



*Advocating For Our Community*

# PARCELS FROM *Paradise*

KEEPING VENETIAN RESIDENTS CONNECTED...

*Published by the VGRCCA as a service to our members and residents of the Venetian Golf and River Club.*

**SEPTEMBER 2023**

*Parcels from Paradise is the monthly publication of the VGRC Community Association. We thank those members who provide the financial resources for the costs associated with its publication. If you are reading this edition and are not a member of the Community Association, we would hope you would consider being one of the many members who financially supports its production.*

## CLOSE TO HOME

### Candidate Forum

The 2023 Annual Candidate Forum sponsored by the VGRC Community Association will take place at the River Club on Tuesday October 3, 5:30 pm. The session will be videotaped and placed on YouTube after the event. It will not be Zoomed. The two races that are being covered are both for Venice Council seats. In one race, Mitzie Fiedler and Joan Farrell vie for Council Seat One. The other race for Seat 2 involves Dusty Dean Fuller and Ron Smith. All four candidates have accepted our invitation to participate in the Forum. As in past years, the questions will be provided by a moderator. Residents who would like to suggest a concise question for consideration can submit their question(s) to [vgrcca.org](http://vgrcca.org) with the subject matter, "Recommended Question: Candidate Forum". As in the past, questions are given to both candidates and are not candidate specific. The submission deadline for all suggested questions is September 20, 2023. In keeping with the decorum of this event, we have requested all campaigns not to distribute any literature to attendees inside the River Club. Candidates may distribute literature outside the River Club.

The Annual Candidate Forum will take place a few days after individuals who requested to vote by mail receive their ballots. We hope that prior to submitting your ballot, you consider attending the Candidate Forum to determine in your mind the best qualified candidate or view the session on YouTube after completion of the Forum.

The following dates are from the Sarasota County Supervisor of Election website:

- Voter registration deadline: Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2023.
- Deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed: Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, at 5 pm
- Early voting dates: Monday, Oct. 30 – Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023, at the Venice elections office at the Robert L. Anderson Administration Center, 4000 S. Tamiami Trail, Room 114.
- Election Day: Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023: Polls open 7 am – 7 pm. Completed vote-by-mail ballots must be received in the Venice elections office by 7 pm.

*Thank you for reading Parcels. If you have a story idea click on "reply" and let us know.*

VISIT: [www.vgrcca.org](http://www.vgrcca.org)

## Do We Have Your Correct Email Address?

Recently a resident was forwarding her VGRCCA emails to her neighbors who were not receiving them. This resident had been wondering why the neighbors were not getting the emails but never checked. Eventually they did check to find out why and discovered that VGRCCA had incorrect emails for them. VGRCCA emails are beneficial to the entire community, such as the notices from the Hurricane Readiness Team, or the recent notification about the scheduling of trash pick-up following Hurricane Idalia. All residents should want to receive these emails. In order for the Community Association to get our communications to each of you, we need to have your correct email address. If you know of someone who is not receiving our communications and they are wondering why not, please have them contact Membership Chair Sharon George at shgeorge426@yahoo.com or 414-526-2555, to get their email addresses into our communication system.

## Welcome Center Status.

Applause to the Heritage Corp., the company who owns the golf course and the Welcome Center property. You may have noticed that they have worked on tidying up the outside perimeter of the Center. Attention will now be directed to the inside of the Welcome Center which needs quite a bit of work. No word yet as to when the makeover will be completed nor what will happen with the Center.

## You Own it!

Yes, you own the Wall of Something. It's yours and if you want to keep it active, take a trip to the Wall. Do you recommend a great company to replace a lanai screen? Enjoyed a great breakfast at one of the best eateries in Venice? Need a car seat for that visiting grandchild from Tuscan? Considering renting you house for the season? Need a physician who might help you with that off-and-on shoulder pain. The list goes on and on for your Wall of Something. To get to the Wall go to [www.vgrcca.org/wallofsomething](http://www.vgrcca.org/wallofsomething). First timers must get an admittance to the Wall for the purpose of giving only our residents access to the Wall. Hope to see you on the Wall.

