

# CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

July 2007

## Upcoming St. Petersburg City Council Elections!

Don't know your city council district? Go to [www.votepinellas.com](http://www.votepinellas.com) or call the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections Office at 727-464-6108.

Mark your calendars for upcoming city council election! Our city council voting system can be confusing to the uninitiated, so here is a quick primer. The primary is for home district voters only. The general is for all voters for all districts. If a candidate wins 51% in the primary, then there will be no general run-off. However, you can still vote citywide in other districts for the general election.

**The primary date is Tuesday, September 11, 2007. The general election is**

**November 6, 2007.** Remember, the primary election is for district voters only. The top two vote getters advance to the general in a city-wide election where everyone votes for all districts. If there are only two candidates, then there will be no primary and they'll go straight to the general to face off. If there are more than two candidates in the primary, then it is possible for the top vote getter who receives 51% support to win the election in the primary contest. City Council races are non-partisan.

### ELECTION DAY- Mark Your Calendar!

Tuesday, Sep 11, 2007

Announced Candidates so far- July 23 is the final deadline to qualify

**DISTRICT 1** Bob Kersteen  
Herb Polson (incumbent)

**DISTRICT 3**  
**(OPEN SEAT--Bill Foster term-limited out)**

Bill Dudley  
Cathy Harrelson  
Ed Montanari

**DISTRICT 5**  
Jamie Bennett (incumbent)  
**No official declared candidates at press time**

**DISTRICT 7**  
**(OPEN SEAT- Rene Flowers term-limited out)**

Gershon Faulkner  
Wengay Newton

Please make the effort to learn about all candidates and get out and vote.

## CONA Board Meeting

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

The SUNSHINE CENTER, 330 5th St. N.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

Refreshments provided

### Agenda Items:

CONA Business – Treasurer's Report – Updates  
City and County Budget Cuts  
National Neighborhood Day – September 16  
Open Forum (Check CONA website for last minute program changes)

### Very Important Upcoming Events:

August 7 – National Night Out Against Crime  
August 15 – CONA's General Membership Meeting  
September 16 – National Neighborhood Day

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# Saving on your energy bill is easier than you think

Improvements in energy efficiency don't have to be difficult or expensive in order to lower your monthly energy bills and make your home more comfortable. Just ask Maxine Robinson.

Robinson, a school-teacher who lives in Southeast Pinellas County, started seeing savings in her monthly power bill after making a few small changes to the more than 50-year old home she inherited from her parents. First, Robinson replaced traditional incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs – or CFLs – which are four times more efficient and last up to 10 times longer. Since lighting accounts for up to 10 percent of your energy bill, switching just one regular bulb to a CFL can result in a savings of around \$30 over the lifetime of the bulb.



*Maxine Robinson (center) celebrates the energy efficiency savings on her home during the kickoff of Save the Watts – Progress Energy Florida's new energy efficiency public awareness program. Pictured with Robinson are CONA president, Barbara Heck, Rep. Bill Heller, St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker and employees from Progress Energy.*

## Progress Energy Florida launches Save the Watts

Energy efficiency is the quickest, easiest, and most environmentally-friendly way for Floridians to manage their energy use. Progress Energy Florida, serving more than 1.7 million customers in 35 counties throughout Florida, recently launched an educational campaign called "Save the Watts." The campaign is designed to raise consumer awareness about the importance and the benefits of energy efficiency.

Save the Watts provides simple, low-cost options that customers can implement in and around their homes to reduce energy use, save money and benefit the environment. Additionally, the Save the Watts initiative promotes and encourages Home Energy Checks, and provides information on additional ways to save money through participation in the company's more than 100 energy efficiency measures.

To learn more about Save the Watts and reducing energy usage, visit [savethewatts.com](http://savethewatts.com).

In addition, Robinson has taken advantage of the many energy efficiency programs and incentives available from Progress Energy Florida to help homeowners offset the cost of upgrades that can help reduce energy waste.

