

CITY of STUART COMMISSION



Merritt Matheson  
Candidate Group 3



Troy McDonald  
Incumbent Group 3



Nick Blount  
Incumbent Group 1



Michael Meier  
Candidate Group 1

**Local political  
races to be decided  
Tuesday. pg 13**

COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT 4



Sarah Heard



Harold Markey



Niki Norton



Edward "Butch" Olsen Jr.

SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT 3



Victoria Defenthaler



Rebecca Negron

**FREE**

# Martin County CURRENTS

August 2018

## Hurchalla says she lost trial due to biased judge

The appeals court threw out her claim. pg 9



**Despite charges,  
Heard files  
pg 9**



**Sherlock,  
Hurchalla  
sanctioned  
pg 8**



**Landfill  
lawsuit filed pg 5**

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

# Belinda Keiser continues to bring her conservative values to the Treasure Coast

Fort Pierce, FL

**F**resh off the 2017-18 Constitutional Revision Commission (CRC), Belinda Keiser, of Hutchinson Island, declared her candidacy for Florida's Senate District 25. Appointed to the CRC by Governor Rick Scott, Belinda stood strong while liberals tried to reduce your Second Amendment Rights. Her steadfast commitment has earned an endorsement and an "A" rating from the National Rifle Association.

As a member of the CRC, she introduced and championed an amendment to establish the Office of Domestic Security and Counterterrorism within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. The amendment recognizes the importance of permanent coordination, intelligence sharing and collaboration among local, regional and federal partners, in protecting our State against homegrown and international threats. You will see Belinda's counterterrorism proposal on your ballot this November along with other proposals she co-sponsored advancing crime victims' rights, environmental protections, and elimination of the mistreatment of greyhounds.

Now she is taking on the issues that matter most to our fellow neighbors.

"I am committed to help in cleaning up the toxic algae that I view from my home on Hutchinson Island with a series of practical and workable solutions," said Keiser. "With conversations already taking place, I will begin acting on our water quality issues the first day of elected service as your State Senator."

Belinda stands with President Trump. Early on in his campaign, she hosted a "Women for Trump" event in her home and a business roundtable.

"As an economic development professional, job creation is one of my top priorities. Serving as President Trump's delegate to the Republican National Convention is one of the greatest honors of my career," added Keiser.

She is pro-life, anti-tax, opposed to sanctuary cities and against Brightline's expansion through the heart of our community.

Her roots in our area run deep.

"I recall about 10 years ago my father and I purchased a small farm on Brocksmith Road in Fort Pierce," said Belinda. The area grew on us and he was very happy there as he lived out the final years of his life.

She is also Vice Chancellor of Keiser University, which has grown in Port St. Lucie over the last 20 years, employing hundreds of our neighbors and graduating thousands of students in nursing, information technology, public safety and business management careers. Keiser University has a statewide annual economic impact



Belinda Keiser, Republican candidate for Florida Senate, District 25

of \$3 billion dollars and values a free market system to operate without harmful regulations and to be an engine of job creation.

Under her leadership, KU has grown into Florida's second largest, not-for-profit university, serving 20,000 students pursuing 100 doctoral through associate degrees in many of Florida's targeted industries. Nearly 25 percent of the student body are active duty service members, veterans, or military family members.

She is a political outsider and a results-proven professional. Belinda has been a gubernatorial appointee to Enterprise Florida, Inc., Space Florida, Inc., Government Efficiency Taskforce, Judicial Nominating Commission and Workforce Florida, Inc.. (now known as Career Source).

Lastly, Belinda enjoys the support and endorsements of the NRA, the Statewide Police Benevolent Association, Professional Firefighters and Paramedics of Martin County, Florida Chamber of Commerce, Congressman Matt Gaetz and Karen Giorno, former Senior Florida Advisor to the Donald Trump Campaign.

"I was raised to believe in faith, family and service to country first and I look forward to applying my conservative values to our local issues, creating solutions here at home and in Tallahassee," Keiser said.

**"I am committed to help in cleaning up the toxic algae that I view from my home on Hutchinson Island with a series of practical and workable solutions."**

# You heard right: county taxes going up all over!

**The county's tentative budget for 2019 totals more than \$435.5 million, an increase of \$3.1 million over the previous year. The added spending will increase the tax rate by 4.1 percent over 2018, with a combined millage proposed at 9.9584.**

Millage countywide is 6.5971, and the combined Municipal Services Taxing Units for roads, fire, schools, police and stormwater are 3.3613, excluding Indiantown. (The newly incorporated village will collect the MSTUs for those services that the county will continue to provide.)

The millage is the rate used to calculate ad valorem, the amount of property taxes to be levied. One mil equals one dollar for every one thousand dollars of taxable property value. The average single family residential taxable value, according to the county property appraiser is \$250,000, with a \$50 thousand homestead exemption, for an assessed taxable value of \$200,000.

Based on the tentative 2019 combined millage rate of 9.9584, a typical taxpayer in Martin County will pay an additional \$79.24 in county taxes, according to county officials.

Commissioners have until the end of September to give final approval to the budget as proposed by County Administrator Taryn Kryzda, or decrease it. The state prohibits an increase at this time, since the tentative budget was already ap-

proved in July and submitted to the state.

The increase in spending for 2019 is due to a combination of increased operating costs, the addition of staff, as well as the list of capital projects, which focused this year on the repair or replacement of buildings older than 30 years, as well as addressing the infrastructure backlog and septic-to-sewer conversions.

The increase in spending also was attributed in part to annual loan payments of \$1.1 million for replacing the jail's HVAC, roof and lighting, and \$1.4 million for the debt incurred for the Lake Point settlement agreement.

The budget does not include funds to continue the legal fight against Brightline/All Aboard Florida, an initiative that began in 2015. If the commission deems that funds are necessary, they will be taken from the emergency reserves, according to Kryzda, which were depleted by hurricanes Irma and Matthew, as well as the county's previous litigation costs.

The budget also includes a \$2 million allocation to those emergency reserves to begin rebuilding the total to equal 10 percent of the annual budget.

Unless the value of property in Martin County, which has increased since 2011 to near the 2007 levels, continues a significant upward trend, taxpayers should be prepared for another increase in 2019 as the result of the state's proposed constitutional amendment on the

ballot that will double the owner-occupied homestead exemption on residential properties to \$100,000.

If approved by voters, the increase in homestead allowance decreases the taxable values of property, thus will impact the amount of revenue collected from ad valorem taxes for the county's budget.

## ALL UNINCORPORATED AREAS TO BE ASSESSED A NEW FIRE FEE

In anticipation of the decrease in taxable values of Martin County properties, the fire department proposed a fire assessment on all properties in Martin County. Tentatively approved by the county commission, the fire assessment fee will have its final public hearing during the budget vote in September.

The annual charge imposed on property owners will be based on square footage, rather than property value, for certain fire services including fire suppression, hazmat response and disaster preparedness. The funds can be spent only for the fire department. The base rate for residential units will be \$151 per property. Non-residential buildings will be assessed at rates from .05 to .32 cents per square foot.

County Fire Rescue Chief Bill Schobel told commissioners the fee would ensure

a more stable source of funding, as well as being more equitable, since all residents benefit from an effective, properly equipped fire department.

The fire assessment fee, as the FPL franchise fee, is not considered by the state to be a tax, thus those fees do not fall under the state's 10 percent cap on the property tax millage rate.

Schobel has been holding Fire Assessment Town Hall meetings to answer residents' questions. Two more meetings are scheduled in August:

- Thursday, August 23, 6 p.m. at the Peter & Julie Cummings Library - Donahue Community Room 2551 SW Matheson Avenue, Palm City.

- Wednesday, August 29, 6 p.m., at the Hobe Sound Public Library - Community Room (D3)

10595 SE Federal Highway, Hobe Sound.

For more information on the fire assessment fee, go to the county's website: [www.martin.fl.us](http://www.martin.fl.us) and type fire fee in the search box.

## TEACHER SALARIES ON THE LINE WITH ASK FOR INCREASED TAXES

Also on the August 28 primary ballot, voters will be asked to raise property

*continued on PAGE 4*

## Martin County CURRENTS

PUBLISHER -- Barbara Clowdus PRINTER -- Southeast Offset, Inc.  
WEBSITE -- Sonic Fish, LLC GRAPHIC DESIGN -- Simone Fong

A monthly newspaper, Martin County Currents LLC is distributed free throughout the county. All opinions are those of its authors, and letters to the editor are encouraged. Contact information: Martin County Currents LLC, Stuart, FL 34997. [www.MartinCountyCurrents.com](http://www.MartinCountyCurrents.com). [editor@martincountycurrents.com](mailto:editor@martincountycurrents.com). 772.245.6564.

### FREE ELECTRONIC SUBSCRIPTIONS

Go to [www.MartinCountyCurrents.com](http://www.MartinCountyCurrents.com) and click on "Subscriptions." Look for distributed copies at all Martin County public libraries; Chambers of Commerce at Indiantown, Stuart, Hobe Sound, Palm City and Jensen Beach; and at diners, grocery stores, pharmacies and in lobbies and waiting rooms throughout Martin County.

