



News and the City: Roger Drouin Reports on Downtown

Laurel Park is known for attracting young professionals and the creative class. This must be why it attracts journalists as residents. Their work embodies both professionalism and creativity.

The leading journalist in the neighborhood at the moment is unquestionably Roger Drouin. Roger is City Editor of *The Observer*, a weekly newspaper with a Sarasota city edition that focuses on the downtown area and its neighborhoods.

Roger, who is 27 years old, has lived in Laurel Park since he moved to Sarasota in 2004. He currently lives on Columbia Court with Sandy, a six-year old “North Carolina Hound Dog.”

When asked why he chose Laurel Park, Roger replies, “I wouldn’t live anywhere else in Sarasota.” He says he “gets a little nauseous” when he travels to gated communities and prefers Laurel Park because it is close to downtown. Roger also likes the diversity of Laurel Park and feels that it is very inclusive. “It feels like more of a collegiate setting,” he says

Roger’s work at *The Observer* affords him an opportunity that many other Laurel Park residents miss—he regularly attends city meetings and personally gets to know the decision-makers. His deep involvement in the business of the city is reflected in Roger’s work.

Roger writes up to five news articles a week, often from his “second office” at Metro Café on Osprey. His work consistently projects a mature, informed and objective tone (which often contrasts with the strongly opinionated editorial section of his paper). In the past few months alone, Roger has written extensively on the city commission election, the search for a new City Manager (and the noteworthy candidate for the job, Susan Stanton), as well as numerous proposals for new city developments and initiatives.

Though Roger strives to remain

impartial in his work, he does have strong opinions about the city and the neighborhood, which make for very interesting conversation. For example, he thinks that a “vocal minority has too much power” in Sarasota and that city leaders need to see beyond this distraction. He thinks that Sarasota has the opportunity to be one of the best cities in America, but its people need to be more open-minded and see beyond real estate and tourism.

Roger rents part of a triplex in Laurel Park and says that he would love to own a home here, but it just is not possible. Prices in Laurel Park are currently out of range for him and many other renters. “I would buy a 500 square foot place, if I could walk downtown.” Roger says.

Roger believes that Laurel Park needs to do some “soul-searching” and develop some ideas to maintain its multi-family rental properties and affordability. “This keeps vibrancy and balance,” he says. He thinks that housing should be “naturally affordable” without government handouts, but that more can be done by the neighborhood.

For instance, Roger believes that Laurel Park’s zoning is fine, but that it should not preclude site specific projects. “Density is not a bad word if planned right,” he believes. Without changes, Roger predicts that the number of living units in Laurel Park will decrease significantly and people like him will live elsewhere.

Though he is writing a book in his free time, Roger takes great pleasure in being a journalist as his primary field of endeavor. “If there is an issue that needs to be addressed and residents are getting no traction; and then something gets done [as a result of my work], that is the best feeling,” he says.

We hope that Roger Drouin will continue his important work reporting on our city...and that he will continue doing it from his home base in Laurel Park!

– Chris Jaensch



From the Secretary's Desk

Hi neighbors. Deb Dart is otherwise occupied this month and asked me to write an article. She said to have fun with it, so here goes.

Congratulations to Jolie McInnis and Kasy Kane, who spearheaded Tunes in the Park and the Great American Cleanup events in April. So many volunteers worked hard to make these two neighborhood events so successful and fun for everyone. Thanks to all of you! If you haven't noticed, the butterfly garden looks beautiful. Check it out next time you walk by the park.

If you run into Chris Jaensch around the neighborhood, please take a moment to thank him for his years of service to the Laurel Park Neighborhood Association. Chris is stepping off the board for a while and we will sorely miss his contributions as newsletter editor and chief, website director, communications guru and neighborhood advocate.

Several people will try to fill his shoes. Kate Lowman has agreed to become our newsletter editor and I will begin issuing the email updates. We welcome a new board member, Ken Wingate, who has graciously agreed to add his talents and serve our neighborhood. The board is still seeking a creative soul willing to volunteer as webmaster.

The LPNA board has been busy this spring and it looks like we'll have no shortage of challenges over the summer. We've been trying to keep on top of seven redevelopment projects in varying stages around the neighborhood to lessen the impact they have on residents.

On a daily basis, we're dealing with increased traffic (especially trucks), homeless camping, garbage dumping, unkempt and overgrown lots, and thousands of feet of often failing black plastic silt fences around construction sites. LPNA board members have worked with the city staff, developers, and business people to reduce the negative effects these projects have on our neighborhood. We've learned that our city codes and ordinances need periodic review and updates so they compel developers to be considerate of residents and property, and provide adequate penalty when consideration lacks.

Our national register historic district nomination is now complete and we anticipate approval at the state level this summer.

