrapped around non-profits" that provides immeasurable returns to residents, pointing again to the Treasure Coast Rowing Club.

"We have a world-class facility that of-

fers world-class training and gives our kids world-class opportunities to be exposed to world-class institutions of higher ed," Smith said. "I don't know how you EVER place a value on what this means to us as a community or as a county."

In a survey of the state's 67 counties, all except Hillsborough County, followed state statutes rather than having a separate countywide leasing policy, and most leases were handled by administrative staff. Heard complained that

*'I don't know how you EVER place a value on what this means to us as a community or as a county.'*

— Commissioner Doug Smith

Dougherty's policy "gives commissioners less control, not more control."

Dougherty was directed to clarify some points, expound on others, compile a list of all non-profits in the county and their mission "to prevent overlapping services" when evaluating them, and to determine the value of the buildings and/or property currently occupied, then return in September with a final policy based on the commission's direction.

Scott called Dougherty's work a "good first step toward a policy, but we're not there yet." ■

## Martin County CURRENTS

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# Commissioners chop CRA, economic funding

**The county's entire economic development fund got axed and the Community Development Areas took a big hit to avoid a millage rate increase on real property in 2017, but taxes will go up anyway due to rising property values and increases in some of the taxing districts, such as school board.**

Most county employees also will get a two-percent salary adjustment, or a one-time payment of \$1,000, whichever is greater. Commissioner John Haddox told County Administrator Taryn Kryzda that the lowest-paid firefighters "locked in Step One" for several years, although bound by a union contract under negotiation for the past 18 months, also "needs to be addressed immediately."

The Board of County Commissioners cleaned out half a million dollars from the economic development fund and reduced funds to the CRAs by \$825,000 at the end of the third day of budget hearings on July 22. The move was to avoid the less-than-one-percent increase in the

millage rate proposed by County Administrator Taryn Kryzda in July to cover an additional \$1.8 million needed to satisfy the county's tentative budget demands.

Although Commissioner Ed Fielding moved to eliminate all funding immediately for economic development, he was unable to convince two other commissioners to follow his lead.

"We committed \$135,000 from the economic fund (to the Business Development Board to extend their contract by six months)," Scott said, adding that the board could reconsider whether to fund a new contract at the time that the BDB presents the contract to the BOCC.

"If it's an equitable contract," she said, "and worthy, and we want to renew their contract, we'll consider then how we'll fund it."

The county – at the direction of a previous board – sets aside \$1 million annually from taxes paid by FPL to be used only for economic development, which this board chose to reallocate partially to

inlet dredging, leaving \$500 million for other economic development activities each year in an Economic Trust Fund. The balance in the fund for 2017 will now be zero.

The commission majority of Scott, Ed Fielding and Sarah Heard also voted to move the \$325,000 in health care reserves back into the general fund, capping health insurance at last year's levels; however, Kryzda had set aside sufficient unspent monies in this year's budget to offset an increase in health insurance costs for employees in 2017.

Scott also requested that the \$44,000 left unspent in District 3 funds from the previous commissioner's discretionary funds go to the general fund; however, since those monies came from her district, she was required to move them into the Hobe Sound Community Redevelopment Area trust fund.

Budget Manager Jennifer Manning presented the Non-Departmental budget, which was the last item of the

budget to be considered, and required the lengthiest discussion. All the other departmental budgets had been approved as presented to the commission, with the exception of the Library's budget, which was increased by \$90,000 to facilitate opening the Blake Library on Sundays at the suggestion of Commissioner Doug Smith.

The fund for aiding private charitable organizations was capped at \$600,000 to include all that received grants in 2016, except Volunteers in Medicine, which asked for a \$200,000 grant and was approved.

Manning and a team of county employees developed a scoring system for awarding grants, which Scott said was "a good step in the right direction," but in her opinion still needed more work.

The tentative total millage rate, including those of the MSTUs for schools, fire, etc., adopted for 2017 is 9.3936. The final adoption hearing will be in September. ■

## Door left open, again, for Pitchford's to refile claim vs county

**District Court Judge Shields McManus dismissed the suit by Reily Enterprises LLC (Pitchford's Landing) against Martin County on August 17, but left the door open once again for the suit to be refiled. According to court records, Reily Enterprises' attorneys have 20 days to refile.**

McManus ruled previously April 6 to dismiss the Pitchford's Landing case against the county, but rejected the county's argument that a Planned Unit Development zoning agreement is not a contract.

Reily's amended complaint stated that the county's Land Development Regulations that were in place at the time the Master Site Plan was approved by the county (in 2007) should take precedence when considering the project's Final Site Plan, that the plan complied with the Comprehensive Growth

Management Plan (in 2015), and that the only differences between the final and the master site plans were those changes required to satisfy the county's requirements, according to court records.

The county's approval of the Pitchford's redevelopment of an 158-unit RV park on 17.7 acres in Jensen Beach, between Skyline Drive and Indian River Drive, into a mix of 83 units of Key West-styled single-family homes and two-story condominiums survived a court challenge in 2008 by residents of Jensen Beach, known as The Jensen Group, led by attorney Ginny Sherlock.

The redevelopment project was further delayed by other suits and counter-suits between Reily Enterprises and The Jensen Group, represented by Sherlock, that were settled during the height of the economic recession, qualifying the project in 2009 for both state and county development timetable extensions.

When Reily Enterprises filed for their Final Site Plan approval in 2013, the former members of the Jensen Group and

Sherlock re-launched their complaints during commission meetings, until Commissioner Anne Scott called for the county attorney to investigate breach proceedings against Pitchford's Landing during the summer of 2014.

Six months later, Senior Assistant County Attorney Krista Storey reported

to commissioners that Pitchford's Landing had not breached its agreements, and that the project was "in full compliance." The Growth Management staff in July 2015, however, recommended denial of the project due to a number of issues the staff said did not comply with the Comp Plan. ■

## Walking across Martin County



With little fanfare, Commissioner Doug Smith took off on foot across Martin County in July, walking in sections, until he had crossed the entire county with a walk of about 58 miles. Residents snapped pictures of him, and he snapped photos for his Facebook account. "You get a whole new perspective of how special a place Martin County and its people truly are," he said. "You also find out how many of our sidewalks have missing links!"



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# Reopened public records trial starting soon?

**M**artin County commissioners Anne Scott, Ed Fielding and Sarah Heard may have to go to court in September in the public records trial that county attorneys have been trying to get postponed.

Scott's undisclosed private email account and emails from Maggy Hurchalla, whom Lake Point is suing for alleged interference with their contracts with Martin County and the South Florida Management District, were grounds cited by District Court Judge Shields McManus in April to toss out his previous finding that Martin County, along with Commissioners Sarah Heard and Ed Fielding, had not violated public records laws.

On June 17, he ordered that a new public records trial be held prior to the end of this year; however, the main trial in Lake Point's breach of contract suit against Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District and Hurchalla, previously scheduled for mid-September, has been postponed until after Jan. 1, 2017, opening up the September docket.

Lake Point contends that Maggy Hurchalla had corresponded secretly with commissioners, providing them with false information in order to persuade them to shut down the Lake Point operation. Scott called for the mining operation to be "shut down immediately," during the Jan. 8, 2013, meeting; however, the commission directed the staff to issue citations as a housing development, rather than recognizing it as a mining operation, and did not vote to shut down the operation.

## A federal ruling allows county's case against AAF to proceed

**A federal judge ruled in August on a suit filed in April 2015 that Martin and Indian River counties had proved "standing" in their case against All Aboard Florida and the U.S. Department of Transportation, which allows them to continue to fight the Brightline passenger rail plans on environmental and historic preservation issues that could disrupt their funding.**

County Attorney Michael Durham said it "could take years" before the case actually proceeds to trial, but in the meantime, the deadline to sell the \$1.75 million billion in Private Activity Bonds



**Martin County commissioners Anne Scott, Ed Fielding and Sarah Heard may have to go to court in September in the public records trial that county attorneys have been trying to get postponed.**

Lake Point filed a public records request in February and again in March 2013 to seek all of the commissioners' correspondence with Hurchalla referencing Lake Point from both public and private email accounts presumably to use as evidence in their lawsuit against Hurchalla.

