

FOCUS

on Florida House

Casa Abierta—Open House

Co-sponsored by the Hispanic/Latino Coalition, Wal Mart and Sarasota County Government, this unique event on December 9th welcomed over 200 of our Hispanic/Latino community to the Florida House for the first time. Many County agencies partnered with us, including the Fire Department, Health Department, Libraries, Mosquito Management, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Sustainable Sarasota, SCAT and the Sheriff's Office. Many provided literature, displays and giveaways, and some units were on hand to inform the public of their services.



The Fire Department displayed a fire truck and Public Works brought an air boat on a large tandem truck.

Tyrone Orozco of Public Works demonstrated the bike rack for some interested visitors, while **Gary Randall** showed others the ramps on the new hybrid buses.



Spanish-speaking volunteers in the house and the yard helped visitors learn about sustainable living, including water and energy conservation, healthy home environment, storm protection, green building and xeriscaping.

We gave away tons of literature that day, and special thanks must go to **Marta Moreno**, who invested a lot of time and energy in translating our Visitor Guide into Spanish. In fact, one of the most exciting results of the event was that a number of County agencies were inspired to create Spanish versions of their literature too.

Detective Dave Micheel distributed free Identi-Kits, an important device for protecting children, as well as crime prevention and drug awareness information.



The Health Department provided information about child health care, and Mosquito Management displayed "How Not to Grow Mosquitoes."

Free compact fluorescent light bulbs were handed out along with a number of door prizes. The children absolutely loved the piñatas **Kathie** put together for the event and the audience equally enjoyed performances throughout the afternoon by **Andres Colin**.



Special recognition must go to **Kathie Balchin**, who organized the event with such enthusiasm, and to her Planning Committee:

Catherine Clouse (SCOPE)
Estella Curiel (YMCA)
Marta Moreno (FHLC)
Adriana Robledo (ESOL)



Fred Santana admires one of **Kathie's** piñatas.

Below, a young family enjoys the wonderful music of **Andres Colin**



Sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the success of this Open House:

Volunteers

Marta & Bob Ellis
Robert Goodell
Michael Ireland
Bennie and Ray Komarek
Mary Marquis
Tuly Martelo
Carl Meskimen
Marta Moreno & Francis Schwartz
Mike & Frances Sosadeeter
Erland Stephens
Terry Stewart
Lydia Towner
John Vollstedt
Melba Watts

Sarasota County employees participating:

Robert Berry – Public Works
Jasmina Herrera – Health Department
Andrea Lipstein – Natural Resources
Yensys Loyola – Fire Department
Det. David Micheel – Sheriff's Office
Tyrone Orozco – SCAT
Patricia Porchey – Extension Service
Gary Randall – SCAT
Cesar Rodriguez – Natural Resources
Dr. Fred Santana – Extension Service
Paul Snodgrass – Fire Department
Laurie Tarleton – Mosquito Managemt
Chico Vasquez – Public Works
Lt. Dennis Vessel – Fire Department

They're all gone?

Yep, the **showerheads** have all been given out and we will not be receiving any more. We do, however, still have some compact fluorescent lightbulbs in the box next to the copier, and will continue to disseminate them to visitors who complete the pledge form while the supplies last (one per household).

These are NOT all gone—yet!

MC Bonnie Nickel will be handing out **CFLs** at the **Venice Library** from **10am to 2pm on Tuesday, January 23**. Tell your family and friends who live in the southern part of the county that if they haven't been able to come to the Florida House yet for their free CFL, this is their chance. Thanks so much, Bonnie, for taking the lead on this! Please be sure to read Bonnie's **CFL article on page 4**.

New Products

If you haven't noticed the new addition to the Radiant Barrier display, please make a point of looking up at the **soy-based spray foam insulation** in the end spaces. One side is "open cell" (R-3/inch) and the other, closed cell (R-7/inch). The literature is on the wall right below the display and educational signage is in development.

Recently voted "Outstanding Green Product of the Year," this bio-based insulation reduces energy consumption utilizing US-grown soybeans, an annually renewable resource. Plus, it contains no harmful agents such as CFCs, HCFCs, VOCs or formaldehyde. It creates a tight building envelope, helps to eliminate moisture problems and reduce noise and dust, while repelling unwanted pests.

The local company that donated the product is Eco-Insulate (see www.ecoinsulate.com) and you can find additional information about the product at www.biobased.net.

I am also in the process of replacing two of our **skylights** with updated models, and adding one above the master bath shower that combines **exhaust fan, artificial and natural light!**

Look for a detailed article focusing on these "tubular" skylights in next month's newsletter.

Kathie's Korner



Chit-Chat Casa Abierta was a great success thanks to all the wonderful volunteers we had at the event. The feedback we received from the public was very positive, enthusiastic, and they look forward to attending future events here at the Florida House!