Robinson started with a **Home Energy Check** to analyze her energy consumption and determine energy-efficient improvements for her home including duct repair, insulation upgrades and a heat pump replacement. A Home Energy Check also allowed Robinson to qualify for financial incentives from Progress Energy.

By having a duct check, Robinson learned that nearly one-third of heating and cooling can be wasted through **leaky ducts**. Fortunately for Robinson, only a small leak was detected and was easily repaired. Duct repairs can significantly reduce energy costs, and repairs will keep the air in your living space from escaping into your attic. Best of all, Progress Energy pays a portion of the test and repair costs.

Robinson also took advantage of the company's insulation upgrade program. She found out that having the proper amount of **attic insulation** can reduce heating and cooling costs by as much as 30 percent. If your Home Energy Check recommends an insulation upgrade, Progress Energy will pay part of the cost.

In addition, if you replace your electric-strip heater or older heat pump with a new, **high-efficiency heat pump** like Robinson, you may be eligible for incentives, depending on the type of system. Plus, a high-efficiency heat pump can significantly reduce energy costs, saving you more money each month.

Robinson also had **window-film** applied which can help lower indoor temperature. Reducing the amount of heat from the sun that enters your home increases your comfort and lowers your energy costs. Plus, Progress Energy pays half of the cost – up to \$100.

Additional savings are possible if customers take advantage of federal tax credits on select improvements.

And, Robinson is continuing to save even more through participation in EnergyWise – a program that allows Progress  
**article continues on bottom of next page**






# Pinellas Living Green Expo

## June 2007



*article continued from previous page*

Energy to temporarily cycle off power to a certain appliances such as central heating and air units during very high periods of peak community demand. In exchange, Progress Energy issues a monthly credit on your bill – just for participating – even if you never experience any cycles. Depending on the appliances enrolled and the time of the year, you can receive up to \$147 in annual savings.

To find out more about energy efficiency incentives or a Home Energy Check from Progress Energy call **1.888.302.834** or visit [savethewatts.com](http://savethewatts.com).



### Win an energy efficiency makeover for your home!

Have leaky ducts left your home full of hot air? Do you know if your attic and wall insulation is adequate? Tell Progress Energy why your home could use some energy efficiency improvements and you could win an energy efficiency makeover valued at up to \$10,000.

Three grand prize winners will be selected – one Progress Energy customer in each of three areas of the company's service territory – greater St. Petersburg area, Orlando/Daytona Beach area, and Ocala/Gainesville area north to the Panhandle.

The contest begins July 16, 2007 and runs through Aug. 31. Enter online at [savethewatts.com](http://savethewatts.com) or by mail. Additional details, including contest rules, will be posted at [savethewatts.com](http://savethewatts.com) on July 16.

# President's Letter

By Barbara McCormick Heck

## Budget Cuts

Whether we like what happened or not, Tallahassee has decided. Our city and county officials have been working and reworking their budgets to comply. CONA officers met privately with City officials and City Council members to convey what you (the neighborhood associations) have told us are your concerns. We also spoke at the public workshops to voice your concerns.

We wanted to talk in broad terms from our neighborhood perspective. We know city staff is looking for ways to streamline tasks, combine departmental work and personnel. We understand that everything is in a state of flux right now and that some suggestions may be further impacted by who actually leaves and who stays. We know that each neighborhood already is or will be talking to their Council members and can drill down on individual concerns.

We know things are going to change and we accept that. One thing CONA can do really well is to inform our neighborhoods so they understand the how and why. Too much miscommunication is out there now. We can help by correcting that as quickly as possible. This makes it much easier when we want to fight something or change something.

