

The "Newscaster" referred to below is the Inglis/Yankeetown Newscaster in Levy County. this is too long for me to post on TaylorCountyTalk, but it's likely that it would be of great interest to your readers.....can you post this?

Sally Price has given her okay to post it anywhere possible, so that the sunshine might be shown on the political scene.

I hear that some folks are sending maps to the FBI to show them how to find Taylor County.

--- On **Thu, 1/8/09, Sally Price** wrote:

NEED TO READ FROM BOTTOM LETTER TO TOP TO UNDERSTAND..

This is a true story that happened to me. It was published in The Newscaster Wed. January 7. 2008. Something is drastically wrong with our politics. I shared this story with Nancy Bell, Chairwoman of the Levy County Board of County Commission, before the last BOCC meeting where Judge Joe Smith swore in Danny Stevens, reelected BOCC member. Shortly after that she came out and said that the 3 BOCC members left were handling the situation well and she did not believe the BOCC needed to have appointments by Governor Crist for Commissioners Yearty and Parker who were indicted for bribery. .

READ THIS AND WEEP... BY SALLY PRICE

Ever wonder how politics really work in the Sunshine State? Read this and weep! In the aftermath of recent criminal indictments which left vacancies in the Levy County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) I was vetted for appointment to the BOCC by political power brokers from Tallahassee. The process left me sad and very angry.

Around 13 November 2008 I was contacted by Mr. C.W. Gilbert, a staunch Levy County GOP supporter. I was asked if I would accept an appointment to Sammy Yearty's BOCC seat by Governor Crist. After thinking about it I gave my positive response which was based on the sincere belief that I could contribute to Levy County and the fine people that live here. Mr. Gilbert said I would be contacted by a friend, Mr. Barnette from Tallahassee. Mr. Thomas Barnette contacted me within hours and made clear "they" had great influence in Tallahassee on the matter of this appointment, or if necessary, "they" could generate campaign funds if an election is called. I made it clear my vote would not be bought or swayed. Arrangements were made for a meeting at the Plantation Inn on 11/20/08 at 1:00 PM. I called Mr. Gilbert back and said I wanted him at that meeting with me since he arranged all this and I did not understand what was going on.

On the 20th I was met by Mr. Barnette upon arrival at the Plantation. Mr. Gilbert called and said he was just leaving Bronson, and would be late. Mr. Barnette informed me, when I asked, that the meeting was solely for me. This gathering turned out to be a 1-2 hour presentation by various representatives of Tarmac America, LLC, a company that previously applied for a Special Exception in Levy County to develop the King Road Mine. I questioned Mr. Al Townsend during the presentation as to why I was targeted since I have been so critical of the project and at the last public meeting he had repeatedly tried to silence me. He had no direct answer but profusely apologized for the way he treated me when I tried to speak at that public meeting.

After that Plantation meeting I did not return Mr. Gilbert's repeated phone calls nor send in the application to fill Yearty's position as I was asked to do multiple times. If politics can't be practiced in the Sunshine I'm not interested. There may be no law against meeting with me or with giving money to a person running for office, but I found this manner of politics repulsive. My conscience said "this is not right."

Many residents in South Levy County feel that every vote cast by the indicted BOCC members should be nullified. I totally agree. I personally feel that political

representatives are ethically and legally bound to serve the people with the highest standards. Tainting by corruption is an act which damages the political landscape for decades and it is a most grievous offense. Recently, BOCC Chairwoman Nancy Bell suggested that sitting BOCC members are fully capable of running affairs until an election. I totally agree and the reason is simple. If the administration in Tallahassee apparently sees fit to “vet” appointees, not by a process that examines their core values, but with a wink and nod from industries with vested interests and applications before the county and state, I find this repugnant beyond my ability to express.

Present at the meeting:

Mr. C.W. Gilbert

Mr. Thomas E. Barnette, Pres., Business Development Strategies LLC

Mr. Albert W Townsend, TarmacAmerica, LLC, Dir. of Real Estate and Environmental Services

Ms. Cindy Burns, Project Engineer, Tarmac America, LLC

Mr. Jeff Harris, King Road Mine, Plant Manager Tarmac America, LLC

Mr. John E. Garlanger PhD, PE, Principal, Ardaman & Associates

Mr. Jacob D. Varn, Attorney, Fowler, White & Boggs

Mr. Steve Godley, Environmental Systems Research Institute

Printed in the Newscaster

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/growth/article957185.ece>

FBI BRIBERY ARRESTS SHAKE UP SLEEPY LEVY

Two commissioners, including a member of a pioneering family, among those in the bribe probe.

St. Petersburg Times - St. Petersburg, Fla.

Author: CRAIG PITTMAN

Date: Jan 4, 2009

For more than a century, the Yearty family has been as much a fixture of Levy County as its rolling pastures and quiet country highways.