You may have received Deb Dart's letter asking you to support conservation of our streetscapes including, sidewalks, curbs and original brick paving. Please take a moment to sign and return the form to us. You may either mail it to P.O. Box 1485, Sarasota, FL 34230, or fax it to 365-8906. We are working with city staff to formulate a plan and process that will minimize the negative impact that utility repairs and construction have on our historic streets. Thank you if you have already returned it.

Please email me, suzy.hagglund@verizon.net if you have information that should be published in an email update. I am also working to keep our list of neighbors and property owners current. If your email address changes, or if you are new to the neighborhood, please send me an email.

I wish everyone a healthy, happy and peaceful summer.

Suzy Hagglund

Secretary LPNA

LAUREL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD STREETScape PLAN

Adopted May 8, 2007

By LPNA Board of Directors

It is the goal of the Laurel Park Neighborhood Association to retain and preserve its existing streetscapes that significantly contribute to the historic neighborhood's local distinctiveness, character and scale.

To achieve this goal the LPNA recommends:

1. Guidelines be drawn for emergency street work to retain the original roads, curbs and sidewalks.
2. The City Commission immediately adopt a resolution to halt all non emergency street work in Laurel Park until a plan for the retention and preservation of the streetscapes of the Laurel Park National Register Historic District is adopted. Only necessary/ emergency repair work is to be completed during the stay under specific guidelines to prevent further destruction of the original materials and complements, i.e. curbing and sidewalks.
3. Complete a thorough survey of the roadways, curbs and sidewalks to determine:
 - a. Extent and location of continuous brick paving below asphalt
 - b. Areas needing immediate repair to preserve infrastructure
 - c. Needs for storm water and utility access to ease future repairs
4. Map the streets to indicate desired road surfaces for the purpose of developing guidelines and budgeting for repair and restoration.
5. Identify funding sources to assist with the road, curb and sidewalk improvements.
6. Have the City Commission adopt the plan for the retention and preservation of the historic streetscapes of the Laurel Park National Register Historic District and lift the stay when the plan is adopted.

Message From the Laurel Park News Editor

This is my seventh and final quarterly issue of the Laurel Park News. It is hard to believe how fast time has passed.

Over the past three years as a member of the LPNA Board of Directors, I have seen (and reported on) many changes to the neighborhood. We have had three excellent Presidents all of whom, in my opinion, have made a tremendous impact.

The first President during my tenure, Gaia Goldman, reestablished and reenergized a neighborhood board that was made up of residents. She revised the association bylaws and set the foundation for the current active group that directs the LPNA. Gaia still contributes with regular newsletter columns on real estate and crime.

Kate Lowman was the next President during my time on the board. She led the effort to prevent changes to Laurel Park's land use classification and zoning, which could have resulted in taller buildings and more intense commercial uses. Kate also elevated Laurel Park to being one of the most influential neighborhoods in the city. Kate still contributes as an LPNA Board Member and will be my successor as Laurel Park News Editor.

The current President, Deb Dart, is now leading the charge to preserve the critical historic elements that give Laurel Park its charm. She and others put an incredible effort into attaining historic designation for the neighborhood and is now working with the city to finalize a plan to preserve our streetscapes.

Though I am taking a break from my active involvement in Laurel Park for a while, these leaders and other committed residents are a reminder that involvement can take many forms. Of course, I will continue to "participate" by drinking wine at the next Tunes in the Park. But, I also look forward to

finding a new role to keep Laurel Park the best neighborhood in the city. As predecessor at this newsletter used to say, "We rock!"

Thanks to everyone who has helped me during my tenure. This includes Bob and Teresa Stone, the printers at Minuteman Press, Irena Yardley, the expert graphic designer and layout guru, Barbara Southard, the advertising coordinator, the regular and substitute newsletter distributors (Bobby Fletcher, Gaia Goldman, Jolie McInnis, Jack Notestein, Betsy Sublett, Suzy Hagglund, Mike Shade, Kate Lowman, Billy Hasson and the late, great Andy Whittington). Also thanks to the many residents who played a part in or contributed stories to the newsletter. It definitely would not have been the same without you all. See you around the neighborhood!

– Chris Jaensch

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A Modern Renovation in Laurel Park



The “Baird House” owned by Anne-Marie and Michael Lang, combines old with new, and a spectacular backyard water feature.

It is an unfortunate reality in Laurel Park that many of our historic homes are too small and/or too deteriorated to warrant a traditional renovation. This has led to many homes being demolished or moved out of the neighborhood. Others remain with “for sale” signs sitting in the front yard, but have limited prospects for future preservation.

Anne-Marie and Michael Lang have found an alternative to the tear-down approach. About two years ago, they purchased an historic Mediterranean-style home in the Washington Park section of Oak Street. The home was originally completed in 1928 or early 1929 and is approximately 80 years old. Most people refer to the home as the “Baird House,” because the Baird family owned the home for much of its existence.