EDITOR  
[editor@MartinCountyCurrents.com](mailto:editor@MartinCountyCurrents.com)

ANNOUNCEMENTS  
[calendar@MartinCountyCurrents.com](mailto:calendar@MartinCountyCurrents.com)

ADVERTISING  
[advertising@MartinCountyCurrents.com](mailto:advertising@MartinCountyCurrents.com)

SUBSCRIPTIONS  
[subscriptions@MartinCountyCurrents.com](mailto:subscriptions@MartinCountyCurrents.com)

All the articles and opinion pieces are authored and/or edited by Publisher Barbara Clowdus, except as otherwise noted. All the typos, mistakes, grammatical errors, omissions, and misspelled words are hers alone, too. The good photos are taken by someone else. Martin County Currents LLC does not verify or is responsible for any advertising claims, including typographical errors or misstatements, by its advertisers. All contents are copyrighted 2018 Martin County Currents LLC and may not be reprinted, reproduced or rewritten.

# Thinking of Buying or Selling?

## Call Olde Florida Realty!

### 772-245-4500

MARTIN CARMODY

772-631-4768  
[mcarmody772@gmail.com](mailto:mcarmody772@gmail.com)



DAN CARMODY

772-332-4758  
[dcarmody332@gmail.com](mailto:dcarmody332@gmail.com)



# Olde Florida Realty

OLDE FLORIDA REALTY • 620 SE DIXIE HIGHWAY STUART

## [www.oldefloridarealty.com](http://www.oldefloridarealty.com)

**County Taxes**

continued from PAGE 3

taxes by a half-mill for school operations, generating \$11.2 million annually for the next four years. The additional revenue will go to teacher salaries and to beef up security measures, as now required by the state.

In November, the school board will ask voters again to raise more funds, this time to construct two new elementary schools, by adding half of one percent to the sales tax, bringing it to 6.5 percent.

The additional tax would be expected to bring in an additional \$112 million, if approved by voters.

In the face of asking voters to tax themselves further, the school board suspended plans to build a \$10 million administrative complex. Although the county generates sufficient school taxes to support its needs, the state distributes around 30 percent of what's collected in Martin County to poorer counties with fewer resources to bring equity to the state's education system.

If the sales tax referendum passes, then Jensen Beach and Palm City elementary schools likely will get new buildings on their campuses. The funds also will bring additional security enhancements to the district's 22 schools.

For more information on the increase in taxes for schools, go to: [www.martinschools.org](http://www.martinschools.org). ■

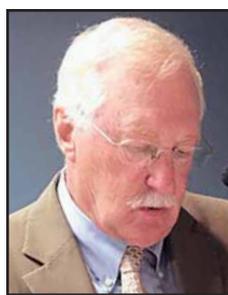
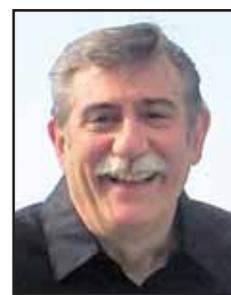
**Public wants greater transparency**

**Although the former police chief, David Dyess, 49, is a highly regarded city employee, his appointment as the city's interim city manager was delayed by two weeks due to public comments reflecting a growing uneasiness over the commission's "quick" votes with little public notice or input.**

When Dyess was first nominated May 9, immediately after the commissioners accepted City Manager David Ross's resignation, the action was tabled after candid public comments by a former city manager, David Collier, saying he could "hear a freight train coming down the tracks" of Sunshine law violations.

Commissioner Troy McDonald had nominated Dyess with no preamble or discussion immediately after commissioners voted to accept Ross's resignation without severance pay.

Collier pointed out to commissioners that they were about to take action with no public notice and no public input, adding that they should "just slow down a bit," the same advice already offered by other public speakers, including Ted Astolfi of the Economic Council and Commissioner Nick Blount, who also had been appointed with no time for

Interim City Manager  
David DyessNew City Commissioner  
Nick BlountFormer Commissioner  
Thomas Campenni

public input.

McDonald withdrew his nomination of Dyess, conceding to table the discussion for two weeks. He also had suggested that no search for a new city manager begin until after Sept. 1, which would give Dyess time "to grow into the position" and give commissioners time "to take a collective breath," getting past the city election for new commissioners.

"September seems like an eternity to me," Blount responded, adding that it also would "definitely give a 'leg up' for (Dyess) over other (city manager) candidates ... but, perhaps, that's what you want, and that's fine, if that's what you want."

**CITY MANAGER ASKED TO LEAVE**

The resignation of the former city manager after only seven months of employment came abruptly and was announced by Mayor Kelli Glass-Leighton while Ross was on vacation. She called a special meeting to extend his vacation a week in order to allow time to take up the resignation during the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Ross attended the special meeting, sitting in the audience, but made no comment, telling friends later that he'd been "caught by surprise" by the mayor's actions, blaming the exodus of staff – a complaint of the mayor's – on an incentive program to encourage early retirement/separation.

Complaints about Ross first erupted after Ross filed a complaint Feb. 28 with the city's Human Resources Department and the Stuart City Police alleging that City Commissioner Tom Campenni had threatened him.

Campenni denied the allegations, and counter-charged that Ross was retaliating in response to Campenni's investigation of Ross's time off work, calling for the city attorney to perform an audit of Ross's hours. Campenni chose to resign after the mayor called for an outside investigation, at a cost of \$10,000.

Three days later, commissioners appointed retired FPL executive Nick Blount to fill the vacancy left by the two-term commissioner on May 12, during a regular commission meeting. The appointment to fill Campenni's seat was not on the agenda.

Senior staff who left city employment included two of Ross's assistants resigned, one of whom gave a scathing exit interview about Ross, as well as the city's public utilities director, Sam Amerson,

and Theresa Lamar-Sarno, special assistant to the city manager and CRA director, both of whom had applied along with Ross for the city manager's position.

Amerson went to work at Martin County and Lamar-Sarno went to the Village of Indiantown as its first city manager, as did City Clerk Cheryl White, who retired after 31 years at the city. She is

now Indiantown's city clerk. Other retirements included the fire chief, David Dyal, and Terry O'Neal, the city's development director.

Ross resigned May 9, instead of waiting until May 14, thus giving up four weeks of severance pay per his contract.

The city commissioners voted June 25 not to conduct a formal search for a permanent city manager, expressing confidence in Dyess' abilities. They agreed to revisit the issue in September, at which time they will consider only local candidates.

Dyess' selection ended a nasty storm that blew through Stuart's city hall since the retirement in July of former manager, Paul Nicoletti. Dyess began his law-enforcement career with the city nearly 30 years ago and was named chief of police in 2012.

**CAMPENNI'S RESIGNATION**

Nearing the end of his second term, Campenni had an unapologetic, assertive style of leadership with some former colleagues going so far as calling him an "overbearing know-it-all," and others remarking on his unabashed love for the City of Stuart.

He was, without question, the odd man out on the city commission, alleging in comments from the dais that the city had been acting with a lack of transparency in reversing their vote without public notice on an already approved – yet unsigned – city ordinance to allow backyard chickens in fenced coops; in voting themselves a pay raise without public notice while denying raises to the lowest-paid city employees; and by approving a budget that would create a deficit in city revenues.

Campenni was the lone dissenter in all three of those votes.

Glass-Leighton said at the time of the commission's vote to increase their salary that Campenni had a history of voting only "to approve his own ideas." Campenni made no comment on Ross' resignation, although his claims that Ross had been derelict in his duties seemed to be confirmed by the commission's actions.

**MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT CITY'S DECISIONS**

Another city commission decision that left city watchers perplexed was its vote in July to sell the public works property without knowing where a new public

Always  
BEST CARE  
SENIOR SERVICES

**In-Home Private Care &  
Senior Living Coordination**

**Palm Beaches - Treasure Coast**

**Call (772) 205-3888**

HHA License #299993776

works garage will be built. The only city commissioner who voted against the move was Eula Clarke, who suggested the commission wait until a study of the city's old landfill had been completed.

The landfill was identified by city officials as "ideal" for housing a new facility, if testing proved it was a suitable site for new construction of a public building. County officials also had expressed interest in a joint facility; however, Dyess informed the county in June that it was premature to make plans for a joint facility prior to knowing the cost of restoring the site to federal standards for public use.

The city has accumulated around \$4 million from fees attached to city utility bills for the new building, according to officials; however, the study is estimated to be more than \$5 million, according to engineer Joe Capra.

"We're trying to get that cost down," Capra told commissioners. The study will take from five to six months, after a agreement on cost is reached.

If the landfill cannot be used or will be too expensive to remediate, the city will need to purchase or lease another site after the current property is sold.

"This does not sound wise to me," Clarke added, "unless there's something I'm not seeing."

The purchase will need to be approved by a majority vote of the board at a public meeting. ■

--Barbara Cloudus



Martin County's Solid Waste Transfer and Recycling Center is the central to an internal investigation and another lawsuit against the county for tortious interference with a contract.

## Landfill lawsuit uncovers favoritism

**Some might say that a new lawsuit against Martin County shows that its checks and balances do indeed work. Others, including the plaintiff, say it shows another case of blatant violations of the state's code of ethics for county commissioners and employees.**

Either way, the lawsuit by Justin D'Adamo, who owns the R3 recycling company, has many of the all-too-familiar trappings of another recent lawsuit against the county, including claims of disappearing public records, improper

conduct by public officials, and tortious interference with a contract.

D'Adamo also tapped the same attorney who litigated the Lake Point case of tortious interference against Martin County to represent him, Ethan Loeb of Tampa, who filed R3 recycling's complaint against Martin County, two of its former employees, John Polley and Patrick Yancey, and two independent contractors, Interstate Recycling and Elite, in Martin County Circuit Court on June 22.

Interstate and Elite have ties to

Yancey, against county policy.

