

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

April 2009

CONA Congratulates you!

CONA congratulates all the nominees of the **12th Annual Mayor's Neighborhood Partnership and District Awards** and the special recognition given to the Award recipients in each category. CONA and all the neighborhoods recognize the work you do to make our city a wonderful place to live and raise our families. Thank you for your contribution.

Neighborhood of the Year:

Award Recipient: Downtown Neighborhood Association

Neighborly Neighbor:

(outstanding achievement, good deeds and service to the neighborhood)
Nominees: Kathy Bara-Euclid/St. Paul's, Mary Barry-Yacht Club Estates; Debbie Obst-Riviera Bay

Award Recipient:

Kyle Nelson – Lakewood Estates Neighborhood

Newsletter of the Year: (organization, appearance and layout)

Nominees: Euclid Heights, Lakewood Estates, Methodist Town, Riviera Bay, Shore Acres, and Yacht Club Estates.

Award Recipient: Venetian Isles – "Venetian Isle's News"

Website of the Year: (information presentation and originality)

Nominees: Euclid Heights, 4th Street Business, and Greater Pinellas Point

Award Recipient:

Yacht Club Estates - www.yachtclubestates.net

Project of the Year: (level of citizen involvement, complexity and originality)

Nominees: Euclid Heights-Holiday Good Cheer Basket; Euclid St. Paul's- Haunted Hike; Greater Pinellas Point-Indian Mound Restoration; Lakewood Estates- Alcazar Way Landscaping; Methodist Town (3 separate projects) - Scholarship for High School Graduates, Thanksgiving Fest, and Fundraising; Pasadena Bear Creek-Creek Cleanup; Riviera Bay-Operation Healthy Water; Tropical Shores-Entryway Beautification; Yacht Club Estates- Entryway Beautification

Award Recipient: Downtown-Williams Park Volunteer Day

Neighborhood Youth Project: (new category to recognize initiative geared toward the community's youth).

Award Recipient: Methodist Town – Halloween Block Party

Association President of the Year:

Nominees: Albert Witted Preservation-Terri Griner, Euclid Heights-Don Baltrusis, Euclid St Paul's- Lari Averbeck, Lakewood Estates-Judy Ellis, Lakewood Terrace- Ann Drakeford, Yacht Club Estates- Shannon Huet

Award Recipient: Patricia Cook – Shore Acres

Council Awards (Outstanding Achievement by Council District)

District 1 Award: Pasadena Bear Creek

District 2 Award: Riviera Bay Civic

District 3 Award: Shore Acres

District 4 Award: Downtown Neighborhood Association

District 5 Award: Greater Pinellas Point

District 6 Award: Historic Roser Park

District 7 Award: Westminster Heights

District 8 Award: Historic Kenwood

CONA Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

The SUNSHINE CENTER, 330 5th St. N.

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

Agenda Items:

CONA Nite at the Trop – Memories

CONA and the Arts – Ann Wykell

Salvador Dali Museum Update

Pinellas County Long Range Transportation Plan

CONA Goals and CONA Listbot Updates

CONA Treasurer and Committee Reports

Old Business – New Business

Important Upcoming Events:

April 14 - CONA Nite at the Trop (Rays vs. NY Yankees)

April 22 - Earth Day

May 2-3 - Pinellas Living Green Expo

July 9-12 - Florida Neighborhoods Conference

in St. Petersburg, Florida

On the inside

CONA Working for You	2
SPPD update	2
CONA Membership	3
CONA Committee Report	3
Progress Energy article	4
St. Pete Codes Department update	5
Boom Cars	5
Neighborhood Partnership Grants	5
CONA Minutes	6
President's Message	7
CONA Executive Board	8
Florida Neighborhoods Conference	8



CONA Working for You

Here are updates on CONA's involvement with city/county issues affecting our neighborhoods.