The Baird House was in terrible condition. Michael Lang says, “From a pure economic basis, it was a toss up

on whether it should be torn down.” But, Michael and Anne-Marie decided that they liked the historic features of the house and could not duplicate them with new construction.

As a result, the Langs embarked on a “modern renovation,” which was a two-year odyssey to preserve, adapt, and restore those features of the Baird House that could be saved, and replace the features that were unsalvageable. However, instead of simply replacing the old parts with look-alike reproductions, the Langs incorporated many modern and eco-friendly features. The result is an entirely new home that simultaneously feels old and graceful yet completely up to date.

Starting with the outside of the home, the four exterior walls of the home are original (excluding a small portion of the back wall, which was an old porch that had been enclosed at some point and was crumbling). The sturdy roof

timbers were still solid after 80 years and some of the plywood roof deck was saved.

Beyond that, most of the exterior features are new. The dilapidated red-asphalt roof covering was replaced with new, clay roof tiles that were hand-made in Honduras. Anne-Marie says that she wanted roof tiles that looked like the historic tiles on the home next-door and credits Feeney Roofing for their help in sourcing and installing the roof. The windows were replaced, the front-porch overhang was reconstructed with cypress, and the home was repainted in an earthy tan.

The landscaping was completely transformed by a local landscaper named Ben Appel of Appel Horticultural Services. The Langs say that they decided to omit grass and use a combination of stone, sand and drought-tolerant plants. They installed a water-collection and cistern system to catch and re-use rain water.

photo by Herb Ritts



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The most impressive landscape element is in the backyard. The Langs created an enormous water feature behind the house that looks like a natural lagoon. The bottom of the water feature is lined with sand and surrounded by rocks, boulders and tropical plants. There are at least three waterfalls and fountains cascading into the water at one time. The water feature is built around an exterior concrete arch that was original to the home and now looks like the remnant of an old castle. The overall effect is unlike anything you will see elsewhere in Sarasota.

The interior of the Baird House equally combines old with new. When you walk into the house, you enter the main living room, which is largely unchanged

architecturally. The ceiling of the main living room was built very tall with a series of terra cotta vents so that hot air could escape from the room. The room features original tile work on the walls, the original wood floor and the old brick fireplace.

Despite these historic aspects, however, the living room is totally modern. There are large abstract art pieces on each wall, modern furniture and the latest in audio-visual technology. The old wood floor has been refinished in a contemporary dark stain. New walls were constructed in a smooth stucco finish to complement the old walls.

The rest of the house is similar. Old features such as original doors and

hardware are juxtaposed with bamboo floors, stained concrete countertops manufactured on-site, and ultra-modern appliances. One bathroom includes a Japanese soaking tub and a pedestal sink in which the pedestal is made from a cypress tree stump.

Anne-Marie and Michael's modern renovation is noteworthy because it points out that using a creative approach could lead to the preservation of more of Laurel Park's classic homes. Significant changes to a home may make it ineligible for historic designation. Nevertheless, much of Laurel Park's past would remain to be enjoyed by generations to come.

— Chris Jaensch

2001



1960



1959 (Mr. Baird)



1956



1954



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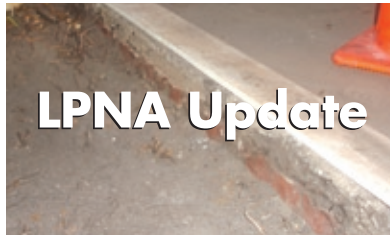

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Utility Pole Update

Suzy Hagglund contacted FPL, Comcast and Verizon concerning the status of removing the old utility poles related to an FPL facility upgrade. FPL's representative stated they could not remove the old poles until Comcast and Verizon had moved their facilities to the new poles. Verizon's representative stated they had moved all their facilities to the new poles. Comcast's representative advised they were in the process of building duplicate facilities on the new poles. When these were constructed and hot, they had to move each subscriber, one-by-one, to the new system. Much of the work was being conducted at night so subscribers would not experience an interruption in service. Although he would not give an exact date, it sounded like the work would be complete within a month.

By the end of 2007, the Laurel Park Neighborhood Association expect the neighborhood to be awarded designation as a National Register Historic District by the National Park Service. In addition, LPNA is working with the City of Sarasota to finalize a plan and policy to retain and reuse the historic brick streets in the district.

In 2005, the LPNA's Historic Preservation Committee identified more than 250 buildings in Laurel Park that contribute to forming a historic district along with a network of wonderful old brick streets, original curbs and sidewalks. After deciding that a national historic district would be the best plan to pursue, we focused our efforts on obtaining support and financial assistance from the city's Historic Preservation Board and Commissioners. With their generous assistance, the nomination was completed, filed and is presently being reviewed by the State of Florida.