Litigating the Lake Point case took five years to conclude, after a circuit court judge ordered arbitration on the public records counts and mediation in the breach of contract counts. In this case, however, county officials and D'Adamo have voluntarily agreed to mediate their dispute, set for Sept. 25.

### COUNTY OFFICIALS INVESTIGATE

An employee's complaint to the county's *continued on PAGE 6*



*"Martin County has been home for three generations of my family. I want my sons to build their lives here, too, and be fortunate enough to experience the beautiful community I grew up in."*

### STACEY SERVES ...

- Elected, Martin County Republican State Committeewoman.
- Appointed, Martin County Coastal Working Group
- Appointed, Indiantown Rural Advisory Committee
- Recipient, Community Service Award 2016 from Martin County Realtors Association
- Board Member, Healthy Start Coalition
- Member, Florida Beaches and Shores Preservation Association
- Member, Stuart-Martin, Indiantown and Palm City Chambers of Commerce

### STACEY SUPPORTS ...

- Balanced, accountable and transparent government
- The core Republican values of lower taxes and business-friendly government
- Funding and completing projects to clean our waterways
- Protecting Martin County's unique character

Paid by Stacey Hetherington, Republican for Martin County Commission District 1

Stacey

HETHERINGTON

FOR COUNTY COMMISSION ♦ DISTRICT 2

Martin County needs a leader with balance and integrity who will represent all residents in protecting our quality of life.

Martin County needs  
**Stacey Hetherington!**

Through her dedicated leadership on a variety of community boards and civic causes, Stacey has spent countless hours and resources strengthening the county's economy and protecting our precious environment. She is a lifelong resident, a graduate of the University of Florida, a Realtor, a licensed insurance agent and public relations professional.



Stacey

HETHERINGTON

FOR COUNTY COMMISSION ♦ DISTRICT 2

HetheringtonForMartin.com  
HetheringtonForMartin@gmail.com  
Find me on

**Landfill Lawsuit***continued from PAGE 5*

Human Resources Department of an employee theft at the landfill in May 2017 prompted County Administrator Taryn Kryzda to ask the county's Clerk of Court and Comptroller Carolyn Timmann to investigate as part of her office's responsibilities.

Timmann confirmed that the employee and three others working at the county's Solid Waste Transfer and Recycling Center were hiding scrap metal materials during weekdays and removing them to sell to recyclers on weekends.

In addition to recommending "appropriate action" regarding the employees, Timmann suggested employee re-training, installation of higher quality video cameras and a time clock, and to create a standard methodology for surveillance.

Timmann also reported to Kryzda in October that she had uncovered other information regarding the solid waste transfer facility at the landfill that needed further investigation. The second report on the landfill was completed and released to the public Jan. 22, which led to 14 recommendations to change county practices at the transfer station, including installation of a security arm to block vehicle access, and resulted in the early retirement of a 30-plus year county employee, Utilities and Solid Waste Director John Pol-

ley, and the resignation of his subordinate, Patrick Yancey, solid waste administrator.

It also led to the lawsuit by R3 filed against Martin County for breaching its contract, which was for removing all construction and demolition debris from the landfill, except concrete.

Polley terminated the R3 contract with the county the day after R3 submitted a public records request for correspondence between Yancey and Polley, plus the county's public records regarding R3. All the data from Yancey's and Polley's county-owned cell phones was erased, according to court records, necessitating that the county hire a third party to retrieve the erased data.

The five-year contract was due to expire in October 2018, and included a five-year renewal option that did not require a new bid request.

According to the court complaint, the materials stolen from the landfill should have gone to R3 per the terms of its county contract. The amount missing was impossible to determine because Elite, a St. Lucie County hauling company incorporated by Yancey and operated by his son and wife, had been dumping debris at the landfill, bypassing the scales, according to Timmann's report.

Her report was released to the public on Jan. 22.

In addition to surveillance videos that showed the Elite truck arriving be-

fore the transfer station opened on Saturday mornings to avoid being weighed, the comptroller did a spot check comparison of the number of collection days and the number of times that tipping fees were collected. She found major discrepancies, as well as an average of 45 days to pay the fees in the instances they were charged.

Yancey, employed since 2003 and administrator of the solid waste division, had declared his "off duty relationship" with Elite, and Polley told Timmann that he had been aware of it.

**CONTRACT GOES TO FAMILY MEMBER**

Martin County began its association with R3 in 2012, when the company bid on a proposal for removal of yard and vegetative waste from its landfill. It lost the bid to the INEOS Biomass Facility, which offered an innovative approach to converting the waste into bioethanol. A year later, R3 bid on and was awarded a separate contract for removal of construction and demolition debris, beginning in October 2013.

After a few years, the INEOS biomass facility collapsed. The county did not consider assigning the remainder of the contract to R3, although it had been operating its construction removal without complaints, according to court documents, and assigned it instead to Interstate Recycling, owned by Yancey's son-in-law and daughter.

The county's contract selection committee had met in early January to consider the proposals but chose Interstate because it had been working on site already as a subcontractor for INEOS.

When Polley appeared at the Jan. 23 county commission meeting for the commission's approval, he did not reveal the relationship between Yancey and Interstate, explaining also that the county receives too much waste to halt the process in order to publish a Request for Proposal.

He also favorably compared the \$16.57per ton price offered by Interstate to a St. Lucie County company's price of \$24.57 for vegetative waste removal, although the scope of services were not comparable.

The commission approved the contract unanimously with the caveat that an RFP had to be published within the next six months to meet county policy for awarding contracts, which was not done.

Timmann's uncontested report was released the day before the commission meeting, which revealed that Polley had told her he was aware of the relationship between Interstate and Yancey, and that he "had not thought of" telling the county administrator that Yancey's son-in-law owned Interstate.

Polley also did not reveal the connection to commissioners.

Polley entered into a retirement agreement with the county Jan. 18, announced at the commission meeting, that would keep his retirement and health benefits intact. He also would remain employed temporarily. Yancey submitted his resignation in early January, which was not effective until Feb. 28.

**COUNTY REVERSES DECISION, AT FIRST**

D'Adamo requested, and was granted a meeting with county officials March 13 to protest Polley's termination of R3's contract. According to court documents, the county's legal department agreed that R3's contract should not have been terminated, offering a one-year extension, instead of the five-year extension as specified in his contract.

The county had identified a need to write a new scope of services for the RFP, according to an internal memo, and D'Adamo would be invited to prepare a new proposal.

D'Adamo rejected the county's offer of a one-year extension. The county attorney's office reinstated Polley's termination notice of Feb. 28, thus ending the services from R3 in October, according to court records.

"We really had expected to mediate with R3 before Mr. Loeb filed a lawsuit," said Kryzda, "and we're still hopeful that we can do that, that we can reach an agreement without going to court."

Timmann's full reports are available to the public on the Martin County Clerk of Court website, [www.martinclerk.com](http://www.martinclerk.com), under "Internal Audits." ■

— Barbara Cloudus

# Create Your Own Personal Green Space

**Call Jenkins Landscape  
for Inspired Solutions  
in Design and Care**

**772.546.2861**

12260 SE Dixie Hwy, Hobe Sound, FL 33455  
[www.JenkinsLandscape.com](http://www.JenkinsLandscape.com)

- ☛ Landscape Installation & Maintenance
- ☛ Irrigation installation & Maintenance
- ☛ Pest Control
- ☛ Fertilization
- ☛ Tree Trimming

Jenkins is a EEO and drug-free workplace.



## The MilCor Group, Inc.

**YOUR LOCAL CIVIL ENGINEERS**

Engineering a Value Driven Sustainable Environment

Proudly Supports

Martin County  
**CURRENTS**

772.223.8850

[www.themilcorgroup.com](http://www.themilcorgroup.com)

10975 S.E. Federal Hwy., Hobe Sound

# Heard gets criminal case severed from Fielding's

**Commissioner Sarah Heard successfully argued during a court hearing in June to have her criminal case separated from those of Commissioner Ed Fielding of Stuart and former commissioner, Anne Scott of Jupiter Island, all charged with alleged violations of public records laws.**

Heard, who insists that she is innocent of the misdemeanor charges stemming from alleged public records violations in 2012 and 2013, filed for re-election June 22 on the last day of the qualifying period.

Heard was indicted by a Martin County Grand Jury on Jan. 4, 2018, on two counts of violating Florida's public records laws. The first count pertained to a Lake Point Restoration public records request submitted to her on Feb. 7, 2013, to which she allegedly failed to respond, and the second count pertains to her alleged failure to maintain the public records in her care, custody and control during the time period of Sept. 1, 2012, through Feb. 7, 2013.

Heard told the court that she could not respond to Lake Point's public records request because her Yahoo! email account had been hacked, which she claims destroyed all emails on her personal computer for the previous eight years. State law requires that public records be preserved and protected. Infractions are punishable by fines and/or jail time.

Lake Point attorneys were seeking the email correspondence between commissioners and environmentalist Maggy Hurchalla regarding the Lake Point mining and water restoration project near Indiantown, which they needed to present as evidence in their tortious interference lawsuit against Hurchalla.

Lake Point won the lawsuit on Feb. 14, based largely on recovered emails from Fielding's personal computer, according to two of the trial jurors. The jury awarded the company \$4.4 million in damages as a result of Hurchalla's actions. Hurchalla has appealed.

In previous court testimony, Martin County's information technology forensics expert reported that he found no evidence of a hack that could delete emails from Heard's personal email account. At the conclusion of the civil trial against the county, the court sanctioned Martin County for \$502,000 based on the unlawful actions primarily of Heard, Fielding and Scott.

