

# Laurel Park News



June 2009

## The Birds And The Bees

### *Jodi John Organizes Eco-Fair*



*Jodi John*

Jodi John, longtime Laurel Park resident, has been busy planning an Eco-Fair for the community.

Presentations on a wide variety of topics and entertainment for children are expected to draw a diverse audience to Laurel Park on Saturday morning, June 27. When LPNA President Jude Levy asked Jodi whether she would be willing to take on the project, Jude immediately knew the answer was "yes."

And

no wonder, since conservation issues have been central to Jodi's life

Her career has been related to waste reduction and sustainability at the local government level. Jodi established Sarasota County's Recycling Program in 1988 and the County's Sustainability Program in 2002. She has always been a devotee of conservation of resources and, as such, Jodi prefers to think of herself as practical rather than "green."

Jodi's family has lived in Laurel Park since 1945. As a child, Jodi lived in Laurel Park and attended Central Elementary, located where our current post office sits. This was followed by other homes, including a houseboat on Siesta Key and time in Fort Lauderdale, a city with professional opportunities but ultimately too much cement. In

*See Eco-Fair, page 2*

### *Birding in Laurel Park*

How do they know about this tiny plot of land? Birds must have a communications network that rivals our Blackberry world. Wonder if they call it Twitter?

For nearly ten years I have watched thousands of birds, from tiny wrens and gnatcatchers to huge hawks and herons, find water and seed, berries and safety at my house on Oak Street. They have perched in the trees, splashed in the bird baths, performed acrobatics on the bird feeder, circled overhead, posed on power lines and stripped bushes of berries. They have built nests, fledged and trained their young, called to one another day and night and generally improved my time in this small urban patch.

Here's my list of visitors, 61 species in all (*see page 7*). Some appear daily, others are annual or even less frequent, but they have all found my private preserve.

I've got a story about each species. The most recent occurred yesterday afternoon.

Three fledgling, very young Northern Cardinals hopped and fluttered all over my deck, poked around in potted plants, ate berries from the wax myrtle and timidly dipped in the birdbaths. All under the watchful gaze of the vivid red male patriarch and monitored by the constant chirping of the nervous female. Every spring the resident cardinals, daily visitors to the birdfeeder and

bird baths, bring their young to my backyard but this was the largest family ever. Within weeks the young will look exactly like their parents and it will be impossible to tell one generation from the next.

Those bright green black-hooded parakeets that squawk as they fly overhead, have visited my preserve.

*See Birds, page 7*

<p><b>June 27: Eco Fair</b> Laurel Park, 9:00 AM to Noon</p> <p><b>July X?: N'hood Brick Laying</b> Details to be announced, See p. 6</p> <p><b>August 4: National Night Out</b> Payne Park, 5:00-9:00 PM</p> <p><b>Nov. 3: LPNA General Meeting</b> Senior Friendship Center, 6:00-8:00 PM</p>
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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's all the talk – how to stretch the dollar, save your money **and** save the planet, and, oh, yes, have some fun while you are at it!

Now people are more interested in growing the food they eat, conserving water, saving energy. My idea about an eco-fair has taken life thanks to Jodi John and Suzy Hagglund. My neighbor Emily Dreis has created a beautiful poster for the event.

I extend a personal invitation to you to attend the **Eco-Fair on Saturday, June 27, 9 am to noon in the park!**

Hope you will stop by, meet your friends, have some lemonade, check out the booths, learn how to plant for bees and butterflies, build a bird house, grow vegetables in a pot or earth box, check out the easy solar oven for backyard cooking, and much much more!! There will be plenty to see and do for all age groups.

It's time to become more conscious about the water you use – maybe rain barrels are in your future? An aerator that can be purchased at the local hardware store can cut down the water you use daily for washing your hands & brushing your teeth from over 7 gallons a day to 2! Keep in mind that recycling is mandatory in the city for all owners and landlords. Only #1 and #2 plastics can be recycled.