Mayoral and City Council Races – Candidate Forums

2009 sees a large number of candidates for the 5 City Council seats and the Mayor's spot. The races and the campaign rhetoric are heating up. There are many important issues involved. Each voter needs to know exactly where the candidates stand and what they propose to do. CONA will partner with League of Women Voters to present Candidates Forums before the September 1st Primary and then again before the November General Election.

Snipe Signs

CONA's Travis Jarman and City Codes Director Todd Yost are heroes on this. Working together, they put a process in place that has been very successful. Over 25,000 signs have been removed, \$30,000 in fines levied and \$4,000 collected. Repeat offenders will now have to go to court. Both a letter and a brochure have been designed to help businesses understand the correct sign use and placement.

Building permit extensions

In response to CONA's concerns, the Codes Department worked to find a solution to the ongoing permit extensions granted that allow construction to continue for years without a finished building. The new plan will allow up to four extensions. Each extension will be increasingly harder to get and will require a higher level staff sign-off.

Approval of non-permitted additions

Certain non-permitted additions or changes to a structure occurring prior to March 1, 2002, that currently meet FEMA and certain safety standards will not be penalized. However, typical permit fees will apply. There are restrictions as to what, who and how.

Radio/boom box noise from automobiles

Judy Ellis' efforts resulted in St Pete's "Soft Letter" Campaign for handling drivers with booming radios. Soon, everyone can report those rude drivers via the internet. Upon verification of the information, a letter from Chief Harmon will be sent to the registered owner asking to turn down the radio.

Roadside litter

Many neighborhoods are seeing an increase in fast food garbage and containers thrown on roadways. CONA is working with Sanitation, FDOT, neighborhoods and schools on both clean up and education (place trash in receptacles). Look for a great new campaign very soon.

Annexation

City annexed a portion of Tierra Verde Island, but the residents had no vote in that process or about the annexation. CONA thinks that was wrong. CNCN worked with north county communities that were trying to be annexed by the City of Oldsmar. The residents were allowed to vote and 92% said NO.

Cell Tower placement

Currently there is no city statute that determines proximity placement of one cell tower to another. Each tower is a profit center where space can be rented to others (cable, radio, etc.). Companies would rather build their own towers next to others than to rent from competitors and lose that rent money. This could potentially place competing towers very close to one another. CONA is recommending city guidelines on cell placement beyond what is currently in the City Code.

KaBoom sponsored Playgrounds

CONA continues to support playgrounds in all neighborhoods, especially when the playground equipment is donated saving the City around \$75,000. We hope to partner on more KaBoom Playground build days.

Community Gardens

CONA worked closely with Bartlett Park neighbors and City officials to move through the long process of designating land for a Community Garden. This pilot project is now celebrating its first anniversary. CONA hopes that Bartlett Park's success will inspire other neighborhoods to plan and plant their own community garden.

SPPD – Public Safety

CONA works very closely supporting our Community Service Officers and the neighborhoods. We strongly support neighborhood Crime Watch groups and are showing many neighborhoods how successful Court Watch can be in making certain repeat offenders are given the maximum time.

Landmark status for historic properties

Throughout the LDR process and afterwards, CONA fought long and hard to protect and landmark historically significant properties. CONA wants to keep them safe for all to enjoy and understand the special part they played in our city's history. Also, it is our historic look that gives our city its personality and has significantly contributed to our economic success. The Detroit Hotel has been promised landmark status, but nothing has happened to date. CONA continues to work with preservation groups to provide landmark status.

Drought

CONA and Pinellas Living Green Expo continue to showcase responsible water usage.

Community and Police Engagement

Last year, we implemented a new initiative in three neighborhoods called CAPE (Community and Police Engagement), an action plan designed to reduce residents' concerns about crime and get the bad guys off the street. The results were so good (violent crimes decreased 26.7% and gun related crimes reduced 17.1% last year), we decided to do it again.

On Monday March 30th, 2009, we held a kick-off for CAPE II with a new plan to reduce crime patterns in three historic St. Petersburg neighborhoods: Bartlett Park, Grand Central and Historic Kenwood. Each area is unique, so we met with the neighborhood association presidents to identify mutually-agreed upon objectives for reducing crime.

