

Shorelines

April 2012

A PUBLICATION OF THE INDIAN BEACH-SAPPHIRE SHORES ASSOCIATION

Be on the Look Out

Dear neighbors,

Because of the serial rapist affecting our neighborhood, we decided to publish a hard copy "Shorelines." Originally, this issue was planned to be published on-line, but there is a need to reach every residence with the sketch of the attacker. Our on-line edition would have been received by a smaller portion of our neighborhood.

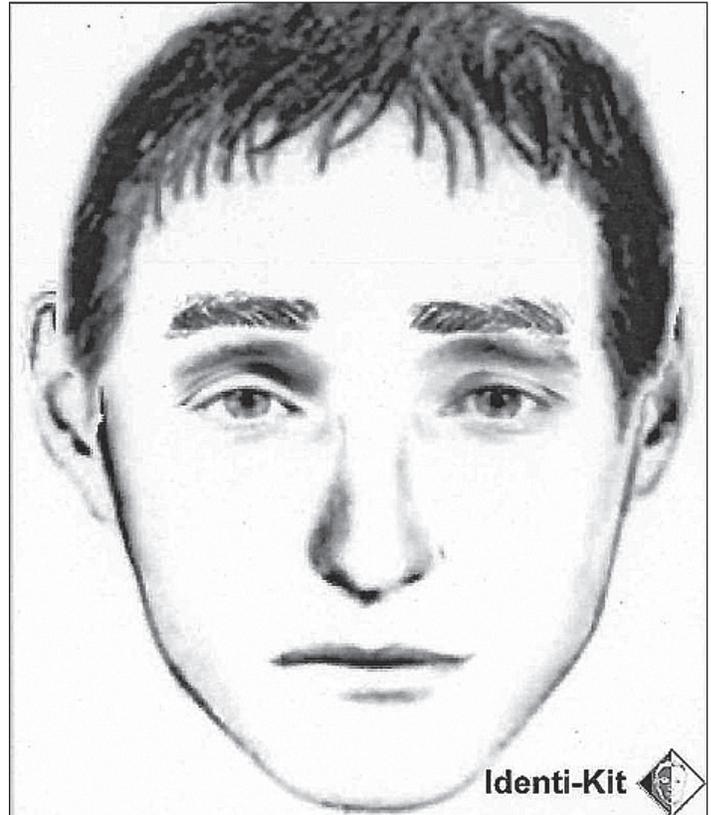
The attacker could well be living amongst us; the police have not discounted that possibility. I would suggest keeping the sketch handy and if any sighting should occur, even with a close resemblance or just suspicious actions, please call Detective Defranco at 954-7049. All tips will be confidential.

Vald Svekis, Association President
359-0683, vsvekis@gmail.com

Time line of attacks:

06.10.2010 Iroquois Ave.
07.14.2010 Leeta Lane
01.29.2011 45th St.
02.27.2011 Sarasota Ave.
09.20.2011 45th St.
02.07.2012 Bay Shore Road (3900 block)

Attacker: Caucasian male, approximately 5'9" tall, with a medium to muscular build, wearing a ski mask.



Sarasota Police Department supplied this sketch.

"Fear Its Self"

by Amanda Marie Mason

It has come to light that several young women in our area have become victims of "The North Side Prowler," a man who has been stalking and assaulting college students in our Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores Neighborhood. It goes without saying that we should all be on the lookout for the dangerous man who is responsible. Please acquaint yourself with all of the information available so that we as a community can help the Sarasota Police Department arrest the perpetrator.

People speak of feeling violated when their houses are broken into; imagine how much worse that feeling is for the recent victims of these atrocious crimes. They were awakened and attacked in their own rooms. It is one's worst nightmare. Breach of the sacred area of one's private space comes as a bigger blow

than anyone who has not had such an experience can imagine. It is because something similar happened to me that I have been encouraged to share the following story.

