



VENICE CITY SCENE

October 2011

A Publication for the Employees of the City of Venice, Florida

Venice City Scene is published by e-mail. Please address questions, concerns and news items to Marketing and Communications Officer Pam Johnson at pjohnso@ci.venice.fl.us.

Those on the city's computer system may access newsletters on the S drive or on the city's web site: www.venice.gov.com, click on Employees, then Employee Corner, then Employee Newsletter.



Above, many city employees enjoyed a free healthy lunch at City Hall as the kickoff to the annual Wellness Fair. The food was served by city council members.

Wellness and health assessments help employees find balance in their lives

The city's annual employee Wellness Fair took place Sept. 22-23 at the Venice Community Center. Health risk assessments were done, health related topics addressed, and examples of health services from mini massages to Chinese medicine provided and skin and vision screenings were available. Many employees went home with awesome prizes. Committee members who planned the event are Mary Ann Ellis, Dave Abene, Heather LeDuc, Nancy Hurley, Kelly Treat, Val Raney, Tony Fitzgerald, Tony Grisanti, Jeremy Petrosky, Babs Anderson, Susan Carpenter, Stacy McKenzie and Dorothy Tary.



Right, the Wellness Fair provided opportunities to experience massage therapy, acupuncture, screening tests, much information and chances to win prizes.

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COMING UP

Farmer's Market, every Saturday in Centennial Park, 8 a.m. - noon.

Check the city's Web site: www.venicegov.com for the next special event.



Friday, Oct. 14, Sun Fiesta, Centennial Park, downtown, 5 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 14 - 15, Sun Fiesta, Centennial Park, downtown, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Bed Races, Saturday at 9 a.m.

Parade, Saturday at 10 a.m.

Sunday, Oct 23, Howl'n Canine Costume Contest, Centennial Park Gazebo, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 28, Arts District Walk, Miami and Nokomis avenues, downtown, 6 p.m.

Friday Night Live Concert, featuring Bruce and the Boomers, Centennial Park, downtown, 7 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 31, Kids Costume Parade and Trick or Treat, downtown, 4 p.m.

(Check the Venice City E-News and www.venicegov.com online special event calendar for more things to do.)



Saturday, Nov. 5, Venice MainStreet Art Fest, downtown, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 6, Daylight Saving Time Ends, turn clocks back one hour and replace the batteries in smoke detectors.

Venice MainStreet Art Fest, downtown, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 11, Veterans Day, City Hall closed; garbage, recycling and yard waste collected as usual.

Sunday, Nov. 13, Joy of Jazz, featuring Jimi Gee and Jazz Salad, Centennial Park Gazebo, 2 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 20, Cyclovia Venice, a bicycling event, downtown, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 24, Thanksgiving Day, City Hall is closed. Garbage, recycling and yard waste will not be collected.

Friday, Nov. 25, City Hall closed in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. Garbage, recycling and yard waste collected as usual.

Arts District Walk, downtown, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 26, Annual Holiday Parade, 7 p.m., with preparade activities at 5 p.m.; organized by the Holiday Parade

Take a Bow

Police Department

As part of the Venice Police Department's new community policing, Officer **Rob Palmieri** left a notice of having checked on the Pit Stop Auto Repair Shops Inc. at 1:50 a.m.

The owner, Ronald Perry, was very grateful.

"I cannot tell you how pleasantly surprised I was to find this security check notice at our place of business in the morning. Thank you! As a small business owner, I keep pretty crazy hours and have seen officers cruise the parking lot before. But knowing that you went to this effort and did a quick inspection of the premises is awesome. I only hope that anyone who might have been thinking of breaking in anywhere in Venice has also seen our officers out doing these inspections," Perry wrote.

When a member of the Sarasota Sailing Squadron left the Venice jetty to join in a Sunday race, his outboard motor died. Without the engine, he could see he would not be able to make the trip to Sarasota in 4 - 6 foot seas. At one mile offshore, he radioed the Coast Guard for assistance. His call was transferred to VPD.

"Within minutes, Officer Paul Joyce was circling my vessel," the sailor wrote.

A passenger was sick, but the seas were too rough for a transfer. Soon another police boat and two lifeguards on jet skis showed up. One lifeguard swam and boarded the sailboat to evaluate the patient.

"Minutes later, the lady jumped overboard to his waiting arms and he immediately swam her to the waiting jet ski, put her on the rescue platform and headed for shore. What a relief," the sailor wrote.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine such efficiency on the part of our local marine rescue. Officer Joyce did a superb job of quickly arriving at the scene; coordinating the rescue; and being superbly professional during the entire affair," the sailor wrote.

Service Anniversaries



Mayor John Holic presents a five-year service pin to Dave Guilmette at the Sept. 27 City Council meeting.

The following employees celebrate one of the 5-year milestones of employment with the city:

25 years, Mechanic Helper **Ron Carter**, Utilities Department, Water Production Division, Oct. 9.

15 years, Battalion Chief/EMT **Shawn Carvey**, Fire Department, Oct. 30.