The Yearty ranch in Gulf Hammock has been W.S. "Sammy" Yearty's home for 62 years. His grandfather was a county commissioner. So was his father.

Thirty years ago, Yearty was appointed to the commission. Every time the short, stocky Democrat has run for re-election, he's won. In a county where local government is the largest employer, he's like the chief executive of a company town.

"They call it Yearty County," said Al Macri, a political opponent who tried twice to oust him.

Nov. 5 should have been a day of triumph for the owlish Yearty, re-elected with 62 percent of the vote. Instead, to the shock of nearly everyone in Levy County, the FBI arrested Yearty.

A federal indictment said he'd taken payoffs from a developer.

From the courthouse in Bronson to the boat docks on Cedar Key, word of Yearty's arrest had tongues wagging. Even more startling: The FBI nabbed another commissioner, Tony Parker, and two officials from Cross City. A month before, agents had handcuffed three

former officials from neighboring Dixie County.

That's seven current and former officials from two rural counties accused of taking bribes.

"They really tore up them good ol' boys," sighed Lindon Lindsey, the unofficial historian of Levy County and a longtime friend of Yearty's.

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Levy County has seen scandals before, but there has never been anything like this, Lindsey said, because Yearty's roots run so deep. Before his last campaign, the commissioner boasted, "My ancestors settled here before Florida was a state." Yearty is a pillar of the Otter Creek Baptist Church. He and his wife, Evelyn, serve on the board of the Christian school where his daughter is assistant principal. His son-in-law preaches at a Williston church that ministers to cowboys.

Money is usually in short supply in Levy County, one of the few places in Florida untouched by the recent real estate frenzy. About 45,000 people call it home, 5,000 more than lived there in 2000. In that time Citrus County, to its south, gained 20,000 residents. Although Levy has 52 miles of coastline, there is virtually no development there because most of it belongs to national or state parks, preserves and refuges.

The land isn't the only thing that's been preserved for generations. The county has long been run by a few powerful families like Yearty's, said Samuel Mutch, a lawyer who has handled civil rights cases there.

Then, in December 2006, Progress Energy picked a Levy County site for its new nuclear plant, spending \$47-million for 3,100 acres. Suddenly, "for sale" signs sprouted along U.S. 19. There was talk of new townhomes for plant employees. Change was in the air. And then the developer from Fort Lauderdale showed up with wads of cash.

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Charles W. Gilbert met the FBI agent two years ago.

Gilbert, a Republican state committeeman, has known Yearty since childhood. Their fathers served on the County Commission together. So did their grandfathers.

Since Yearty took office, Gilbert has been his most vocal critic. Twice, Gilbert says proudly, Yearty ordered deputies to escort him out of meetings.

"He's a good guy," Gilbert said. "It's just that the power went to his head."

Four years ago, Gilbert complained to state ethics officials. He said Yearty ordered county employees to build Yearty's daughter a house and used county equipment to maintain his driveway.

Yearty convinced an investigator that the employees built the house on their own time.

The driveway had been maintained as a county road since Yearty's father was a commissioner. The ethics complaint was dismissed.

Gilbert said he has thought for years that Yearty was too cozy with contractors. He never complained to the Justice Department. But then an FBI agent asked him about Levy County corruption.

"I told him, 'You rang my bell!'" recalled Gilbert, who was happy to tell them his suspicions.

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Yearty and Parker have pleaded not guilty. Neither Yearty nor his attorney, former gubernatorial candidate Rod Smith, returned a reporter's calls.

A federal prosecutor says Yearty's arrest is part of "a wide-ranging investigation." That's

about all she would say.

The indictments refer to the man handing out the bribes as "an individual representing himself to be Sean Michaels on behalf of Gideon Development." Gideon Development exists on paper. It incorporated in 2005. State records show a Sean Michaels listed as a company manager.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Rhew, when asked if Michaels was actually an undercover FBI agent, said, "I can neither confirm nor deny that."

What if a reporter called the company's number? Would Michaels call back? The prosecutor laughed. "You could try that," she said. (It didn't work.)

First, the mystery man paid a building and zoning inspector \$1,200 to persuade Dixie County Commissioner "Big John" Driggers and a colleague to vote his way on zoning matters, the indictment says. Driggers - whose most enduring achievement was erecting a 6-ton granite replica of the Ten Commandments at the courthouse - and the other commissioner allegedly took \$6,000 in payoffs before they lost re-election bids.

Next, Michaels targeted Cross City, where, the indictment says, he bought the cooperation of a council member for \$1,500 and a town superintendent for \$500. Then he made his move on Levy County, giving Yearty a \$100 gift card, the indictment says.