Our next big event will be the **Earth Day Celebration**, April 21, 2007, so please mark you calendar.

This is the time of year when we have mixed emotions...we get irritated by long lines in the stores and people in such a hurry they somehow misplace their manners. Yet, it is up to each and everyone of us to reflect on our own actions and think of how much more we can do in 2007. You help make our lives more meaningful and we thank you for that. Happy Holidays and best wishes for a great 2007!

Master Gardener Workday—December 4, 2006

Special thanks to all the Master Gardeners who worked this past workday: **Sandy Frick, Donna Grantham, Steve Nettles, Peter Price, and Julie Whitney.**

Our **next Master Gardener Workday** will be **Monday, January 22 at 8:00** a.m. Please join us!

The **2007 Plant Sale Committee** will meet on **January 10th at 9 a.m.** here at the Florida House. For those who want to help plan this yearly event, please come!



Meet Master Gardener — Betsy Roberts

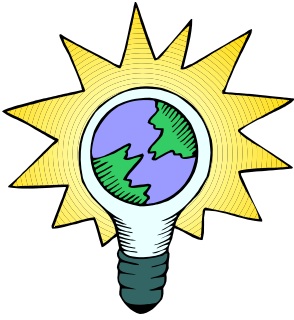
Originally from Ohio, I have lived in Florida for almost thirty years. I am a mother of three and grandmother of eight... all of whom I enjoy and work with to educate them regarding the importance of environmental issues. My son lives in New York, one daughter is in Massachusetts, and the other in Gainesville.

Although I tried to retire from being a psychiatric nurse, I am still called upon to take on home health patients. When I have time, I enjoy a good book, and I am also Chapter (State) Chair of the Sierra Club, my other "hobby." In that capacity, I work with the 19 Sierra Club groups around the state of Florida, attend the annual conservation conference in November, and help to plan five meetings each year of Flexcom—the Florida Executive Committee. Although it is a lot of work and requires that I stay

well informed so that I can respond to the media regarding current issues, I love contributing to the accomplishments of the Sierra Club.

I have also loved gardening and plants for as long as I can remember, which was a contributing factor to my becoming a Master Gardener. I enjoy working at the Florida House, in my own Florida yard, and at the butterfly gardens at Red Bug Slough.

This year, my yard was chosen as one of the homescapes on the Gardening for Wildlife Tour November 18. It was a lot of hard work to get ready for the tour day, but it was really fun and all of my visitors seemed very interested and appreciative.



The Light That Changed the World

by Bonnie Nickel

How many light bulbs does it take to change the world? One. A compact fluorescent light bulb or “CFL.”

Fluorescent light bulbs have been around for years, typically relegated to the garage or the laundry room because they have given off a cold blue light and emitted an annoying buzz not acceptable in the rest of the house. That has all changed and now the “buzz” is all about how much energy, money and pollution this improved technology will save us.

Incandescent bulbs produce light through friction over the wire coil inside the bulb. 90% of the electricity used for this 19th century technology produces heat and 10% produces light. Since the purpose of a light bulb is to provide light this isn't very efficient. Today's CFL's reverse that equation. Most electricity is used for light with very little heat emitted.

So where does the savings occur? Light emitted by any bulb is measured in lumens. A 60-watt incandescent bulb emits about 800 lumens. So does a 13-watt CFL. That's the key. You get the same amount of light from a CFL for $\frac{1}{4}$ the electricity. What happens if you use less electricity? Your electric bill is lower, of course. Since lighting can account for up to 20% of your electric bill, savings can be significant. According to the Department of Energy, replacing the 5 most frequently used bulbs in your home can save you more than \$60 a year. If every household in Florida changed just one incandescent bulb we would save enough energy to light all the households in Sarasota for 7 years. No kidding. One bulb can make a huge difference.

But that's not all. According to studies at the University of Florida, for every dollar that you save in lighting costs you save an additional 30¢ in cooling costs. Remember, incandescent bulbs are producing additional heat that your cooling system has to eliminate from your house. While CFL's are more expensive to purchase (\$2 for a 13-watt CFL vs. 50¢ for a comparable 60-watt incandescent), energy savings provide a quick return on your investment.

On average, CFL's last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs (10,000 hours vs. 1,000 hours). Not only does that make CFL's perfect for hard-to-reach fixtures, it also means that you can eliminate the energy and pollution associated with the production, packaging, shipping and disposal of the 9 incandescent bulbs that you will no longer need.

Speaking of pollution, on average, each CFL can prevent more than 450 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions since less electricity is required from the power company. That's a hard figure to visualize so try this: If every household in Florida replaced one incandescent bulb, carbon dioxide emission reductions would be like removing 48,000 cars from Florida's roads.

