



The Daily

Saturday Op Ed



"Will attaining these objectives be heavy lifting? You bet... but together we can and must accomplish them."

- Steve Queior, The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce

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GUEST CORRESPONDENT

[Guest Column] **Rebuilding the Economy of Greater Sarasota**

STEVE QUEIOR, SQUEIOR@SARASOTACHAMBER.COM



If Sarasota County were bludgeoned by a major hurricane for four days, we would undoubtedly come together and creatively plan how to rebuild our community. Our economy has been battered over the last four years, in some senses more intensely than areas hit by a severe storm. As painful as it may be, we need to realize the magnitude of what we've been through and respond accordingly.

Let me shine a positive light on the fact many indicators turned upward in 2011, albeit slightly. Here are a few facts about the last half-decade:

- A year ago, the number of jobs in our county was down more than 40,000 from 2006-2007. Over the last 12 months, we came back 2,000 jobs, but still have 38,071 jobs to create to have the employment opportunities we had.
- Although headed in the right direction in recent months, the county's retail sales are more than \$100 million less per MONTH than four years ago. One impact of this is a drop in collections of the Local Area Sales Tax for infrastructure, reducing funds for key (job-creating) road, water and sewer projects by \$8 million per year.
- Sarasota County's assessed valuation of property lost \$73 billion, with a "B," during the last five years, from \$207 billion to the \$133 billion range, putting great pressure on local governments to deliver services with finite resources.
- We still have 16,059 unemployed neighbors just in Sarasota County, with thousands more in Manatee and other nearby locales, looking for work. Our Chamber's Young Professionals Group recently completed an analysis showing 200 of its members moved away to seek jobs elsewhere – we're losing talent due to the lack of employment opportunities.

So, what must we do in 2012? Let's focus on the longer-term priority first, lest it not be addressed at all.

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TODAY'S POLL

[Politics] **Elections Are Coming**

What elections in 2012 deserve the greatest attention from Sarasota? Is it the county races? The presidential election? Vote in our poll at SRQMAG.com.

Last week, we asked voters how their holiday spending this year compared to last year. Of those who responded, **43 percent said they spent MORE, 36 percent said they spent LESS and 29 percent said they spent ABOUT THE SAME.** SHARE:

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THINGS TO DO

[TODAY] **PARTY: New Year's Eve Party, Sporting News Grill, Holiday Inn Sarasota-Bradenton Airport, Dec. 31, 8:30pm**

You and yours are cordially invited to celebrate the New Year in style and comfort at the Airport Holiday Inn. The Sporting News Grill will be your dining room—it's Chef Darrell Mizell's pleasure to offer a four-course meal

We need a vision for what Sarasota County can and should be in 5, 10 and 20 years. All high-performing communities have a vision of their potential and ideal future. Our area has a multitude of assets, many under severe pressure. Other communities - ones we compete with - move forward with plans collaboratively, strategically and synergistically.

Involving everyone in our county to build our "Vision 2020" is critical to recovering these years of extreme losses as quickly as possible – not over decades. We will be best served determining optimal ways to create good jobs and a high quality of life leveraging new economic opportunities. We must simultaneously help core elements of our area, such as arts and tourism, be as healthy as possible.

Our Chamber strongly supports:

- Expanding sports and recreational tourism. Baseball, rowing, soccer, swimming and other events can bring in tens of millions in new dollars.
- Buy locally, sell globally. Those in other states and countries have resources to spend and invest here. We can buoy our businesses through upcoming efforts, including the "Opportunity Canada" project.
- Move forward redeveloping key areas like the North Tamiami Trail and continuously improving our downtowns and waterfronts.
- Grow health and medically-based economic development, leveraging strong assets including our hospitals, medical manufacturers and science and research firms.
- Enhance support for entrepreneurs and small businesses. They create most of the new jobs in America.

Will attaining these objectives be heavy lifting? You bet... but together we can and must accomplish them.

Steve Queior is the president of The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce

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OLD GRAY MAYOR

[Column on City Politics] 2012 Wishes From the Old Gray Mayor

LOU ANN PALMER, LOUANN.PALMER@SRQMEDIAGROUP.COM



A personal wish list for 2012:

December will see Jon Thaxton, Carolyn Mason and Christine Robinson still seated at the Sarasota County Commission table.

Mason will be elected to chair the County Commission for 2013.

New County Administrator Randall Reid will put the county's procurement scandal to rest.

In May, Vice Mayor Terry Turner will become Sarasota's next mayor.

The internal squabbling between Sarasota City Manager Bob Bartolotta and City Auditor and Clerk Pam Nadalini will end.