On Nov. 14, 2007, the indictment says, Yearty met an unnamed person for lunch to "discuss favorable votes and received an all-expense paid trip to New York City." A month later, it says, Yearty and Parker had dinner with someone at a Gainesville Hilton "and accepted \$10,000."

Later, the indictment says, Yearty acknowledged taking the trip with Parker. He said he and the other commissioner couldn't have traveled to New York "without someone else paying."

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Until Yearty and Parker's case is resolved, Gov. Charlie Crist has suspended them. The Levy County Commission must make decisions - including a recent vote on the nuclear plant site - with just three members.

The new chairwoman, Commissioner Nancy Bell, said one thing baffles her. The commission never voted on any Gideon Development project. It was never on any agenda.

The prosecutor, choosing her words carefully, said that the indictment says "that these fellows took the money with the intent to influence votes, whether they actually did it or not."

Since Yearty's arrest, the grand jury has indicted two more people: the executive director of Levy County's economic development agency, and Dixie County's former county attorney.

Rhew would not say whether there will be more charges.

Times staff writer Asjlynn Loder and researcher Caryn Baird contributed to this report.

FAST FACTS

Nine indicted

Those indicted so far in the federal investigation are:

- W.S. "Sammy" Yearty, Levy County commissioner since 1978
- Robert A. "Tony" Parker, Levy County commissioner
- Pam Blair, Levy County Enterprise Zone Development Agency executive director
- Marcellus Dawson, Cross City council member and former police chief

-Johnny Miller Green, Cross City town superintendent
-John Lee "Big John" Driggers, former Dixie County Commission chairman
-Alton J. Land, former Dixie County commissioner
-Willie D. "Billy" Keen Jr., former Dixie County building and zoning official
-Joseph T. Lander, former Dixie County attorney
"He's a good guy," [Charles W. Gilbert] said. "It's just that the power went to his head."
On Nov. 14, 2007, the indictment says, [Sammy Yearty] met an unnamed person for lunch to "discuss favorable votes and received an all-expense paid trip to New York City." A month later, it says, Yearty and [Tony Parker] had dinner with someone at a Gainesville Hilton "and accepted \$10,000."
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Credit: Times Staff Writer

[More questions arise regarding House Speaker Sansom](#)

Mon Jan 5, 2009 4:53 am (PST)

<http://spacecoastpolitics.com/2009/01/04/odom-sansom/>

More questions arise regarding House Speaker Sansom

January 4, 2009 by Dagny Taggart

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Grass roots or top down? What is the best way to decide who is going to represent "we the people" in politics? Why not simply let the voters decide?

Apparently that model didn't appeal to the Republican Party of Florida in the last election cycle. They recruited candidates before the filing deadline, and in so doing effectively shut out any other interested, motivated and qualified persons. They also chose candidates in primary races, endorsed them and helped them with fundraising.

What is wrong with this top down approach the RPOF leadership would argue? EVERYTHING the people in Florida should scream. Aren't we supposed to be a Constitutional democracy? Isn't the purpose of primaries to let the people choose who they think would best represent their party in the general elections? Or has the RPOF become a dictatorship where its members are held hostage by the

policies, politics and (lack of) principles of Chairman Greer?

When the RPOF hand chooses and funds its favorite candidates there is a quid pro quo involved once the chosen ones are elected. In the current House Speaker Sansom (R-Destin) for Ransom scandal, there is no outrage from those who walked neighborhoods and promised to be ethical once elected. The memories of those who said they were running to represent the people and would always remember that when they got to Tallahassee have grown short indeed.

It took a random citizen from the Tampa Bay area to file a much overdue ethics complaint regarding Speaker Sansom's (R) acceptance of a job that Sansom himself made happen by helping to obtain funding to the tune of \$25 million from last year's state budget to call attention to Mr. Sansom's apparent lack of a moral compass. It is obvious to anyone outside Tallahassee that this was wrong, unethical and possibly illegal. With all of the controversy and the persistent reminders of the inappropriateness from the Florida Democratic Party, it would make sense for Speaker Sansom to either resign the new position, step down from being speaker, or even better: do both. Alas, no such action appears forthcoming. What is being done to by the RPOF to remove Sansom? NOTHING. What is being said about the situation? NOTHING. What are our representatives (even newly elected ones) doing about this situation? NOTHING. What are Republican Leaders, the RPOF and the Governor doing? NOTHING. Their silence is deafening - but not mysterious.

When peeling back the layers of the onion there appears to be a common thread to explain the apathy of the Republicans to call the Speaker out: the Speaker's good friend Jay Odom, the not-so-poor developer from Destin, has funded the RPOF and campaigns around the state to the tune of almost half a million dollars in this last campaign cycle. He's the second largest (personal) contributor to the RPOF. He contributed \$100K personally and another \$100K from Leadership for Florida's Future, a CCE chaired by Representative Dean Cannon, and comprised and controlled by Republican leadership including Speaker Sansom. Jay Odom's personal and company contributions to the RPOF and Leadership for Florida's Future.

