

THE NEWS-PRESS LOCAL



Betty Parker
PARKER ON POLITICS

Radel lands book deal; appeared on Maher show Friday night

Southwest Florida's former congressman Trey Radel is writing a book; nonfiction, and one he promises on Twitter "will be entertaining and funny, often poking fun at myself."

Radel, a Republican elected in 2012 with strong tea party support, was arrested in October 2013, when he tried to buy about 3.5 ounces of cocaine from an undercover cop in Washington, D.C.



Radel

He resigned his congressional job and went through rehab. For months he stayed out of the public eye while starting his own consulting business.

But in the last year or so he's raised his profile, writing op-ed pieces — one about the need for criminal justice reform, doing a few national interviews, and resuming Twitter activity, where he's written about politics, hip-hop and rap music, and his gym routine.

Radel, a former journalist and radio talk show personality who lives in Fort Myers, was also slated to be a panelist late Friday on Bill Maher's "Real Time," a live, hour-long talk show on HBO.

He did not respond to calls and emails about his book but told a national Buzzfeed writer earlier this week the book will be about more than just him. In that interview Radel said he'll "share my inside look at how Congress works, and sometimes doesn't work, for the American people."

The book is expected early next year, and will be published by Blue Rider Press, affiliated with the Penguin Group USA, according to the story.

Bonita has spending limits

With Bonita Springs' city elections coming in March — and a spirited mayoral race in play — more people are noticing an unusual factor in city politics.

Bonita has spending limits for candidates, despite all evidence and advice that such limits are not enforceable, not constitutional, and probably destined to fail a court challenge.

Despite all that, the limits work. Candidates follow them, saying the existence of such a rule, and the popular support it has, is all the "enforcement" needed.

According to city rules, candidates can spend about \$2.18 per registered voter in their election. For the mayor, who's elected by all 30,000-plus voters, that works out to nearly \$70,000, depending on the exact number of voters.

For some council members, who run in smaller districts, the limits are closer to \$10,000.

Those numbers are a far cry from many elections elsewhere, where six-figure campaign accounts are considered essential.

The limit goes back to the city's earliest days, to its founding in 1999, when the spending cap was part of the new city charter developed by a citizens' group and approved by the voters.

See Parker, Page 10A

Note to readers

Dear valued readers: Please be advised of our daily retail newspaper price increase (Monday to Saturday). Starting Feb. 1, our daily rate will be \$1.50 for Cape Coral / Fort Myers edition papers purchased in local stores or from street racks. Thank you for your continued patronage.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FGCU trustee's comments 'potentially very dangerous'

State official worries about effect on whistle-blowing



Florida Board of Governors member Alan Levine is concerned about public comments made by an FGCU trustee.

THYRIE BLAND
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Florida Board of Governors member Alan Levine is concerned that comments a university trustee made could discourage employees at the school from being whistle-blowers.

Florida Gulf Coast University Trustee Dick Klaas made the comments in a story that ran in The News-Press on Dec. 12. He talked about finding out who triggered a state investigation that focused on two things: evergreen con-

tracts given to Athletic Director Ken Kavanagh and Chief of Staff Susan Evans and renovations to Evan's office suite.

Levine put his concerns in a Dec. 15 email to Marshall Crisler III, chancellor of the State University System. The News-Press obtained the email through a public records request.

"It just seemed he was more focused on who complained as opposed to what the issue was, and who complains is not

relevant," Levine said in an interview. "When you are on a governing body, if there is something that's not right, it doesn't matter how you found out about it."

"You need to focus on addressing the issue, not saying comments that tell everybody else at the university, 'Wow, I don't ever want to complain about something because I don't want the board coming after me.' That's ... potentially very dangerous."

Klaas comments were in defense of Evans. He said he thought someone was trying to put a blemish on Evans' career.

"And whoever this coward is should come forward," Klaas said in the

See FGCU, Page 4A

Naples Winter Wine Fest



PHOTOS BY KINFAY MOROTI/THE NEWS-PRESS

Executive Chef Colin Bedford was the featured chef during a vintner dinner Friday at Lee and Cheryl Anderson's home in Naples. The dinner was held in support of the Naples Winter Wine Festival.

DINING, WINE, A FINE TIME

Celebrity chefs put their mark on vintner dinners at 17 Naples homes



A vintner dinner is held Friday at the home of Lee and Penny Anderson in Naples.

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As guests in top hats and bejeweled gowns posed in front of the gleaming Duesenbergs parked behind his Gulf-front estate, Lee Anderson took a second to reflect Friday night.

"This is our 14th year and our 13th dinner," said Anderson, a trustee emeritus with the Naples Winter Wine Festival, and chairman of the API Group, a multibillion-dollar parent company for more than 40 independently managed construction companies worldwide.

"The draw is, obviously, helping the children of Collier County, but it's also a community of people with like interests that enjoy wine and sociability and just having a good time."

Good times were had at 17 homes across Naples on Friday as the 16th annual Wine Festival launched with a series of chef-vintner dinners.

See Wine, Page 6A



See photos and video from the event.

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Wine

Continued from Page 3A

Each soiree paired world-renowned wineries with celebrity chefs from across the country. Tickets to the dinners started at \$10,000 per couple, a price that included a private car and driver (lest too much wine be imbibed), as well as seats for today's auction at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples.

Chef Colin Bedford and his team from The Farrington House Inn in Pittsboro, North Carolina, executed a five-course menu for the 35 guests of Lee and Penny Anderson and their cohorts, Larry and Cheryl Andrews, on Friday.

Bedford and his two sous chefs left Pittsboro on Wednesday to make the 12-hour drive.