The North Trail will have hired its redevelopment director and Lorna Alston, Newtown redevelopment leader, and Randy Welker, Downtown redevelopment guru, will hatch a plan to coordinate efforts to increase and improve business opportunities in all three areas.

including crab-stuffed prawns and a four-ounce filet with a shallot demi-glace. Dinner per person is \$34.95. The H-I also has a special "Take the Elevator Home" package: \$199 includes dinner and a room for the evening. Reservations are requested. SHARE: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

8009 15th St. E., Sarasota, 34243, 941-355-9000 x108

[TODAY] MUSICAL THEATER: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do, Golden Apple Dinner Theatre, Dec. 27–Feb. 26, Tues.–Sun., call for times.

Iconic pop singer and songwriter Neil Sedaka provides all the tunes for this sweet, contemporary musical. Written in 2005, the '60s setting and beloved classic hits such as "Where the Boys Are" and "Stupid Cupid" lend the production a warm sense of nostalgia. The show's run has now extended to Feb. 26 and includes a special New Year's Eve showing. Call for individual and group ticket pricing. SHARE: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

25 North Pineapple Ave., Sarasota, 941-366-5454

[TODAY] CULINARY: Savory @ Night, Savory Street Café and Bakery, Tues.–Sun. through end of December

The Savory Street Café and Bakery invites you in for dinner this month to check out recent renovations and to tempt the tastebuds with a new Latin-inspired menu. Star items on the menu include a Mayan lentil soup with plantain, pineapple and chorizo; Huitlacoche crepes with poblano sauce, an Aztec delicacy; and a tamarind-glazed center cut pork chop. As an added bonus, Savory Street offers complimentary wine with dinner. SHARE: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

411 North Orange Ave., Sarasota, 941-312-4027

[WEEKEND] MUSICAL THEATER: Love Sung in the Key of Aretha, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, Dec. 14-23 and 27–30, Jan. 1, 3-8 and 10–16

There's still time to catch the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's season opener, written and adapted by WBTT Artistic Director Nate Jacobs. Four women, each in different stages of life but caught together in the thick of the Civil Rights Movement, dream of a better life and explore many themes of love through the songs of Aretha Franklin. Aretha's immortal voice speaks for each character, their individual and collective struggles. Individual tickets are \$28 and a \$75 package subscription is available for seeing all four shows of the WBTT's 2011–12 season. SHARE: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

1646 10th Way., Sarasota, 941-366-1505

[WEEKEND] PERFORMANCE: Salute to Vienna, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Jan. 1, 8pm

The Palm Avenue fight over zoning issues will be resolved without eliminating administrative approval for new developments that meet code requirements.

Sarasota's old police department building will finally come tumbling down.

The City of Venice police and fire dispatch services will be merged with Sarasota County.

Mixed-use phase 2 of Janie's Gardens on Martin Luther King, Jr. Way will see new business tenants on the ground floor.

Sarasota Police Department's Operation Street Sweeper will rid north Sarasota of drug dealers and end the horrendous murders in Newtown.

The recently unveiled Partnership to End Homelessness ten year plan will be at least 1/10th successful and the benches will be returned to Selby Five Points Park.

The County Commission will implement a Sheriff's Department Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) to resolve the dual taxation issue that has festered for years between the County and Longboat Key, Venice, North Port and Sarasota regarding taxing city residents the same amount as unincorporated residents for Sheriff services that are not provided to the cities.

The Lido Beach Residents Association plan for resuscitating the pavilion and pool will secure approval from the City Commission and the Quay reproductions of the seahorses will reappear where they belong.

The equivalent to Greenville, South Carolina's "Mice On Main" will appear on Sarasota's Main Street as another huge tourist attraction.

The Florida Legislature will quit passing legislation that invades local governments' home rule, realizing that "one size fits all" statutes are disastrous; e.g., a law that will prevent counties and cities from restricting fertilizer use during the rainy season to protect waterways from receiving debilitating chemicals. (Both the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County have already passed the restrictive ordinances)

And the last comment from the OGM's desk at SRQ Media Group is to wish all our readers an extra special new year with health and happiness for you and your families. See you in 2012.

SRQ Daily *Columnist Lou Ann Palmer is a former Sarasota mayor and equal opportunity pisser-offer* SHARE: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

THE MOVE AND THEN

[Newcomers] Holly Lundgren, USF Sarasota-Manatee

TEDI DOYCHINOVA, TEDID@SRQMEDIAGROUP.COM

Moved From: St. Paul, Minn. **My Profession There:** Student and Communications intern at Lund Food Holdings **Friday Nights There:** Studying or working.