The county's IT department uncovered previously undisclosed emails between Scott and Hurchalla in March of this this year.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The postponement of the main trial came after the SFWMD filed counterclaims against Lake Point for breach of contract, alleging that the mining company had not turned over ownership of the about 1,100 acres of land near Indiantown to the water district as agreed upon.

Lake Point contends in court records that it is prevented from transferring ownership to SFWMD because of Martin County's failure to revoke its development order on the property, designed for a housing development, which the county contends still applies to the property and under which the county levied violations and fines in 2013.

Lake Point also contends that it had obtained all state permits for mining as

was agreed upon and was designated a water restoration project by the state DEP, thus is exempt from the county's development rules.

In July, District Court Judge Shields McManus agreed with SFWMD that its agreement with Lake Point did not include a water-supply business, thus reducing the anticipated length of the trial by one week, and

eliminating the loss of Lake Point's water-supply business in their claims for damages.

McManus disagreed with Martin County attorneys, however, that Lake Point was not a party to the county's interlocal agreement with SFWMD, calling it "unjust" to rule otherwise.

"The name Lake Point is littered throughout the agreement," he said

during court testimony. "Without question, Lake Point – if not a party to the agreement – is no less than a third-party beneficiary."

### IT IS NOT A SLAPP SUIT

Attorney Virginia Sherlock, although she failed for the fourth time in June to prove to McManus that Lake Point's lawsuit against Hurchalla is what she calls a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (a SLAPP suit), now the county's attorneys will argue to have the court dismiss the charges against Hurchalla. They have asked for a final summary judgment based on affidavits filed by former SFWMD officials that Hurchalla's comments had not influenced them.

Court-ordered mediation took place between Lake Point and Martin County attorneys on July 14; however, no settlement agreement was announced. ■



**Commissioner John Haddox, center, recently founded a new organization, Coastal Forum Task Force, which met recently at the Morgade Library in Stuart to discuss a coordinated effort among coastal counties south of Martin County to stop Lake Okeechobee discharges. Addressing the group is Ken Burns, Ph.D., PE, director of the Broward County Environmental Planning and Community Resilience Division**

## Getting help to stop discharges from the counties south of Martin

**Commissioner John Haddox, who served for nearly four years on the Southeast Florida Coast Oceans Task Force, recognized the potential for recruiting counties south of Martin in efforts to eliminate Lake Okeechobee discharges, which damage not only the St. Lucie estuary, but Florida's reefs.**

After the Task Force made their recommendations to the state's Department of Environmental protection for a national ocean policy – which included eliminating all polluted outfalls to the ocean – he saw the opportunity to add the clout of six million people to Martin County's own efforts to influence the state and federal legislatures to in-

crease storage south of the Lake.

"We had an excellent group of people working together," Haddox said, "it just made sense for us to continue our work (after the task force sunsetted) since we have common objectives. We now will be able to add the clout from the six million people south of us in our effort to stop discharges and to build more storage south of the Lake."

The group includes state, county, and city officials and key stakeholders from Martin, Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties. Haddox is chair of the group, which will continue to meet regularly to form strategy and an action plan. ■

# Indiantown joins Hobe Sound in path to independence

**First it was Hobe Sound, which announced in May that its residents are seeking incorporation as a separate town with its own governing body. Now Indiantown is on the same path to independence.**

Some Hobe Sound residents said that the county commission majority had ceased to listen to them or to validate the community's vision, which caused five civic leaders to engage a firm with their personal funds to explore the feasibility of becoming a town.

The objective, according to Mike Ennis, chair of the group, is to ensure the future protection of Hobe Sound from unscrupulous developers. Their boundaries are the current urban services boundary and they will adopt the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan unchanged.

"We found out what it's like to have a county commission that does not listen," said Ennis, "and although this (commission) is slow growth, it could

just as well be the other way around. We feel that the people who live here are the ones who should have the most say as to what happens here, and the only way to get that is through incorporation. ... It's a whole lot easier to be listened to if your mayor or your councilman is your next-door neighbor."

In Indiantown, the dashed hopes of Indiantown residents after the permit application for the EcoGen biomass facility was withdrawn in July spurred Indiantown leaders into pursuing incorporation for its 5,000 residents.

The EcoGen project also was the elephant in the room during Commissioner Anne Scott's town hall meeting in July at the Indiantown Civic Center.

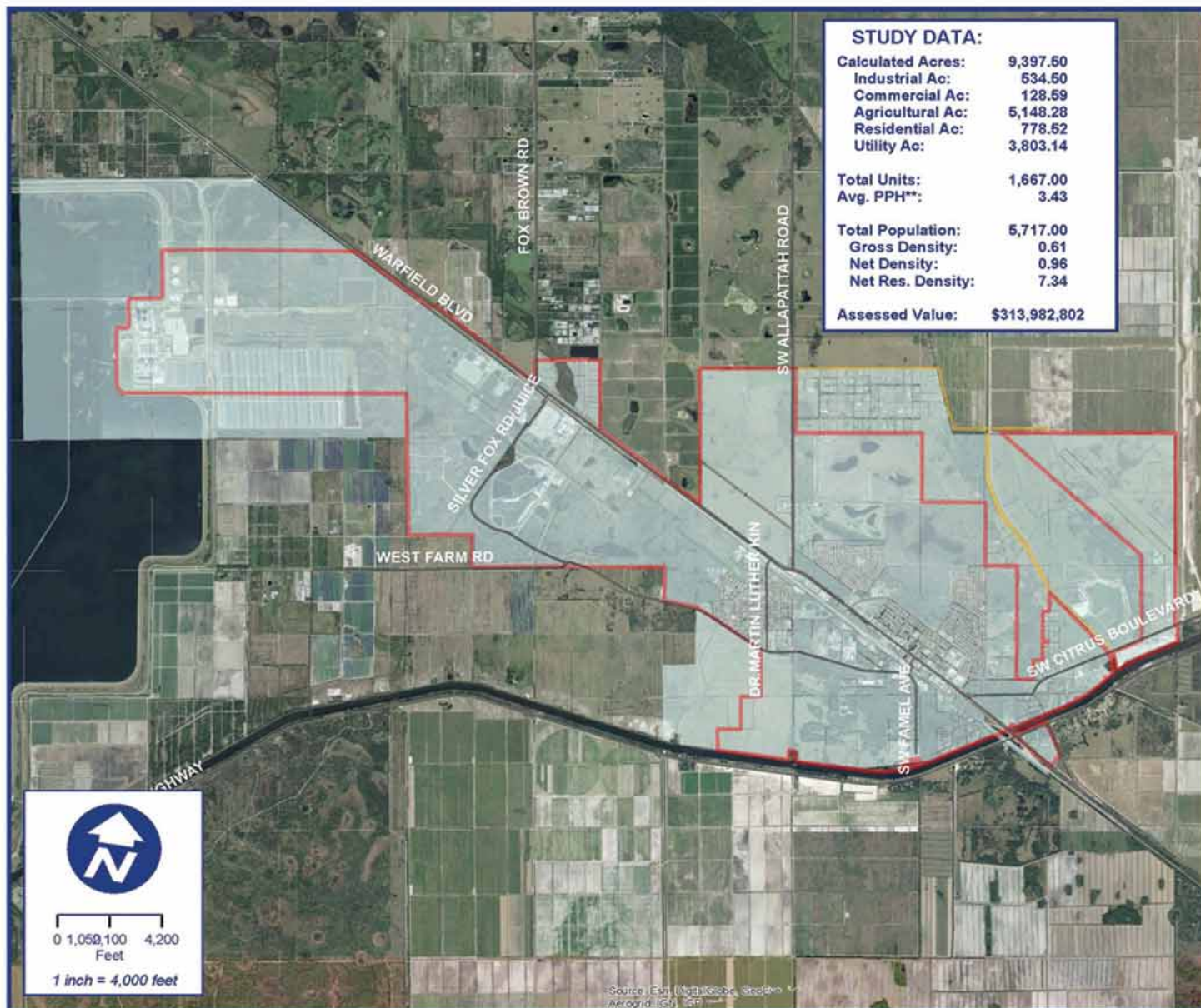
The plant that would burn wood to



generate electricity would have also been a sort of agricultural renaissance for the Indiantown area, since it also offered an alternative crop – non-invasive eucalypt-

tus trees – for thousands of acres of farmland decimated by citrus canker and no longer supporting the citrus industry.