Over twenty years ago I was the victim of a crime. I was alone in the bathtub of my single-story rental when a man came crawling through the window between the door and the tub. My initial reaction was frozen disbelief; I could not even register what was happening. It was inconceivable that an area where I was so vulnerable was being breached. I did not freeze for long; something instinctual made me snap into action. I screamed loudly, shoved the intruder out and closed the window on his arms, then rushed for the door and called 911.

By the time the cops arrived I had collected myself. I tried to give them a description of the man, but I could not tell them a single detail, not even the color of his skin even though he had touched me and looked right into my eyes. The cops had me come outside

and shone a flashlight on the area back of my apartment, an area I had never gone to because it was dark and backed up on an alley. Grey masses of finger prints literally lined all of my windows and doors. My would be attacker had been watching me, peering into all of my windows, turning the handle on the back door, even standing on buckets he had brought to get a better view. He had been watching me a very long time.

I never spent another night in that apartment and I have never totally gotten over the feeling of being watched. There was no follow up search for the man. His prints did not match any in the database, and I was absolutely unable to recall a single detail about him except that he wore a baseball hat. I was lucky, very lucky nothing had really happened to me, right? People I told about the event wondered what the big deal was. I know that what happened to me does not even come close to what has happened to the young victims in our neighborhood. It affected me profoundly though. It was the fact that I had been somewhere I expected to be safe that made it so bad. I knew what to be on guard for in all sorts of circumstances, walking through large cities alone at night, hiking through jungles in foreign countries, but just how does one remain on guard in one's own home?

It made me angry. How dare a stranger have taken that sense of security from me? I decided to be proactive about my experience. I started reading about women's self-defense; I was obsessed with any and every article with statistics regarding personal safety. My first thought was that I would get a gun.

I started out by reading everything I could about gun usage as it related to women. Initially I was encouraged by the fact reports stated crime had gone down significantly in areas where the media had announced that gun ownership was up. I went to gun ranges, and fired weapons. I tried to embrace the idea of becoming a gun owner. But I wanted to do it right, and I had many questions. For instance, how did one incorporate the rules of gun ownership with practical application?

Here are the NRA's five most important tips on gun safety:

- 1) Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction (whether loaded or unloaded).
- 2) Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- 3) Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to shoot.
- 4) Be aware of what is behind your target.
- 5) When handling firearms, never use alcohol or any drug that might impair your awareness or judgment (including prescription drugs).

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Some things were hard to reconcile. If I was going to be a responsible gun owner, then how was I supposed to be ready to protect myself and follow the rules? I was really stumped by number three...how would a gun be useful if you were supposed to keep it unloaded until ready to shoot? There are very strong statistics about gun usage being the most effective deterrent to becoming a victim of a crime (apparently every 13 seconds an American gun owner uses a fire arm in defense of a crime). However, ultimately I felt incapable of becoming comfortable enough with the mechanisms of a gun to find it useful and did not know how I could keep a loaded gun from the hands of those who should not have it. Gun ownership, at least responsible gun ownership, is very serious business. If you draw your weapon you need to be prepared to use it. I asked myself if, in order to stop a threat, I really could empty my weapon into a person. I wanted to be able to say yes, but I knew I could not, even though I get a tremendous kinesthetic thrill when movies show the bad guys going down in a fan of well-placed bullets.

Ultimately, I found myself in martial arts classes. At first it was my boys who were the students. But after six months of watching from the sidelines, I could not resist jumping into the fray. I quickly discovered that studying martial arts is not about kicking and punching...it is about developing your mental and physical reactions to a point where they become automatic. I do not like to have my personal space invaded. I am not at all unique in this. In our culture we all have an area of space that circles us that it is considered comfortable; it is a social taboo to have someone impinge upon that space. Martial arts empowers defense of one's personal space. By spending hours practicing scenarios that have would be attackers come at you in a myriad of ways, you develop automatic reactions in real life. We practice how to react if you are grabbed by your hair from behind, or what to do if someone tries to hit you in the temple, or grabs your arms in order to subdue you. The techniques are practiced repeatedly in order to desensitize ourselves to the whole action of being attacked.