## THE WALL OF SOMETHING

An Electronic Bulletin Board for all Venetian Residents!



Visit us at [www.vgrcca.us](http://www.vgrcca.us) and Click the wall of something

## Too Early for High Fives

The most recent storm, Hurricane Idalia, caused us to pause and take stock of our hurricane preparedness. While we dodged the Idalia bullet, we should not relax because we still have three months remaining in the hurricane season. We also should pay close attention to the current and future weather conditions and predictions during September, the month that encounters the most hurricanes in Florida.

If you have not seen or are curious about the damage that Hurricane Idalia caused, please see the posted videos in the "Hurricane Corner" at [www.vgrcca.org/hurricane-corner](http://www.vgrcca.org/hurricane-corner). While you are there, please check out the other information posted that may prove to be valuable in future hurricane preparation.

## How 'Bout Pitching In to Help?

**The quarterly Laurel Road Clean Up is scheduled for Monday, September 18, 2023 at 8:45am.** Volunteers are to meet on the south side of Laurel Road - across from the entry to the Venetian. Neon tee-shirts, rubber gloves, bags and pickers will be provided. You are suggested to wear a long sleeve shirt, long pants, high socks and appropriate shoes. For those who choose to provide the use of their golf cart ... we will use the carts to transport volunteers to their starting points. The carts will also be used to transport volunteers back to the Venetian entry after they have completed their assigned area. Transport carts will only be driven on the sidewalk and will not be used during the cleanup.



**Knock Your Socks Off.**

You have probably seen it already, but if not, attached is the Knock Your Socks Off brochure listing the various events and seminars scheduled during 2023-24. As some of the events grant early registration to members, you can check the status of your membership by clicking on [www.vgrcca.org/membership](http://www.vgrcca.org/membership).



## KEEPING YOU BUSY

**FAMILY PROMISE WALK.**

Family Promise of South Sarasota job has a wonderful mission; namely, helping children and their families in temporary need of housing. The Venetian also has a resident serving on its Board of Trustees. There are about 450 children in Sarasota County who are considered homeless. On Saturday, October 14, from 8 am-10 am they have their major fund-raising initiative with the 7th Annual Dream Walk in downtown Venice. It's a great opportunity for you and your friends to build up that cardio while helping at the same time to raise money for a worthy cause. If you are interested in participating in the Family Promise Walk or just donating, go to <https://familypromisessc.org/dream-walk>.

**What Are We Going To Do This Weekend?**

Often, residents are seeking things to do in the surrounding area. A great source of information for activities and event is the website: <https://www.visitvenicefl.org/newsletters/> where you will see a link that allows you to receive a monthly, very informative newsletter. We also have placed this site on the "Resource" section of the VGRC Community Association web site [www.vgrcca.org](http://www.vgrcca.org)

## NEWS FROM THE HOOD

**Publix Puts their Paws Down.**

Our friendly grocery store recently issued an announcement indicating that no pets would be permitted in their stores except for service animals (not to be confused with "emotional support" animals). Therefore, from now on you may not bring into any Publix your pets including parrots, pythons, Tasmanian devils, eels, amoebas and/or your pet gecko, Elmer, who you quietly carry in your pocket.

**War on Laurel.**

Don't worry if you are still up north and reading about the "War". There are no fatalities or destruction. It's in fact a gas war between the Shell Station and the new 7/11 station, both located at the corner of Laurel and Knights Trail Road. Sometimes car owners will find the price of gas drops about 30 cents lower than the average price in the area. What is unsure is who draws their "guns" first and when the war starts or ends. How long the gas war will continue is to be seen but while it is taking place, it's a plus for car owners. By the way, 7/11 offers an excellent, easy to sign up Rewards program, which reduces your gas price a nickel a gallon.