Residents had begun to leave at the



## URBAN SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY STUDY

Fiscal & Demographic Study  
Indiantown, Florida  
August, 2016

### Legend

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- Primary USA
- Secondary USA
- Parcels Within USA
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Note:  
This exhibit was prepared utilizing public data sources, including the Florida Geographic Data Library, US Census Data, and the Martin County Property Appraiser Data and is the work product of the iTown Work Group. This exhibit is intended for general information only, any use of this exhibit without authorization of the Work Group is prohibited.

**INDIANTOWN  
INDEPENDENCE  
COMMUNITY WORK GROUP**

end of the July Indiantown NAC meeting, until Carl Frost of Kai Kai Farms in Indiantown asked the question of Scott that had been the topic of conversation prior to the meeting, yet had not been asked.

"Why did EcoGen withdraw their application?", Frost asked.

Residents ceased their chatter and turned toward Scott for her answer as the Indiantown Civic Center grew quiet.

"You will have to ask them," Scott said, as she shrugged her shoulders. "EcoGen pulled the plug themselves."

She explained that the county commission's "extraordinary concession" to EcoGen officials allowed them an early start to an expedited review process, requiring a comprehensive plan amendment that commissioners seemed ready to approve, but the EcoGen application was "not in compliance ... I can assure you, it was nothing the commissioners did."

In the audience was Indiantown native Kevin Powers, who said that he had supported the EcoGen project and had read their withdrawal letter to Scott, and among the reasons EcoGen cited was the hostile political climate they would have to overcome to obtain approval.

EcoGen officials had met with county staff on a Thursday, which was an upbeat, hopeful meeting with no insurmountable obstacles to approval, then the following week, EcoGen received a letter that recommended denial.

The county had received nearly 200 pages of emails from Maggy Hurchalla, Donna Melzer and Ginny Sherlock, among others, objecting to the EcoGen plan, which officials said could have been addressed if given the opportunity.

"Businesses cannot operate like that," Powers added. "A business must be able to plan, they must have some predictability, or they will not succeed."

EcoGen moved its project to Okeechobee County, along with its estimated \$450,000 in annual tax revenue and its \$6.7 million in payroll. For Indiantown residents, it was like "getting kicked in the stomach," said Brian Powers, who led another town hall meeting a month later to tell residents that after the EcoGen withdrawal, several leaders had met and decided to investigate the feasibility of incorporation. They opted to use the same consultant that Hobe Sound had hired.

"We are facing the loss of 350 jobs," Powers told residents. "The sale of the Cogeneration plant alone means we lose 100 jobs in a couple of weeks. We needed that project."

Most residents in the room shook their heads in agreement with Powers. "EcoGen had been a gift from God," added Indiantown resident Thelma Waters.

After looking at Indiantown's assessed property values, which total more than \$300 million, the consultants reported that incorporation was feasible and suggested moving to the next step,

which was public involvement, including public information, feedback, signing a petition and raising the funds to cover the initial expense of attorneys.

Like Hobe Sound, Indiantown will adopt the "Government Lite" model, using the taxes that residents currently pay to the county and to contract the county services needed, such as fire, police, and libraries. No increase in taxes will be required.

Hobe Sound has held eight public information meetings thus far, one fund-raiser and obtained more than 1,000



signatures on a petition. They plan to take those to Tallahassee next week as the next step in the process, as they continue to plan another fund-raiser and continue to collect signatures.

Hobe Sound leaders plan to submit the five-year feasibility study and the Town of

Hobe Sound's charter by Dec. 1, a deadline that Indiantown hopes to meet as well. The state legislature must approve both their applications prior to holding separate referendums.

"Hobe Sound is way ahead of us right

now," Powers said, "but we also don't need as many signatures as they do."

Both have websites that will take signatures of residents in support of putting the question of incorporation on the ballot for a vote only by those residents who live within the town's proposed boundaries. Both towns are aiming for a special referendum in either August or November 2017.

For more information on Hobe Sound's incorporation, go to: [www.townofhobesound.com](http://www.townofhobesound.com).

For more information on Indiantown incorporation, go to: [www.indiantown.org](http://www.indiantown.org). ■

--Barbara Clowdus

**RE-ELECT**  
**DOUG SMITH**  
**MARTIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER**  
**Tuesday, August 30**

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#### **Making Our Lives Better**

**Doug Smith** has kept up the fight for "good growth" that keeps people employed, government under control and life here affordable for all. He has consistently *opposed* higher property taxes, was the lone Commission vote *against* a referendum to hike the sales tax, and voted *against* a beach parking fee.

#### **Protecting the Indian River Lagoon**

**Doug Smith** has been a tireless advocate for more federal and state funding to protect our precious "lifeline." His efforts finally resulted in a fully funded C-44 project, growing support for comprehensive Everglades restoration, and a 16-county coalition that's prioritizing projects and raising awareness of our water-quality needs.



#### **Creating Jobs and Growing Our Economy... The Right Way**

An active member of the County's five chambers of commerce, **Doug Smith** is a leading supporter of the CRA program and Business Development Board, a Jobs Tool Kit of incentives, a Small Business Bill of Rights, and dedicated funding for economic development. He also chairs our Tourist Development Council.

#### **Fighting All Aboard Florida**

**Doug Smith** understands that local leaders must be constantly on guard against profiteers and projects that are wrong for Martin County. That's why he has voted to fund legal action against All Aboard, which poses a potential public safety problem and financial risk to our communities.

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Political advertisement paid for and approved by Doug Smith, Republican, for Martin County Commission, District 1

# Editorial: The primary results will shape our county

**D**o you prefer that Martin County be a place that's healthy for families to settle in, or do you prefer a place attractive only to retirees? That's the bottom-line choice for voters in the Board of County Commission race to be decided August 30.

Look at the special-interest contributors in the District 3 County Commission race. Harold Jenkins, unlike his opponent Anne Scott, has a range of contributors from every socio-economic class including the working class, and nearly all from Martin County, where Jenkins was raised and has grown both a family and a business. Nearly 90 percent of Scott's contributors are retirees.

Also unlike Anne Scott, who lives on Jupiter Island, Jenkins supports economic development, yet at the same time has a proven history in preserving Martin County's quality of life by fighting to stop western development of agricultural lands.

He wants to apply the business principles of customer service and lean efficiency to government functions and budgeting; enforce the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan with common sense; re-establish an independent Community Redevelopment Agency; continue the fight against All Aboard Florida; and work to stop Lake Okeechobee discharges.

Anne Scott is endorsed by former

county commissioner Donna Melzer, a candidate for the District 5 seat, who spent much of her first term as county commissioner in the late '90s defending herself in lawsuits or invoking 5th Amendment protections against criminal charges while being investigated by a Grand Jury for abuse of power and violations of public records laws.

Scott also has been accused of violating public records laws, which will be addressed in a Martin County courtroom this fall.

**A man of integrity and deep roots in Martin County, Harold Jenkins is the choice of Martin County Currents (and The Stuart News) for the District 3 County Commission seat.**

Incumbent John Haddox, a Navy veteran from the Vietnam era, is considered a "moderate" commissioner and endorsed by The Stuart News, although he is passionate about protecting our quality of life, about water quality, about stopping the train, about revitalizing our neighborhoods and creating opportunities to bring higher-paying jobs to Martin County.

He often has said that the number-one responsibility of a county government is public safety and supports numerous fire department initiatives, yet he's under attack by the firefighters union leadership, in spite of a public endorsement from

just-retired fire chief, Joe Ferrara. Fortunately, Haddox has the character and integrity not to hold these unwarranted attacks by firefighters against them later, which earns our respect.

Haddox founded the Coastal Ocean Task Force to continue his work with the counties south of Martin, leveraging the weight of six million additional residents to end Lake Okeechobee discharges and to establish reef protections. Haddox, a genuine environmentalist without a hidden agenda, is endorsed by noted environmentalist Nathaniel Reed.