Police officers will visit every home in these three neighborhoods to meet with the residents, listen to their concerns and provide them with important information. We hope these personal interactions will encourage the residents to get involved in their neighborhood and persuade them to provide tips or leads that might help us close open cases.

We encourage everyone in the city to report tips anonymously to our Tip Line (727-892-5000) or by using our Text a Tip line (727-420-8911). Both of these telephone lines are monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so add them to your cell phone's address book and use them to share crime tips with us.

We hope CAPE II will help us resolve crime trends in three neighborhoods, but if we work together, we can make a difference citywide.

William Proffitt, St. Petersburg Police Department

APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS... JOIN CONA FOR A BLOOMING GOOD TIME!!!

WHO: CONA the citywide Council of Neighborhood Associations
WHAT: Monthly Meetings – April 15 next meeting
WHEN: 3rd Wednesday of Month 6:30 pm Social – 7 pm Meeting
WHERE: Sunshine Center, 330 5th Street North, St. Pete
WHY: News, Presentations, Information, Discussion, Explanations
HOW: Network with Leaders in Neighborhoods, City, County, Organizations



You're late – You're late – for a very important date!
 No time to say hello – goodbye. You're late – You're late – You're late!

Time to Spring into action and join CONA today. Please mail your application and \$35 check for annual Membership, or bring them to the Meeting on April 15.

Did you make the List of 2009 Members? If in doubt, check it out...

22nd Street South
 4th Street Business
 Airport Association
 Americana Cove
 Azalea Homes
 Bahama Shores
 Bayway Isles
 Broadwater Civic
 Central Oak Park
 Coquina Key
 Crescent Heights
 Crescent Lake
 Crossroads
 Disston Heights
 Downtown Neighborhood
 Eagle Crest Civic

Edgemoor
 Fossil Park
 Garden Manor
 Greater Pinellas Point
 Greater Woodlawn
 Harbordale
 Harris Park
 Highland Oaks
 Historic Kenwood
 Historic Old Northeast
 Historic Roser Park
 Historic Uptown
 Jungle Terrace Civic
 Lakewood Estates
 Lakewood Terrace
 Live Oaks

Magnolia Heights
 Maximo Moorings
 Meadowlawn
 Mel-Tan Heights
 North Kenwood
 Northeast Park
 Old Pasadena
 Old Southeast
 Ponce de Leon
 Riviera Bay Civic
 Shore Acres Civic
 Snell Isle
 Tropical Shores
 Venetian Isles
 Westminster Heights

2009 Membership Invoice & Application available at www.conastpete.org
 Please join us at the Meeting on Wednesday, April 15...
 Barbara Ann Hawkins, Membership

Land Development & Historic Resources Committee

Current Activities

- Assuring the proposed new Pier offers community quality of life facilities for city residents (such as aquatic & marine science programs) as well as business development interests; advocating for increased community participation on the Pier Planning Task Force.
- Advocating for a public visioning and planning session co-sponsored by CONA encompassing the entire Waterfront Park area (rather than only the more limited single focus sessions held to date addressing the Port, Al Lang Stadium, and the Pier).
- Rezoning Al Lang Stadium to come under Downtown Park Zoning and limiting height of future development on the site to 75 feet (also limit Mahaffey site to 125 ft). (This will come before the City Planning & Visioning Commission on March 10th). (CONA co-sponsored with the City the public visioning session on Al Lang.)
- Seeking changes in the City Land Development Regulations to increase the likelihood that historic development rights will be purchased to protect historic properties.
- Designating the Detroit Hotel, St. Petersburg's most historic building, a local landmark.
- Monitoring new planning for Al Lang Stadium and possible new stadium.
- Reviewing city's planning for placement of cell towers.

Give yourself a (tax) break

If you've been thinking about making energy improvements to your home, now is a good time to seriously consider turning thought into action.

