

Dealing with homelessness in Brevard

As I started to write this article, I thought about how long homelessness has been with us. This realization truly upset me. In the past, we viewed the merry band of Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood as saviors of the needy. Well, times change and so does our thinking. I hope through this series of articles that readers will become aware of more than homelessness. We should ask ourselves some hard questions. Why haven't we been able to develop affordable housing? What is holding us back from establishing alternative ways of living to care for our aging population and prevent homelessness?

The City of Palm Bay recently asked for input on how to use the \$18 million they received in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money to address homelessness and affordable housing. How much is available from all cities in Brevard? And, does



HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD
JOE STECKLER

the county have similar money that could attract major foundation funding for a unique new plan to build affordable housing? Anything is possible, you just need a good plan that will appeal to funding sources.

There is a lot of unused land in Brevard County, much of which is controlled by the cities and the county. And there is a lot of government money available to help fund a well thought out plan. Perhaps we need to think outside the box. What if we avail our-

selves of some of the millions in the Sadowski Fund set up by Governor Lawton Chiles to build affordable housing? Oh, I forgot, the Fund was raided by legislators for pet projects!! Think what \$200 million donated annually to counties across Florida could have accomplished if used for the purpose intended.

Although I have long been a supporter of building affordable housing, I was unaware that the City of Melbourne had created a new staff position to study and present solutions to homelessness in the city. They hired Community Affairs Liaison on October 11, 2021. The person hired resigned the position four months later. No reason was given, even though the persons qualifications seemed appropriate for the position. This all is a little surprising in that Helping Seniors has long advocated for affordable housing and was not aware of the position nor of any

meetings to discuss the issue. In my opinion, pulling panhandlers off city roads and turning Daily Bread into a 24-hour operation will not solve the problem.

I know that the County Commission on Aging is aware of the lack of affordable housing. I believe it should take the lead in developing a plan to build affordable housing. For my part, I intend to keep writing articles to make more of us aware of the need for affordable housing for seniors and those homeless in Brevard. I would certainly be available to help build the plan, but it will necessarily be a challenge from start to finish and will require a small group of informed citizens to make it happen, leaving the politics of the effort at the front door.

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org, or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

Crime

From page 5

Malikai Howard, 19, of Cocoa, was arrested March 28 and charged with leaving the scene of a crash involving injury other than serious bodily injury, aggravated fleeing with injury or property damage, petty theft 2nd degree larceny (1st offense), aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer/firefighter/EMT, grand theft of a motor vehicle, and grand theft larceny over \$750 and less than \$5,000.

Jeremy Kish, 31, of Melbourne, was arrested March 28 and charged with assault on a law

enforcement officer/firefighter/EMT, and resisting officer without violence.

Robert Lloyd, 57, (address not listed), was arrested March 28 and charged with discharging firearm in public, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon without intent to kill, and possession of firearm/weapon/ammo by a convicted felon.

Amanda Vanterpool, 33, of Rockledge, was arrested March 28 and charged with driving under the influence causing death to human/unborn child, and vehicular manslaughter of human or unborn child.

Haleigh Ware, 31, of Morgantown, NC, was arrested March 28 and charged with out of

state fugitive, possession of a controlled substance, and introduction of contraband into county detention facility.

Omaree Fletcher, 34, of Cocoa, was arrested March 29 and charged with grand theft larceny over \$5,000 and less than \$10,000, aggravated battery causing bodily harm or disability, and kidnapping and inflicting bodily harm or terrorizing victim.

Hayward Hilton, 23, of Melbourne, was arrested March 29 and charged with fleeing and eluding police officer, driving while license suspended with knowledge (3rd or subsequent offense), and reckless driving.

Clifford Jones, 47, of Cocoa, was arrested

March 29 and charged with possession of cocaine, possession of a controlled substance, resisting officer without violence, and tampering with or fabricating physical evidence.

Joseph Keefer, 51, of Melbourne, was arrested March 29 and charged with out of state fugitive.

Alansio Letlow, 28, of Rockledge, was arrested March 29 and charged with felony battery by strangulation as domestic violence, and battery as domestic violence.

Christopher Minnis, 53, of Rockledge, was arrested March 29 and charged with lewd and lascivious molestation by offender over 18 to child under 12 years of age.

Saturday, April 23, 7:00pm

Eau Gallie High School Performing Arts Center, Eau Gallie

Sunday, April 24, 3:00pm

The Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts at Saint Edward's School, Vero Beach

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Celebrated sopranos Mary Anne Kruger and Amy Cofield premiere new work with SCSO

A Florida Story, "A Celebration of Vero Beach," tells the love story of W.E. Sexton and his bride Elsebeth in a narrative describing Florida one hundred years in the past and life in a small frontier town. The work will be narrated by Indian River Poet Laureate, Sean Sexton. The concert is rounded out with three of the most popular and rousing works in American repertoire, Grofe's "On the Trail" from *The Grand Canyon Suite*, Aaron Copland's stirring *An Outdoor Overture*, and George Gershwin's romp, *Cuban Overture*.

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APR 20/21	7:30 PM	CELEBRATING WOMEN COMPOSERS <i>Preshow with the Swingtimers Vocal Trio. Featuring Ukraine's National Anthem, the Great Gate of Kiev, and soloist Rachel Carter singing two Gershwin songs.</i>
JUN 8/9	6:30 PM	MMB POPS! <i>Not-in-the-Park Picnic Concert</i>
JUL 20/21	6:30 PM	SWINGTIME TAKIN' IT EASY <i>Not-in-the-Park Picnic Concert</i>
AUG 10/11	6:30 PM	BY POPULAR REQUEST <i>Not-in-the-Park Picnic Concert</i>

Dances

MAY 13	7:00 PM	MAY FLOWERS SOCK HOP
JUN 24	7:00 PM	JITTERBUG JUNE

All events are held at the Melbourne Auditorium, 625 E. Hibiscus Blvd., Melbourne, FL. Concerts are free – no tickets are required. Dance and Sock Hop tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the MMB website. Call 321-724-0555 or visit www.MelbourneMunicipalBand.org for information.