Thanks for staying involved and making Laurel Park a great place to live!

*Jude Levy*

## *Eco-Fair, from page 1*

1997, Jodi John once again returned to her Laurel Park roots because “no place has the lure of our little piece of paradise.”

She lives in a home that was originally two separate fishing shacks, the oldest built in 1894. Jodi has loved archiving her home during various renovations. Under the tin roof, the original shake roof was discovered; the license plates that were used to patch it dated to the '30s. Newspaper used as insulation was found in-between the walls. Jodi believes that some older buildings are often more sustainable in that they were built with local resources and the local environment in mind.

### **Rain Barrels**

Jodi has posted a sign on her fence: “It’s a drought: Conserve water.” She put her money where her mouth is and bought a local rain barrel business that was about to close and is a strong advocate of their usefulness during this time of drought. Jodi’s front yard has earned the Federal Wildlife Habitats’ certified wildlife designation and features many native plants. Most notable among all the glorious colors is the Mexican flame vine adorning the arch at the entrance to her yard. An urban gardener, she grows shitake and oyster mushrooms and sells them through Eco Essentials, a co-op, which makes their cost cheaper than in the market. Her worm farm helps in aerating her compost, and Jodi also farms various vegetables and herbs.



*Build a bird house for your feathered friends at the Eco-Fair.*

Laurel Park is the first neighborhood to host an Eco-Fair. Jodi, along with Jude Levy, Suzy Hagglund and Emily Dreis are coordinating this innovative event which will have over twenty-five presenters and activities. The Sarasota Butterfly Club will bring caterpillars and information on butterfly gardening; see how a worm farm builds compost; learn how to build a backyard solar oven – these and other presentations are focused on projects that can be implemented in our small urban yards.

Gardening exhibits will include growing herbs in containers, native plants and various types of non-invasive bamboo. For those with specific plant problems or who need help identifying a plant or garden pest, the UF/Sarasota County Extension Service will provide assistance. Many other exhibitors providing information on water conservation, waste reduction, and energy/carbon reduction are also participating.

Every effort has been made to make this a “family-friendly” event. Dr. Nic, a puppeteer/musician will provide entertainment with an emphasis on environmental protection, and kids will have the opportunity to work on building a bird house (eighty kits kindly supplied by Home Depot.)

The Laurel Park neighborhood is fortunate to have Jodi John as a resident, who not only talks the talk of sustainability, but walks the walk as well.

*Nancy Richardson*

# eco • fair

Historic Laurel Park



SAT, JUNE 27, 2009  
9am - noon  
FREE FOR ALL

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Sponsored by LPNA & the City of Sarasota  
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go • green

Designed by: Emily Dreis 941.928.4884

## Need Space to Grow?

For those of you who live in an apartment or have outgrown your small backyard, one possibility to consider is participating in a community garden. The closest garden to Laurel Park is the Orange Blossom Community Garden, located at Orange and 18th Street.

This is the garden which was relocated from Rosemary when the City decided to build affordable housing in its place. (The housing was not built and the land sits empty at the moment.)

At present, the Orange Blossom Garden is full, but there is a waiting list. There is also a possibility that another community garden will be started closer to Laurel Park. If you have any interest in participating, this is a

good time to get on that list. It will position you well if a new garden is started and also lets the powers that be know that there really is sufficient interest to justify a new garden.



### Share a Plot

If starting your own plot seems like too much responsibility, remember that you can also share a plot with others, and much support and information will come your way as a community garden participant.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Extension Service at 861-9805. You can also contact Barbara Powell-Harris, one of the volunteers managers for the Orange Blossom Community Garden via email at [powellharris@aol.com](mailto:powellharris@aol.com).