During these unprecedented economic times, reducing monthly expenses is on most everyone's mind. Home energy-efficiency improvements will not only help you achieve monthly savings, they will improve your home's comfort and value. Plus, the economic stimulus package recently signed into law by President Obama provides tax breaks to homeowners for a wide range of energy-saving improvements to windows and doors, roofing, water heaters, insulation and HVAC units.

According to Energy Star, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, 2009 – 2010 tax credits for home improvements must meet the following criteria:

- must be "placed in service" from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010
- must be for taxpayers' principal residence
- maximum amount you can claim for most improvements is \$1,500 in 2009 and 2010 (solar water heaters are not subject to this cap)

For record keeping, you will need to save your receipts and the "Manufacturer Certification Statement." For windows, you can save the ENERGY STAR label from your new windows. And, note that improvements made in 2009 will be claimed on your 2009 taxes. Use IRS Tax Form 5695 (2009 version); it will be available in late 2009 or early 2010.

Before you make any energy-efficient home improvements, be sure to schedule a free Home Energy Check with an Energy Advisor from Progress Energy. They can help you navigate through the process of determining which improvements to invest in and the order in which they should be made to give you the biggest return on your investment. For example, you would want to fix leaky ducts and increase your insulation

Celebrate Earth Day all year long and save

On April 22, 1970, 20 million people across America celebrated the first Earth Day as a day of national environmental recognition. More than three decades later, Earth Day has evolved into a world-wide campaign to protect our global environment. This Earth Day, make a decision that will help the environment and your budget all year long. Start with a free in-home Home Energy Check by a Progress Energy Advisor and receive a free energy-efficiency kit that's filled with several energy-saving items that can save you up to \$280 in energy costs over the life of the provided items. The kit includes compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), weather stripping, a refrigerator thermometer, a hot water temperature gauge and electric outlet insulators. For more information, call 1-877-364-9003 or visit savethewatts.com.

before upgrading your old heating and cooling system. You'll receive a customized energy evaluation of your home, tips to help you save money right now and recommendations about improvements you can make for longer-term energy savings and to take advantage of the tax breaks provided in the stimulus package.

To schedule your free Home Energy Check, call 1-877-364-9003 or visit savethewatts.com. You can also find more information on the home improvement tax credits for consumers by visiting energystar

LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT



Codes Compliance update

The Codes Compliance Assistance Department has made several changes over the past few months regarding the enforcement of three ordinances. The changes were the result of input from the Mayor, CONA and the neighborhoods. The following is a brief synopsis of those changes:

The enforcement method change has been in the issuance of Municipal Ordinance Violations (MOVs) through the County Court system for ordinance violations. The reason for this change is to bring a resolution to violations that should be easily remedied through the most expedited enforcement process available. The focus has been on Snipe Signs, Residential Yard Parking, and Inoperative Motor Vehicles. Beginning October 2008, the Department began using this enforcement strategy for snipe sign violations. To date the Department has issued 253 MOV's totaling \$35,706.00 in fines, of which \$9,285.00 has been paid. The Codes Investigator also removes about 40 signs a day on average, with over 2500 signs taken to-date. The Department has continued a policy of utilizing other available Codes Investigators to sweep snipe signs from major corridors and neighborhood streets throughout the City one day a week. Beginning December 2008, the Department began enforcement of Residential Yard Parking. This new program involves issuing a notice of Yard Parking violation with a 24-hour voluntary compliance time. If the violation is not resolved in that period, a MOV is issued with a fine amount due. Violation notices issued are effective for one year from issuance. Beginning March 2009, the Department began an educational campaign for a pilot program for Inoperative Motor Vehicles that is similar to the Residential Yard Parking enforcement. The enforcement of this program through the issuances of MOVs will begin April 6, 2009. The one main difference in this program compared to the Residential Yard Parking program is that the violation must be corrected within 72 hours of notice in order to avoid an MOV.