Heard also was charged with a civil infraction for alleged public records violations in November as part of an apparent



Sarah Heard



Ed Fielding

plea deal between her attorney and the state attorney's office; however, Heard rejected the deal and hired a new attorney. She has since claimed in court records that she was "being forced to sign" an agreement to resign from office.

Challenging Heard in the county commission District 4 race are Niki Norton, Harold Markey, and Edward "Butch" Olsen Jr., all Republicans. A Rocky Point resident, Heard is seeking her fifth four-year term as the District 4 representative for the Port Salerno and Tropical Farms areas.

The vote is Tuesday, August 28, and is open to all registered voters regardless of party.

Fielding did not file for re-election to the District 2 seat. Three candidates will face each other in November's general election to represent District 2: Stacey Heatherington, a Republican; Joe Banfi, NPA (no party affiliation); and a write-in candidate, Caryn Hall Yost-Rudge, a Democrat. ■



Eagleston Holly  
Standard 45g

Insist your landscape contractor buys plants & trees from a reputable Martin County resource!



772-546-3541

www.beckertreefarm.com

# Harold Markey Wants to Bring Trust Back to Martin County

Martin County resident Harold Markey has announced his candidacy for Martin County Commission, District 4, and believes he has the skills, knowledge and experience to lead Martin County in the right direction.

Markey joined the Martin County staff as a plumber in 1990 and worked his way up through the ranks, holding increasingly responsible positions before culminating his career as General Services Director. After 28 years as an award-winning employee, Markey retired in October of 2017. During a County Commission meeting, Markey was recognized by each Martin County Commissioner for his work with the county, particularly for saving the county and the taxpayers millions of dollars through his innovative approach to problem solving.

"My experience in the General Services Department has given me unique insight that will serve the taxpayers well if I'm elected," says Markey. "I'm intimately familiar with the county budget, and the spending habits of our commission. We have spent millions on lawsuits while our



Harold Markey

growth philosophies. "We need to support our local businesses," he says, "while encouraging the right types of new businesses to locate here, businesses that meet our citizens' needs."

It's not just managing the growth of Martin County that is critically important to Markey. As a resident who loves the local waterways, he knows that saving them requires a collaborative effort of our own county, as well as neighboring communities, and other governmental agencies.

Since he filed to run, Markey has been making his way around the county, meeting with residents to hear what they have to say. "One issue that I've heard regularly is that residents are losing trust in their county government," he says. "They want more transparency and honesty from the county. They deserve it, and I want to help them get it."

Markey has invested personal time in his community, both in New York and in Florida, having volunteered for years as a coach for high school varsity and Pop Warner football programs. He was the County Team Leader for American Heart Walk for two years and was named the Martin County Historic Preservation Board's Preservationist of The Year in 2016. In 2017, the Disability Assistance, Inc., organization issued a proclamation thanking Markey for his outstanding work in making Martin County the most ADA-accessible county in Florida.

A father and grandfather, Markey enjoys music, playing the guitar, and he and his wife, Nicole, enjoy camping in their motor home. He also has a very clear goal in mind.

"If elected," he says, "I will work hard every day to bring trust back to the people of Martin County."

For more information about Harold Markey, go to [www.vote4Markey.com](http://www.vote4Markey.com), or visit his Facebook page, Vote 4 Markey.



Markey is presented a plaque by County Administrator Taryn Kryzda celebrating his retirement after 28 years of service to Martin County

first responders, county infrastructure and facilities have gone on the back burner for far too long; a very costly mistake for taxpayers. I managed my department with complete transparency and have proven my fiscal responsibility with taxpayers' hard-earned dollars."

Markey managed millions of budget dollars throughout his career but is more proud of the millions of dollars he saved the taxpayers over the years. Having been professionally trained in the areas of managing multiple projects, meeting deadlines and achieving objectives, communicating, maintaining strong ethics, teamwork and exceptional customer service, Markey believes he can help build consensus among local decision makers and county residents.

Markey also believes in thoughtful growth, as opposed to no-growth or pro-

Paid for by Harold Markey, Republican for County Commission, Martin County District 4

# Sherlock, Hurchalla ordered to pay sanctions

Stuart attorney Virginia Sherlock and her client, former commissioner Maggy Hurchalla, were slapped with court sanctions on May 10 for deliberately delaying the entry of the jury's final judgment against Hurchalla in February by filing a motion on a non-existent complaint.

At the circuit court hearing, Judge William Roby called Sherlock's action "frivolous," and ordered that she and Hurchalla split the cost of Lake Point's attorney fees and court costs due to having to appear in court to hear Sherlock's post-trial motion.

"You're asking me for a judgment on a count that doesn't exist ...," Roby said to Sherlock. "This is the most scurrilous argument I've heard as a judge for a long time."

Two day after the trial, Sherlock objected to the entry of the final judgment, ostensibly because a count that had been dismissed in 2013 by Circuit Court Judge Thomas McCann had not been disposed of properly, according to Sherlock's motion.

Calling Florida law "absolutely crystal clear" on the issue, Roby read the

law to Sherlock in open court, explaining that an amended complaint supersedes any previous complaint.

"The previous complaint no longer exists," he added, unless rulings and counts from the previous complaint are adopted as part of the new complaint. "What matters is what was tried before the jury."

Sherlock had not only gone back five years, he added, but the complaint had been amended twice since originally filed. Sherlock said she was aware of the law, but disagreed with the judge in its application.

Roby reminded Sherlock that after the jury's verdict Feb. 14, he had asked attorneys from both sides if there were any pending issues, reading verbatim from the trial's transcript.

"Both of you said no," he said. "No



Maggy Hurchalla



Virginia Sherlock

issues. Then upon entry of final judgment, this issue arises."

The judge entered the final judgment for \$4,391,708 from the bench, which had been awarded to Lake Point by the jury 14 days earlier on Feb. 14.

Hurchalla and Sherlock were ordered to split a total of \$7,282.83 in attorney fees, costs, and interest, including a \$115 clerk fee. Hurchalla paid the amount in cash to Circuit Court Clerk Carolyn Timmann on May 16, which stayed the execution of the court's order during Hurchalla's appeal to the Fourth District Court.

In addition, Hurchalla also was ordered at the May 10 hearing to pay \$253,109 in costs relating to the civil trial, on top of the \$4.4 million in damages to Lake Point Restoration awarded by the six-person jury, which found that Hurchalla was indeed liable for having interfered with Lake Point's agreements with Martin County and South Florida Water Management District.

Hurchalla's actions had caused Lake Point's operation to lose \$22 million in profits, according to testimony by a forensics accounting expert.

#### WERE REASONS BEHIND THE DELAY?

The deliberate delay temporarily stopped the legal requirement that Hurchalla provide a list of her financial assets to Lake Point Restoration, which had concluded five years' of litigation with the jury's ruling Feb. 14.

The hearing could not be scheduled on Sherlock's claim until Feb. 28, thus delaying the entry of the final order by two weeks.

In Lake Point's investigation of Hurchalla's claim that her bank accounts at

Bank of America were jointly owned as tenants to entireties, meaning that both parties were 100 percent owners, Lake Point attorney Ethan Loeb discovered that the bank signature cards were not signed until Feb. 27, after the jury's verdict and the day before the hearing that delayed entry of the final judgment.

#### HURCHALLA'S ASSETS EXEMPT?

Sherlock's motion contended that all of Hurchalla's assets were exempt from garnishment. Hurchalla owns two Bank of America checking accounts, which total \$69,657, plus two safety deposit boxes, one of which is in three names.

Court records also show an account with Merrill Lynch Fenner & Smith with a total of \$228,296 in cash and securities; three accounts with TD Ameritrade that total \$129,049; and a brokerage account with The GMS Group with a balance of \$108,368 as of Feb. 15.

Hurchalla also has three crowdfunding websites, which also have been garnished.

In addition to Hurchalla's waterfront home in Rocky Point with a market value of \$656,000, according to the Martin County Property Assessor, Hurchalla also owns two vacant waterfront lots in Rocky Point valued at \$473,000, plus three additional vacant lots with a total market value of \$175,000, according to the property appraiser.

Although Hurchalla inherited her family's estate in Kendall last year following the death of her sister, Janet Reno, she donated the house and property to Miami-Dade College.

A court trial was held in June to determine which accounts were social security and retirement accounts, and which were investment accounts. Prior to the trial, Lake Point withdrew its garnishment of two of the accounts. The remainder of their holdings are being reviewed by the court to determine which are exempt. ■

--Barbara Cloudus



Hobe Sound's

## HOMETOWN TEE SHIRT SHOP

Where the only limitation is your imagination!

One-of-a-  
Kind Custom  
Shirts

A Variety  
of Designs or  
Create your  
Own

"Spicy  
Tuna" Sport  
Shirts

"Cotton  
Crustaceans  
Creations"

On Mars Street at Old Dixie Hwy  
772-321-5849



## Bumpy start to Hurchalla's appeal

The Fourth District Court of Appeal has denied or dismissed most of Maggy Hurchalla's motions since Hurchalla first appealed the trial court's decisions March 8 – except her request for postponement, which was granted.

The three-judge panels have denied or dismissed Hurchalla's motions for a new trial, to disqualify the jury foreman and declare a mistrial, and most recently to force Circuit Court Judge William Roby to relinquish an apology letter that Hurchalla says the judge tried to force her to sign.