While it is probably impossible to ever accurately simulate the amount of adrenalin and fear a real attack causes, I can tell you that the training does indeed kick in when you need it to. For instance, I had someone grab at my purse while I was walking in a busy city crosswalk. Without even thinking about it, I turned my body away to avoid the grab, thus deflecting their momentum and stealing their element of surprise. I have to say, the perpetrator himself looked pretty surprised. A more benign experience occurred in a crowded area when I found myself pivoting someone who did not know that they were about to back right into me. I actually picked up a person by both arms and moved him gently out of my way. It was all by instinct. I must confess that both of my boys take a certain delight in trying to catch me unawares. They use their particular ninja powers (both are black belts themselves) to see if they can get me to yell and scream like a girl, I have to admit that they have, on occasion, been successful.

This brings me to the last important lesson I have learned from martial arts training. We are taught that our most effective weapons are ones that we always have with us---our running legs and our voice. People shout in class to get used to projecting a forceful, do-not-mess-with-me message. It is your voice that can get you out of trouble, and your running legs can do the rest.

I am not an expert in advice for self-defense. Even though I will be testing for my second-degree black belt in April of this year, after training for the last 10 years, I am fully cognizant of the fact that I can only speak for myself about how one could and should react to threats. Nevertheless there are some practical suggestions that I do feel confident in giving.

Trust your instincts, if someone makes you feel uncomfortable trust that feeling. Don't worry about being impolite; go ahead and get off that elevator if someone gets in who makes you feel odd. Yell clearly and assertively in the direction of the man coming towards you in the parking lot. Yell, "stay the f#\$% back," and mean it! Better to be wrong than to be a victim.

Keep your eyes open and if you see it, report it. We can all look out for one another in this neighborhood; the police need us to call them when we see anyone who looks out of place. Call the non-emergency number 941-361-1201 if you do not feel the call merits emergency status. Always lock your doors and windows and light up the outside of your house. Motion detector lights are a great tool for crime prevention, as are noisy dogs.

If you find yourself being attacked, fight as though your life depended on it, because it just might. (This is in no way meant to be a criticism of victims who were too frightened to resist, which is a non-voluntary reaction that is impossible to override.) Use everything you have if an attacker is trying to move you from one place to another, from what is known as the initial crime scene to the secondary crime scene. Scream as loudly as you can; use your legs and kick; then run. Your goal is to be such a pain in the ass that they will leave you alone. Criminals like to slink around in the dark; they do not like a commotion that will alert others.

And I leave you now with this. In order to restore a sense of safety to our neighborhood, we need to get together. I would highly recommend getting to know your neighbors, especially your immediate ones, those who are on either side, across the street and behind your property. Give them your phone number and just ask that they alert you if they notice anyone hanging around or if they feel uncomfortable about something. When you go to the mailbox, look around both sides of the street and take note of what and whom you see. When you are in your home, make sure your car is locked and your garage door opener is not easily obtainable. Go ahead and make sure your doors and windows are locked, and that the number for the police is close to or in the phone. And, by all means, if you see something, say something. We will all sleep more soundly. ■

2011 Real Estate Recap

by David Jennings

It's always easier looking in the rear view mirror to see where you've been rather than looking forward trying to predict where you're going.

As such, some people suggest the "bottom" of the real estate market was a while back. If sales figures for our neighborhood in 2011 are any indication there could be some validity to this thought. And 2012 is off to an even more robust start.

This information is pulled from the Multiple List Data base maintained by the Sarasota Association of Realtors. It is not a complete record of all transactions since some people buy and sell houses outside of this medium but it reflects over 90% of all activity.

Within the boundaries of IBSSA 52 homes were sold in 2011. They ranged in price from \$48,000 to \$2,920,000, once again illustrating the neighborhood's extreme diversity.

25% were distressed, meaning a short sale, in foreclosure or bank owned. This percentage is slightly lower than Sarasota at large.

Compare this total number of transactions to 22 in 2008, 30 in 2009 and 48 in 2010.

Now for some fuzziest math the average price per square foot for non waterfront homes was \$134 in 2011 compared with \$133 in 2010, \$120 in 2009 and \$157 in 2008.