Why I Moved: I wanted to live where I vacationed as a kid (Siesta Key). I also hated the cold Minnesota winters. **Now I Am:** Events and Commencement Coordinator at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee. I am still exploring this great little city, working a lot, meeting great Sarasota people and getting to the beach as much as possible. **Friday Nights Now:** I am usually downtown at Café Epicure/Jolly Espresso and Martini Bar enjoying Pepe's pizza

The flash and dazzle of a full orchestra, singers and dancers— a 75-piece ensemble in full— returns to Sarasota for a 16th season. Inspired by the Viennese "Neujahrskonzert" that is televised to over 1 billion people around the world every year, this live spectacle brings the Strauss Symphony of America, Hungarian singers Mónica Fischl and Dániel Vadász and dancers from the Ballet St. Pölten to the Van Wezel stage. Together they'll celebrate the new year in a concert of Strauss waltzes, operetta selections and lively polkas.

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777 North Tamiami Trl., Sarasota, 941-953-3368

[SOON] STUDIO: Designer Fitness Open House, Jan. 6, 5:30pm

Designer Fitness is hosting an Open House on January 6, 2012 to celebrate the opening of its new studio. Started by Darla O'Brien in 1989, Designer Fitness has moved from its former location to 32 S. Osprey Avenue, Suite 204. The Open House, scheduled from 5:30-8pm, has a 50th anniversary of "Breakfast at Tiffany's" theme, complete with an Audrey Hepburn look-alike contest. Whether you have poise like Audrey or not, come celebrate the opening of Designer Fitness' new studio and learn about their unique approach to fitness training. SHARE: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

32 S. Osprey Avenue, Suite 204, Sarasota, 941-544-5127

[SOON] MUSIC: We Can Be Heroes: David Bowie's 65th Birthday Tribute, Cock and Bull Pub, Jan. 8, 3-10pm

To round out a three-day, three-city tribute festival, Sarasota Music Scene and WSLR collaborate with Tampa's WMNF and the Bay Area Arts and Music Association in bringing David Bowie's birthday bash to Sarasota. For six solid hours, local bands and musicians will play a catalogue of the Thin White Duke's biggest hits and hidden gems. To kick off the event, Bowie publicist Tony Michaelides will share "Behind the Scenes: Working and Touring with David Bowie," a half-hour presentation of never-before seen video and photos of the legendary musician and performer. Michaelides' first-hand accounts of going from a starry-eyed fan to Ziggy's right-hand man are not to be missed. Tickets are \$9 in advance, \$12 at the door. SHARE: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

975 Cattlemen Rd., Sarasota, 941-726-5839

[SOON] WORKSHOP: "Managing Your Time and People Resources," Manasota SCORE, Argosy University, Jan. 9, 5:30-8:30pm

This free business workshop covers the basics of assessing Human Resources needs, understanding good hiring practices, low-cost ideas for employee training, motivational strategies, knowing when to hire outside

and a fresh brewed espresso martini.

First Impressions: My first impression of Sarasota was that it is a beautiful, clean, perfectly-sized little city with absolutely no one my age (I am 24). **Biggest Potential Community Mistake:** I think there should be much more focus on improving the North Tamiami Trail area. There are three universities full of students who want safe places to hang out and fun things to do. I think there is a lot of potential at hand that we should be taking advantage of. **My Vision:** I hope Sarasota maintains its beauty and attractiveness to vacationers but focuses on building a more sustainable economic infrastructure for people like me who plan on living in Sarasota for a long time and are not just "wintering" here. It is amazing how dead the city becomes during the summer. I think improving the north part of town, where the three colleges are, would help with this. Prospective students would be more inclined to attend our schools, which would have its own economic impact. Making Sarasota more of a "college town" would attract younger people who will stick around and continue to improve the area's economy. **SHARE:** [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

expertise and tips on effective time management. To register for the course, visit manasota.score.org and look up "Local Workshops." Then meet up at Classroom A-1 at Argosy University to hone your edge in local business management. **SHARE:** [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

5250 17th St., Sarasota, 941-955-1029

[SOON] MUSIC: The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with Pinchas Zukerman, Sarasota Concert Association, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Jan. 9, 8pm

As the kickoff to its "Great Performers" series, the Sarasota Concert Association presents Pinchas Zukerman, one of the world's leading violin virtuosos, conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Under Zukerman's baton the orchestra will perform Edward Elgar's Enigma Variations and two works by Beethoven: the Egmont Overture and the Concerto for Violin in D major. Zukerman himself will command this instrumental tour de force for the violin. Individual tickets are \$35-\$60. **SHARE:** [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

777 North Tamiami Trail., Sarasota, 941-955-0040

[SOON] MUSIC: Musical Morning, Sarasota Orchestra Manatee Association, Powel Crosley Estate, Jan. 17, 10am

If a cup of coffee with friends doesn't shake off the weekday sleepies, then the strident sounds of brass instruments ringing through the halls of the Seagate Mansion should. The Sarasota Brass Quintet is featured on the January Musical Morning, hosted on the Crosley Estate by the Sarasota Orchestra's outreach branch in Manatee County. Tickets are \$15. **SHARE:** [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

8374 North Tamiami Trl., Sarasota, 941-761-2862



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