Based on your input to us, here is what was discussed:

- **Codes Department** – this is the Department we use most to help us clean up code violations and potentially stop crime from starting. Changes in compliance can have a major impact on our neighborhoods.
- **Neighborhood Partnership** – this is the group that helps us form our associations, write our neighborhood plans, work with city staff and develop additional traffic, beautification plans. It provides grants funds through the Pennies for Pinellas. This function is crucial.
- **Social Services co-sponsorship** – concern is that severe cuts in homeless support both in our city's and county's budgets (housing, food, and drug/alcohol addiction) will exacerbate the homeless situation down the road.
- **Arts co-sponsorship** – City has built a reputation as an arts and theater center. We depend heavily on tourism dollars. If we cut these, what effect will that have on the tourism on which we so heavily depend?

We will continue to lobby our City staff and our Council members to do the right thing for us.

CONA is asking the neighborhood associations to work in partnership with the city, county and each other to help find volunteers, golden angels or whatever it takes to support those programs we want to keep up and running. Our new motto is going to be – CONA can . . . do it. Together we can make the difference.

## CNCN – Council of North County Neighborhoods

CONA officers attended the July 9th charter meeting of our north county neighbors as they formed their own association for north Pinellas County. We are excited for them and are working closely to offer assistance and guidance as requested. Preserving Brooker Creek and all the surrounding area helped push our north county friends to action. We welcome them and look forward to working closely to make Pinellas County a great place to live. Good luck CNCN.

## Brooker Creek Preserve and Board of County Commissioners

I spoke in June against the proposed amendment which had too many loopholes. We feel that a charter vote should be required on ANY change to Brooker Creek Preserve and allow the residents to be heard loud and clear. We are with CNCN on this as we ask the Board of County Commissioners “do not disturb the Preserve.”

## Inappropriate Development – repeated from June

I would like to see City Council place a moratorium on all site plan requests until the new LDR's are in place. By trying to squeeze in under the old and outdated LDR's, some developers are submitting very inappropriate plans that do not reflect the character or the ambiance of the surrounding neighborhood. Within a few weeks, the new LDR's will be law. These new LDR's were crafted over the past 7 years with input from everyone and truly reflect what we want to see St. Petersburg become as outlined in our Vision 2020.

## Hurricanes – PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE

Neighborhoods, work on a neighbor to neighbor plan in your areas. The first two to three days after a hurricane, you may be on our own until help can arrive. You will need to rely on neighbors and they will rely on you. Be prepared, be safe and be ready for whatever my come your way.

## Vacation Recap

Thank you all for the warm wishes. We had a fabulous time. I traveled with my daughter and granddaughter for almost a month. It was wonderful seeing the sights

*President's Letter continued on next page*

*President's Letter continued from previous page*

through the eyes of a six year old. Needless to say, we never missed a fountain to play or splash water, a playground to check out, a dog to pet or a cat to hug. We said hello in many languages, smiled to everyone, made best friends with all our servers in restaurants. We even visited the kitchen in one as my granddaughter wandered off looking for the "house" cat. We met the local policemen and street mimes, tourists and natives. We marveled at all the wonderful sites. We ate food we had never tried before and found ice cream was delicious no matter where we bought it. We were tired at days end, but up early the next morning and ready to go for our next adventure. However, no matter how far we traveled, how beautiful the country was, we loved coming home best. I love St. Petersburg even with all its quirks. I appreciate what we have here so much more. And I promise I won't complain about the humidity (or I meant the free summer sauna) for at least one month. I promise !!!

## Historic Kenwood's BungalowFest 2007 highlights a neighborhood on the rebound

St. Petersburg, FL – The Historic Kenwood Neighborhood Association (HKNA) will hold it's 10th annual BungalowFest Friday night and Saturday, November 2-3, 2007 in central St. Petersburg. On Friday night, there will be a tour by moonlight of five homes from 7-9 p.m. On Saturday, 15 homes and gardens will be on display from 10 a.m. -3 p.m. The tour is a two-hour walk or trolleys will take visitors on the 2-mile loop.