Hurchalla was given until August 22 to file all the trial paperwork for her final appeal, which includes 813 pages of records and transcripts from her Feb. 8-14 trial in Martin County Circuit Court. The jury awarded \$4.4 million to Lake Point Restoration after they found Hurchalla liable for damaging Lake Point's business.

Lake Point attorney Ethan Loeb said that the mining and water restoration project had initially filed suit against Hurchalla in order to clear Lake Point's name. They had asked her in 2013 prior to filing suit to recant her claims about Lake Point, including that wetlands were being destroyed and that the project had been "fast-tracked." ■

# Hurchalla claims she lost at trial due to judge's bias

Some observers called the Lake Point civil trial against Maggy Hurchalla a circus. Others called it a travesty. Regardless of perspective, however, the trial and its appeals have not been "ordinary."

After Hurchalla and her attorney, Virginia Sherlock, asked for a mistrial based on the claim that the presiding judge had been biased, the Fourth District Court of Appeal dismissed the motion.

Had the appellate found otherwise, the case would have required a new trial.

Claims of bias against the judge was only one of multiple issues arising during the Feb. 5-14 trial. On the second day, Sherlock – prior even to opening arguments – submitted an order to the judge to sign that he'd not seen previously.

The order was to prevent Lake Point from revealing to the jury that three commissioners, Sarah Heard, Ed Fielding and Anne Scott, had been granted Fifth Amendment protections from incriminating themselves.

Lake Point also could not reveal that the commissioners all were under criminal indictment for public records violations, and could not release any portion of the arbitration report that concluded the county had been guilty of violating public records laws.

The order presented to the judge by Sherlock added another condition – that Point also could not present any of the evidence used in the arbitration, including depositions, which was the crux of Lake Point's case.

Roby told Sherlock he had not issued that order, struck one page of Sherlock's added conditions, then signed the order from the bench prior to seating the jury and commencing the trial.

## OTHER ISSUES ARISE

During the morning's session, the judge also admonished Sherlock's partner, Howard Heims, for not following his pre-trial instruction that all objections to evidence submitted to the court needed to be filed in advance, in order not to spend 10 or 15 minutes debating each exhibit in the courtroom.

"If we do that with every exhibit," Roby told Heims, "this trial will take a lot longer than one week."

In the trial's opening arguments, Lake Point had focused on Hurchalla's emailed directions to county commissioners to cancel its contracts regarding the Lake Point project. They also presented the county's apology for its treatment of Lake Point, showed photos of restored wetlands, and displayed an email from Hurchalla to Commissioner Ed Fielding that she signed "Deep Rockpit," giving specific instructions for commissioners to follow.



19th Judicial  
Circuit Court Judge  
William Roby

The documents were displayed in front of the jury box on a 72" television screen, positioned between the judge's bench and the defense table. The attorneys' tables were outfitted with a smaller TV console in order to view whatever was being played on the larger screen for the jury.

Sherlock's opening arguments focused on Hurchalla's

First Amendment rights to complain to her county commissioners, again claiming that Lake Point's lawsuit was merely a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) because she questioned and commented to her commissioners on a project she did not like, a right to which she was entitled.

Following opening arguments and during a jury break, Roby invited Hurchalla and her attorneys to meet with him. After approximately 15 minutes, all the parties returned to the courtroom, the jury was again seated, and the trial resumed.

Several hours later, after the lunch break but prior to reseating the jury, Hurchalla and her defense team conferred with the judge at the bench in open court to ask the judge for an immediate recusal or to declare a mistrial, alleging that he was biased.

They based their allegations on their private meeting with the judge that morning.

The judge's invitation had been an offer to mediate, to seek a settlement, he said, rather than to proceed with a trial after he saw the jury's reaction to opening arguments.

"I've been doing this for 30 years," he said, "and in that time, I've learned to read a jury."

He said he felt compelled to help Hurchalla mediate a settlement with Lake Point after listening to the opening arguments and watching the jury's reaction, which to him appeared as if they were already siding with Lake Point's arguments.

The judge had suggested the form of an apology, which Hurchalla might offer to Lake Point that could end the trial; however, Hurchalla had said that such a settlement was one-sided and unfair, according to their court testimony. In open court, Sherlock accused the judge of insisting that Hurchalla sign a letter of apology.

"Ma'am, I never suggested she sign anything," said Roby. "I don't know why you're making that representation."

Sherlock also claimed that the judge's demeanor had changed toward her defendant following their early morning meeting. Hurchalla testified that she could see the judge's facial expressions – rolling his eyeballs during Heim's cross-examination of witnesses – although Loeb demonstrated by sitting in Hurchalla's chair at the defense table that the giant TV screen that dominated the cen-



The view of the judge from the defense table with attorney Virginia Sherlock, on left, defendant Maggy Hurchalla, and attorney Dan Melzer, on right, was blocked by a giant TV screen that dominated the courtroom.

ter of the courtroom also completely blocked Hurchalla's view of the bench.

Loeb asked Hurchalla, "Are you testifying to the court that when you're sitting in that chair, that you can see what the judge is doing from that chair?"

Hurchalla replied, "Yes."

Almost immediately, Sherlock told the court that she'd complained since the beginning of the trial that their view was blocked.

The judge denied Sherlock's motions, the TV screen was moved back for better visibility by the defense team, and the trial continued.

Seven days later, the jury awarded Lake Point a total of \$4,391,708 for lost revenue, based on an economist's expert analysis. Whether the jury's verdict will stand now lies in the appellate court's hands. ■

--Barbara Cloudus

The Perfect Outdoor Venue for Private Events or Weddings.

The original farm-to-table venue of the Treasure Coast with menus crafted by top local chefs on acres of flowering fields, a cathedral of eucalyptus trees and lots of country charm.

**Kai's Music Garden**  
At Kai Kai Farm  
8006 S.W. Kanner Hwy., Indiantown  
772-597-1717  
KaisMusicGarden.com

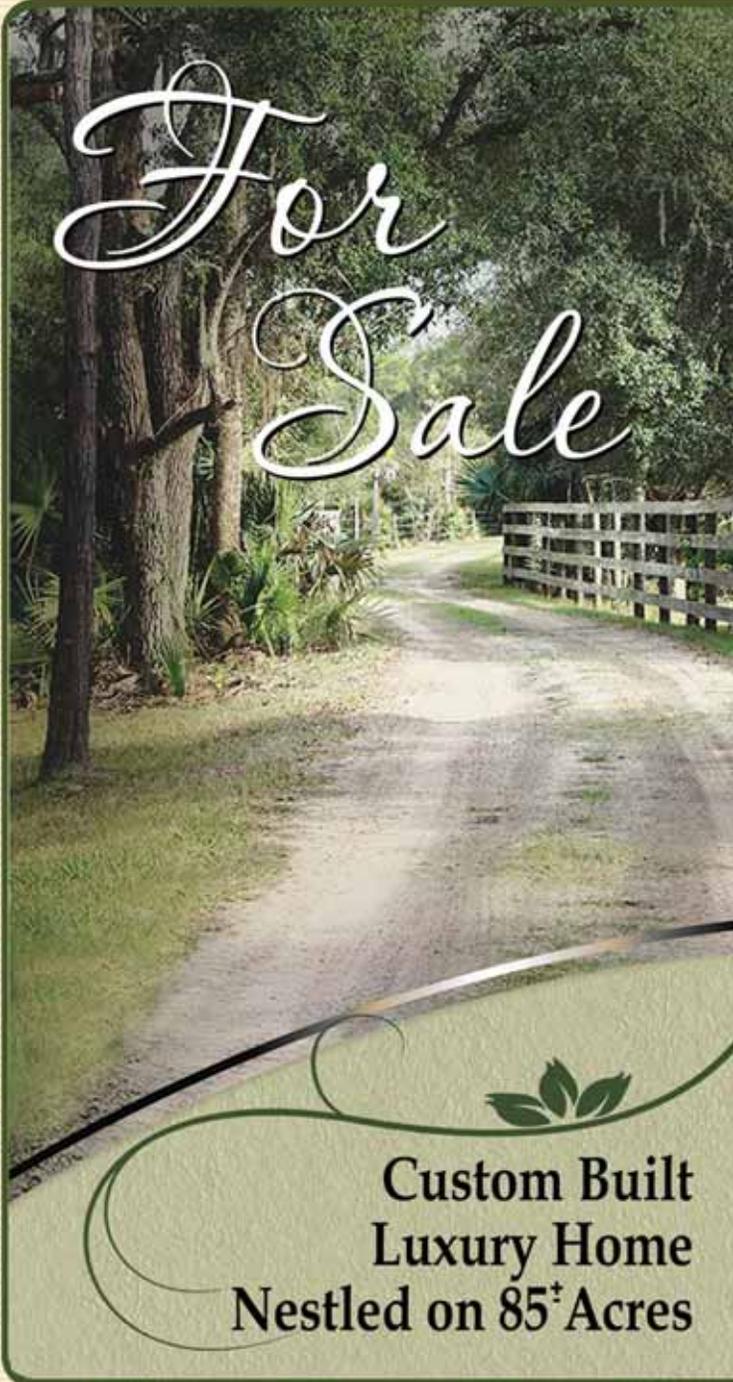
Dining & Dancing under the Stars ★ Screened Pavilion ★ Concert Stage ★ No Curfew



**YOUR TRUSTED REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE COMPANY**

Visit our website at: [www.Tucker-Group.com](http://www.Tucker-Group.com) for more properties

Office: (863) 763-4010 • 104 N.W. 7th Ave. Okeechobee, Florida 34974



**Custom Built  
Luxury Home  
Nestled on 85<sup>±</sup> Acres**



**THIS MAGNIFICENT CUSTOM HOME** features a 3Br / 3Ba and a 1Br / 1Ba Mother-in- Law Suite that has everything! River Stone fireplace has the capability of burning wood or gas, cathedral ceilings, reclaimed Heart of Pine Flooring, Sunken Cypress Ceiling, Cherry Wood Cabinets, Stainless Steel appliances, two home generators, salt water pool, solar powered barn that comes complete with full functioning bunkhouse that sleeps six! Round pen, horse safe turn-out lots and spacious tack room. This property also has a storage building, metal pole barn, dock on one of the ponds and is fenced and crossed fenced. The acreage is truly unique with a mixture of pasture, Oaks, and Pine Tree's. There is an additional 50 Acres available as well. Located near two public use areas that have additional riding trails and outdoor activities.

