

SHELL SHOCKED

Saving Sanibel from Itself

By Art Stevens

After many sleepless nights and unfulfilling cheeseburgers I have made a momentous decision in my life. No friends, it's not to leave Sanibel. It's the very opposite. I am announcing my candidacy for the Sanibel City Council.

I plan to run on a platform about ten inches off the ground and will throw my hat into the ring. The decision I need to make is which hat. Should it be my old St. Louis Browns baseball cap or the red fez which I bought on the streets of Casablanca for a song?

I've decided to run for the City Council because Sanibel is caught in the cross hairs of history. I have no idea what this means but I'll surely come up with a position on the subject as the campaign unfolds.

Sanibel is a victim of urban blight, mass transit decay, rising Subway sandwich prices and blackened Dairy Queen ice cream cones. Calm heads must prevail and if anything I have been known to carry a calm head on my shoulders. In fact my head is so calm that opening my eyes has become quite a chore.

I plan to be the anti-politician politician. I belong to no party because to my mind the party's over and it's time to call it a day. My campaign will be focused on simplicity, in fact outright dullness. I will make no ripples or waves but I will indulge in meaningful dialogue with my opponents. However, once my opponents learn that my hat is in the ring – be it the baseball cap or the fez -- they will pull out of the contest knowing that they will have no chance against my platform, which I've now decided to raise to twelve inches off the ground.

Sanibel is broken and must be fixed. And I'm the man to do it. Sanibel has come across hard times. Houses are selling for a mere \$5 million. Doc Ford's plans to move to Tarpon Bay Road. Lance Armstrong is now banned on Sanibel's bicycle paths. And rare sea shells are even harder to find.

Can anyone expect millions of tourists to flock to Sanibel under these conditions? Our public servants have failed us. They have resorted to honesty and transparency. They have put the public interest ahead of their own. Really? How do they expect Sanibel to function without a smidgeon of graft and corruption?

Sanibel ranks among the top five beach resorts in the world. Are we willing to settle for this? Didn't Vince Lombardi say that winning is everything? That will be my approach to Sanibel governance. I want us to win at everything we do.

I insist that Randy Wayne White's thrillers become number one on The New York Times best seller lists. I will personally see to that. I insist that our major league baseball team the Sanibel Bells win their division. I insist that luxury skyscrapers come to Sanibel which is what the vast majority of our residents want. Why are our voters being ignored by the current Sanibel City Council?

All our City Council members think about is cleaning up our water supply, maintaining the current fragile eco-commercial status quo and ignoring the cries and pleas of the national franchise companies clamoring to make inroads in Sanibel, like McDonald's, Burger King, Sol's Knishes and Sally's Blow Dry.

The real goals of our community simply aren't being met – a brisker night life, more rampant pornography, availability of island bookies and traffic lights. If I'm elected the whole tone and ambiance

of Sanibel will change for the better. I will bend to the will of our founders and recreate Sanibel in their image. We will till the soil once again, invite back native mosquitoes and turn the clock back to pre-causeway days. The so-called progress we've made hasn't been in our best interests.

I will bring back such past island staples as Nutmeg Restaurant, Noopies, McT's, Diamond Jim Brady's Steak and Opium Parlor and the famous Elephant House. Plus the now torn down Sanibel Burlesque Theater will once again be part of our future.

And while I'm at it, there's nothing wrong with restoring martial law and evening curfews. Crime has gotten out of hand. Jaywalking is running rampant and the failure of Sanibel bikers to signal left or right turns properly has resulted in unnecessary emergency waiting time at CROW. Those poor little egrets and sea turtles wearing those tiny casts on their wings and paws simply break my heart.

There will be little in the way of electioneering and character assassination. Everyone knows that whoever runs against me is a heathen, infidel or moron. My platform, which will now be at least twenty inches high, will appeal to the masses: right is might; a stitch in time saves time and go Marlins.