By day or night, BungalowFest is unique among home tours. The tour features homes that are completely restored and some that are currently under renovation. "The goal of the tour is to showcase the amazing homes and residents Historic Kenwood," said Jim Longstreth, HKNA president. "In the past few years, we've seen BungalowFest attendance grow to more than 1,500."

The tour begins at Historic Kenwood's Seminole Park – 2900 3rd Avenue North, St. Petersburg. Tickets are \$10 a day or \$15 for both days. For more information, please visit our web site at [www.historickenwood.org](http://www.historickenwood.org) or call the Craftsman House at 727-323-2787.

### **About Historic Kenwood**

The beginnings of Historic Kenwood may

be traced to 1912, the year Charles R. Hall, one of the city's early developers, filed the first plat within its modern boundaries. The housing in Historic Kenwood is typical of St. Petersburg development from the 1920s through the 1950s. While many styles are evident among the 1,100 homes, from Frame Vernacular to Minimal Traditional, Colonial, Mediterranean and Ranch, bungalows of some sort (typically Craftsman) constitute more than 50 percent of the architecture. That is the largest concentration of bungalows in Florida.

St. Petersburg High School (1926), listed on the National Register of Historic Places, sits in the heart of Historic Kenwood along 5th Avenue North.

As was the case with many inner city areas, the neighborhood fell into neglect beginning in the 1950s. In the early 1990s urban pioneers began a neighborhood revival in Historic Kenwood, which continues full steam today, during which many beautiful restorations to these historic homes have been made. These efforts reached a milestone when Historic Kenwood received its historic status from the National Register on August 4, 2003. In 2007, Historic Kenwood was named a finalist in the Neighborhood USA contest.

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# CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - June 20, 2007

- President Barbara M. Heck called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.
- We then heard a round of applause for the very successful Pinellas Living Green Expo of 2007 and for all those who supported it.
- Treasurer Keith Locke reported a paid membership of 47 neighborhood associations and a current CONA bank balance of \$2,217.79.
- The President told of plans to speak for CONA at a Booker Creek Hearing on the 5th floor of the County Building, June 21st at 8 p.m.
- We also heard of a Budget Hearing to be addressed by Mayor Baker in Room 100 at City Hall on Friday, 6/22/07 at 8:30 a.m. [Barbara will ask Deputy Mayor Metz to waive parking fines around City Hall for Friday]
- Scott Swift, of Bartlett Park, came forward to receive our CONA Citizen of the Month Plaque Award. He thanked CONA for our encouragement.
- Barbara reminded our member neighborhoods that their announcements of local events can be posted on our two web sites and our listbot by contacting Mo Eppley or Conrad Weiser.
- Cathy Wilson, Chair of our By-laws Committee gave a brief update of our evolving by-laws.
  - The by-laws should always be evolving as a "Living Document".
  - The most recent update, needed to qualify for 501(C)3 tax status was approved at our March meeting.
  - A standing Audit Committee was added to our by-laws at that time.
  - Moved, (Barbara), to require that the Audit Committee shall include 3 members of which the Treasurer is not a member. They will meet at least twice each year and issue reports of their findings. [Approved]
  - Three volunteers were appointed to serve as audit committee members at this time: Mike Gulley, Travis Jarmin, and Scott Swift.
- Barbara then discussed the Historic Preservation Committee noting that it is not yet designated a CONA Standing Committee. She appointed Will Michaels as Chairman who will select his other members.
- Darden Rice suggested establishing a CONA committee for affordable housing.
- Barbara led an appreciative applause for the sustained and devoted work of Cathy's By-laws Committee.
- Darden gave a report on the joint efforts of The League of Women Voters and CONA to request city television coverage of our upcoming elections.
  - CONA and The League petitioned City Council to provide coverage of our candidate's forum.
  - Darden will share the promised response from Council Chair John Bryan at our next meeting.
  - The city will select the venue for the televised candidates forum. A large hall and TV coverage will provide a much greater exposure of these candidates than had been offered in the past.
  - It is likely that some segments of the forum will be broadcast on the commercial news channels.
- We heard a message from Expo President, Karl Nurse, thanking all of the principles that supported this year's program. He noted that several other Florida counties had sent representatives to our show in hopes of learning how to establish their own Green Expos.
- Our Chair called for an Open Forum Period:
  - Judy Ellis, (Lakewood Civic Assoc.), shared their experiences with 3 issues that have been troubling their neighborhood.
  - The homeless had been inappropriately housed in a local church.
  - The proliferation of drug houses in Lakewood does not seem to bring adequate police enforcement.
  - Panhandlers at major intersections, (e.g. Hwy. 19 & Bayway), have become an uncontrolled nuisance, detracting from image of our neighborhood to visitors.
  - The St. Pete Times appears to be the principle legal defender of these highway median panhandlers.
  - Keith Locke noted that judges are refusing to prosecute violators of existing panhandling ordinances because our jails are overloaded.
  - The CONA Public Safety Committee can draft a form letter that member associations can use to initiate "Nuisance Abatement Action" against local property owners who fail to evict tenants that are recognized as drug dealers.
  - Scott Swift recalled that a series of increasingly critical letters concluding with police statistics have helped his neighborhood to evoke constructive responses from negligent landlords.
  - The now more potent Nuisance Abatement Board can assume "Judicial Control" over properties that fail to respond to reports of criminal activities on their premises.
  - Requesting increased surveillance from your Community Service Officers is a first line of defense with many of these neighborhood problems.
  - There are currently available very effective means to