It is my hope that these changes will have a better impact on our community. I appreciate all of CONA's input and thank you all for your assistance to our department in keeping the City of St. Petersburg a great place to live and work.

For more information and to view updated informational brochures regarding these changes, please visit: <http://www.stpete.org/codes/>.

Todd Yost, Director,
Codes Compliance Assistance Department,
City of St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg Soft Letter Program Spreads

In February of 2008, the City announced a program by which citizens can report people violating the state's "anti-boomcar" statute, 316.3045, which forbids noise from car stereos audible at more than 25'. Initially the program was piloted by the Lakewood Estates Civic Association and the postcards and other incidental expenses were paid for with drug forfeiture money. At the foundation is a soft letter (no fine, no punishment) sent to offenders by the police department, reminding them of the law and encouraging them to be better neighbors. While it sounds simplistic, it has been tested in other cities, notably in Gulfport, MS after the hurricanes, and has been found to greatly reduce the problem.

Since then the program has spread to three of our neighboring cities – Gulfport, Largo and Clearwater and has become a source of considerable comfort to people trapped in their homes by the relentless boomboom and thumpathumpathumpa of loud stereos augmented by the low-frequency vibrations of subwoofers. The consensus here and in our neighboring cities is that the program has not only made things quieter in many areas (others still need work), it has given sufferers a sense of better control over their environment, a feeling that they are not helpless, and a renewed hope that one day they may enjoy the peace and quiet guaranteed to them as homeowners.

While the St. Petersburg program continues to rely on postcards relaying the date, time and car information, our neighboring cities have added a complaint form to their police department web sites, and it is expected that St. Petersburg will soon do the same. Those without computers can still report violators via phone or fax, but for many, the ability to send this information in electronically and receive back a confirmation is very important.

This type of noise pollution is on the agendas of many, many cities and towns around the country as they struggle for ways to respond to a flood of complaints. It is estimated that about 80% of the calls to non-emergency police numbers are for noise. St. Petersburg has found a win/win solution by giving citizens a way to deal with the noise on their streets and easing the burden on the police department. The program is expected to expand to a second phase in which the soft letter may be delivered by hand – in Mississippi this system is so powerful that third-time offenders are unheard of.

2010 Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant

The 2010 Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant applications will be available soon. The application will be available on the City Web page www.stpete.org by mid April. The grants are designed to give community groups an opportunity to make improvements in their community. Past grants have included funding for landscaping, lighting, public art, gazebos, signs, and a variety of other projects. The maximum applicant award for each project is \$25,000. The proposed amount allocated for the FY 2010 grant program is \$100,000. All grants must be matched with either cash or in kind volunteer hours (\$20.00 per hour) All grants must be completed on public right of way (City property). The Neighborhood Partnership will be conducting workshops to assist community groups with the application process. The Neighborhood Partnership Department will also be sending notice to all neighborhood associations and residents who have requested to be included on our mailing list. For more information, please call Terese Hilliard at 551-3249.

CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - March 18, 2008

- President Barbara Heck called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.
- Barbara welcomed all of our member associations, our visitors and our distinguished guests; Pinellas Commissioner Kenneth T. Welch, Deputy Mayor David Metz, Police Division Manager Gene Webb, and City Councilmen Jamie Bennett, Bill Dudley, and Herb Polson.
- The Treasurer's Report was not available during our meeting.
- Barbara Hawkins, our Membership Comm. Chair indicated 47 neighborhood associations have paid their 2009 dues. It was stressed that all attending need to sign-in to record their neighborhood representation.
- We were reminded of the Police Department's Citizen's Retreat scheduled for the Allstate Learning Center on March 25th.
- Cass Rael Sr., Chair of our Baseball Promotion noted that half of the 200 seats reserved for CONA at the April 14th Rays and Yankee game have been sold at this time.
 - Parking before 6:30 PM will be free for cars with 4 passengers.
 - "Bling" -there will be reproductions of Ray's Rings given away.
 - Some of our members will bring Neighborhood signs to display.
- Deputy Mayor David Metz provided a recap of the information shared by Mayor Baker with our Executive Board at City Hall last week.
 - There is a revenue shortfall anticipated for F.Y. 2010, (begins October 1), of 18 to \$20M.
 - Property tax reduction of next year likely 11 to \$12M. City revenue from state tax collections will likely fall by \$3M.
 - The 3 major city worker union contracts will take a heavy toll of city declining city revenues next year. Garbage and Water Service fees will decline as will prospective profits from our Enterprise Departments, (e.g. our Golf Course Facilities).
 - Our current fiscal planning is for the next 3 years though the Mayor's term concludes next year.
 - All city departments have been required to submit 2010 budget plans based on 3 levels of revenue shrinkage- 5%, 7%, or 10%.
 - Current revenue has dictated a mid-year correction of the 2009 Budget with the anticipation of 40 to 60 staff positions vacated.
 - All possible alternatives to fill the revenue gaps are being considered: Wage freezes or reductions, furloughs, structured debt reductions.
- It was explained that the recently approved federal stimulus funding was largely directed to specific projects such they may have limited impact on our city staff workload or funding.
- We learned of an Economic Stability Fund, developed by Council and The Mayor, some years ago, that has been accumulating a buffer/reserve cache intended to tide the city over during periods of unusually low economic conditions.
- There will be a public hearing, May 14th, to consider quality of life impacts, from the 2010 budget proposals.....prior to City Council confirmation of that upcoming budget. There will be further hearings after the Council approves. All were urged to attend these meetings for public inputs.
- Barbara Heck reminded us that our city and state have weathered severe economic storms before and can pull together for a victory again.
- City Councilman Herb Polson reported on a meeting he recently attended in Washington hosted by the National Council of Cities.
 - He told us of new "Stimulus" funding for a Police "COPS" program that offers level funding for adding Police Officers over a 3 year span, but dis continues thereafter. [A previous counterpart provided 4 years of linearly declining funding]. The new funding is promised in just 15 days!
 - He also recounted a meeting with our congressional representatives Bill Young, Betty Castor and Bill Nelson at which the local soil pollution problems at the Raytheon plant were discussed.
 - In prior years, a Citizen's Budget Committee, promoted by CONA, worked to involve our neighborhoods in identifying alternate funding sources to supplement city budget shortfalls.
 - "We can't balance a diminished budget by cuts. We must increase taxes or reduce some of the tax exemptions".
- "Government is forced to do things differently. We are striving to improve efficiency rather than staffing cuts to meet our upcoming budgets.
- Pinellas Commissioner Ken Welch spoke briefly of their revenue reductions, anticipating a 2010 shortfall of between 80 to \$100M. He invited all residents to a County Budget Workshop, at Gibbs High School, on March 26th at 5:30
- Barbara Heck reminded us of upcoming Candidates Forums jointly sponsored by CONA and the League of Women Voters. There are plans for forums before and after the primary voting. The first will be convened at St. Peter's Cathedral.
- Judy Ellis, (Lakewood Estates), told us of two programs striving to reduce noise pollution and highway trash accumulations. Despite various enforcement schemes, education campaigns to alter attitudes, (especially of youngsters), seems the most promising remedy. [The anti-cigarette "Indian" campaign of 30 years ago was cited as a successful example.]
 - As a Tourist City, highway trash accumulations are a threat to our image.
- Will Michaels provided an update on the compilation of the recommendations of our CONA Goals Retreat.
 - A 2nd. draft for BOD approval will be offered at our April meeting.
 - Our April CONA meeting, (4/15/09), will include a segment by our CONA LDR & Historic Preservation Committee that will address the Cell Tower issue and feature a presentation by the city's Julie Weston.
 - All were invited to attend the "Trop Night Baseball Celebration", March 28th. The program titled "100 Years of Baseball In St. Petersburg" will feature an appearance by Babe Ruth's Granddaughter.
- Cass Rael Sr., (Chair of our CONA Listbot Evaluation Comm.), promised a report from his committee for our April meeting. They contemplate establishment of a new listserv robot that will be more strictly limited and available only to current neighborhood leaders.
- Andrea Hildebrand, (Bartlett Park), urged that CONA submit a letter to City Council supporting community gardens. Comments from the floor asked that CONA only support these gardens in the city if rules are established to require post harvest tilling, because some of the plots have become eyesores after gleaning.
- The Roser Park Homes Tour will be April 11th. Get your tickets on-line.
- A round of applause greeted the announcement that our President, Barbara McCormick Heck had been awarded the "Woman of The Year" award by the Chamber of Commerce.
- April 18th will see the annual Booker Creek Park celebration, and the annual Riviera Bay Canal Cleanup. [Last year, 93 volunteers removed 40 cubic yards of canal clutter.]
- Jeff Frank provided a report for his CONA Public Safety Committee.
 - He spoke of a meeting with Pinellas Sheriff James Coats where they discussed the impacts of pending budget reductions, and cooperative strategies with our St. Petersburg Police Department.
 - Jeff has also had meetings with the Executive Officers of our S.P.P.D. to consider budget impacts on quality of life issues and the Matrix Report.
- Plan now to attend the Pinellas Living Green Expo, Harborview, May 2 - 3.
- The State Neighborhood's Convention will be here this year, July 9 - 11.
- Don't forget the Mayor's Pancake Breakfast, Harbordale YMCA, March 28th.
- Annual City Neighborhood's Awards Meeting, Roberts Comm. Center, 3/28.
- City Councilman Jammie Bennett thanked CONA for their support of the plans to restrict the use of nitrogen fertilizers during the summer months.