*Call today to schedule an exclusive showing appointment to see this Paradise Oasis!*

**Vangela McFarland (863) 261-3630** Licensed Real Estate Professional

**57<sup>±</sup> PRIME ACREAGE IN MARTIN COUNTY**



**57+/- ACRES** with A-1 Agricultural Zoning with frontage along I-95, Florida Turnpike and Bridge Road. Minutes to Jupiter Island, Palm Beach Gardens and Stuart. 2 miles West of New Michael Jordan Private Golf Club. Located in Hobe Sound, FL. Shown by appointment only.

**\$1,970,000**

**Contact: Colton Cunningham  
(561) 718-4182**

Licensed Real Estate Professional

## Here we go again, not once, not twice, 3 times



**Nyla Pipes**

*One Florida Foundation*

**H**ere we are again with canals, marinas, and shorelines coated in blue-green algae, otherwise known as cyanobacteria. With record-breaking rainfall in May throughout the state, Stuart topped the list with a whopping 24.22 inches.

The governor was ridiculed for saying, "It's the rain." He is partially correct. I know, I know ... we don't want to hear that!

We want something or somebody to blame besides Mother Nature. It's human nature, for if we only had a cause, then we could find the solution, and whatever the case may be, we don't like to blame ourselves. So, it's the rain and a few other things, like our hot summer temperatures and nutrients, which sounds as if they'd be good, but are actually pollutants.

How did we get here ... yet, again ... and what can we do about it?

The first rains of the season always flush a large amount of nutrients, primarily phosphorous and nitrogen, into our waterways. May rains also turned the St. Lucie River 100% fresh before the discharges from Lake Okeechobee began June 1.

Our waters were primed with nutrients that feed algae, and then that algae was discharged from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie River. Now it continues to grow. Had the water not been so fresh from the rains, and if the nutrients weren't so readily available for this organism to use, we would not see these cyanobacteria blooms.

Cyanobacteria with the microcystic strains we have in our river are a fresh-

water bacterium, which would not survive in saltier water.

Unfortunately, stopping Lake Okeechobee discharges is an effort decades in the making, and we haven't gotten there yet. It's all tied up in the 68 Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Projects designed to send more water south – projects like the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir, the C-44 Reservoir, and the Lake Okeechobee Watershed project, to name a few.

Just because the task is large, however, does not mean we should stop trying.

One area we can work on is nutrient removal and slowing water down so that it's filtered before reaching our rivers. A lot of this work can be done in our own watershed between Port Mayaca and the Atlantic Ocean. There are many opportunities to make a difference, and to solve this problem will take a multi-pronged approach. Here are a few actions we can take as citizens to help.

A) Work to get Everglades Restoration projects funded at state and federal level. The federal government is currently \$400 million behind in paying for its share of these huge infrastructure projects. Right now, you can write/call your congressman/ senator and ask them to fund the EAA Reservoir and the Central Everglades Planning Project, which are some of the most important components needed to move more water south.

B) Advocate to upgrade sewers to Advanced Wastewater Treatment AND get off septic tanks. If you can't get off septic because there is no sewer, put in a nitrogen removal system. Nitrogen is feeding the cyanobacteria, and a standard septic system doesn't remove much nitrogen. Septic systems rely on the drain field for nutrient removal, and our drain fields are often flooded in this coastal region. Obviously, if we are to connect to sanitary sewers, they need to

be adequate and should remove as many nutrients as possible. Advanced Wastewater Treatment facilities treat the water three times.

C) Attend meetings and speak. Go to county commission and city meetings and tell them how much your water matters to you. Pay attention to water quality improvement plans in your community and advocate for more. There are also meetings listed on the South Florida Water Management District website and on the Army Corps website where you can speak up about our water, stopping the discharges, and complete Everglades restoration.

D) Support Deep Well Injection. It's the fastest emergency measure we've got. The only other option is continuing discharges. South Florida Water Management District is proceeding with a pilot project and we should not discount this option for handling up to 67 percent of the Lake Okeechobee discharges to the St. Lucie River.

E) Support conservation easements and water farming/dispersed water management programs. Public/ private partnerships are quicker to execute and hold some water back. Caulkins Water Farm is a great example of a project that

is making a difference. Watch for more of these projects to come to the table and support them.

F) Participate in the Best Management Practices program and do the very best you can to reduce nutrients. Whether you own substantial acreage, or live on a 1/4 acre lot, you are responsible for the nutrient pollution that comes off your land.

G) Participate in the public meetings regarding the St. Lucie River Basin Management Action Plan. This plan is being put into action to clean up the nutrients going to our St. Lucie River.

Please understand the problems are vast. The solutions are expensive and time consuming; nevertheless, there are plans in place and actions being taken.

Sometimes, with a problem this big, it's easier to blame others, to lose hope, to be angry. We cannot let that happen. Please know that by participating in some of these actions, you can make a definitive difference for our water. ■

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



**MANCIL'S**

8530 SW Jayme Way  
Palm City, FL 34990

Ol: 772-288-0951  
Fx: 772-288-0983

www.mancills.com  
Like us on Facebook!

Earthwork  
Roadways  
Storm Drain  
Underground Utilities

**COMPLETE SITEWORK**  
772-288-0951



**NEW LOCATION!**

WILL BUY WORKING OR BROKEN MECHANICAL (WIND-UP) WATCHES.

*Fine Watch & Antique Clock Repair*

You can rely on About Time's reputation for meticulous work and superior service to repair your heirloom clocks and watches, even the most challenging.

8880 SE Bridge Road • Hobe Sound

Monday-Friday 9am-5pm  
Saturday 10am-2pm

*About Time*  
CLOCK & WATCH REPAIR SERVICE

# SAVE THE DATE!

HOSTED BY

## iTown

Indiantown Western Martin County  
Chamber of Commerce & Welcome Center

# OCTOBER 19 & 20, 2018

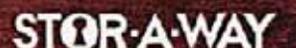
# INDIANTOWN RODEO

**PROFESSIONAL RODEO COWBOYS ASSOCIATION AND  
WOMEN'S PRO RODEO ASSOCIATION SANCTIONED EVENTS**

**TIMER POWERS PARK • CITRUS BLVD, INDIANTOWN**

**TICKETS \$18 Advance \$25 Gate**

**WWW.INDIANTOWNCHAMBER.COM • 772.597.2184**



## Letters to the Editor:

### Markey has experience to be Martin County's Dist. 4 commissioner

In the past few months, I have spoken to each of the candidates running for County Commission in District 4. Harold Markey stands out as someone that Martin County needs.

Markey has 28 years of experience as an employee of the county. In his last position, Harold was responsible for overseeing the county's million-plus square feet of occupied space. Markey introduced innovative and cost-cutting measures, so his department operated more efficiently and saved taxpayer dollars.

Markey explained to me that his reason for running was the lack of trust between the government and the residents of Martin County. Most of that distrust was caused by the county's inability to address basic governmental needs such as the hundreds of millions of dollars in deferred road and infrastructure maintenance. Harold believes in tackling these crucial needs first before adding unnecessary new projects and taxes. And Markey's experience will be able to help in doing just that.

He retired early to be able to run in this election for the commission District 4 seat. Harold Markey's determination to turn around Martin County's situation is an important reason to support him. For far too long we have elected politicians who have neither the experience nor practical understanding to adequately represent the citizens of Martin County.

For these reasons, I urge you to support and vote for Harold Markey for County Commissioner in District 4.

*Tom Campenni, Stuart*

### Say no to Hobe Sound incorporation move

I respectfully offer my comments on the article featured in the February, 2018 edition of the Martin County Currents regarding the effort to incorporate Hobe Sound.

If one of the major challenges facing the Hobe Sound incorporation campaign is apathy, then doesn't this message underline the need to drop the effort? I want to protect Hobe Sound as much as the members of Protecting Hobe Sound, Inc., but not by adding another layer of government, that being the formation of a town of Hobe Sound. Having attended several of the pro-incorporation group meetings, I never found then, or now many supporters, nor any overriding substantiation of the benefits of incorporation – benefits which outweigh Hobe Sound's current status. Apathetic now...are we surprised given the current



political climate and general distaste for government?

The article's claim that "many do not understand the sense of urgency" (for incorporation) is bewildering. Indiantown's intent was most definitely economic as incorporation was pursued. Clearly, most residents were behind the type of self-determination so desired and needed, for economic reasons. But Hobe Sound is a very different community, seasonal to be sure and largely made up of retirees and young families, both of which groups seem to me to have other concerns and interests at heart. That is not to say that most wouldn't support preservation and protection, but not at the cost of a new layer of government.