track absentee landlords.

- Local statutes require that 3 confirmed drug “Buys” must precede and drug arrests that will be sustained in court.
- Cathy Wilson urged that we all compile a priorities list that we can use to evaluate proposed city program cuts to be announced on Friday.
- Tim Baker, (Downtown Neighborhoods Assoc.), opened a discussion of a new interpretation by the city staff of the existing Land Development Regulations (LDRs).
  - All subsequent development permits can be granted a approval for FAR’s that will be increased by a factor of 2.5 on demand if the new policy applies in a loosely defined area within the “Downtown Activity Center”
  - The initial application, [the Tropicana Block], if applied to a current permit application, (apparently favored by a Staff Attorney), will result in approving a project FAR that exceeds any downtown structure plan approved during the last 20 years.
  - The regulations thus relaxed by this X2.5, [referred to be Tim as the “Magic Multiplier”], would essentially lead to approval of all development proposals...without variances or public hearings!
  - The long standing “FAR Bonus System” for evaluating development proposals would be obsolete- scrapped!
  - Attorney Peter Belmont has filed an appeal to City Council in behalf of the Downtown Neighborhood Association to reject this new interpretation by John Hixenbaugh of Development Services.
  - Moved, (J. Bagg), that CONA will participate in the appeal to City Council, (EDC) to reject the new interpretation of John Hixenbaugh as it applies to formulation of FAR approvals. This are clearly in violation of the city’s existing Comprehensive Plan. [Approved]
- Several executive members of the city staff were quoted as objecting to these new LDR interpretations as illegitimate.
- Darden Rice, our Newsletter Editor, appealed to Tim to write a basic article on this LDR theme for our CONA members.
- Barbara renewed her appeal to neighborhoods to bring forward their problems to CONA, ASAP to allow us to marshal our resources to assist in whatever ways that we can.
  - We heard a discussion of urging neighborhoods to pay their CONA dues if they plan to seek our support. Several objected to that criterion, noting that many associations are financially “Strapped”.
  - Another suggested that apathy rather than scant financial resources is the greatest impediment to vitality in our neighborhood associations.
  - It was urged that we visit more neighborhood meetings to encourage them to enroll candidates in our next CONA Leadership Class.
  - Barbara promised that the Open Forum Period would hereafter be a regular segment of our agendas.