10 years, Administrative Aide **Marta Ugas-Carpenter**, Police Department, Oct. 15

10 years, Environmental Technician **Lee Krauss**, Utilities Department, Field Operations Division, Oct. 29.

5 years, Permit and Systems Analyst **Karen Butterworth**, Building and Code Enforcement Department, Oct. 2

5 years, Officer **Aleks Gregoire**, Police Department, Oct. 2.

5 years, Officer **Joe McGee**, Police Department, Oct. 2.

5 years, Solid Waste Equipment Operator **David Szakalos**, Public Works Department, Solid Waste Division, Oct. 7

Retirements

Two long-time members of the Police Department retire



Mayor John Holic recognizes Sgt. Kevin McGrath's 29 years of achievement as McGrath's mother, wife, Tina, and daughter, Erin, look on.

Sgt. Kevin McGrath retired from the Venice Police Department after almost 30 years of service.

He began his career with the city in 1982 as a police officer trainee. Before joining VPD he was a physical education teacher and coach at Epiphany Cathedral School. Later that year he obtained state certification. He was a patrol officer for four years and then served as a school resource officer at Venice High School for the next five years. During that time he coached the high school girls' softball team winning two district titles. Current School Resource Officer Ruth Terry was a member of that team.

McGrath was promoted to sergeant in 1993, making him the squad supervisor for the next 17 years. As the department's first field training officer, he has managed the program for new hires for the past 13 years. Over the last four years, McGrath managed the fleet maintenance program. He has been a participant in "Shop with a Cop" throughout his career.

Among his accomplishments are developing and implementing a report writing procedure that stood the test in the court system and serving on the police pension trust board for 22 years. He was recently reappointed to the board.

McGrath plans to play golf when not busy doing activities his 12-year-old daughter requires of him.

Officer Dave Aker retired from the city after 22 years of service.

Aker began working for the Police Department in 1988 as a campus aide at Venice High School. In 2008 he returned to the role as school resource officer.

Over the years, Aker received many commendations, but one of the most important is probably for the night he saved the life of a citizen on Venice Avenue Bridge.



He served as field training officer, and EVOC training instructor.

Officer Dave Aker says a few words to the audience after receiving accolades for his years of service upon his retirement.

During retirement, Aker plans to work at a local charter school or substitute teach in the area of the University of Central Florida where his son, Ashton, is a student and spend lots of time with his new granddaughter.

Your old stuff could be someone's treasure

Girl Scout Troop 749 is having a garage sale on Saturday, Nov. 5.

The troop is collecting items for this sale. If you have items to donate please contact Lori Stelzer. No item is too large or too small.

The troop is having fundraisers to earn money for troop activities. Your donations would be greatly appreciated.

From the Pipeline



The Utility Department installs two 12-inch raw water valves that were inoperable due to excessive wear and usage. This is part of the valve exchange program that was a cost savings for the utilities department. From left, Bob Clark, Jeremy Petrosky, Ron Carter, Mike Sellers. In the work area are Phil Carnell, Tony Ramirez, Jimmy Bennett and Dave Guilmette. Wayne Hill operates the crane. Not pictured but a special thanks for their assistance and support, Brian Treat, Eric Barr, Gary Coble, Steve Park, Jim Anderson, Joe Stroer and Eric Lindsay.



Eric Lindsay and Dave Guilmette prepare to install an eight inch gate valve into our water distribution system located at the reverse osmosis plant. This gate valve was installed to isolate the raw water pressure relief line from phase one of the water production plant.



Phil Carnell and Dave Guilmette are flowing a 2 inch meter as part of the quarterly flushing program, which is a requirement by the Department of Health. This program keeps the dead-end water lines located throughout the city from having stagnant water from lack of movement.

These employees drive the bus

Administrative Services Administrative Assistant **Jeanette Bartek** received a BUS Pass for establishing a new level of excellence for her department. While working with benefits coordinator Mary Ann Ellis, she volunteered to resolve an issue she identified that made a data system prone to errors.



Bartek created an Access database that could be shared by members of the department to handle information regarding life, health, dental, vision, flexible spending and long-term disability insurances for employees, retirees and their dependents.

It is a customer-made report that can be distributed to individuals with open enrollment materials. It has the ability to automatically calculate rates based on age and other factors, significantly reducing the possibility of errors. The database is an excellent auditing system for current data and has already identified errors that are now being rectified.



What is a BUS Pass?

BUS (Bravo for Ultimate Service) passes are given to employees who provide service to others, or who establish a new level of excellence in duties through self initiative and exemplary behavior. The impact must be significant to a work group, division, department, organization or the community.

Administrative Services Benefits Coordinator **Mary Ann Ellis** received a BUS Pass for exemplary work effort. As the coordinator of the city's wellness program, she has shown exemplary productivity, dedication and innovation by formulating an active wellness committee of employees from across the city. The members of this group develop new programs, which they implement.



Ellis researched health club programs in the area and developed a gym reimbursement program and proposed a health club membership incentive plan. She researched the wellness programs of other municipalities and continues to update the program.

Two outstanding results of her efforts are the healthy barbecue held on Sept. 14 and the health risk assessment and health fair held on Sept. 16.

