

PARCELS

FROM
Paradise

January 2025

KEEPING YOU IN THE KNOW

Hospital Expansion

Our neighbor down the street, SMH-Venice, recently opened its much-anticipated ER expansion, a transformative step to meet the growing healthcare needs of south Sarasota County residents. The \$90 million, 30,000-square-foot expansion significantly increases the hospital's emergency care capacity. The newly expanded Emergency Care Center (ECC) now has 61 exam rooms, a significant increase from the original 28. The expansion includes two additional resuscitation suites, upgraded imaging facilities, and a third, centrally located CT scanner -- all designed to address the rising demand for emergency services. Recently, SMH-Venice also opened a new, 5-story patient care tower. The addition of the third patient care tower doubled SMH-Venice's inpatient bed capacity from 110 private patient rooms to 212. Along with the ER expansion, the upgrades and enhancements will help streamline emergency response times at SMH's Venice Hospital and provide a more efficient and comfortable experience for patients during emergency situations.

Jetty Progress

For those who love to visit the North and South Jetties either to fish or to just gaze out into the Gulf, that opportunity has been put on the back burner due to the hurricane damage. Parcels reached out to a key city official asking when the jetties will open. His response was NOT too encouraging when he stated, "The Army Corp of Engineers is the lead on the Jetty Project. They have stated that due to the size and cost of both the North and South Jetty repairs, it will be several years before completion".

Tortoise and the Government

Since childhood we've read the story about the Tortoise and the Hare. Today's version has been changed to the Tortoise and the Government. We know that government works slow... very slow. If you have been following the Laurel Road widening and the Northeast Park issues you know it has taken some time.... probably enough time for the tortoise to get ahead. The reality is that all government entities, including our own CDD, face numerous hurdles. These hurdles include the infamous "Sunshine" Law forbidding elected officials from talking to each other outside of their meetings about any related issue; various state laws and local regulations; the need for public contract bidding and possibly legal maneuvering when facing the need to purchase privately owned property for the good of the public and of course, funding. Certainly, the odds are in favor of the tortoise with many decisions and regulations that government must face.



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**Sharon Rehm,
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Thankful to be a
Proud Resident since 2015.



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

VISIT: www.vgrcca.org



Changes to Medicare

The reputable AARP recently published an article focusing on changes with Medicare for 2025. Given the number of residents in our community that are Medicare recipients, Parcels thought it would be helpful to post this article on our website. To view it, click on www.vgrcca.org

A Learning Experience for You

Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning, or SILL, has been around for quite some time and features in its yearly program lectures and presentations from both national and international experts along with programs presented by some very talented musicians. The good news is that the program has two venues, one of which is in Venice. To see more information about their programs, times and locations, go to our website at www.vgrcca.org



Making Small Steps with Clean Up Laurel

Due to the plea made by Parcels, the latest "Clean Up Laurel" initiative drew more volunteers than previous efforts. The next Clean Up Laurel undertaking will be held on March 18th. Volunteers should meet at the front gate area at 8:45 am.



The Wall

With snowbirds migrating back to the VGRC, activity on the Wall of Something (www.vgrcca.org/wallofsomething) has increased. It a great way to address many of your needs as a resident. The Wall is especially helpful for new residents who are searching for that right doctor or roofer or wanting to buy that Weber grill at a very reduced price.

THE WALL OF SOMETHING

An Electronic Bulletin Board for all Venetian Residents!



Visit us at www.vgrcca.us and Click the wall of something

Venice Planning Commission Makes Decision

After over 5 hours of testimony, rebuttal, and public comment today, the Venice Planning Commission voted 6-1 to approve the proposed site and development plan for the Milano PUD shopping center. The Venetian POA proposed 17 stipulations to alter the proposal, and the approved plan includes 5 stipulations from the POA which were agreed to by the applicant:

- Parking lot lights are to be shielded and the light directed down
- Security cameras will be installed in the parking lot
- No overnight parking will be allowed
- There will be no gas station on the property
- The landscaping will be per the Milano PUD plan

Two POA stipulations were refused by the applicant:

- The hours of operation will not be limited to 8am to 11pm
- A traffic light at the Veneto and Laurel intersection is not required for approval of this plan

Much of the debate and comment centered on these points:

- Traffic and safety at our front gate were a big issue. Sarasota County owns Laurel Road and has the final say on traffic control devices for the intersection. The Planning Commission has no say in it.
- How drainage from the shopping center will be handled was a concern. SWFMUD has approved the site's water management plan to handle runoff when the retention lake currently there is removed.
- The POA's request for an elevated landscape berm was not included. It was decided that the 5 foot buffer is not wide enough to support an elevated berm and the proposed landscape plan was included in the approval.