RPOF
Leadership for Florida's Future

Jay Odom
\$283,050

Crystal Beach

Development
\$52,449
\$100,000

Total
\$335,499

\$100,00

There is also the \$4500 personal inkind contribution (most likely some free plane rides) to the Yes on 1 - Save Our Homes Campaign PAC. The Yes on 1 effort was led by Governor Crist to convince Floridian's to vote in favor of Amendment 1 which was approved by the voters in January 2008.

The following is a list (not exclusive) of all the companies listed on www.sunbiz.org that Destin developer Jay Odom either owns or is part owner:

99 Eglin, LTD

Crystal Beach Development

Crystal Beach Development CO of N.W. FLA

Crystal Beach Development CO of Destin, LTD

Crystal Beach Realty

Hammock Bay Real Estate

Waters Edge Building Company (and/or Land Trust)

The following companies listed in the Florida Supervisor's of Election database of contributors but are not listed on www.sunbiz.org, however they share the same post office box for Mr. Odom's other companies.

Destiny Plantation

Destiny Real Estate

Coincidence? Probably not.

Here's a list of all of the contributions of Jay Odom and all of his many companies to political candidates in the last election cycle.

99 Eglin

Crystal

Beach (all)

Destiny

Hammock Bay

Water's

Edge

Total

JD Alexander (S17)

\$1000

\$500

\$500

\$2000

Thad Altman (S24)

\$500

\$500

Jeff Atwater (S25)

\$1000

\$500

\$1500

Mike Bennett (S21)

\$500

\$500

\$1000

Laura Benson (H69)

\$500

\$500

Peter Boulware (H11)

\$1000

\$2000

\$500

\$3500

Marti Coley (H7)

\$500

\$500

\$1000

Sherry Campbell (H5)l

\$500

\$500

\$500

\$1500

Steve Crisafulli (H32)

\$500

\$1500

\$2000

Don Curtis (H10)

\$1000

\$1000

Charlie Dean(S3)

\$500

\$500

\$500

\$1500

Paula Dockery (S15)

\$500

\$500

Brad Drake (H5)

\$1000

\$900

\$500

\$2400

Chris France (H21)

\$100

\$100

Adam Hasner (H87)

\$500

\$500

\$1000

Kurt Kelly (H24)

\$500

\$500

Belinda Ortiz (S19)

\$500

\$500

\$1000

Ken Roberson (H71)

\$500

\$500

Ray Sansom (H4)

\$500

\$1500

\$1000

\$500

\$500

\$4000

Will Weatherford (H61)

\$500

\$500

Stephen Wise (S5)

\$500

\$500

Mr. Odom also contributed another \$500 to Representative Sansom personally - bringing his total to \$4500. The RPOF was well known to be involved in the elections of:

Thad Altman (SD24)

Peter Boulware (HD11)

Steve Crisafulli (HD32)

Brad Drake (HD5)

Chris France (HD21)

Adam Hasner (HD87)

Belinda Ortiz (SD19)

Ken Roberson (HD71)

Jay Odom's contributions to the RPOF and the Leadership for Florida's Future shouldn't be discounted as they were in the hundreds of thousands, thus giving the RPOF the means to fund their favored candidates. The following chart shows the contributions from the RPOF and the Leadership for Florida's Future:

RPOF
Leadership for Florida's Future
Total

Brad Drake (HD5)
\$25,785
\$500
\$26,385

Steve Crisafulli (HD32)
\$132,500
\$500
\$133,000

Adam Hasner (HD87)
\$69,611

\$69,611

Ken Roberson
\$36,274

\$36,274

It isn't the amount of money Mr. Odom donated to Sansom that sets off red flags, it's the other campaigns he appears to have funded at the direction of the RPOF and the Leadership for Florida's Future CCE. Several of the candidates were funded by Mr. Odom just prior to an RPOF endorsement announcement.

Why is Mr. Odom so generous with his contributions? It could have something to do with the money he was trying to secure from the state budget to build an airplane hangar in Destin. A hangar that cost \$6 million to build. That his company would control. A hangar, the cost of which is now part of the monies dedicated to the local community college turned state college. In other words, Jay Odom's modest investment of almost half a million dollars in political contributions to the Republicans appears to have netted him a \$6 million hangar. No wonder he was so freely writing checks to the RPOF and Republican candidates!

So will anyone in the RPOF stand up and cry foul? It probably won't be the people who have benefited from RPOF endorsements and the contributions of Jay Odom. Their silence appears to already have been paid for.

Filed Under: Main, News, State
Tagged: Crist, Greer, Odom, RPOF, sansom