Both of these trends, an increase in transactions and a possible stabilization in price per square foot, would seem to suggest our last low trough in the marketplace was 2008 in volume and 2009 in value.

This does not mean the market won't fall again and we are keeping a close eye on the number of foreclosures in our area but it's hard to say the sky is falling when we look at 2012 year to date numbers.

As I write this in mid March we have already sold nine homes and pended 23 between \$62,000 and \$637,000. Average price per square foot for non waterfront homes (sold and pended) is \$125.

This trend would seem to indicate we will have another growth year in volume and another stable year in value.

Remember, ALL REAL ESTATE IS LOCAL and it's more relevant to know what's happening in your neighborhood than what is being read to you by talking heads on national news networks. ■



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Semi-Annual Meeting
June 5, 2012 - 7:00 pm
Bay Shore Mennonite Church



Don't speed! Be a safe driver and obey the 25 mph speed limit throughout our neighborhood and the 15 mph speed limit in all school zones.

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Patience Pays Off – Lift Station 9 ▲

by Kitty Cannon, Beautification Committee Chair

The newly refurbished Lift Station 9 on Bay Shore Circle has been a slow but successful partnership between local neighbors, the utility companies, Sarasota Public Works, environmental experts and IBSSA. Built approximately sixty years ago, the original lift station was a small, one-story building with an attractive front door. It had shrubbery around its foundation, a few palm trees, shrubs screening it from next-door neighbors and a weedy “lawn.” During heavy summer rains the lot was nicknamed “Lake Newt” after the neighbor to the north who made sure the lawn was mowed.

Following a neighbor survey by Alan Lillie, the consensus was that the landscape needed to be easily maintained, be wild-life friendly and help solve the drainage problems. All decisions were postponed, however, because of the plan to install a new lift station. Nearby neighbors attended meetings emphasizing their desire for an attractive building that blended with the local (primarily one-story) homes surrounding it. An original two-story plan with exterior pipes was changed to a one-story structure with a flood wall to protect from storm damage and artificial “windows” to mitigate the prison-like appearance of the structure.

The IBSSA Beautification Committee, environmental experts, representatives from the utility and the City and the local neighbors again convened at the site to review the landscaping plans as the structure neared completion. The resulting plan included sod to allow a “mow-able, drivable” area immediately surrounding the building, trellises to decrease the glare of the bare wall to the north, a low impact landscape of wild-life friendly plants and a swale to carry heavy rains back to the retention pond.

The successful conclusion of this saga is a direct result of participation by the local neighbors. When meetings or workshops are scheduled, it is important that interested parties make the effort to attend. The final decisions are, of course, driven by the needs of the infrastructure, but our input really does matter and does help guide the process.

On another note, the Beautification Committee sends a special “thank you” to the conscientious dog walkers who clean up after not only their dogs but pick up so much of the other litter in our public spaces. We do request that pets be steered away from new plantings (Indian Beach). The native plants are hardy and tough, but need a chance to get started. ■



Yard Sale Mania

by Jane Nutter Johnson, Major Events Chair

The annual yard sale was held January 28th and 29th. It has a great following... shoppers must put it on their calendars weeks in advance. There were thousands of shoppers and lots of neighbor interaction.

29 houses were sanctioned (paid the \$10). Many more will be sanctioned next year. The \$10 each pays for ads and signs. As you know, the beauty of Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores is we do not suggest when you can have a yard sale or what color you can paint your front door. The advantage of one weekend for all yard sales is that the traffic is terrific and limited to just one weekend per year.

Darian (Hoyt Miller) and I were setting up in the garage before daylight and three veteran shoppers came in with flashlights and actually purchased! I knew it was going to be a good day. The Buzz in the park and on the street was excited and very friendly.

I attended an open house the next weekend as a lookie loo. Another woman (not from our neighborhood), told me on the way out that she had been here for the Great Yard Sale and had decided to look for a house in the neighborhood because we were all so friendly.

We wouldn't live anywhere else!