He will work as a full-time commissioner on Martin County's multitude of issues, something the other candidate in the race, Ed Ciampi, cannot do. Ciampi is an international salesman for a Palm City firm, and although we certainly respect his previous record as a commissioner from 2008-2012, frankly we've had our fill of a part-time commissioner who is out of town and out of reach far too often.

**Martin County Currents endorses John Haddox as District 5 County Commissioner.**

The public record contradicts environmental activist and District 1 commission candidate Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch statements that she thinks "independently." Her actions say otherwise. She switched her stance in

October 2014 on the issue of removing septic tanks from the headwaters of the Loxahatchee River following just one rebuke by a Ginny Sherlock/Maggy Hurchalla email. Her explanation is that it was "not the time for a fight."

We believe the Loxahatchee River deserves as much "fight" as does the St. Lucie River, and we are concerned at the obvious control over her decisions by attorney Virginia Sherlock and former commissioner Maggy Hurchalla, who are working diligently to turn Martin County into an exclusive retirement enclave.

Thurlow-Lippisch's opponent, Doug Smith, has "a solid record," says The Stuart News, including founding the 16-county coalition for water quality and launching numerous successful lobbying efforts at the state and national levels to get critical Everglades project funding -- not to mention taking the lead during our recent algae crisis.

We think the Stuart News endorsed Thurlow-Lippisch because she is the most popular among their readers. Your choice is between a candidate with strings tied to and controlled by Sherlock, Melzer, and Hurchalla, and a proven, independent leader like Doug Smith. **For the sake of our estuary and the future direction of our county, we choose Doug Smith as District 1 County Commissioner.**

## Letters to the Editor:

### Melzer & others bring back painful memories

As a 35-year resident of Martin County, who raised a family here and has owned businesses and multiple properties here in Stuart, and whose daughter is a college professor and granddaughter is in elementary school here, I'm sickened and astounded to still see the old guard from the 90's become regenerated and once again corrupt and strangle this county – as they lie and prey on newly transplanted residents who don't remember what it was like before the new Roosevelt Bridge was built.

These commissioners (both past, present and possible new commissioner) have cost the taxpayers of Martin County millions of dollars in lawsuits, attorney fees and in the case of Anne Scott, provided a \$115,000 contract (which could lead to a \$800,000 dollar contract if she has her way) to a Chicago consultant firm. That's HER hometown. Yet the taxpayers were

never asked their choice and we have many real estate consultant firms right here in Martin County.

I was not fully aware of their devious and nefarious intentions, and hopefully the truth will surface through newsletters such as this. Additionally it's also up to long-time residents to help educate and defend the integrity of the county. I'm also disgusted with the fact that the current commissioners can be and are so manipulated by this "underground network." Unfortunately it's all about the money. Melzer, Scott and Lippisch seem to have deep pockets to do whatever they feel is best – best for them only!

Do not re-elect Anne (this is MY county) Scott, Donna (let's spend taxpayers money and approve nothing) Melzer, and Jacqui (no vans or trucks in Sewalls point ) Lippisch. (That's not how I spell her last name, by the way, but the editor insists on changing it.)

*George Geoff Haramis  
Sunny Stuart, Florida  
Satcom*

### Don't respond to nursing home calls? Are you kidding?

After watching the (county) commission budget meeting, I am truly scared for the safety of Martin County residents. In regards to our public safety, the majority of the commission are truly clueless.

The subject of the many newly approved nursing homes in our county came up with regards to call numbers. Both Ann Scott and Ed Fielding implied that these aren't true emergencies. Ed Fielding actually said that most are not true emergencies and that they are nursing home personnel who don't want to do their job. SERIOUSLY?

Attention to call numbers were also given to our trauma helicopter. Once again, Ed Fielding gave his words of wisdom. He actually said, on record, that "in most cases, ground ambulance transportation is just as effective, if not better, than the trauma helicopter." One has to wonder where he gets his expertise information from. It's called the

"Golden Hour" Ed, look it up!

I wonder if he were involved in a life threatening situation, if he would choose an ambulance ride over a helicopter ride.

I had no idea that Ed Fielding was so well versed and qualified to make better life and death decisions than the many men and women ACTUALLY educated to do so. It is apparent that someone is feeding him inaccurate information and it's very dangerous.

If you have a loved one in a nursing home in Martin County, if you ever need the great services of MCFR or LifeStar, or even if you are a resident of Martin County, you should be concerned that commissioner Fielding actually believes what he is saying.

I have an idea for commissioners Anne Scott and Ed Fielding. Why don't you actually go and ride with our fire rescue and gain some true knowledge before you speak? Because now you just sound plain stupid.

*Tamara Moyer  
Stuart*

# The FB comment blocked by Donna Melzer



**Nancy Smith**  
Guest Columnist

**M**aggy Hurchalla wrote a letter posted on Donna Melzer's Facebook page "PAC Attacks Donna Melzer." I wouldn't have known a thing about it if a friend hadn't called me to say my ears should be burning, and I might want to check the letter out.

No biggie. Maggy has misrepresented me before. But I wanted to set the record straight, so I started to post a long reply. Unfortunately, after I got two paragraphs in, I was blocked from continuing. As I finished my third paragraph, a note popped up – something on the order of "No permission to comment."

The whole comment is gone from the website.

So, I hope you don't mind if I try to make my points here.

First, I've never called environmentalists "bottom feeders" OR "losers." Particularly losers. I think environmentalists are always perceived the good guys, even when they're hoodwinking the world – and no matter how much, at

times, they use their "cause" to further other ends.

Certainly, most of the environmentalists I know are fantastic people who work hard to make the planet a better place. I just don't happen to think Donna Melzer, who never mentioned the Everglades or the lake releases or the algae that formed during the 1990s once that I can remember, is one of them.

Donna was all about growth, not the environment. I have to wonder how Maggy's theory that "electing candidates who are always environmentalists" is going to "save our river." Especially when she's recommending Donna to do it.

Is it because Maggy knows she pulls Donna's strings?

Let me tell you what I remember most about attorney and voracious litigator Donna Melzer. I remember her as probably the worst county commissioner elected in my 28 years at The Stuart News.

What I remember most is:

1) her participation in firing County Administrator Peter Cheney on his hospital death bed (literally), immediately after her election, when she had absolutely no history with the man;

2) when she hired a private detective to follow a Martin County citizen; and

3) when she pleaded the 5th amend-

ment seven times in a case in which she never should have been involved.

Even now, out of office, she behaves badly. Ask the county utilities and solid waste department folks, for instance. They won't let her look at their records unless a monitor sits with her. A year or so ago she removed a document from the department instead of copying it and got caught. Now, when Donna enters the department, staff are put on alert.

So, yes, Maggy is right about one thing. I DO wish I could make a difference in the Martin County election. The county is full of newcomers who weren't here 16 years ago to know why Donna went "one and done."

As far as my being "on sugar's side" – I suppose that was said to discredit me among residents who believe Big Sugar is responsible for their sick rivers and estuary.

Frankly, I don't think I'm on anybody's side. I try to look for answers. I understand the Everglades Foundation wants to take sugar land out of production; I just don't think Big Sugar is the smoking gun.

Have a look at Maggy's letter. It's full of hate – Nancy Smith, with her "nasty personal attacks ... can't seem to stop hating" environmentalists; the firefighters apparently either "hate Martin

County environmentalists or they just love Ed Ciampi and Doug Smith." If you're not with the Maggy gang, you wear a black hat.

You have to hand it to Maggy. She has always been a good politician. She's written this kind of letter pretty much for every campaign since she was voted out of office in the 1990s. And it works. She was a powerful minority of one, once in a while 2, while she served for 20 years on the County Commission.

But she is far more powerful right now than she ever was then. Like I said, one first-class politician.

If I were free to spend election week passing out informational flyers in the middle of Martin Square mall, I would do it, just hoping the residents of Martin County would get to know the real Donna Melzer.

It's not going to happen, but I wish it were.