### Thanks to LPNA's New & Renewed Members (since the last newsletter)

Charing Bostic  
Carol Christie & Cecily Deex  
Marianne Collins  
Rene & Margaret Desjardins  
Violet Finger  
Lyndsay Gordon  
Al & Yvonne Haffner  
Billy Hasson & Juliette Reynolds  
Marla & Peter Katz  
Valeria King  
Sierra Logan  
Sarah Malone & Baird Juckett  
Ed Midler  
Krystina Muller  
Lance Nelson  
Kathryn Price  
Barbara Southard & Greg Dibona  
Bob & Teresa Stone

Your LPNA membership is due in January of each year. Membership donations are appreciated but not required.

## THERE WAS A TIME WHEN CUSTOMERS ENJOYED BANKING WITH PEOPLE THEY KNEW AND TRUSTED



Lisette Cain - Vice President & Branch Manager

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3939 McIntosh Rd at Bee Ridge Rd • 5851 Fruitville Rd at Cattlemen Rd  
8444 S. Tamiami Trail south of Beneva Rd • 6020 Lakewood Ranch Blvd at SR 70



# Plants On the Edge



*Gaillardia*

Along our neighborhood streets, one can find a wide variety of plants growing in the rights-of-way.

Some have been planted intentionally but most others are there by nature - usually referred to as "volunteers"

or "weeds." Many of these so-called "weeds" have characteristics of good form, flowering color and perhaps most importantly, *drought resistance*.

## Right Plant, Wrong Place

"Weeds" can be good plants in the wrong place. When they show up in our yards, mixed with the more auspicious varieties, we sometimes go to extreme efforts and expense to remove them from our intended designs. They deserve more recognition as useful, drought-tolerant plants that, when grouped, or simply left alone to multiply, can be part of a low-maintenance landscape. They come in all forms - tall, grassy, low, clumping, some with small, colorful blooms or foliage. These plants

are tough and have adapted to our sandy soils by putting down deep or wide-ranging roots to find moisture.

## Wild Plants

Go out into your yard or right-of-way to see what interesting wild plants are there now and look for others nearby that are similar. Just remove all other plants, and you can begin to create a landscape design very much the same way that a stone sculptor creates a work of art - just by removing all the stone that does not contribute to the desired final shape. Of course, there is nothing final about a landscape design because it grows - always changing.

The lawn in our park is now full of such plants. One is blooming with nickel sized, yellow flowers. It's low and compact now because of mowing, but if left un-pruned, it will grow into a 3' diameter bush. Others can be naturally low and spreading.

There are wild purselanes that bloom yellow (*portulaca oleracea*) or magenta which will spread easily by seed. Vinca is a pink flowering plant that also sets small seed-pods. Turnera has yellow flowers and spreads easily by seed. Several types of kalenchoe have a wide variety of foliage shapes - from round, tubular to wide, flat leaves. These grow easily from cuttings and have soft, purplish-grey or pink-variegated foliage with tall, dark reddish blooms in fall and winter. Another great plant with colorful red and yellow flowers is gaillardia, a member of the aster (daisy) family. They are very drought resistant and spread by seed. They would be a perfect sidewalk / right-of-way plant for our neighborhood.

## Reference Sources

You don't need to know the names or much else about a plant you like but it can be interesting to research. A few good books will give you pictures, botanical names and other useful characteristics about plants you find in your yard or on your travels. One handy book is the Simon and Schuster paperback - *Guide to Florida's Native Plants*.

A very good way to look for plant information from home is to use Google-Images to quickly find what you've seen earlier. If you don't know the plant's common or botanical name, you can search for it by simply using the flower's shape and color.

*Jack Notestein*


It's time for the...

## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

against crime!

**When:** Tuesday, August 4, 2009  
**Time:** 6:00-9:00 PM  
**Where:** Payne Park/Payne Auditorium\*  
 2100 E. Laurel Street  
 Sarasota, FL 34237


\*Located in Downtown Sarasota, south of Ringling Blvd between S Washington Blvd (US 301) & S School Ave




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## Eco-Tips

Recycling is **mandatory**. Pickup day is Tuesday. If you don't have bins, call 953-6559.