This decision can be appealed to the Venice City Council, who has final approval.

GET IT ON YOUR CALENDAR

The VGRC will lead off 2025 with three very popular seminars:

- **Tuesday, January 14th, 9 am, Estate Planning** – Not only will our expert speaker provide helpful tips for your estate planning but also provide information specific to those considering Florida as their primary place of residence.
- **Tuesday, January 21st, 5 pm, Wildlife Rescue** – Did you know that the Wildlife Rescue is not far from the Venetian on Jackson Road? This is the second time the Wildlife Rescue personnel have spoken at a Community Association seminar. They do a tremendous job in their mission and are called upon by Venetian residents when they spot an injured Sand Hill Crane or other animal. Wildlife Rescue post-hurricane work has been noteworthy and we're sure you will hear about it at the seminar. It will be a fascinating presentation.
- **Saturday, January 25, 9-11 am, Bike-O-Rama.** Not that we are attempting to catch up to the number of Super Bowls, but Bike-O-Rama has been an annual event for many years. In cooperation with Bicycles International on Tamiami Trail, residents can bring their bikes to the River Club parking lot for a quick but thorough check up. The service is free. Bike equipment and bikes will also be on display. A Community Association membership table will be on site for those who need to join or renew their membership.



KEEPING YOU ACTIVE

Consider attending the 17th Annual Venice Craft Fair on **January 25 and 26**, from 10 am – 5 pm on Venice Ave. ...on the island.

Strike Up the Band - Take advantage of another musical experience held at the Venice Performing Arts Center, located on the grounds of Venice High School. It is the Venice Concert Band under the baton of Artistic Director and Conductor Bob Miller. Their next concert, "Remember When" will take place on **Monday, January 20th at 7 pm**. Tickets are available at www.veniceconcertband.com. Here's something special about the Venice Concert Band: there are several Venetian residents who play in the band. So, when you go, enjoy the music plus seeing your talented neighbors performing.

Bring Your Appetite

February is not too far away which means the well-attended Annual Jewish Food Festival (JFF) will be held on **Sunday, February 16th**, at the Jewish Congregation of Venice. The Congregation is located on Auburn Ave., about a five-minute drive from the Venetian. Pastries, massive corn beef or pastrami sandwiches, stuffed cabbage, matzo ball soup are just some of the features on the menu.... an epicurean delight for sure from 10 am – 3 pm. There is free admission and free parking. You will also find vendor booths and a special jewelry sale. It's an annual tradition for residents of the City of Venice and if you have never attended the JFF, perhaps this year is the year for you to make a visit. We guarantee you won't walk away hungry.



NEW BUSINESSES IN THE AREA

- The liquor store at Plaza Venezia has opened under new ownership as a family business. The store is simply called “**Venezia Liquors**”. The interior has been remodeled with an appealing atmosphere for customers. Hours are 9 am to 9 pm, Monday through Saturday and 9 am to 8 pm on Sundays. Their phone number is 941-484-7400. As we have constantly stated, let’s make sure we support local businesses.
- Expect Jersey Mike’s to open in the Plaza Venezia in about two months.
- Parcels has had many inquiries about the “Sold” sign on Laurel Rd. just after the new doctor’s building being built and in front of the Mirasol. It will be a hotel, **Echo Suites operated by Wyndham**, a 4-story extended stay hotel. This is the second lodging to be built in the area with the first being the Hyatt on Pinebrook near the shopping center. As mentioned in past Parcels, we are an interstate exit and will eventually see many of these types of businesses (fast foods, hotels, service stations) similar to what you see at other interstate exits; such as the Jacaranda exit. The noted difference at the Laurel exit is the presence of a major area hospital.

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR 2025 RESOLUTIONS?

