



Civic Chatline



Happy Thanksgiving



Volume X Issue IX

November 2006

Civic member Jeff Kottkamp now Lt. Governor-elect

As you all know Cape's own Jeff Kottkamp was elected, as Charlie Crist's running mate, to be the next Lt. Governor for the State of Florida. That's some pretty impressive stuff! We all want Jeff to know how proud Cape Coral Civic is of his 'promotion' up the political ladder.



Civic has been honored to have Jeff as a member and our State Representative for Dist. 74 for several years. We sincerely

hope that Jeff will continue both his membership and periodic visits to our meetings. Most importantly, it is with all sincerity that we hope Jeff has felt at home when he comes to Civic.

Again Jeff, allow us to extend our most hardy congratulations to you, Cyndie and Jackson on your historic and prestigious accomplishment.

Civic Expresses Thanks

Civic thanks our new Dist. 74 State Representative



Gary Aubuchon who was appointed to replace Jeff Kottkamp and new Police Chief Rob Petrovich for being guest speakers last month. We appreciate them taking time out of their schedules so that

they could be at Civic. We look forward to having them back at a future meeting.

Congratulations Tom Clark



Civic member Tom Clark easily defeated incumbent Mark Smith for the Lee County Soil & Water Conservation Dist. 3 (Lee SWCD) Supervisory Board position. Free Irrigation System Evaluations are available for all Lee County residents from the S & WCD, call 995-5678

Civic Elections this month, Nov. 28.

This month at Civic the order of business as provided in our by laws will be the election of the Civic Board of Directors for the 2007-2008 term of office. Ballots will be provided to all members in good standing upon signing in at the November meeting.

The following names provided by the nominating committee at the October meeting will appear on the ballot. Any nominations from the floor at the November meeting will then be added to the ballot for your consideration. Any candidate who is nominated from the floor must be present, or must provide written confirmation in advance of the meeting, to accept the nomination.

Nominated Candidates:

- President.....Shawn Seliger
- Vice PresidentDiane Leelo Bush
- Secretary.....Frank Perry
- Treasurer.....Rillie Hickey

Trustees:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|
| Evan Bush | Bill Fekety | Jane Longo |
| Frank Miletti | Nick Tomacelli | Art Vitale |

ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS

Elections for the Board of Directors will be held once every two (2) years in the month of November at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Cape Coral Civic Association. Election qualifications: the President and Vice-President must be members of the association for one (1) year, board members six (6) months, prior to the election. Elections are held in even years and only those members in good standing are eligible to vote. A quorum requires ten (10) members to be in attendance. Elections will be conducted via secret ballot or show of hands as determined by the membership.

Council member Alex LePera to Speak at Civic, Nov. 28

Last month Civic pulled a surprise request on Council member Alex LePera in asking her to speak without any advance warning while waiting on the arrival of the Lee Memorial Hospital Board candidates. Alex did an excellent job addressing a number of subjects requested by Civic.

This month since we don't know how much time the Civic elections will consume we have again asked Alex to be our speaker.

If no additional candidates are nominated from the floor at the meeting, the candidates who were nominated at the October meeting and whose names appear on the ballot will be elected without opposition.





Politics in Paradise

A look at bureaucrats and elected officials

Dr. Mark Asked to Resign

On Nov. 13, the Municipal Charter School Board Authority came to city council asking for money (\$400,000 loan) from the tax payers to keep the city charter schools afloat.

The financial problems plaguing the schools are a result of an inadequate enrollment at the two new schools; Christa McAuliffe Elementary and Oasis Middle which opened in August. For each empty seat, the Charter School Board authority loses approx. \$4000. per year from the state. Hence, the dilemma in their inability to pay back the debt that is owed for the buildings (approx. \$35M) and their inability in meeting their daily operational expenses.



Dr. Patrick Mark

At the Nov. 13, City Council meeting Municipal Charter Schools Administrator Dr. Patrick Mark was asked if he was willing to resign his position by Mayor Feichthaler. Mark declined. Council then took a vote of "no confidence" in Mark with a recommendation to the Charter School Board Authority, that Mark immediately be fired with cause. After the no confidence vote council then voted (7-1 LePera voted no) to continue to fund the Charter School with "day loans" until Dec. 11. At that time the School Board is to submit a budget plan to council. Council voted to continue funding the schools despite much *posturing and pontificating*, by some, on how the city cannot be the money tree for the schools and references to the promises that were made that taxpayers would not be funding them.