"It was us in a Suburban full with three coolers and all our stuff," Bedford laughed of the trip. "It's not all that glamorous, but the nice part is getting here with our ingredients, our equipment, our tools."

The chefs and their tools spent the better part of Friday mincing and julienning and shaving and braising.

Courses included Dungeness crab salad with cucumber, avocado mousse, mango, radish, crème fraiche and salsify, the plate accented with a puffed crisp made from the chefs' own tapioca paper.

Bedford roasted sunchoke and served them with caramel and mustard seeds, pistachio, apple and wild mushrooms.

He braised veal and served it with seared strip loin, truffles, honey and celery root.

Each course was crafted to pair perfectly with a selection of wines from Peter Michael Winery. Paul and Emily Michael, owners of the Calistoga, California-based winery, were on hand for Friday's event at the Anderson home. Peter Michael is also the festival's Honored



KINFAY MOROTI/THE NEWS-PRESS

Larry and Cheryl Andrews, right, and Lee and Penny Anderson, second from right, host a vintner dinner Friday in Naples.

Naples Winter Wine Festival

When: Through Sunday
Where: The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples
Cost: packages begin at \$10,000 per couple
Benefits: Naples Children & Education Foundation
Web: napleswinefestival.com

By the numbers

- 1:** The first Rolls-Royce Dawn to be delivered in the world will be up for auction today.
- 40:** The 40th anniversary of The Judgment of Paris, a legendary blind taste test where California wines bested their French counterparts, was re-enacted at a tasting and luncheon Thursday.
- 60:** Approximate number of chefs and vintners showcased at this year's event.
- 2,500:** Wine glasses on hand for today's live auction.
- 11.8 million:** Total dollars distributed to 30 non-profits and three initiatives through the Naples Children & Education Foundation in 2015.
- 135 million:** The amount raised by the festival since it began in 2001.

Vintner.

Paul in a top hat and tails, and Emily in a lacy, floor-length gown, the couple fit right in to the night's Roaring 20s theme. As with many of the attendees, the Michaels were there as much to have fun as to raise funds for the Naples Children & Education Foundation.

Since its 2001 inception, the Naples Winter Wine Festival has raised more than \$135 million, making it one of the

most successful wine events in the country.

"It's a fantastic event with some very educated people who love their wine, so that's one reason we come," Paul Michael said.

"But the first and foremost reason really is the kids."

Connect with this reporter: @ATometich (Twitter)

Legislature

Continued from Page 1A

er Steve Crisafulli insist they will get their work done on time this year.

Here are a few highlights of the two budgets as they are currently proposed:

» **Spending.** The House budget is nearly \$80 billion, while the Senate spending plan is about \$1 billion more. Both budget proposals are higher than Gov. Rick Scott proposed.

» **Schools.** The Senate has proposed raising school spending 2 percent more than this year, or nearly \$142 more for each student. The House proposal would increase student spending by 1.75 percent, or about \$124 more. Both school funding proposals, however, rely on increased local property taxes. The House has \$45 million for a controversial teacher bonus program opposed by Florida's teacher union, but the Senate budget does not include the funding.

» **Tax cuts.** Scott has made a tax cut package one of his main priorities this session. The House has rolled out a tax cut package that would total nearly \$1 billion. The cuts would not kick in right away but instead would take effect over a 2½ year period. The Senate has yet to offer up its own tax cut package. But top senators have suggested they may roll back property taxes instead of endorsing some of the business-oriented tax cuts proposed by the House.

» **Pay raises.** The House and Senate budgets currently do not include any across-the-board pay raises for state employees. But the budgets do include targeted pay raises for specific employees such as state firefighters. Scott vetoed a similar budget request last year. The Senate has proposed raises for employees who work in Florida's prisons. Gardner has said the Legislature may still consider setting a pay raise for all state workers.

» **Economic development.** Another top priority for Scott is the creation of a \$250 million fund that he can use to recruit businesses to move to Florida. The Senate has included the money in its proposed budget, but the House has not.

» **Health care.** The Legislature is not considering Medicaid expansion again this year. But the Senate is still proposing spending more on health care than the House. Some of the differences include how much money should be set aside for hospitals as well as providing money to pay for health coverage of immigrant children who are in the country legally.

» **Environment.** The House and Senate have set aside different amounts for Everglades restoration and money to help restore Florida's troubled freshwater springs.

Hotel

Continued from Page 1A

several years, with the project changing hands at least five times due to difficulty in securing the \$55 million needed to make it a reality.

In September, Goodman had trouble securing the financing, so Chris Freeman, of Freeman & Hasselwander Resort Properties, bought out his interests in the deal and had the money to start the project.

But Freeman was asking for more than the city was willing to give—public property around the water basin—and

the deal was transferred back to Goodman, Paight said.

"It's complicated," Kazemi said. "There are a lot of moving parts."

And on top of all that, much needed renovations to the Harborside Event Center have been put on hold until the hotel deal is in place. In October 2014, county commissioners approved \$4 million in matching funds to the city for renovations. The agreement provides \$8.5 million in improvements, and the county will make 10 annual matching payments of \$400,000, as long as construction begins before Dec. 31.

The idea was to construct the hotel and renovate the event center all at once, Paight said, but if the city can't get the hotel deal nailed down in time,

officials may have to move forward with the renovations this summer. But that will be decided at the coming Feb. 16 city council meeting.

There has been chatter about the need for a downtown hotel ever since the former Sheraton Harbor Place turned Ramada turned Amtel Marina Hotel closed in 2008.

Paight said city officials are holding out until they get what they want: a full-service convention-style hotel in the heart of downtown. But how long they will have to wait is yet to be seen.

"It's been challenging," Paight said. "We have not progressed as quickly as we would have liked."

Connect with this reporter on Twitter @dulaneycd.



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