Our meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

April President's Message

By Barbara McCormick Heck

Ouch ! ! ! City budget shortfall projected at \$20 million. County budget shortfall projected at \$85 million. The news worsens daily. How can our residents, our neighborhoods, our associations survive during these very tough economic times? What should we do? What can we do?

There are lots of things you can do and most cost nothing more than a little bit of your time and a lot of your brain power. Each of us has the power to do great things for us and for our neighborhood.

Get informed and stay informed. Invite city/county staff to explain and educate you on the issues. Know the true facts and get them from the source. Do not rely on politician's rhetoric or what you read in the paper. Take the time to ask the tough questions and find out for yourself. If you have only half the information, you could make a decision that might be only half right . . . or half WRONG.

Let City and County leaders know exactly what you want. Write, phone, e-mail and speak to Council and Commission members . . . frequently. Let them hear what concerned citizens think about their proposals, plans, etc. Just get your facts right before talking to them and have a plan for them.

Share your public safety issues. Talk to you Community Service Officer about your safety concerns. Work with your neighbors to place those calls for service when they see something out of place or a crime being committed. Warn your neighbors about leaving valuables in plain sight in cars. Lock your cars, your doors and your garages. Stress the "lock it or lose it" campaign. Do not be an easy target for thieves. Work with your Crime Watch group. Form one or revitalize an existing one.

Encourage neighborhood participation. Simple neighborhood tactics work best. Here are some neighborhood ideas you might like to try to encourage neighborhood participation. Do not let some horrible problem get everyone involved. There is too much "doom and gloom" around right now. Let's try to improve our outlook with low-cost or no-cost ways to get together and share what is happening and how people can help.

- **Porch Parties** – get to know your neighbors.
- **Community Gardens** – start one. If the White House can do this, you can too.
- **Movie Night Out** – good way to enjoy our beautiful summer evenings with neighbors.
- **Community Dine Out** – what is better than an outdoor BBQ and everyone bring food to share?

Help out. Offer a helping hand whenever you can. It may be something as simple as bringing a newspaper up to the front door for an invalid. It could be offering to pick up groceries for a shut-in. It could be mowing an adjacent yard for someone who is elderly or sick. It could be forming a mom's play time for community babysitting. It could be picking up groceries for someone or offering to carpool to the store. Look around you and think what you might want help with if you became very sick or lost your job. Now see if you can help out in some way.