Here are some suggestions when considering your list:

- **Volunteer** to make your community even better by participating at Clean Up Laurel, CA/ POA/CDD advisory committees, American Flag placement on three national holidays or as a valued member of the Hurricane Response Team (HRT).
- **Increase your fitness** by joining water aerobics, fitness classes or just walking the loop around the golf course plus estimated by a regular walker as being about 3 miles.
- **Pay attention to emails** sent by the POA, CA and CDD so you are up to date with the news from these three organizations. By reading these emails, you won’t be placing your garbage out on a Wednesday when the email indicates that there will be no pickup (ouch!).
- **Continue to read Parcels.** Most residents do...an average of 82 percent open it up every month. Perhaps the other 18 percent might want to know what is happening outside and inside the gates that will impact them. Feel free to suggest an article for future editions.
- **Slow Down When Driving Through the VGRC** – the Sand Hill Cranes requested that we remind all residents of this resolution.
- **Take Hurricane Preparation Seriously** – Given this past year of area hurricanes, we hope you are beginning to get your game plan ready for Hurricane season 2025.
- **Keep the Brain Lubricated** by signing up for an Adult Learning Class at one of the various available learning centers in and around the Sarasota area (Note: special mention of the SIL in today’s Parcels).
- **Support our River Club** by enjoying the great food at dinner or lunch. Watch for their new “Portico Pickup”, Bar Bites Menu and some new pizza offerings.
- **Love thy neighbor** – hopefully you have practiced this already.



Recruiting New Board Members

Perhaps consistent with your New Year's resolutions, you are interested in serving on a Board that does so much for the community without the angst which many Boards face. The VGRC Community Association is eager to entertain your interest in being a member on its Board. To indicate your interest, send an email to Co-President Mark Faford at faf99@aol.com, providing your name, phone number and email. We will reach out to you once you submit the information.

The Birds

Nature is wonderful at the Venetian. One creature we see is the Great Blue Heron. For golfers, on hole 12, every year the Great Blue Heron builds a nest for the hatching process. It is wonderful site to watch, especially waiting for the birth of the little guys and girls. Due to the hurricane damage of their usual nesting place, the Heron found another tree but still by Hole 12. Once the big day takes place, mom and dad watch over the brood, eagerly waiting for the time when the little guys and gals literally fly from the nest.

We asked resident expert and photographer extraordinaire, Rick Cordner, to provide an article on the Blue Heron at the VGRC. Below is his story.

Around the golf course, there are 5 Great Blue Heron nesting sites with 7 active nests. Attached is a quick map of their location

- A - 1 nest**
- B - 1**
- C - 2**
- D - 2**
- E - 1**



The males arrive first to claim the nest site, make a rudimentary nest and then wait patiently for this year's sweetheart to arrive. Once they have copulated, the lady is in charge and tells the males to fetch more sticks for the nest. He dutifully complies. I believe currently at 6 of the 7 nests, the male is still waiting for the female to arrive - i.e. the ones standing in or by the nest wistfully looking skyward. On nest D2, I believe the heron is sitting on eggs i.e. incubating.

(Join Rick Cordner for an outstanding VGRCCA seminar in April which features a guided tour of the Rookery in Venice by Rick. Details will be provided the closer we get to the date).



We hope every resident has a safe and healthy 2025.

“Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much”
~ H. Keller



Membership Enrollment Form

Your Venetian Golf and River Club Community Association membership demonstrates the value you place on living in this community. For more information, visit our informative website, www.vgrcca.org

Your membership will provide the necessary financial support providing for the:

- Publication of the monthly Parcels from Paradise distributed to all Venetian households
- Continuation of the Hurricane Response Team, activated during an approaching hurricane
- Support for the Wall of Something, an electronic messaging board for members
- Scheduling of exciting seminars and events including Shredfest, Bike-O-Rama, CPR training and a host of presentations made by local experts

Quick Facts about the VGRCCA:

- Formed in 2008, the Community Association has a long and successful record of community engagement
- Managed by a volunteer Board of up to 11 members
- A history of approximately 60-70% of the Venetian residents who join
- Board meetings once a month, open to residents and accessible on Zoom
- Strong emphasis on communications to residents

There are two ways to join:

1. On-line at <http://www.vgrcca.org/membership>
We accept credit cards and use Pay Pal as our secure server.
2. Write a check, payable to **VGRC Community Association** and mail with this form to:
Treasurer
305 Martellago Dr.
North Venice, FL 34275

Membership Dues Per Household

(Please Check Appropriate Line):

SIGN UP	TERM DUES
<input type="checkbox"/> Three Years (best deal)	\$70 (\$20 discount)
<input type="checkbox"/> Two Years	\$50 (\$10 discount)
<input type="checkbox"/> One Year	\$30

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION:

\$

MEMBER INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT AND PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION):

NAME: _____

PREFERRED TELEPHONE #: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

ADDITIONAL NAME: _____

PREFERRED TELEPHONE #: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

VENETIAN ADDRESS: _____

OTHER MAILING ADDRESS: _____