The next day Dr. Mark resigned effective Feb. 13. On Nov. 20, the School Board meet and accepted Mark's resignation terms with no discussion about firing him immediately. They also appointed the school principals as the interim management team. Dr. Mark will be collecting about two months pay.

Obviously, the school board is missing the mark, pardon the pun. Obviously, their priorities were about a High School instead of insuring the success and full enrollment of K-8.

Obviously, city council needs to *Say What They Mean, Mean What They Say*. The promises made to the taxpayers have been broken and in all probability will continue. *They Lied!*

Civic had good reason to voice opposition when the city got into the education business *without voter approval*.

Lee Memorial Hospital Board Elections

The following were elected to the Lee Memorial Hospital Board. Lee Memorial controls 95% of the beds in Lee County after purchasing SW FL Regional and Gulf Coast Hospitals for some \$535 million.

Akin, Yost and Babb are all newcomers to the hospital board and have indicated they would have either voted against the purchase or would have done it in the "public eye."

Hospital Board elections are voted on county wide.

- Dist 2 Nancy McGovern, Richard Akin
- Dist 4 Frank LaRosa, Jason Yost
- Dist 5 Kerry Babb



President's Message Nov. 2006

Dear Members and Friends,

As we approach the holiday season we are reminded of and thankful for the many things, family and friends that we have. Soon we will also be seeing the annual migration of snowbirds that will congest our roads and fill our stores and restaurants. We all need to remember to make allowances since there is very little that we can do to change our inconveniences. Try to make our guests feel welcome.

Last month Civic had another great meeting. In addition to our guest speakers we also provided an opportunity to meet the candidates for the Lee Memorial Hospital Board. As you recall, they arrived about 8 PM since they also had the Nt. Ft. Myers Civic meeting to attend. Things went well and it's always a pleasure for me to report how others see CC Civic, especially when we are being compared to other meetings. We again got great feedback from the hospital board candidates for our format, our attendance and venue.

This month's meeting is an extremely important time for the CC Civic Association since we will be electing our 2007-2008 Officers and Board of Trustees. I know each



and every one of the candidates that have been nominated. I have every confidence that Lyndia Bradley and the nominating committee have brought to the members an excellent slate of candidates. However, as you know, our by-laws also provide for the members to nominate other candidates from the floor at the November meeting. Please show your interest in your association by being present at the meeting and participating in the election process. Let us, the Cape Coral Civic Association, not show the same sort of apathy that we have been seeing in the political elections of late.

The November meeting will also be our last meeting for this year. The next meeting will be Tuesday Jan. 23, 2007. It will be at that meeting that your newly elected President and Board of Directors will be sworn in. Remember and be proud of the fact that this process has been going on with at the Cape coral Civic Association for almost 45 years! There is no other club or organization in Cape Coral with that tenure. We will celebrate our 45th Anniversary at our April 2007 meeting. I hope you are looking forward to that as much as I am!

One final note, on behalf of the current Civic Board of Directors, and my wife Alex, I want to extend to each and everyone of you a safe and joyous holiday season.

With Best Regards and Best Wishes,

Ralph LePera

"The Association is for the betterment of Cape Coral."

**Civic is now accepting 2007 dues
Still only \$15.00/year/family**

“The City of Cape Coral should not be in the education business.”

Posted are abbreviated news articles relative to the funding issues that have plagued the City's Charter Schools. As you can see the demands of growth cause a chain reaction to provide more schools, conversely the downturn in that growth now has left school districts (and the city) with excess seats that are not being funded by the state.

Cape's new charter schools will open

The following is an excerpt from a N-P story. By Jason Wermers Originally posted, July 14, 2006

Cape Coral's two new city-run charter schools will open Aug. 8 for students, officials said this morning. During a meeting today between Charter School Governing Board Chairwoman Mary Margaret Embroli, charter schools Administrator Patrick Mark and city financial staff, the charter school system was able to realize more than \$600,000 in cost savings.....

The biggest savings — more than \$200,000 — comes from reducing the number of teaching positions in the budget. That is because the spending plan was based on the brand-new 660-pupil Oasis Charter Middle and 580-pupil Christa McAuliffe Charter Elementary schools having their full enrollment. But because both schools have fewer students — McAuliffe had 384 as of Thursday, and Oasis Middle had 268 — fewer teachers are needed.