Our meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

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## Water Restrictions in Effect - January 16 – July 31, 2007

The continued lack of significant rainfall has increased demand for water in the Tampa Bay region, leading the Southwest Florida Water Management District to declare a Water Shortage. The City of St. Petersburg has restricted watering with potable (city) water, private well water and private connections to surface water sources (lakes, ponds, etc.). Here are the restrictions, days and times for watering and fines that can be assessed for watering violations. Check your sprinkler system/timer now and make the necessary adjustments.

### Portable and Private Well/Surface Water

Addresses ending in Even Numbers (or letters A-M)

Addresses ending in Odd Numbers (or letters N-Z)

**Irrigation is allowed ONCE only either 5-9AM or 7-11PM**

### ONCE A WEEK ONLY

Saturday only

Sunday only

### Reclaimed Water

Even Numbers

Odd Numbers

### (voluntary restriction so far)

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

Wednesday, Friday, Sunday

**Fines are severe** – Class II offense \$175 fine + Court costs. Subsequent violations can increase fines up to \$500 + Court costs. Please help by following these restrictions.



**2007 Officers and  
Executive Board Members**

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**CONA Leadership**

Patricia Guaveia

**Frequently Called Numbers**

Neighborhood  
Partnership Office: 892-5141  
Mayor's Action Line: 893-7111  
Codes Office: 893-7373

**SPPD Community Service Numbers:**

District 1 551-3181  
District 2 551-3182  
District 3 551-3183

**CONA Newsletter Deadlines**

*Copy Deadline:*  
30th of each month.

*Publication:*  
2nd Monday of month.

*Mailing:*  
2nd Wednesday of month.

*Editor:*  
Darden Rice - 822-6241

**The Council of Neighborhood  
Associations of South Pinellas County  
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## **CONA's Citizen of the Month**

### **July Citizen of the Month**

# **Jon Wilson**

For more than 35 years, Jon Wilson has worked full-time for the Evening Independent and the St. Petersburg Times. Jon moved here with his family in 1956 from Scottsbluff, Nebraska. He first started as a summer intern and part-time writer in 1963, four days after graduating from Dixie Hollins High School.

He attended the University of Florida for two years before serving in the Army. He received both Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. He returned to the newspapers in 1971. He has been a reporter, editorial writer, outdoors writer, bureau chief in Citrus County, a sports editor and columnist. He has worked for Neighborhood Times from 1996 until his retirement in July, 2007.

Jon has authored two books, Bridger's Run, an action-adventure novel set in 1880's Florida and, with co-author Rosalie Peck, St. Petersburg's Historic 22nd Street South. He is working with Rosalie on a second book, this one about the Gas Plant area and Methodist Town. In addition to his writing, he is currently enrolled in the Florida Studies Masters degree program at USF-St. Pete.

In retirement, Jon plans to keep writing, keep learning, keep playing music, and help his wife, Becky, more. Together they have three children. Jason, who works in property management. Carrie, who is married to Andrew Forrester who comes from Royal Tunbridge Wells, England. They both teach at Admiral Farragut Academy. Katie, the youngest was our Neighborhood News writer and now works for Padgett Communications, which supplies technology for corporate training.

Jon's favorite thing to do is to play Irish and other sorts of music with Jason Wilson, Katie's boyfriend, Jason Merritt, Andrew Forrester, and another young friend, Mike Schmidt. They are a talented bunch of musicians who may, or may not, ever play together in public.

We are told that Jon is a cat lover and is now down to 4 cats, (Buddy, Charlotte, Rizzo and Abby). 5 if you count Katie's cat Chloe who is visiting.

CONA thanks Jon Wilson for reminding us of our rich heritage in St. Petersburg and for patiently documenting that history for all to read and enjoy. Thank you, Jon Wilson. The CONA Officers, Board Members and Associations salute you.