You cannot recycle compact florescent lightbulbs (CFLs). Drop them at the county hazardous waste site: 8750 Bee Ridge Rd., or at Home Depot.

## Bricklaying 101 A Community Project

Get out your work gloves and dust off your potluck recipes. Laurel Park is preparing for a community brick laying project to restore the damage done to Rawls Avenue.

We last reported on our brick street preservation efforts in the February Laurel Park News. In March, Suzy Hagglund and Jude Levy accompanied City of Sarasota Public Works employees Doug Jeffcoat and Bill Hallisey to Punta Gorda to investigate that city's brick street preservation efforts. This inspiring trip began with a presentation by Rick Keeney, Public Works Director for the City of Punta Gorda titled, *Follow this Red-Brick Road --Reconstruction Using Citizen Volunteers*. Mr. Keeney's presentation outlined the history, challenges, and eventual success achieved by a citizen-initiated effort to retain and restore Punta Gorda's brick streets.

### If Punta Gorda Can Do It...

Their initiative, started in the late 1980's, continues today, and restores approximately one block per year. The City of Punta Gorda furnishes some labor and equipment but regular citizens provide most of the labor to relay the brick, a model we hope to duplicate in Laurel Park.

Bill Hallisey attended our April 18 LPNA General Meeting and asked attendees to state their preference regarding the configuration in the area where Rawls Avenue meets Oak Street. The membership decided on a narrow concrete apron rather than brick because it will hold up better. Fourteen neighbors volunteered for the labor-intensive brick installation when Rawls is ready. But please don't sit back – we will need even more participants, plus

it will be fun.

Since April, most rehabilitation efforts have occurred behind the scenes. Since we were unable to obtain enough original street brick, the City of Sarasota ordered closely matching brick from Pine Hall Brick, a brick maker since 1922. Delivery is expected in early July. Once the brick is received, the city will begin work by closing Rawls Avenue between Oak Street and Devonshire Place. The city will provide notice to residents prior to the closure, which should last about a week. The process will include removing the existing brick, some utility repairs, removal of an old water main, and reconstruction of the road base. After the base is reconstructed, a layer of sand will be installed.

Once the sand is in place, residents and friends of Laurel Park will reinstall the brick street. LPNA will keep you posted about the progress with emails and notices. Once we have established an installation date, please invite your friends and neighbors to become part of this historic rehabilitation project. Punta Gorda residents wrap up their brick laying efforts with a big community potluck, and we would like to do the same thing if residents like the idea. Let us know what you want!

In addition, LPNA will continue our preservation efforts by working with the city to revise the Engineering Design Criteria Manual (EDCM) and permitting processes to safeguard our brick when utility or development projects include street work. Who knows, perhaps this is the beginning of returning many of Sarasota's streets to their original, beautiful brick.

*Suzy Hagglund*



*Punta Gorda neighbors at work. We hope the next Laurel Park newsletter will have a similar photo with Sarasotans laying brick. Photos are from "Follow this Red-Brick Road --Reconstruction Using Citizen Volunteers."*

# Laurel Park Birds, *continued from page 1*

Balanced on the edge of the bird-bath, they tip over like a child's toy to take a sip. Their clownish antics on the birdfeeder remind me that their ancestors were caged pets who ate from containers. These large, 12-inch birds hang upside down, thrust their talons into the feeder to reach sunflower seeds, flapping their wings and screeching the whole time. (Black-hooded parakeets are often called Monk Parrots. Both thrive on the West Coast of Florida, but the most common in Sarasota are the Black-hooded. And technically, they are parakeets, not parrots.)