Thank you, Martin County Currents, for allowing me to post the comment Donna blocked on her Facebook page. ■

*Nancy Smith, who worked at The Stuart News/Port St. Lucie News for nearly 28 years – some of them as managing editor and associate editor – is executive editor of Tallahassee-based Sunshine State News. (www.Sunshinestatenews.com).*

## Let's talk about benefits of Amendment 4



**Barry McLaughlin**  
Guest Columnist

**V**oters will see Amendment 4 on the August 30th ballot, and, if passed, will amend Florida's constitution to exempt the value of solar panels and other renewable energy equipment from both the tangible personal property tax and the real property tax.

In other words, property owners—both private and commercial—would not have to pay additional taxes when the value of their property increases by adding solar power equipment.

Since the value of solar panels would be exempt from property taxes when assessing the value of the home or business, the cost of solar and energy installations becomes more attractive; however, to become law, Amendment 4 must be approved by a YES vote of at

least 60 percent of the August 30 primary ballot.

Why support what amounts to a tax reduction on solar equipment? Several barriers are holding back the solar market in Florida, which should instead be encouraged to expand to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases.

The burdensome tangible personal property tax and the real property tax on solar equipment discourages installation of alternative energy equipment. As it stands now, a one-time purchase can increase taxes permanently; therefore, businesses and homeowners certainly are less inclined to make the switch to solar.

Passage of Amendment 4 will remove those two barriers, thus lowering utility bills for energy costs and allowing more Florida homes and businesses access to affordable solar power.

This becomes especially meaningful in that part of Florida served by Florida Power and Light, which faces a potential rate hike for electrical energy. FPL has asked the Public Service Commission for a 24% rate increase over the next four years. Adopting afford-

able solar energy helps protect Floridians from rate hikes and provides financial stability and certainty for supply and costs.

In addition to helping Florida business owners achieve energy cost savings, Amendment 4 will encourage solar manufacturing and installation companies to expand or move into Florida, which will create new jobs that support the local economy and may even reduce the purchase cost of solar panels.

The solar industry is creating jobs 20 times faster than the overall economy. In the US in 2015, the solar industry created one out of every 83 new jobs, according to the Solar Foundation 2015 Job Census. The vast majority of those jobs are living-wage opportunities that cannot be outsourced, keeping energy dollars right here at home.

Finally, there are intangible benefits of increased solar energy, as well. Most electrical energy comes from sources that create pollution, either pre- or post-production, including coal, natural gas and nuclear. Solar energy is derived from sunlight, a renewable

non-polluting source. The more energy we produce from renewable non-polluting sources the better it is for all Floridians.

Florida has the most solar energy potential east of the Mississippi, yet we are way behind Colorado, Delaware, New Jersey and Massachusetts, all leading Florida on the use of solar power.

Currently, there is no opposition to this ballot initiative. The Florida House and Senate, comprising Republicans and Democrats, agreed to place this constitutional amendment on the ballot for voters and is also supported by many business groups, environmental groups and municipalities.

Vote YES on 4 to lower energy bills and allow solar energy to flourish in Florida and enjoy the benefits of our state motto, "the SUNSHINE STATE." Voting YES on Amendment 4 is a vote for prosperity and our environment. It's a win-win for the whole state. ■

*Barry McLaughlin lives in Hobe Sound and is a volunteer activist for Amendment 4.*

## MARTIN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Non-Partisan Race Open to All Voters)

# QUESTION:

### LAURIE GAYLORD

Florida is one of the few states in the nation with elected superintendents. The majority of superintendents nationwide are appointed by a board of education.

Martin County has had the issue of elected vs. appointed superintendent on the ballot several times in past years, and the voters have spoken each time to continue to elect the Superintendent of Schools in Martin County.

I respect the right of the voters to choose the superintendent of schools.

There are advantages and disadvantages of both the elected and the appointed superintendent. Both appointed and elected superintendents

share the same duties but do not share the same level of oversight by the local Board of Education. Appointed superintendents work at the direction of the

Board. Elected superintendents work with the Board and for the voters who elect them. Appointed and elected superintendents share the same issues, concerns, and joys of operating either the largest or one of the largest employers in each county.

One of the advantages of the elected superintendent for the taxpayers is the considerable cost savings. For an elected superintendent the salary is determined in

Tallahassee and is based upon the population of the county. Elected superin-

*continued on PAGE 16*



**Laurie Gaylord**  
Hobe Sound  
Superintendent of Schools  
Incumbent, formerly  
a Member of the School Board

The Florida Commissioner of Education became an appointed position in 2003 – appointed by the governor – and many school districts are considering the question now as to whether local schools would be better served by an appointed Superintendent of Schools, instead of an elected superintendent. How do you feel Martin County's school system would be better served and why?

### SCOTT KING

An elected Superintendent must be directly responsive to the electorate, and most importantly, to parents of current students (who have the most "skin in the game"). Compare this with an appointed Superintendent, who needs to serve a constituency of 5 School Board members (and really only a majority of 3).

The more critical parental participation, the more responsive an elected Superintendent of Schools should be. And right now, we can say that student achievement has fallen precipitously for 4 years and we seem to be way behind in even understanding and measuring what is and is not working. This makes parental involvement more important than ever, especially for parents of children whose first language is not English. Parents need to be on the front lines, and an appointed Superintendent reduces rather than enhances accountability. The current incumbent seems to make a practice of offering excuses for slipping performance. Ask yourself if an appointed Superintendent working under a contract with the School Board would be more or less inclined to address pressing frontline issues (hint: I think an appointed official would be far more insulated from accountability to parents).

A couple factors that also support this view. If recent performance placed our District and its students (consis-

tently) at the top statewide, one might be tempted to lock-in the team by hiring the Superintendent under a multi-year contract. That is not the case. Martin County now ranks 44th in 3rd grade reading and 38th in 3rd grade math, with 47% of the 3rd grade students not reading at a satisfactory level. Moreover, since the state has itself varied testing and our results have fallen relative to other Districts, one should not be tempted to lock in team

leadership that does not seem to have adapted to change effectively.

Finally, the choice and effectiveness of an appointed Superintendent would be largely driven by the skills, expertise and good judgment of the School Board that appointed him or her. Is the current School Board composed of members with sufficient skills and experience to identify areas of greatest need and to select

an appointed Superintendent accordingly? Or, what is the alternative risk that the School Board might hire someone more on the basis of their expected ability to control them? How many current Board members are parents of current students?

A final issue to ponder: Should the Superintendent of Schools be someone with managerial or professional experience at or near the top of a large complex organization, or is it more important to instead emphasize that a Superintendent have substantive class-

*continued on PAGE 16*



**Scott King**  
Palm City  
Attorney

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**Jeff Krauskopf, Mayor of Stuart**



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**John Payson, community leader & environmental advocate**

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# THERE THEY GO AGAIN.

In the waning moments of the election cycle, Big Money political committees attack from the shadows. Using falsehoods, distortions and juvenile insults, these self-serving special-interest groups clog our mailboxes with attempts to assassinate

## **SORRY GUYS. MARTIN COUNTY VOTERS SEE THROUGH YOUR SMEARS. A TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT OF ALL THE CITIZENS, COMMISSIONER HADDOX:**

- Argues eloquently and factually to fund Everglades restoration and Indian River Lagoon South projects, stop the discharges and move water south.
- Engaged neighborhoods, the marine industry and Realtors early on to understand in-depth how devastating All Aboard Florida would be, then led the county's fight against it.
- Initiated an anti-fracking ordinance and works to make Martin County animal shelters no-kill.
- Supports the Comp Plan and votes against property-tax increases.
- Speaks up for small businesses and our environment, earning him the broadest base of support that any Martin County commissioner has ever enjoyed.



There's only one county commission race that's open to every voter—regardless of party affiliation—and that's Commissioner Haddox's race, District 5. **On Aug. 30, please join me in supporting Commissioner Haddox, who's truly supported us.** The best way to keep these nasty attacks out of Martin County elections is to continue rejecting them where it matters most—the ballot box.