I believe we all have a responsibility to help protect and/or preserve this incredibly beautiful, peaceful community. We've done this before with the leadership of Protecting Hobe Sound, Inc. and we can continue to be active without creating a new government structure and the politics to ensue.

*Elizabeth Hubbard, Hobe Sound*

### Harrell is local voice; Keiser is an outsider

I heartily endorse Gayle Harrell on her candidacy to our Florida Senate.

Through the more than 40 years Gayle, husband James, and her family lived here, they've always shown support and dedication to Martin County and the Treasure Coast, its values and concerns.

The Harrells were never ones to shy from standing for what they believed — Gayle in particular.

Back in the 1980s, Gayle was a founding member of Hibiscus Children's Center. She stood strongly with Suzy Hutchinson's Helping People Succeed and volunteered and served on every school advisory committee one of her four children attended. Gayle understands well our public education and its problems.

Her involvement and enthusiasm are always straightforward. She always found a positive route to any situation that presented itself.

Later, in more recent years, she has represented us honorably in our Florida Legislature, her focus always on the needs of the greater community — the Treasure Coast, citizens' medical concerns, business initiatives, school curriculum issues, law enforcement and always the environment and how important our waterways are to our health, our economy and our future.

Her opponent in the primary, Belinda Keiser, knows nothing about our community. Keiser's attacks on her only speak to a limited ability to know who and what we are on the Treasure Coast.

There is a word I rarely use in politics: "carpetbagger." I find it fitting in this primary race. Keiser appears to be one.

Having Sen. Joe Negron's support, as Gayle does, means a lot. He lives and breathes his home district, as Gayle does. He has done us proud, as Gayle will do.

No outsider like Keiser is deserving of our trust or vote.

Please support and vote for Gayle on Aug. 28. She is an outstanding legislator. Let us not lose her voice in Tallahassee.

*Jody Bond, Palm City, former member of the Martin County School Board and former member of the Children's Services Council.*

### Why I'm voting for incorporation of Hobe Sound

Like most folks in Martin County, I am not an advocate for rampant growth. I favor a cautious approach to growth, sound fiscal policy and a consistent application of the adopted codes and standards that protect our quality of life.

I know this is achievable when the citizens are involved and hold their elected officials accountable.

Over my 25-year career with Martin County before retiring in 2014, I saw many commissioners come and go with the changing political climate. From the threat and fear of massive overdevelopment to anti-business commission majorities whose actions invite lawsuits that cost taxpayers dearly, this charged environment puts county staff in a tough spot when it comes to enforcing clear, consistent policies.

That's what I love about living in Hobe Sound. As a small, close-knit community of involved, concerned citizens who band together to help one another, we enjoy a refuge from such dramatic divisions.

Although we are a diverse community with many differences, we are united in our love for Hobe Sound and our determination to protect it.

But as an unincorporated region, we are governed entirely by Martin County and subject to all of its political implications.

We would be much better off governing ourselves by electing a commission made up entirely of Hobe Sound residents who are 100-percent invested in protecting this town. That is why I am voting in support of creating the town of Hobe Sound on Aug. 28, and I encourage everyone in the boundary line to do the same.

If we really want to protect Hobe Sound, we must do so ourselves. Vote "yes" on incorporation on Aug. 28.

*Jon Pasqualone, Hobe Sound*

### Harold Markey for District 4

I had the pleasure of meeting Harold Markey about ten years ago. In my posi-

*continued on PAGE 14*

# City commission race to be decided on Tuesday

Stuart Commissioner Troy McDonald turned both the city and county commission races on their heads when he withdrew from the County Commission District 2 race in April to run for re-election to his Group 3 seat on the Stuart City Commission.

He faces newcomer Merritt Matheson, the first candidate ever to challenge McDonald.

Citing the issues the city has recently encountered for his decision to withdraw from the race for a county commission seat, McDonald said he'd "been concerned about leaving an additional gap in experienced leadership, and I've been bolstered by the comments from many concerned city residents who tell me how much they wish I could stay on."

McDonald has served on the Stuart City Commission since 2011—facing no challengers for his last three elections and twice elected by his fellow commissioners as mayor, including during the city's centennial celebration.

Matheson, McDonald's opponent, hails from a member of a Martin County heritage family and is a newcomer to politics. He regularly attends city commission meetings, serves now on the Stuart planning agency and was the only city resident who objected publicly about the lack of transparency in the



**Merritt Matheson**  
City Commission  
Candidate Group 3



**Troy McDonald**  
Incumbent City  
Commissioner Group 3



**Nick Blount**  
Incumbent City  
Commissioner Group 1



**Michael Meier**  
City Commission  
Candidate Group 1

commissioners' decision to grant themselves a 60-percent pay raise to \$18,000 annually, which has become a primary campaign issue.

Matheson, who filed in March, attended the University of Colorado, Boulder, to study environmental biology, earned a captain's license in 2003 and settled in Maui, Hawaii, as a charter fishing boat captain. After a hereditary condition rendered him legally blind, he returned to Stuart in 2010 with his wife, Chelsey, where he manages investment properties.

## TWO MORE FILE FOR CITY SEATS

Two other candidates also filed for city commission seats: Michael Meier, a Stuart native, filed March 26 for the Group 1

seat, currently held by Commissioner Nick Blount, who was appointed in March to fill the seat vacated by the resignation of Commissioner Thomas Campenni.

Meier, co-owner of Ground Floor Farm, which has made a significant impact on downtown Stuart life, holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and linguistics from New York University. He was director of analytics for a technology company in the advertising industry, followed by a career in farming as farm manager of Brooklyn Grange.

He also organized the National Young Farmers Coalition. After returning to his hometown in 2013, he helped build the city's first urban farm, café and market, and has a particular interest in community farming.

Meier pointed out to city commissioners at their April 9 meeting that the CRA board, on which he sits, had approved \$170,000 for improvements to the downtown streetscape; however, the final cost will be \$540,000 with no explanation, deliberation or public awareness of the project's increase in cost. The city's lack of transparency also has become a campaign issue.

In addition to serving on the city's Community Redevelopment Board, Meier also serves on the executive board of East Stuart Partnership. He's established a website to provide more details about his campaign: [www.meierforstuart.com](http://www.meierforstuart.com).

Blount, a familiar face to most residents due to his extensive community outreach as an FPL executive in numerous roles over the past 42 years, including as interim executive director of the Indiantown Chamber of Commerce, serving the boards also of the Palm City and Stuart-Martin Chamber of Commerce, Boys & Girls Club, and numerous other civic positions.

Retired as area manager for FPL in 2014, he joined the board of the Stuart Air Show in 2015 and has been a lay leader of Stuart Methodist Church since 2004. He holds a BS degree in electrical engineering from the University of Tennessee, an

*continued on PAGE 15*

## Letters to the Editor

*continued from PAGE 13*

tion working for the private Aviation company that provides the LifeStar helicopters and pilots, part of my job was advocating for real quarters for LifeStar. When I first became associated with the program the "base" was a trailer. That leaked. That had air quality problems. Others warned me not to approach Harold, the General Services director about these issues. Hard headed me, I didn't listen? The outcome - nearly immediate action. Whenever I had an issue and Fire Rescue gave me enough rope to work with Harold, it was always very professional. Harold already has my vote and my wife's (love early voting!). One thing I know is he knows County government from the inside out. I think we could use that expertise on the Commission instead of, say, Sarah Heard. Personally, I'd like my share of the \$30 million she, Ed Fielding, and Anne Scott cost me. Harold is straightforward, even blunt some would say. Commissioner Heard has lost touch with the reality of Martin County and tilts at windmills. I don't see Harold Markey putting up with the kind of back door crap the previous Commission did. We're lucky today that we have Commission that is relatively

friendly to Hobe Sound, and Harold Jenkins is a godsend. Lets replace Ms. Heard and her lawsuits and ongoing criminal legal troubles from her actions as a Commissioner in favor of new blood with a TON of government experience. I am not associated with any campaign for County Commission, I am just sharing the point of view I'm entitled to. Thanks for reading.

*Chris Church, Olympia/Zeus Park*

## Norton would make a great difference

As a resident of Martin County for over 45 years and business owner, I believe Niki Norton can make a real difference in our community.

We need a county commissioner who knows what's going on with our youth and the lack of skilled young workers

Niki believes in job creation for our youth and promoting exposure to vocational and trades training within our public schools.

Her architectural firm hires young workers to teach them the skills in that trade.

As a member of the Treasure Coast Builders Association and past president, I have seen Niki volunteer to better our

community by donating her services back to Building Homes for Heroes and Dream Homes for local veterans.

Beyond giving back to the community, she incorporates that betterment through her firm's practice. Niki's firm, n2 Architecture + Design, obtained certification for environmentally friendly commercial renovations.

Niki truly cares for the character of Martin County and believes in the viability of Martin County families. She is a mother of five and supports our youth so they will return back to live and work in Martin County. Vote Norton for District 4 county commissioner.

*Ronnie Kirchman II, Palm City*

## Defenthaler is best advocate for our students, teachers

Victoria Defenthaler has my support. She is running for Martin County School Board, and I cannot think of a better person to advocate for our students.

While principal at Bessey Creek Elementary in Palm City, she gained the respect of parents and students, impacting the lives of over 10,000, while supervising

1,700 employees and managing budgets totaling almost \$10 million. Throughout her storied tenure, her character, honesty and ability to face the difficult decisions of running a big business were evident.