Since CFL's contain trace amounts of mercury (about 1% of that in a thermometer) spent bulbs should be dropped off at the county's Household Chemical Collection Centers. If you break a bulb wipe up shards with a paper towel (do not vacuum) and seal in a plastic bag before delivering to the collection center.

What to Look For

Shape: CFL's are available in many shapes besides the original spiral and are made for a wide variety of fixtures. Check the packaging for special features such as dimmable bulbs. Check the length of bulbs before you buy since the ballast is now part of the bulb, which makes some bulbs a little longer than incandescents.

Color: Besides the traditional cool white light, CFL's are now available in warm light. Check the packaging.

Energy Star®: This is the most important feature you should seek. Energy Star® is a joint program of the EPA and DOE. To qualify for the Energy Star®, products must meet significantly higher energy efficiency standards and are guaranteed for 2 years. The Energy Star can also be found on appliances, household electronics, programmable thermostats, fans and many more products. For further information about this and other energy saving options, check out www.energystar.gov

CFL's can be found in hardware, home improvement and most retail stores. There are major retailers who plan to change how we think about and buy light bulbs in the next year. Stay tuned.

The Energy Star® Change a Light campaign is a national effort to change the world one energy-saving step at a time. Change your front porch lights and show your neighbors that you are saving money, preventing pollution and changing the world!

January 2007



Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>MC: J. Hanson</p> <p>MG: Jo Hanson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>MC: AM- B. Nickel R. Singer PM- R. Singer</p> <p>MG: AM- N.Nicholson PM—B. Roberts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>MC: AM-L. Towner R. Goodell PM-K. Findley</p> <p>MG: Dot Beeman Norm Carmel Nick Cook Joan Resker PM—E. Pardey</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>MC: AM-A.Sullivan AM/PM- R. Singer</p> <p>MG: AM-- J. Gindling PM—J. Doran</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>MC: J. Vollstedt</p> <p>MG: J. Becker</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p>MC: J. Hanson</p> <p>MG: Jo Hanson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p>MC: AM- R. Singer PM-CBenninghoff</p> <p>MG: AM—C.Meskimen PM-B. Roberts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11 AT</p> <p>MC: AM-L. Towner, R. Goodell PM-K. Findley</p> <p>MG: Dot, Norm, Nick, and Joan PM—E. Pardey</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">12 CT</p> <p>MC: AM-A.Sullivan PM- M. Ireland</p> <p>MG: AM/PM C. Kiblinger</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">13</p> <p>MC: L. Garren J. Nordquist</p> <p>MG: P. Olsen</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">16</p> <p>MC: J. Hanson</p> <p>MG: Jo Hanson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">17 AT</p> <p>MC: AM-B.Nickel, L. Nilssen PM-CBenninghoff</p> <p>MG: AM-E. Stephens PM-B. Roberts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">18</p> <p>MC: AM-L. Towner, R. Goodell PM-K. Findley</p> <p>MG: Dot, Norm, Nick, and Joan PM—E. Pardey</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">19</p> <p>MC: AM-A.Sullivan AM/PM- R. Singer</p> <p>MG: AM J. Gindling PM J. Doran</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">20</p> <p>MC: K. Grove J. Vollstedt</p> <p>MG: E. Stephens</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">23</p> <p>MC: J. Hanson</p> <p>MG: Jo Hanson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">24</p> <p>MC: AM- R. Singer PM-CBenninghoff</p> <p>MG: AM- N.Nicholson PM-B. Roberts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">25 AT</p> <p>MC: AM-L. Towner, R. Goodell PM-K. Findley</p> <p>MG: Dot, Norm, Nick, and Joan PM— B. Komarek</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">26</p> <p>MC: AM-A.Sullivan AM/PM- R.Singer</p> <p>MG: AM/PM C. Kiblinger</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">27</p> <p>MC: M. Andrews</p> <p>MG: E. Stephens</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">30</p> <p>MC: J. Hanson</p> <p>MG: Jo Hanson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">31</p> <p>MC:B. Nickel, R. Singer PM-CBenninghoff</p> <p>MG: AM- Carl Mesk. PM—B. Roberts</p>			

Tours:

January 11
Welcome Club
Robert Goodell
Patricia Porchey

January 12
Home Schoolers
C. Kiblinger

January 17
Garden Club, Venice

January 25
Eagle Audubon
Ann Sullivan
Carl Meskimen

January 25
Vladimir, Russia Delegation

Classes:
January 9
Tropical Fruiting
M. Holsinger

January 13
Wildlife Gardens
Dr. Kluson;
L. Schiller

January 16
Citrus
Dr. Steve Futch

January 23
Insurance Reductions Thru Disaster Resistance
Matt Ross

MG Workday
Mon., January 22

Office closed on
Jan. 1 and 15