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## DISTRICT 5 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

# Mike DiTerlizzi

**QUESTION: How do you plan, specifically, to address the 3rd grade reading and math scores, which have declined with the advent of new standards, since the state requires that students be detained in 3rd grade when not performing at grade level?**

Earlier this year the School Board and the District were notified by the Department of Education that test scores for third grade reading and math had moderate declines due to changes in the Florida testing standards. Test scores throughout the State experienced similar or greater declines than Martin County. It was disappointing to me and the Board because we have successfully focused on improving the quality of our education system. Every time Florida modifies its tests, results like this temporarily occur.

Fortunately we have a plan to rectify this issue. Upon notification of the drop in scores the Superintendent and Board came together to develop an action plan for improvement. Quick response to developing problem areas is what differentiates the Martin County School system from most others statewide, and what helps us maintain our high ranking within Florida.

We are concentrating efforts in the third grade reading and math classes

with the addition of math and reading coaches to assist our teachers and students. Additional professional development for teachers has also begun, along with relocating higher performing teachers into the classrooms that had the declines. Coaches will provide enhanced learning for our students, aid our teachers with their lessons, and ultimately improve upon student test scores.

This strategy is commonly utilized when problem areas are identified in learning environments. In the past when test standards were modified and scores dropped, these tools were initiated to improve test scores.

My Board members and I are committed to providing a high quality learning experience for our students. Significant investments have been made



Life is about God and family, being with the people that I love the most, my wife, children, and their spouses, enjoying our time together.

to improve the ability of our teachers to teach. Educators are learning new and innovative ways to engage students with their learning. We have committed to "teaching the teachers" with dedicated staff and administration to insure that our teaching staff is doing the best that they can. We have raised starting teacher salaries with additional dollars to come so that we can recruit the best

teachers available. I am committed to seeing this through so that our students can continually outperform their peers.

We are blessed to have a District that employs quality teachers, support staff, and administrators, when problems arise we do not waste time, we take action.

Thank you. I ask for your vote on or before August 30th. ■



### MIKE DITERLIZZI



- President, Highway Tire & Auto
- Martin County Commissioner, District 5, 2000 - 2008
- Former Member, Water Resources Advisory Committee, SFWM
- Board Member, Former President, Palm City Chamber
- Board Member/Director United Way of Martin County, Big Heart Brigade



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## DISTRICT 5 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

# Josh Ferraro

**QUESTION: How do you plan, specifically, to address the 3rd grade reading and math scores, which have declined with the advent of new standards, since the state requires that students be detained in 3rd grade when not performing at grade level?**

Improving third grade reading and math is one of the most important issues facing our school district because a child who cannot perform these skills is substantially less likely to build a successful life. In fact, multiple studies have demonstrated a direct link between third-grade reading scores and future rates of teen pregnancy, high school drop outs and even criminal activity. On the contrary, those children who are reading proficiently by the third-grade are exponentially more successful throughout their time in school. Therefore, it is imperative that the school district address this problem head-on by identifying the underlying causes and providing prac-

tical, evidence-based solutions.

The third-grade achievement gap is based primarily on three factors: (1.) school readiness; (2.) school attendance; and (3.) summer regression. By far, the most prominent of these factors is ensuring that children are ready for school on the first day of kindergarten.

We now know that eighty-five percent (85%) of brain activity is developed between the ages of 0-5 and that the best way to stimulate cognitive development is through frequent communication between the caregiver and the child. Unfortunately, children from lower income families are likely to have heard thirty million less words spoken during their lifetime than their middle income coun-

terparts. Additionally, more than sixty-seven percent (67%) of lower income families don't have single children's book in their home. As a result, a significant portion of our student body is simply not receiving the tools necessary to ensure that they have the opportunity for success on day-one.

In order to address this problem, the school district needs to abandon the idea that its responsibility for children begins on the first day of kindergarten. Instead, we need to provide families of infants and toddlers with the tools to eliminate this communication gap. This might include a program in which reading volunteers work with parents starting just after birth to explain how to effectively communicate with their young children....and just as importantly to explain why this is critical to their future success. Likewise, the district should be involved in programs that reach out to families with children's books and other learning materials immediately upon, or even prior to, birth. Implementation of these programs would not need to be through the school district itself but we can provide training and logistical support to "reading volunteers" while looking to other interested community agencies for funding and staff.

The second component of the third-grade achievement gap is attendance. The state already mandates that children attend school whenever they are physically able. However, in practice this is a rarely enforced provision of the law. Instead, we need to effectively communicate with parents the reasons that even a few unnecessary absences, in the critically important early years,

presents a significant challenge to a child's ability to succeed.

The final component of the third-grade achievement gap is summer regression. We know that children who are not enrolled in an effective enrichment program are likely to lose up to three (3) months of progress over the summer months. Several of our community organizations are making strides in this area but they need the school district's help with awareness, logistics and funding.

Our current level of proficiency in reading and math at the third grade level is certainly a challenge but it is also an opportunity. I believe that we have the tools and resources at our disposal to effectively end the achievement gap in this community and, by doing so, create a national model that will provide immeasurable benefits to Martin County's long term well-being. ■

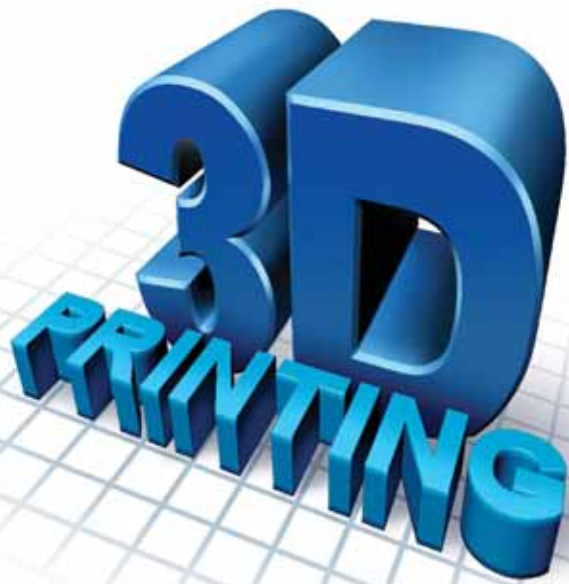


### JOSH FERRARO

- A Stuart native and Martin County High School graduate.
- A bachelor's degree in political science from University of Florida.
- Graduated cum laude from Stetson University College of Law Honors Program.
- A member of Lesser, Lesser, Landy & Smith law firm in Stuart.
- Board of Directors, Tykes and Teens.
- VP, Keep Martin Beautiful.



My favorite photo is of my Number 1 supporter, my daughter Georgie Ferraro.



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## DISTRICT 5 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

# Larry Green

**QUESTION: How do you plan, specifically, to address the 3rd grade reading and math scores, which have declined with the advent of new standards, since the state requires that students be detained in 3rd grade when not performing at grade level?**

I retired in April of this year after 38 years serving the children of the Martin County School District. For all but three of those 38 years, I worked at Title 1 schools. In other words, I worked at schools where many of our students came to school with a deficit that we had to overcome. As an administrator of Title 1 schools for 18 of the last 21 years, I have become aware of what areas need to be focused on. This was very evident with the fact that in 2015, my school, Pinewood Elementary, was one of only two Title 1 elementary schools in Martin County to receive a letter grade of B, while this year, 2016, we were the ONLY Title 1 elementary school to receive a letter grade of B.

How was this accomplished? The federal government gives Title 1 schools funds to help "level the playing field." We used these funds to help support our teachers. We purchased personnel in the way of four coaches (two literacy coaches and two math coaches). These coaches provided modeling in our classrooms to our teachers. This modeling helps the teachers work on their instructional practices. This would be the model that I would be using at all Title 1 schools. A key investment we made was to hire a third grade Interventionist to work with any struggling third grade reader.

In order for this to be addressed at non-Title 1 schools, they are going to need the support from the school district. This may not be a popular opinion,

but it has always been my feeling that we are under-staffed at the district level, specifically in our curriculum departments. Currently, the district has Math, ELA (English, Language Arts) and Science Departments. Believe it or not, each department is comprised of one (1) person. Any curriculum that is developed for teachers must be developed by the teachers themselves. It is my belief that we must invest in our curriculum departments and not put the work on the teachers, who are already overloaded. This is a point that (school board member) Tina McSoley brought up at a recent board meeting and I, am totally in favor of. Teachers are crying for support in the way of curriculum. This may be the missing link in plummeting ELA and Math scores. It has become so time consuming for teachers to create their own ELA and Math materials, they are becoming frustrated and downtrodden.