City financial staff had presented a bleak picture on Wednesday, showing that the only way the charter school system could avoid a deficit in 2006-07 would be to not open McAuliffe and run a K-8 school at Oasis Middle.

Low growth costs schools funds

By The Associated Press (Not the total article)

Originally posted on November 16, 2006 School districts will lose \$203 million in state assistance because statewide enrollment increased by fewer than 500 students this year, far below the projected growth rate, Florida education officials said Thursday.

The 0.02 percent increase is the lowest since the 1981-82 school year, when statewide enrollment also declined by less than a percentage point. The net growth of only 477 students brought statewide enrollment to 2,641,598. The Department of Education had projected an increase of 48,853 students that lawmakers used when writing the annual state budget.

The \$203 million in enrollment-based funding that's no longer needed — out of \$9.9 billion in state assistance — will return to Florida's treasury. The Legislature then will decide how it will be spent. School districts also will lose about \$1 million out of \$8.4 billion in local funding.

Cheri Pierson Yecke, state chancellor for kindergarten through 12th grade, said officials can only speculate on why the enrollment has become stagnant. “We don't know because there are multiple factors at play,” Yecke said. “Affordable housing is one. Insurance costs is another, hurricane activity.”.....

County enrollments figures will be released Friday. Officials in many districts had anticipated missing their projections and already have made staffing and budgetary adjustments, Yecke said. She said it still took state officials by surprise because they didn't begin to hear that districts were expecting lower numbers until the spring and summer — after the Legislature already had approved the annual state budget.

The enrollment numbers, though, aren't all bad news. “This will make it easier for districts to meet class size requirements,” Yecke said. The lower-than-expected enrollment also will help with a teacher shortage, but education officials still estimate Florida will need 21,875 new teachers next year.

Schools owe \$7.4 million

Lee enrollment falls short so money must revert to state By Dave Breitenstein Originally posted November 18, 2006

Lee County schools must return \$7.4 million to the state because enrollment counts failed to match projections. ***Lee reported a net gain of 3,565 students — more than any other Florida county — but its summer enrollment spike still fell short of the expected 5,192-student jump. Because 1,628 students aren't sitting in classrooms here, schools are not entitled to keep the money.....***

Information was not available Friday as to which schools missed their marks, although low enrollment at Cape Coral's city-run charter schools have put that system in financial limbo.

Lee Superintendent James Browder says paying back the money won't be a problem. The school district's 2006-07 budget includes a \$4.5 million reserve specifically for a possible enrollment shortfall and an additional \$2.5 million reserve in case schools saw an influx of students. “We'll be able to cover it with our reserves, and schools will not notice any changes,” Lee budget director Ami Desamours said. Statewide, floundering head counts have Florida school systems marking “return to sender” on \$204 million, money that will be saved for next year's education budget.....

The state projected a net increase of 48,853 students, but official data the Florida Department of Education released Friday pegged the net growth at just 477 full-time-equivalent students. That's a minuscule 0.02 percent gain in a state with 2.6 million public school students.....

Veterans Day November 11

Veterans' Day is a holiday formerly observed in the United States as Armistice Day in commemoration of the signing of the Armistice ending World War I.

Nov. 11 officially became Veterans' Day on May 24, 1954, by act of Congress. The day is set aside in honor of all those who have fought in defense of the United States. Let us repeat that, **“the day is set aside in honor of all those who have**

fought in defense of the United States.”

It never ceases to amaze us why some city officials choose to ignore the significance of this day especially



when the City of Cape Coral has one of the largest parades around in honor of this day of those that served.

Civic salutes our city officials, Mayor Feichthaler, Council members Bertonlini, Hair and LePera and City manager Stewart for their active participation in the Veteran's Day parade. We're not sure who dressed as the dog.



Cape Coral Civic Assn.
2007 SE 10th Avenue
Cape Coral, FL 33990



Next General Meeting: Tues. Nov. 28 , 7-9 p.m. CC Yacht Club

Chatline is a publication of the CC Civic Assn. and intended for the enjoyment of its members

Civic Web Page: <http://www.capecoralcivicassociation.org> Visit On-Line forum <http://civicchatline.blogspot.com>

CCCA Board of Directors

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