### Accolades for Our Neighbor Down the Street

Sarasota Memorial Hospital-Venice recently received Advanced Hip & Knee Replacement Certification from DNV, an international health care quality and accrediting organization. The certification recognizes excellence in joint replacement surgery and the full spectrum of diagnostics, surgical services and therapies related to hip and knee care.



### Quiet on the Northeastern Front.

No great revelations have taken place within the past few weeks regarding the Appeal of the City's decision to approve the Commercial re-zoning application, the traffic light, the widening of Laurel Rd. and the proposed northeast Park. Regarding the park, there are no specifics at this time about all park amenities including the number of pickleball courts, assuming pickleball courts will be located in the park. Stay tuned.

### New Name but Same Great Food.

Pizza Gorda on Knights Trail Road has a new name change but the very affable owner and the wonderful food remains the same. It is now named Giuseppe's Ristorante and Pizzeria. One of the reasons a change was necessary was due to the confusion of the restaurant in guess where...Punta Gorda. Giuseppe's is located on Knights Trail Road, about a mile down on the left. Drive slowly as you might miss the entrance. The restaurant has great Italian food and wonderful pizza....even a Vegan Pizza. We encourage residents to support local businesses.



## VERY INTERESTING READS

### Bridge Operation

For those who travel to the island over one of the three bridges, you might find the article below of interest.

Vessels can call the bridge tenders on VHF Channel 9 and request an opening as they are approaching. The bridge openings for the island work like this:

Circus Bridge (south end of the island) – Operated by FDOT and the bridge will open based on vessel request. There are no set times.

Venice Ave Bridge (Colonel George Kumpe Bridge) – Operated by Sarasota County and will open on the 10's if they have a vessel request (top of the hour, ten minutes after the hour, and so on.)

KMI Bridge (aka Hatchett Creek Bridge on the north side of the island) – Operated by FDOT and if requested by a vessel the bridge will open on the 20's during the week (top of the hour, 20 minutes after the hour, and so on). It will open on the 15's on Saturdays and Sundays, if requested. This bridge will not open during "rush hour" during the week, which is considered 4:30pm – 5:30pm.

If there is a maintenance emergency, such as the bridge is stuck, they contract with a maintenance company who will arrive within 30 minutes. They will also notify Venice Police Department so they can assist with traffic and place temporary signage. Anytime one of the bridges to the island is open, they will not open either of the remaining two bridges to ensure sufficient traffic flow to and from the island. Venice Police Department has direct contact with all three bridge tenders in case there are issues. If anyone needs additional information, they should contact FDOT regarding the KMI or Circus Bridges or Sarasota County regarding the Venice Ave Bridge.





**Who Needs Affordable Housing?**

We are fortunate that many residents on property have expertise in particular areas. As Affordable Housing has been a key discussion for our City Council, we asked one of our residents to provide us with a thorough understanding of what is Affordable Housing.

Who are these people? Most people think affordable housing is for individuals and/or families on limited, fixed incomes in need of Section 8 housing assistance payments. To qualify for Section 8 assistance, a single person must have an income below \$32,000 per year, a couple below \$36,600 or a family of four below \$45,700. This is an extremely limited view of who really needs “affordable housing”.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a person or family who pays more than 30% of their annual income for housing to be in need of affordable housing (“cost burdened”). The average monthly rent for an apartment in Sarasota County is \$2,147 and the average apartment size is 947 square feet. To afford this “average” apartment your annual income must be \$85,880 to avoid paying more than 30% of your income. In the most affordable (least desirable) neighborhoods of Sarasota County, the monthly average rent is \$1,229, requiring an annual income of \$49,160. The area median income (“AMI”) in Sarasota County for a family of 4 is \$98,700, meaning 50% of the population is above and below this number.