These events encouraged 158 employees, who attended one or both, to practice healthy habits. The 59 percent participation is considered well above the average high participation of 40 percent. Because Venice is self-insured, healthy employees are key to budgetary and productivity issues that can exist in any workplace.

Building and Code Enforcement Permit Supervisor **Karen Butterworth** received a BUS Pass for public and customer service excellence.

Butterworth took the initiative to learn a computer program, Click 2 Gov, in order to set up online contractor payments for permits. She worked after hours and on weekends to simplify and customize the program so it could also be used for utility bill payments. She then developed an online help guide.

Butterworth took the shell program consisting of multiple layers of customizable options from a basic level to a specific design ensuring the city's citizens, including its seniors, would be able to navigate the process. She continues to maintain and improve this part of the website. The initiative has taken the city into the 21st Century by providing its citizens an easy way to pay bills online. It also allows the Cashier's Office to function with fewer employees than years before and allows them time to give better service to those who need to come to the counter or call for assistance.



BUS Pass, *continued*

Utilities GIS Specialist **Damien Stillings** received a BUS Pass for providing an exemplary service to another work group at the city. The Fire Department needed GIS work to document its annual Insurance Service Organization (ISO) information. Doing



Utilities Director Len Bramble presents Damien Stillings with a BUS Pass.

this well helps the city's residents save money on homeowners' insurance.

At the time, the city's GIS specialist position was unfilled. Stillings had been studying GIS mapping, but had not tackled a project such as the Fire Department was requesting. However, that did not stop him from stepping up to the plate. The project required that he start from scratch to produce unique information and maps on a deadline.

Stillings spent time with the GIS software's customer service and training representatives to ensure he was utilizing the ISO's specified graphic icons and data creation methods. Not only was the resulting data accurate, but it was completed earlier than requested. This allowed the ISO representative to forward the information for analysis, establishing a solid base for a successful survey.

"Because of Damien's dedication to go above and beyond, we were able to successfully obtain information that was accurate, properly formatted and submitted prior to deadline," Administrative Battalion Chief Joe Silva said.

Wedding Bells Ring

Bonne Thorpe became the bride of **Dennis Rodriguez** June 11 aboard the Floating Chapel on the Bay. Capt. Orca Fisher officiated at the 4 p.m. service. The bride was given in marriage by her nephew, **John Muggli II** of Port St. Lucie, Fla. A reception followed at Selby Gardens.



Cheryl Rogoza of International Falls, Minn., served as her cousin's matron of honor. Bridesmaids were **Brittany Jolcover**, daughter of the bride; **Lisa Miller** and **Jo Rushlow**, all of Venice.

Sal Denoto of North Port served as best man. Groomsmen were **Mike Robarge** and **Tony Ramirez**, both of Venice, and **Jason Mastin** of Port St. Lucie, nephew of the bride.

Flower girls were **Abigail Muggli** of Port St. Lucie, great-niece of the bride and **Emma Rushlow** of Venice. Ringbearer was **Alex Miller** of Venice.

The newlyweds are residing in Venice since returning from a trip to the Western Caribbean aboard the Carnival Legend.

Raney earns certification

For the second year in a row, Finance Department Procurement has received the Agency Certification Award from the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council for small agencies. The criteria for this award is all qualified staff must be UPPCC certified.

Keith Raney earned the Florida Certified Contract Manager Certificate through the state's Department of Management Services and passed the Certified Procurement Officer exam.

The certification demonstrates an individual's comprehensive knowledge of public procurement.

Raney is one of 2,009 people to obtain the certification in Florida.

Happy Birthday!

The following celebrate birthdays in October:

- 2**, Utility Mechanic II **Scott Hart**, Utilities Department, Wastewater Treatment Division
- 3**, Meter Reader **Theo Gibson**, Utilities Department, Field Operations Division
- 4**, Operations Supervisor **Jim Petrosky**, Utilities Department, Reclamation Division
- 5**, Firemedic **Steve Worobel**, Fire Department
- 7**, Firemedic **Dru Miller**, Fire Department
- 8**, Field Operations Technician II **Jeremy Petrosky**, Utilities Department, Field Operations Division
- 9**, Solid Waste Equipment Operator **Mike Cararo**, Public Works Department, Solid Waste Division
- 9**, Plant Operator C **Gary Coble**, Utilities Department, Water Production Division
- 15**, Maintenance Supervisor **Bob Clark**, Utilities Department, Water Production Division
- 16**, Irrigation System Tech II **Scott Marra**, Public Works Department, Parks Division
- 16**, Firemedic **Eric Putnal**, Fire Department
- 18**, Municipal Service Worker I **Bill Ford**, Airport Department
- 19**, Field Operations Technician II **Jim Bennett**, Utilities Department, Field Operations Division
- 21**, Dispatcher **Becky Irving**, Police Department
- 26**, Plant Operator B **Eric Barr**, Utilities Department, Water Production Division
- 28**, Solid Waste Equipment Operator **Ed Wix**, Public Works Department, Solid Waste Division
- 31**, Senior Airport Maintenance Technician/Leader **Bob Anderson**, Airport Department