## Welcome Invasion

Almost every year, usually in January or February, large flocks of American robins find my back yard. They are en route from the Caribbean and South America to northern breeding areas. Two years ago the flock numbered in the hundreds and stuck around for several days. My decks were literally wall-to-wall robins. Water being the attraction (they are not seed eaters) I put out every available shallow container. Large plant saucers were continually ringed with 25-30 robins at a time. Dozens of times a day I filled the containers. The second morning of the invasion I saw one cedar waxwing among the hundreds of robins. The distinctive black eyepatch, the sleek and elegant olive color with red and

yellow accents stood out. But there he was, an accepted member of the flock despite being hugely outnumbered. One of my bird books notes that cedar waxwings flock to migrate and feed and that they often do it with American robins! A lifelong birder, it was news to me.

The only downside to this semi-annual invasion is obvious. Hundreds of robins produce a lot of poop. And the fact that they feast on Brazilian pepper berries means that the seeds germinate in my preserve. So long after the robins had made it to New England and other points north, I was still finding Brazilian pepper sprouts. Small price to pay for a spectacular backyard event, especially with a cedar waxwing hitch hiker. What birds have you seen in your Laurel Park yard? Or overhead or while walking the dog. Surely there are many other birders in the neighborhood. Let's start a dialogue about our sightings. Did I tell you about the blue grosbeak that came to my feeder in April? Or the oriole in the birdbath?

## Share Your Sightings

Send an email to: [lowmancarter@verizon.net](mailto:lowmancarter@verizon.net) with your birdy comments, observations, identifications. I'll put together another LP newsletter article from your input.

*Ellen McKeefe*



# Support Your Neighborhood

Become a Member   
or Friend  of the LPNA!

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- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- American Kestrel
- Laughing Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Rock Dove
- Eurasian Collared Dove

- Mourning Dove
- Black-hooded Parakeet
- Eastern Screech Owl
- Chimney Swift
- Belted Kingfisher
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Fish Crow
- Purple Martin
- Tree Swallow
- Carolina Wren
- House Wren
- Marsh Wren
- Blue-grey Gnatcatcher
- American Robin

- Grey Catbird
- Northern Mockingbird
- Brown Thrasher
- European Starling
- Cedar Waxwing
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Palm Warbler
- Black-and-white Warbler
- Savannah Sparrow
- Northern Cardinal
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Blue Grosbeak
- Common Grackle
- Boat-tailed Grackle
- Orchard Oriole
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch

## The State of Real Estate

by Betsy Sublette

There have been 6 properties sold since the most recent newsletter:

612 Ohio Place	List Price \$225,000 Sold Price \$225,000
507 Madison Ct.	List Price \$290,000 Sold Price \$226,500
527 Madison Ct.	List Price \$320,000 Sold Price \$300,000
320 Ohio Place	List Price \$399,000 Sold Price \$305,000
602 Ohio Place	List Price \$624,900 Sold Price \$595,000
There is one sale pending at 1638 Oak Street. List Price \$299,000	

Below are Properties that have seen a price adjustment since the last issue of the newsletter, February 2009.

1842 Hawkins Ct.	\$225,000 to \$204,900
1651 Devonshire	\$269,000 to \$239,000
1659 Oak Street	\$390,000 to \$309,900
1828 Hawkins Ct.	\$425,500 to \$399,900
1860 Hawkins Ct.	\$729,000 to \$550,000
1841 Oak Street	\$699,000 to \$649,000
1855 Oak Street	\$990,000 to \$850,000

Currently there are 17 residences listed for sale in Laurel Park.

*Information Provided by Betsy Sublette, Realtor  
Signature Sotheby's International Realty  
Source: Sarasota Multiple Listing System*

Special thanks to Laurel Park residents Bob and Teresa Stone, who own Minuteman Press on the corner of Fruitville Road and Lime Avenue. They are registered with the City as an authorized Neighborhood Association Newsletter printer and they always do a great job with printing our newsletters.



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**Vice President: Chris Jaensch**  
**Treasurer: Betsy Sublette**  
**Secretary: Suzy Hagglund**

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and  
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