In Sarasota County the average salary for a:

Vocation	Average Salary	% of AMI
Police Patrol officer	\$59,925	60.7%
Firefighter	\$61,977	62.8%
Schoolteacher	\$54,275	55.0%
Food service waiter	\$25,832	26.2%

There is a need for “affordable” housing at various income levels. In addition to Section 8, which serves only a small portion of the population, there is the need for Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program serving those up to 60% of AMI, and local and state capital infusion programs to assist those with incomes from 60% of AMI up to 80% or 90% of AMI. These existing programs provide only a small portion of the affordable housing needed. Higher interest rates and inflation in construction materials and salaries are further limiting the ability to create affordable housing. There is a pressing need to provide funds to expand the Federal and State programs to cause the creation of additional affordable housing.

**Keep It Clean**

Just try to imagine what life would be like without easy access to clean water. Without water, life is not possible. Water in Florida is a most precious commodity. The Venice Reverse Osmosis Treatment plant provides water for the city at an average of 2.5 million gallons per day (in August 2023). It has capacity nearly twice that (4.5 million gallons per day) and usually does not need to exceed 3.3 million gallons per day, even during heavy usage from November to April. The plant is located on Warfield Avenue near the Venice Bridge and is in a flood zone. That situation could result in a closure during a hurricane with water cut off for the city. A 10-year plan is in effect to move the plant. Utility rates will no doubt increase to fund that move. The plant will be relocated to East Venice Ave, near the Venice Police Department.





# **KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF:**

To astound or greatly impress someone

The **VGRC Community Association** is proud to present its 2023-24 series of events and seminars referred to as the **Knock Your Socks Off** season. As you peruse the list, you will see some new and exciting events as well as repeats of previous resident favorites. We will elaborate on all of these events via our monthly newsletter, **Parcels from Paradise**. Get your calendar out and mark those events you would like to attend.

## 2023



**October 3, 5:30 pm**  
**Annual Candidate Forum** Venice Council candidates will be featured.



**# October 18th, February 8th, 10:00 am**  
**CPR/Use of AED**  
 The Venice Fire Department again provides hands on training for residents.



**# November 4th, 10:00 am**  
**Mugshot**  
 A photo op for your dog and with permission, possibly for you.



**November 6th, 5:00 pm**  
**A Chance to Live:**  
 A Family's Journey to Freedom from 1930-1943.



**December 5th, 5:00 pm**  
**Southeastern Guide Dog** A repeat seminar demonstrating the skills of these wonderful canines.



**# December 12th, 9:00 am**  
**Common Sense Self Defense**  
 Suggested by a few residents after last year's Active Shooter Seminar.

**2024** ↓



# 2024



## # January 6th, 9:00 am Bike-O-Rama VIII

Time to get that free maintenance bike check.



## January 16th, 5:00 pm Addressing Your Mental Health Needs

Facing challenges such as anxiety, depression and other life issues.



## # January 24th, 9:00 am Taking Better Pictures with Your Camera

Obtain the know how to take better pictures.



## February 24th, 8:30 am Shredfest/Junkfest

Now on a Saturday morning. Bring your stuff.



## # February 28th, 9:00 am Estate Planning

Is your estate in order? An expert will provide you with some practical advice and direction.



## March 4th, 5:00 pm Gators, Snakes and other creatures

The title says it all.



## # March 14th, 10:00 am SharPfest

Bring your tools and kitchen knives for this wonderful service...at a reasonable cost.



## March 18, 5:30 pm Annual Town Hall Meeting

- Key local decision makers in the area will update you on the latest news and issues.



## April 2nd, 5:00 pm Fascinating Culture of Amish and Mennonites

Gain a better understanding of these two local religion/cultural groups.



## # April 18th, 6:00 pm A special "Field Trip"

An expert bird guide will moderate this visit to the Rookery.

# - Due to space or time limitations, registration will be required. Current Community Association members will receive priority registration.