Next Year's Sale is January 26th and 27th...the same weekend as Forks and Corks (on purpose). For information, contact me at janenutter@aol.com or 351- 1920. ■

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Myrtle Street News

by Mike Lasché

On November 22, 2011, the City and County Commissions decided on the cheapest option for Myrtle, between US 301 and Old Bradenton Road. They chose the option that involved only providing one sidewalk, on the south side of the road. They chose this over the option of providing two sidewalks, bike lanes, and lighting.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocates (BPA), a local group, did some research and found 21 safety reasons why sidewalks on both sides, bike lanes, and lighting made sense for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, buses, and emergency vehicles. BPA also provided 4 economic development reasons why this section of road should match its connecting parts, east and west, as well as most of the major north-south roads it meets.

The following organizations have signed letters urging the City and County to rebuild Myrtle with sidewalks on both sides, bike lanes and lighting: Indian Beach Sapphire Shores Association, Bayou Oaks NHA, Janie's Garden NHA, Amaryllis Park NHA, North County Improvement Organization, Sarasota NAACP, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocates, North Trail Redevelopment Partnership and Booker High School.

On February 21, this community coalition's opinion was presented to the City Commissioners, prompting them to vote 5-0 for the more complete street.

On February 23, the opinion was presented to the County Commissioners, and they directed their staff to figure out, with the City, how to fund it.

On March 14, it was revealed that the City has reportedly offered substantial funding for the project and the County continues to search its various sources.

If you would like to add your voice to the chorus for a safe, complete Myrtle Street, please contact Mike Lasché at 941-544-7788, or mike@floridawalksandbikes.org, to see how you can help. ■



IBSSA Annual Picnic

by Jane Nutter Johnson, Major Events Chair

By 2pm, November 6, the neighbors began drifting into the Caples Campus at New College to help set up the annual picnic. 3pm the fun started, with over 200 members in attendance. Mike Minks entertained, singing our favorites. Bon Fehling face painted and a clown roamed through the crowd performing balloon tricks.

The food was spectacular. The Old Florida aroma of the smoked mullet, cooking all day, helped draw the crowds. The dishes to share were varied and delightful. Perhaps someone knows of a study showing why pot luck parties of 20 or more always provide the perfect number of veggie dishes, desserts, salads, baked beans, etc.

The annual Chinese Raffle (2nd year) had over 30 donated gifts and services to tempt. The raffle tickets were reasonable (7 for \$5) and enabled one to pick the item(s) wanted. There was a neighborly buzz around the table until the drawing. \$444 was made to help cover picnic expenses.

Roger Barkin, a “newbie” to the neighborhood, organized the event. Over 30 volunteers helped. Mark your calendars now for November 11, 3 PM, 2012!

Email Roger at rogerbarkin@gmail.com to volunteer for next year!

I was in charge of weather. It was another day in Paradise!

Sapphire Shores Right of Way

by David Jennings

It’s funny how things get misinterpreted over time. I’m often reminded of the children’s game we call telegraph.

Get a large group of children sitting in a circle. Whisper a message in the first child’s ear and have them “pass the secret” along to the next child by whispering in their ear. So on and so

on until the message makes it around to the final child who says aloud...“The glow bit sometimes bowls!” when the original message may have been “The rabbit runs down the hole!”

You get the idea.

Recently, I heard a neighbor on North Shore Drive suggest the right of way is so wide on her street because it was originally going to be a causeway over to Longboat Key!

Wow, a causeway to a barrier island at the widest part of the bay in Sarasota County? How interesting...but you know what forward thinkers those gilded era industrialists were.

The glow bit sometimes bowls!