In this school board race, in my opinion, I have the experience, education, time and desire to get this job accomplished. In addition, I've been attending school board meeting for the last 25 years on a regular basis, so I know the inner workings of the board.

As a teacher for 17 years, an Assistant Principal for 11 years and a Principal for 10 years, I have dealt with every aspect of our school system. I have worked with budgets, curriculum, facilities, scheduling, personnel, community involvement, federal and state legisla-



Nothing to me is more important than my family. From my left, my son, Joshua, 24, daughter, Danielle, 2, and my wife, Phyllis. Joshua is a graduate of Indian River State College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Graphic Design. Danielle, a graduate of University of Central Florida, is starting her first year as a first-grade teacher at Crystal Lake Elementary School in Stuart. My wife begins her 30th year, teaching fifth grade at Palm City Elementary School for the last 21 years.

tion, ESE law, and everything that a board member would have to deal with. I WILL be an engaged board member, visiting schools on a regular basis to see the wonderful things going on in our public schools.

This job is not a stepping stone, hobby or a second job for me. It's been my entire adult life. I have been an educator my entire life, and I would like to remain in that role as your next school board member. ■



### LARRY GREEN

- Holds a bachelor's degree from Trenton State College and a master's degree from Florida Atlantic University.
- 38 years in Martin County School System as a teacher at Port Salerno Elementary, assistant principal at SeaWind Elementary, Crystal Lake Elementary and Port Salerno, principal at SeaWind and Pinewood Elementary schools.
- Martin County Association of School Administrators, Past President and Current Board Member

- Former board member, Martin County North Little League, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Martin County, and Temple Beit Hayam

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Laurie Gaylord, exceedingly proud of her family. Looks like a family who campaigns together, stays together!

### Laurie Gaylord

continued from PAGE 10

tendents typically receive less salary than those superintendents who are appointed. Appointed superintendents typically receive a higher salary and also receive other added "perks" in their contract such as a car allowance and/or other allowances that may be written into their contracts.

Raises are awarded to appointed superintendents by the School Board. Some elected superintendents have been awarded a bonus or a raise through policy or a vote by their local school board. Martin County does not currently have such a policy. Superintendents are part of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) and retirement is based upon an individual's highest years of salary, thus an appointed superintendent will receive a

higher benefit from FRS because of their higher wage.

I think that Martin County Schools have been served favorably with an elected superintendent. The majority of the time, the elected superintendent has been beneficial for Martin County when the superintendent makes an effort to work with the school board, the staff, and the community; however, when the elected superintendent makes no effort to protect the financial interest of the school district or makes no effort to work with the school

board or to share information, it has failed miserably.

Often times when a superintendent is appointed by the school board there is a national search for the best qualified candidate. Many times the appointed superintendent comes from out of the area and possibly another state, which is an adjustment, and includes relocation and time for a newcomer to understand Florida school law and the local county rules and nuances.

The same holds true for the local, elected superintendent who may have knowledge of the local county rules and issues, but have no idea about education, the science and art of teaching, nor know anything about educational policy or school district operations.

In conclusion, I think the Martin County School District is best served by an elected superintendent. The local county candidate is vested in the community, and it is an added bonus when the candidate has an educational background, understands school law and school board policies, and has working knowledge of school district operations. ■



Scott King with his two sons and a daughter as he prepares the paperwork to file in the school superintendent's race. "My daughter told me if I won, I could give her extra recess time!"

### Scott King

continued from PAGE 10

room teaching or School management experience? It seems reasonable to believe that the "optimal" skill set might change over time and also is directly impacted by the relative strength or weakness of other senior District staff whose relevant expertise complements and supplements the Superintendent's. The present Superintendent does not seem to have much in the way of professional-level large organization managerial experience (except to the extent that

being an elected Board member counts), nor is she a mainstream teacher or senior school administrator. In 2010, Martin County faced this very issue and decided against an appointed Superintendent. Of the top 10 districts by achievement on test scores or overall grade, elected Superintendent's run 6 of the 10 districts. In view of all of the foregoing, while this is a fair question to address from time to time, right now, it seems best that Martin County continue to elect its Superintendent of Schools, thus ensuring the greatest accountability in a challenging educational environment. ■

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When massive development threatened our small-town community, Harold got active. He formed Preserve Martin County, uniting business leaders and neighbors to stand up for the comprehensive plan and urban service boundary and stop a town the size of Stuart from coming to rural Hobe Sound.

When our historic downtown areas needed revitalization, Harold volunteered with the community redevelopment efforts. As All Aboard Florida threatens our safety and quality of life, Harold works to defend Martin County.

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*Mike Ennis, Harry MacArthur, Pat Martin & Harold Jenkins*

# Conflicts continue to impede genuine solutions



**Nyla  
Pipes**

*One Florida  
Foundation*

**A**h, the joys of summer! Usually residents of the Treasure Coast welcome the slow pace and spend its long days at the sandbar, mornings paddling the Indian River Lagoon, or out fishing the St. Lucie River. With toxic blue-green algal blooms in our water, however, with images broadcast on national television and taking over social media, it's hard not to be sad and angry.

Unfortunately, sadness and anger accomplish little.

It's time to step away from the steady diet of despair and do something about our problems, which means, we must change our mindset!

To understand why this happens in the first place, we need to understand that cyanobacteria, aka toxic blue-green algae, grows due to a nutrient imbalance in the water; this living organism, one of the oldest in the world, feeds on pollution. It grows in water that is warm and



**The Florida map designating the areas that Sen. Joe Negron announced earlier this month are his targets for purchasing land to build a reservoir large enough to stop Lake Okeechobee discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers.**

stagnant, which has been especially true this summer, and is why you will see

blue-green algae in just about any pond or lake in the area.

Cyanobacteria prefers fresh water, so the vast quantity of water runoff from the banks of the river during the rainy season doesn't help, either!

This cyanobacteria was documented growing in Lake Okeechobee in early May, therefore, many residents blame only the Lake Okeechobee discharges for our unprecedented algal blooms this year. That's understandable, as the cyanobacteria indeed came with the discharges into the St. Lucie River, as required by federal government and determined by the Lake Okeechobee Release Schedule to protect the communities south of the lake. There is no doubt, whatsoever, that we must find better places than just releasing to our estuaries to store and cleanse this water before moving it into south in the Everglades!

Lake Okeechobee is an easy scapegoat; a convenient place to lay all the blame; however, many scientists

say the cause of these algal blooms is the nutrient pollution that exists throughout the ENTIRE ecosystem. As painful as it may be, we must look in the mirror and acknowledge that we all have culpability. From urban runoff to agricultural inputs, human beings are very good at creating nutrient pollution.

To reverse this cycle and finally achieve clean water and a healthy estuary, it's going to take bravery. We are going to have to admit that ALL of the pollution sources matter.

We must tackle our pollution simultaneously with stopping Lake Okeechobee discharges. It is time to quit arguing about which has bigger input, and who should pay more to stop it. We all need to be focusing in our communities on cleaning up our messes!

Please admit that aging septic tanks are a problem. So are developments, and golf courses with fertilized lawns in areas that used to be wetlands. That's right, everyone, the Everglades Agricultural Area isn't the ONLY thing people built where water was supposed to go! Practically any development west of I-95 is in the path of the original Everglades. Many to the east are in places where there were intermittent wetlands.

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## An extremely convenient truth from Water Institute report



**Capt.  
Don Voss**

*One Florida  
Foundation*

**W**hen people speak about fracking, there is always some commentary about the toxic chemicals finding cracks through the earth's crust and working their way to the surface or worse. People see this and are outraged at this chemical pollution – this poison water.

Not too many years ago, the solution for the excess water currently being discharged was thought to be Aquifer Storage Recovery wells. ASRs are deep wells intended to be used to inject excess water normally discharged, deep into the ground, with the intention of reclaiming it later for use after removing all pollutants.