We need someone of Victoria's caliber on our School Board, as Martin County is facing many challenges in our educational system. Did you know we have had many bright and devoted teachers resign this year? Are they leaving because of salary, lack of support/respect, or feeling unappreciated? Did you know we are losing some of our "A" rated schools? Why is that?

As a Realtor, I will say that our educational standards of excellence bring many families to Martin County. Whether you have children or grandchildren in our school system, your vote means so much to the welfare of our county.

Recently I had the pleasure to listen to Victoria present her platform, and as I looked around the room, I saw not only several parents from Bessey Creek, but also students, both past and present. Their respect and support of this candidate was obvious. What a great endorsement!

Please take the time to vote. We live in a country where, as individuals, we have that luxury. Please use it.

*Sally Stetson, Stuart*

# Unexpected twist in county commission races

Shortly after city Commissioner Troy McDonald withdrew from the District 2 County Commission race against Stacey Hetherington, retired county planner Joseph Banfi threw his hat into the ring for the seat currently held by Commissioner Ed Fielding, who did not file for re-election.

Fielding was indicted in November on two criminal charges of violating public records laws. He has pleaded not guilty and asked for a jury trial, which is scheduled for December.

Hetherington is a Republican, but since Banfi filed as an NPA (No Party Affiliation), their race is closed for the primary and will not be decided until the Nov. 6 general election.

Hetherington and Banfi are also being challenged by an unexpected write-in candidate, Caryn Hall Yost-Rudge, a Democrat. She submitted the paperwork to the Elections Office during the qualifying week that ended June 22 and was not required to pay the filing fee or submit petitions.

Her name will not be printed on the ballot, but a space will be allotted for voters to write in her name.

A frequent public speaker at the City of Stuart city commission meetings, she is a home-schooling mother known for bringing her child to public meetings and courtroom hearings as a civics lesson.

In the District 4 county commission race, incumbent Commissioner Sarah Heard filed for re-election on the last day of the qualifying period, June 22, despite facing two criminal charges for violating public records laws, plus one civil infraction.

Her court case will be tried separately from other commissioners also charged with criminal violations.

Heard has served on the Martin County Board of County Commissioners for nearly 16 years. She was elected chair in 2012, serving the next four years in that position.

Others vying for the District 4 seat include Harold Markey, Butch Olsen Jr., and Niki Norton, all Republicans.

Niki Norton, an architect who owns n2 Architecture + Design in Stuart, is a former chair of the Palm City Chamber



Sarah Heard



Harold Markey



Niki Norton



Edward "Butch" Olsen Jr.

and mother of five. She is endorsed by numerous organizations, including the Treasure Coast Builders Association and the Police Benevolent Association. She has raised more than \$50,000 in campaign contributions, and is the only candidate who qualified through petition.

A Republican, she states, "I believe in our shared conservative values, and I'll fight every single day to create good jobs, protect our waterways, lower taxes, and promote sustainable growth. I have always believed in sustainability in Martin County for my family, your family and our way of life, business and personal. Sustainability means keeping families together. It means improving local government. It means providing high quality government services.

"Many of you want Martin County to thrive in its local culture. This doesn't mean massive growth; it means essential, smart growth. It means accountability and prosperity to continue the great way of life we enjoy in Martin County."

Her motto is "Sustainability for Martin County!"

Harold Markey, retired in October 2017 as General Services Director for Martin County, after serving the county for 28 years in order to run for the District 4 seat. This is his first venture into local politics. He began his career with the county as a plumber, who was promoted to increasingly more responsible positions until he was named director of the department. He has attended nearly every county commission and local planning agency meeting for more than eight months, in addition to a number of NAC and CRA meetings. He is endorsed by the late Nathaniel Reed and by the editorial board of The Stuart News.

Also a Republican, Markey states: "The opportunity to bring my experience to the board level provides the residents of Martin County with the chance to have someone walk into this position with complete, extensive knowledge of county operations.

The board has for many years experienced dramatic swings in political direction. The 'no growth' and 'pro-growth' labels have created constant challenges within our county. What we need for Martin County today is smart, well managed growth. Martin County has a growth plan, the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to guide us, and we need to exercise compromise and common sense, without wreaking havoc and

costing the taxpayers more and more money in lawsuits and lost business.

Markey's motto: "Bring trust back to Martin County."

Edward "Butch" Olsen Jr., Republican, was raised in Port Salerno and is currently president of the Port Salerno Fishing Dock Authority and chair of the Port Salerno Seafood Fest. He has served for a number of years and remains active on the Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast, the Port Salerno Neighborhood Advisory Committee and the Agriculture and Natural Resources Advisory Committee of Martin County.

He states: "The biggest issues facing our community right now are the Lake Okeechobee discharges and the quality of our water. I will work hard to further educate the public on this issue while advocating for more funding for the reservoir and other projects. I'll also demand accountability from our legislatures and water managers. In doing so, I will stay open minded and search out other potential solutions."

The District 4 race will be decided on August 28, by whomever earns the most votes. ■

## City Commission

continued from PAGE 14

MBA from Florida Institute of Technology and is currently chair of the Housing Solutions Council of Martin County.

The citywide election is Tuesday, August 28.

Incumbent City Commissioner Eula Clarke was automatically re-elected to the Group 5 seat on the city commission at the end of the June qualifying period,

overcoming her resignation as mayor in March 2017.

Controversy in city hall had erupted when the police union filed a complaint Feb. 28, 2017, for her use of the word "pig" in front of a Stuart police officer at an East Stuart grocery store. She apologized for her "poor choice of words" and was subsequently cleared of charges by both an outside investigator commissioned by the city and a state ethics commission investigation. ■

**HIGHWAY** tire and auto  
(772) 283-9001

- Complete Auto & Truck Repair
- Tire Sales, Rotation & Repair

Home of Great Deals on Michelin tires!

**Mike DiTerlizzi, Owner**

**CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE**

**PALM CITY LUBE & AUTO SERVICE**

Featuring Pennzoil Products **772.223.LUBE (5823)**

3584 SW Armellini Avenue, Palm City • 772. 283. 9001

## School board race may be hottest in county

Considered by many Martin County residents as important an issue as our waterways, the primary election on August 28 will decide one school board seat, as well as the fate of the tax referendum to benefit only the Martin County school district.

Lack of funding is the primary issue facing the school board. The state's partially funded mandates for increased school security will cost the district an additional \$2.4 million a year. In addition, the backlog for school building maintenance, repairs and maintenance is around \$98 million.

And teachers need a pay raise.

The two school board candidates in contention for the District 3 seat are Victoria Defenthaler, a retired educator with 22 years in the Martin County School District, the last 16 as principal of A-rated Bessey Creek Elementary School, and incumbent Rebecca Negron, who has served on the board for six years. This is the first time she's faced a challenger for her school board seat.

Defenthaler's first-hand experiences dealing with the issues facing students and schools, as well as her collaborative leadership were the qualities singled out



Victoria Defenthaler



Rebecca Negron

by the editorial board of The Stuart News in their recommendation of Defenthaler.

Negron, who challenged Brian Mast two years ago for the Republican nomination for the District 18 congressional race, is known as a staunch supporter of school choice, including charter schools. She is a fiscal conservative, frequently the lone vote against spending measures.

She garnered attention recently by independently organizing a town hall meeting on school security following the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, assembling a panel of experts on public safety and mental health. She has been both praised for bringing attention to the issue and criticized for adding chaos to the situation, since the

school district was not involved.

Defenthaler also supports charter schools, which depend on tax dollars from the school district, but only when a charter provides a service or a type of education otherwise unavailable.

Negron, by contrast, supports charter schools in general, saying that competition is good and necessary.

Two school board candidates had no opponents in their races; therefore, they were declared winners at the end of the qualifying period in June.

Anthony Anderson, who is serving his first term on the board, and incumbent Christia Li Roberts, the current board chair, who will be serving her second term.

Roberts has been devoting much of her time addressing groups about the need to pass two separate tax referendums on the ballot this year. The first one, which seeks additional property tax revenue to increase teachers' pay and operating expenses, will be on the primary ballot.

The second referendum, a half-cent addition to the sales tax, if passed, will pay to replace and replace crumbling school buildings. ■

## Other races to be decided August 28

A multitude of candidates will crowd the ballot to decide party nominations for a number of races. One race that is non-partisan, which many voters find particularly challenging, is the selection for circuit court judge, who is responsible for hearing both criminal, civil and family court cases for Martin and St. Lucie counties.

Judicial candidates include Louis "Lou" Larsen, of Martin County, and Robert "Bob" Meadows and Nirlaine Smartt, both of St. Lucie County. All are highly qualified: Larsen touts his broad range of experience in all three areas; Meadows identifies with the enforcement side of criminal cases since he began his career as a police officer, then put himself through law school; and Smartt has experience as a county



Robert "Bob" Meadows



Nirlaine Smartt



Louis "Lou" Larsen

judge in St. Lucie County.

For more information, you can check out their websites: <https://larsen4judge.com/> for Lou Larsen; <http://meadowsforjudge.com/> for Bob Meadows and <https://nirlainesmarttcampaign2018.com/> for Nirlaine Smartt.

Other primary races, some of which are hotly contested and quite contentious, will decide the candidates that will face each other in the November

general election for U.S. senate, U.S. representative District 18, governor, attorney general, state senate District 25, and state representative District 83.

Also on the ballot (only in Hobe Sound) is the vote for incorporation as the Town of Hobe Sound., an effort that began three years ago by five residents either

born in Hobe Sound or raised there. It has become another hotly contested issue, even by those who do not live within the proposed town boundaries. ■