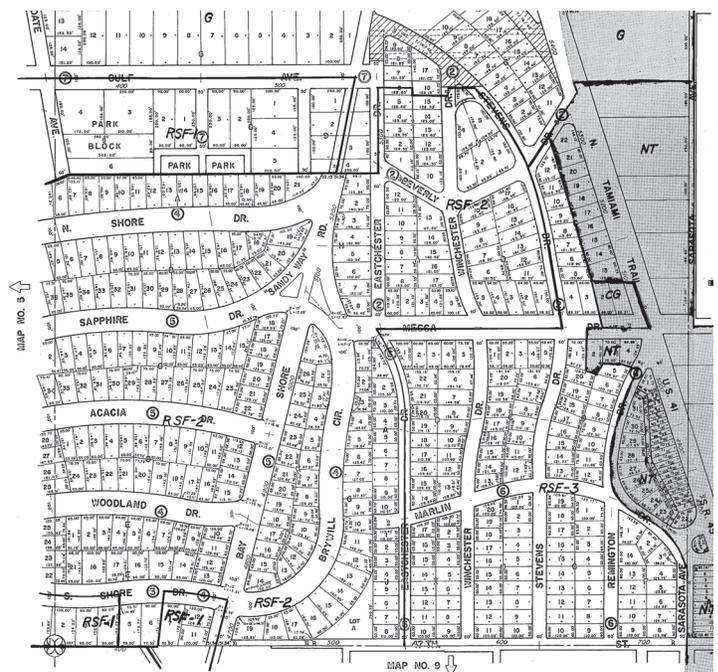
Sapphire Shores does have the widest Right of Way of any neighborhood in Sarasota. Private property lines are 50 feet from the center of the road compared to half that in many other parts of town. And the setback for any building is another 20 feet from the property line. So, the City right of way down any street in Sapphire Shores is 100 feet! Add the building “setback” and we are up to 140 feet of width within which no building can be placed.

Now consider each street has just enough twist making it impossible to see from one end to another so all you see is green space. Look up and down any street in Sapphire Shores and all you will see is landscape and blue sky.

This achievement is no accident. Sapphire Shores, like many other parts of IBSSA, was platted in the mid 1920’s, which many professionals consider the zenith of American planning.

So, the next time you are on South Shore Drive, Woodland Drive, Acacia Drive, Sapphire Drive, North Shore Drive or Brywill Circle pay a bit more attention to your view going forward. The nine decades passed have only enhanced the genius of this planning gem.

And if you live on any of these streets, I think the possibility of your front yard becoming a launching site for a 3 mile long causeway to Longboat is remote. ■



Membership Application and Dues Renewal Form



Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores Association

Membership type: New Renewal

I can volunteer:

- Beautification
- Membership
- Neighborhood Watch
- Newsletter
- Picnic/Special Events
- Web-site

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Checks payable to: IBSSA

Mail: P.O. Box 49673, Sarasota, FL 34230

2012 Dues Payment: \$20.00

Voluntary Contribution \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

If you have a question about your dues status, please contact
Greg Shea, Treasurer, 355-8966 or gmshea@hotmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



News

by Debbie Muller

As residents of one of the most lovely areas in the city of Sarasota we are afforded many wonderful experiences and opportunities. The ability to step outside and enjoy the beautiful natural landscape throughout our neighborhood, the privilege of having renowned cultural venues within our borders and the existence of fine educational institutions nearby make Indian Beach Sapphire Shores a truly unique place to live. It is, however, our residents who make our neighborhood a wonderful place to call home.

With all of the tremendous attributes and characteristics of our area also come some challenges. As in all communities, the potential for crime is an unfortunate reality. We are made aware of this all too often as we travel on North Tamiami Trail to access our neighborhood. Incidents involving prostitution and illegal drugs are ongoing along this corridor and contribute to increased criminal activity in surrounding areas. These types of crime often lead to burglaries and thefts in neighborhoods and the illicit atmosphere can also generate a greater probability for violent crimes to occur.

For decades the residents of Indian Beach Sapphire Shores have worked together and with law enforcement to ensure the safety of our families. We remain vigilant and are committed to keeping criminals off our streets. Thanks to the concern and awareness of our neighbors, we really do "take a bite out of crime."

Crime Report: 2012

There have been approximately nine residential burglaries, and seven auto burglaries and one burglary with assault and battery [SPD released a description and sketch of the suspect] in our neighborhood this year. Other incidents reported to the Police and/or Neighborhood Watch include suspicious persons, vandalism, aggressive and fraudulent solicitors, attempted burglaries and evidence of prostitution and illegal drug activity occurring in secluded areas within our neighborhood.