Inspire others. Share your successes (and even your "not so" successes) with other neighbors and other neighborhood associations. Your ideas and deeds will inspire others to action.

Take responsibility and take that first step. You are in charge of yourself. Good and wonderful things can happen if you take responsibility and tell yourself that you can make a difference. Just try. Ask for help. Inspire others. Together you can make change happen. It all starts with you and that first step.

WE'RE LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT.

INTRODUCING A **BALANCED SOLUTION** FOR THE FUTURE.

At Progress Energy, we're using innovative and environmentally responsible solutions to meet our area's growing energy needs. We are expanding our energy-efficiency programs to help you save energy and money.

We are supporting advanced technologies like solar power and plants fueled by vegetation waste. We are investing in existing power plants to

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
STATE-OF-THE-ART PLANTS



ensure their safe, efficient operation while assessing the need for new plants and better ways to get electricity to you. The result is clean, reliable, affordable power – for today and tomorrow. To learn more about our bright thinking, visit progress-energy.com.





**2009 Officers and
Executive Board Members**

President

Barbara Heck - Snell Isle
894-6020 - barbara@theheckhouse.com

First Vice President

Mike Gulley - Coquina Key
244-8374 - jmgulley1@hotmail.com

Second Vice President

Will Michaels - Bahama Shores
420-9195 - wmichaels2@tampabay.rr.com

Secretary

Conrad Weiser - Edgemoor
522-5008 - conrad33702@verizon.net

Treasurer

April Gausman - Historic Uptown
244-1896 - april@realestatebyapril.com

CONA Leadership

Ingrid Comberg - Historic Uptown
821-2192

CourtWatch Committee

Carole Griffiths - Disston Heights
522-7206 - cgriff6721@aol.com

Membership

Barbara Hawkins - Greater Pinellas Point
866-1747 - be.hawkins@verizon.net

Nominating Committee

Judy Ellis - Lakewood Estates
864-3957 - jellis5610@tampabay.rr.com

Public Safety Committee

Jeff Frank - Live Oaks
322-0488 - kirstenjeffinn@yahoo.com

CONA General Meetings

3rd Wed of each month

CONA Board Meetings

2nd Wed of each month

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 (NEW):
25th of each month

In Hand:

2nd Wednesday of month

Layout Editor: Mo Eppley 686-2146

Coordinator: Mike Gulley 244-8374

**The Council of Neighborhood
Associations of South Pinellas County
P.O. Box 13693
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3693**

Presort Std
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit #1084
St. Petersburg, FL

Return Service Requested

**CONA President Barbara Heck was named
"Community Service Woman of the Year" at the
recent St. Petersburg Area Chamber of
commerce Women's Symposium.**

Florida Neighborhoods Conference

Mark your calendars for July 9 - 11, 2009, when the City of St. Petersburg will host the 13th Annual Florida Neighborhoods Conference (FNC) at the Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront! This gathering of neighborhood and civic leaders from throughout Florida provides an opportunity for participants to share ideas and learn ways to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. The FNC includes workshops, neighborhood tours, and a chance to network with friends at numerous social events. Nearly 400 community leaders attended the 2008 conference in Tallahassee anticipates at least that many this year. Registration fees are \$50 per person which includes all workshops, tours and special events; hotel reservations and transportation arrangements must be made separately. View website to register for the conference and reserve your hotel room online at www.stpete.org/fnc.



We need volunteers to help us manage the 2009 Florida Neighborhoods Conference that will play host to visitors from around Florida. Volunteers are needed to assist us in the following areas:

- Hospitality Support - Greeters, information assistance, social events
- Program Support - Room monitors, A/V equipment assistants, exhibition hall support, workshop assistants
- Tour Support - Tour guides, transportation assistants
- Administrative Support - Registration desk, workshop session signup

If you're interested in serving as a volunteer, please contact: Neighborhood Partnership at: 727-892-5141.