Brick streets discovered under Cherry Lane

The LPNA has tried for many years to enlist the city's help to protect Laurel Park's old streetscapes – the bricks, original curbs and sidewalks. In October 2006, Laurel Park residents and property owners voted unanimously to establish a policy and process to properly repair the streets and, when funding is available, restore many to their original brick paving. This month, the city has invited us to yet another meeting to discuss this. We hope the outcome will finalize and direct implementation of a firm plan before the end of 2007.

The LPNA board members stay engaged with city staff to continue to mitigate the impact of redevelopment on the neighborhood's historic infrastructure and to minimize the inconveniences to our residents. The association is dedicated to keeping the area a vibrant, healthy and desirable place to live, work and visit.

– Deborah Dart

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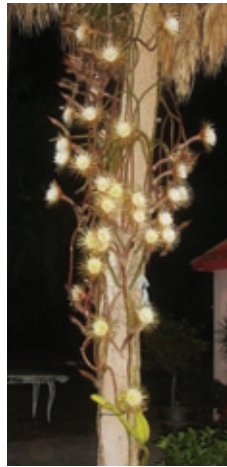
As we approach summertime, keep these suggestions in mind:

Forget fertilizing during the rainy season June thru October. Consider that rainfall will wash your fertilizer off your landscape and it will end up in our creeks, lakes, and ultimately in Sarasota Bay. If you must fertilize, apply a timed release fertilizer, applying it only once or twice per year, and use yard clippings as a supplement year round. Near water, leave a 25 ft border free of fertilizer and 6 ft free of mowing.

Limit or eliminate use of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides. Keep your yard safe for children, pets, and wildlife. Consider natural solutions.

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Cereus blooms

4, 6 or 8) may water only on Tuesdays. Odd addresses (house numbers ending with 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9) may water only Thursdays. Water between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Resources to find out more:

Florida Yards & Neighborhoods/Florida friendly landscaping: www.fyn.ifas.ufl.edu

Southwest Florida Water Management: www.watmatters.org

Beyond Pesticides: www.beyondpesticides.org

This information was provided by your local Sierra Club. For more information please contact, Stuart DeCew, Regional Representative, 951-6084



Laurel Park Police Report Sarasota Police Department

March 15, 2007 - June 13, 2007 • If you see crime happening call 316-1199

Information compiled by Gaia Goldman, Laurel Park Neighborhood Crime Watch Coordinator

03/22/07	Battery – Non Serious	1703 Oak St	05/11/07	Burglary – Structure	646 Columbia Ct
03/23/07	Burglary – Vehicle	1669 Laurel St	05/23/07	Burglary – Vehicle	1670 Laurel St
04/20/07	Armed Robbery	Cherry Ln/Osprey Ave	05/29/07	Battery – Non Serious	1637 Devonshire Ln
04/24/07	Rape – Forced Intercourse	1912 Morrill St	06/02/07	Burglary – Vehicle	1680 Oak St
05/05/07	Battery – Non Serious	1652 Oak St	06/09/07	Aggravated Assault	626 Ohio Pl

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The State Of Real Estate

by Gaia Goldman

Since the last real estate report on March 15, 2007, there have been zero property sales in Laurel Park. There are many properties for sale or rent at the moment and prices seem to be failing. The list below shows the properties currently listed for sale on the MLS along with the current asking price compared to the original asking price..

	Today's Price	Price Started
1644 Dolphin Ln	\$1,495,000	
1654 Dolphin Ln	\$1,295,000	
1718 Cherry Ln	\$1,149,000	
1724 Cherry Ln	\$ 997,000	\$1,245,000
1849 Laurel St	\$ 899,000	
1850 Hawkins	\$ 775,000	\$ 875,000
1660 Oak St	\$ 750,000	\$ 900,000
638 Madison Ct	\$ 699,000	
1910 Laurel St	\$ 650,000	
1864 Laurel St #4	\$ 570,500	\$ 670,000
527 Madison Ct	\$ 549,000	\$ 735,000
1685 Laurel St #2	\$ 545,500	\$ 712,000
1685 Laurel St #3	\$ 515,500	\$ 672,000
1841 Laurel St	\$ 449,000	\$ 639,000
654 Lafayette Ct	\$ 425,000	
643 Ohio Pl	\$ 399,000	\$ 525,000
1927 Laurel St	\$ 375,000	\$ 489,000
1830 Hawkins Ct (lot)	\$ 359,000	\$ 446,250
1859 Laurel St (lot)	\$ 325,000	\$ 374,900
659 Ohio Pl	\$ 279,000	\$ 393,000

Listing and sales data obtained from the Sarasota Association of Realtors Multiple Listing Service and provided by Gaia Goldman, Broker Associate, Michael Saunders & Co.

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.



Downtown Sarasota

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