Eyes, Ears and Knows: As you go about your daily routine be aware of your surroundings and take note of anything that seems unusual or out of the ordinary. If you have any doubts about a situation, never hesitate to call the police. Your call could prevent a crime, help catch a criminal or save a life.

Alert: Due to the recent burglary with assault and battery (February 7th) along with similar prior incidents, it is extremely important to lock your doors.

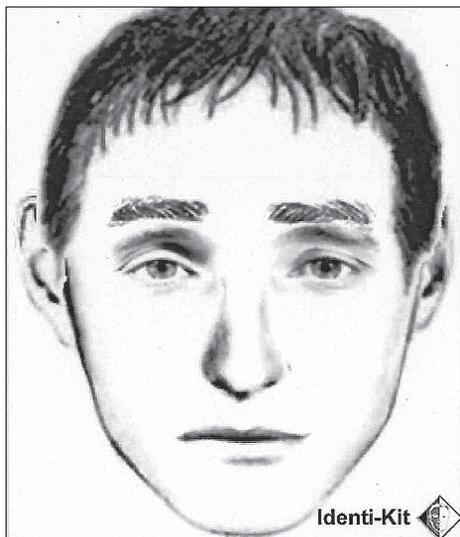
Update: Business Closed Beauty by Nature, a problem business discussed at the December membership meeting, was investigated by the police and officially closed February 10, 2012.

FYI on Door-to-door Solicitors: Door-to-door solicitors must apply for and receive a Local Business Tax Receipt from the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County. The business or organization seeking permission to solicit door-to-door in the City of Sarasota must be considered a Not For Profit or Non Profit by the Department of Revenue, be registered with the State of Florida Department of Professional Regulations, individuals must undergo background checks and fingerprinting at the Sarasota Police Department and each solicitor must carry picture ID with proof that they are an employee or affiliate of the business or organization. ■



Indian Beach Sapphire Shores Association
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Wanted by the
 Sarasota Police Department,
story on page 1

Neighborhood Watch Coordinators:

Sapphire 1 58th Street - 47th Street

Debbie Muller 355-5743

Sapphire II 47th Street - Myrtle Street

Barbara Cherry 351-7906 or Barbara.Cherry@comcast.net

Sapphire III Myrtle Street - Indian Beach Drive

Fred and Joanne Gonet 358-8529 or frejo3617@yahoo.com

Sapphire IV Indian Beach Drive - Whitaker Bayou

Yvonne Lacey 365-7063 or Lacey.Yvonne@yahoo.com

Helpful Numbers:

Sarasota Police Department:

Non-Emergency: 316-1199 or 316-1201
 SPD Front Desk: 954-7025
 Chief Mikel Hollaway: 954-7002
 Lt. Randy Boyd (N. Dist): 364-7360

Animal Services: 861-9500

**Citizen Volunteer & Project Lifesaver
 and Crime Prevention:** Officer Ford Snodgrass 954-7056

Code Compliance: 954-4125

Narcotics Hotline: 954-7050

Semi-Annual Meeting, June 5, 2012

Annual Picnic, November 11, 2012, 3pm

Neighborhood Yard Sale, January 28 & 29, 2013

Notice to all Residents of Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores

Meeting: Saturday, April 21 at 9 am

Sapphire Shores Park (at pet-free area just west of intersection of Acacia Drive and Sun Circle)

Purpose: Present and discuss plans for **children's swing and slide**

Association Board of Directors has voted to proceed with installation of this play equipment. We have applied for a \$10,000 grant to cover the majority of the cost. Another \$5,000 will be needed to complete the project. Public play equipment is expensive due to construction, installation and needed ground cushioning. If you would like to donate any amount, please send such donation to IBSSA, P.O. Box 49673, Sarasota, FL 34230.

All contributors will be recognized in the next Shorelines.

Vald Svekis, President, IBSSA