It was thought that pockets of fresh, albeit polluted, water would help fill our aquifers, push back against saltwater intrusion and end discharges. Others feared that – just as with cryogenic storage – some event would happen

and terminally end what had seemed a great idea. For cryogenics, it was the economic bust that ran these storage facilities into bankruptcy and left buildings full of frozen human heads. In the case of ASRs, not all wells turned out to be into the correct aquifers. There were also indications that polluted water was leaking through the crust, just as with fracking, so the idea of using ASR wells were shelved.

Now, let's review the University of Florida Water Institute's "Negron" Report that states on Page 42: "The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Restudy (US Army Corps of Engineers 1999) called for a total of 333 ASR wells including 200 located around Lake Okeechobee intended to store up to one million gallons per day of excess lake water that would either be lost through discharges to tide or create harmful high-water conditions in the lake. ASR Regional model production scenario report (USACE 2014) suggested operation of 333 wells in the south Florida region would likely produce undesirable hydrological impacts. That report recommended a smaller system of approximately 94 ASR wells in the upper Florida aquifer, 37 ASR wells in the Avon

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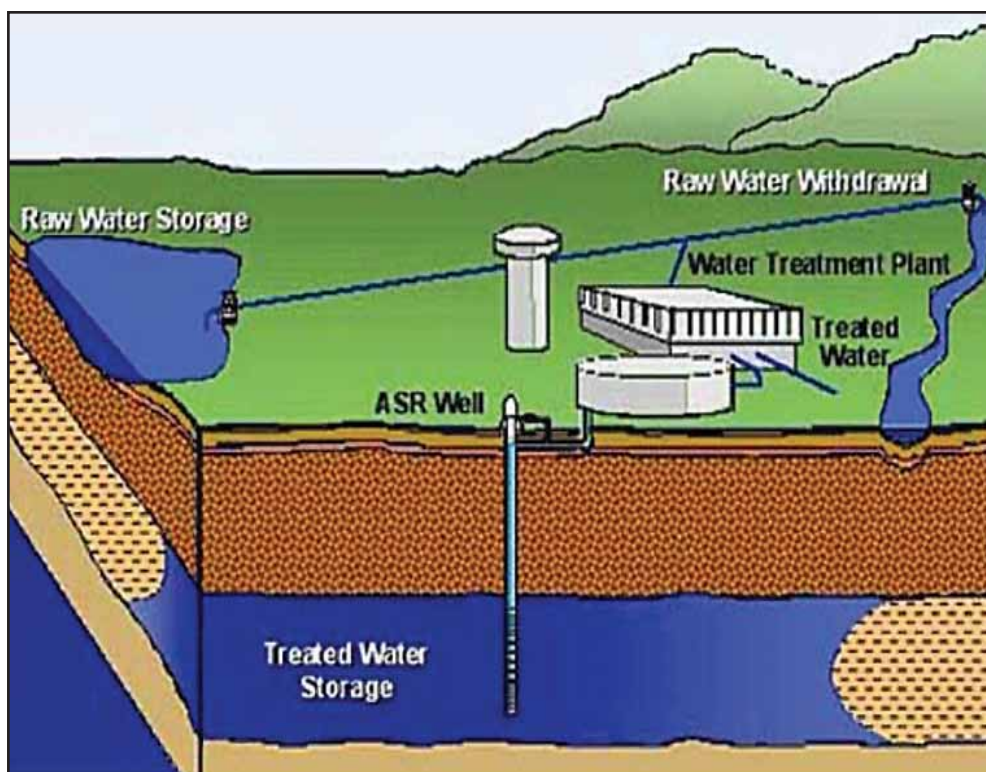
## Capt. Don Voss

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Park Permeable Zone and an additional 101 ASR wells in the Deep Boulder Zone. Of these ASR wells, 139 were located in the Lake Okeechobee basin, 27 were located in the Caloosahatchee basin and the remaining 66 were located in the basin southeast of Lake Okeechobee."

These wells sit there, unused, waiting for further study. I have spoken to people extremely knowledgeable about these wells and current research. It is my understanding that tests have shown that pumping approximately 5,000 acre-feet into each well per day and then retrieving it has been most successful. Additionally, water has come back out of the well somewhat cleaner than when pumped in. Not a huge change, but a positive indicator for future use.

Now, what could be so important about that? One Florida Foundation has been acting as a clearing house recently for private enterprise concepts, working models and fully functioning approaches to cleaning water of pollutants similar to current estuary and lake situations. Many of these machines center around a thousand-year-old process of reverse osmosis updated with various forms of power, collection procedures and rates of materials removed / water cleaned. Many of these machines are perfectly suited for our needs. So, what if we cleaned water to under 50 per billion phosphorus and then pumped that cleaned water using the ASRs? We discussed



An illustration by the U.S. Dept. of Interior showing how proposed Aquifer Storage Recovery wells in the Lake Okeechobee watershed are designed to work.

what we called pollution oozing up from these fracking operations – poisons. Do you know what we call clean water oozing up through the earth's crust? A spring.

Pumping cleaned water into the ASRs would accomplish all of the original goals: Replenish aquifers, push back saltwater intrusion and limit or stop discharges – now with the added impact of recovering cleaned water. It seems counter-productive to allow rainwater that falls from the heavens at 16 parts

per billion phosphorus, to just become polluted to upwards of 400 PPB and then clean it.

The Buy-the-Land concept will cost nearly \$3 billion to acquire, permit and build a reservoir, as well as having to endure the 20 years for a lease-back option for the sugar industry to expire, which is part of the deal.

Another option is to acquire significant land for water farming, based on the Caulkins' model, which could cost \$12 billion over the next 20 years.

Using those figures as a baseline and by using private enterprise concepts to clean the water first and then pump it into the ASRs would require smaller, more accessible parcels of land at much less expense. ASRs could be a fantastic tool to add back into our box of solutions for stopping these discharges and greatly improve water quality!

Recommending ASRs is a change in One Florida's philosophy. Research and new data combined with private enterprise stepping up to help with these issues has changed the playing field and obviously helped to change our minds. Cleaning the water first made all the difference. There is no future in putting dirty water anywhere.

"Water quantity and water quality intertwined – inextricably connected – incapable of being disentangled, undone, loosed, or solved alone." ■

*Capt. Don Voss, nationally recognized for his environmental initiatives to improve the water quality of the Indian River Lagoon, will be a regular contributor to Martin County Currents. All advertising on these pages will benefit One Florida Foundation, dedicated to addressing water issues throughout the state.*

## Nyla Pipes

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I challenge you to step away from the blame game and support efforts such as Governor Scott's plan to budget grants to help communities tackle their aging septic issues. I urge you to have your septic system inspected, or hook up to city sewer, if it's available. I beg you not to fertilize your yards; better yet, I challenge you to get rid of your grass and plant native plants instead! If you are in agriculture, I request that you to go above and beyond Best Management Practices for the sake of our water. We need to work together to raise our standards.

Additionally, we need to get behind our local leaders when they suggest plans with merit. We cannot throw out ideas because they aren't perfect. Senator Negrón's plan to purchase land south of the lake, for instance, needs to be "fleshed out." He knows that, and so do we.

It's easy to point out flaws. Sure, the plan is dependent on having "willing sellers" and money in place. Understandably, the Glades communities are nervous, because there are concerns about how his plan might impact their economy. Absolutely, we need to be

moving clean water south, not just trying to store our way out of a mess; however, we need to celebrate the fact that he's looking for solutions, and encourage him to continue.

If this isn't the right land, let's respectfully ask for help and find some that is. If you feel there is not enough attention given to cleaning the water, then let's work with Senator Negrón to fix that, instead of complaining about it on social media.

There are so many steps we can take, but we are not reaching our potential as "problem solvers" if we keep arguing over what's the "worst" problem, or why anything proposed won't work. That just breeds frustration and ensures our water is harmed for decades to come.

It's time for our community to try a positive, cooperative approach. We need to stick with the plans in place, support plans that are still developing, tackle water quality and quantity issues concurrently, and stop with the constant negativity. We are all in this lifeboat, and we need to start rowing together. ■

*Nyla Pipes is a founder of One Florida Foundation, which addresses water issues throughout the state.*

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