KeyOpinion

Gators and Buckeyes at Town Hall

Lia's Corner

Remember the wave?

For some of us, you may have to go back a bit. Say college or, further back for a few of us, to high school.

Remember the wave now?

People in a whole section of bleachers would stand up, or make some kind of gesture together, and the movement would run around the baseball diamond, around the football field, or the basketball court if that was your game.

It was exhilarating to be one little part of a crowd engaged in a singular activity. You were part of a whole on a clear, bright night and everything was beautiful…

This week in the Commissioner's Chambers at Town Hall on Longboat Key was one of those kind of nights.

Yes, and this enchanted evening did take place during the regular meeting of the Commission from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on this particular Monday night.

If residents knew how interesting, informative and fun Town Hall commission meetings could be, we would have to enlarge the commissioner's chambers to seat the crowd.

You think I'm kidding, don't you?

If you are in the government business, you know how seriously plodding some meetings can be. In spite of the fact that volunteers or paid government officials are determining how to take care of a town, city, county, state, or nation, it can get a little worn around the edges after a while.

Sure, sometimes it can be exciting. After all, commissioners get to talk into microphones, sit on a podium and look at the gathered masses, and spend taxpayer's money at every meeting.

You also get to make decisions, and as fast as you can make them.

I know, everyone in Town knows that commissioners take their sweet time to make up their minds. They move items on the agenda to workshops, take them off workshops and give them to staff members, and they save it until the next meeting.

Hey, if you were in their shoes, would you want to make a million dollar decision in a matter of hours?

Okay, I am straying off the subject at hand, which is the Wave and this past Monday night.

Every so often comes this magical evening (the one I was mentioning in the beginning), where there was a lifting of spirit.

By now, you are probably wondering what this has to do with the Wave.

Right?

Now, that I have laid out how dedicated Town staff and our governmental officials are, I will get to the point.

As a reporter, you arrive early and leave late – at the end, as a matter of fact.

Most residents, who come at all, leave as early as they can get out the door. Very few stay to enjoy the whole evening, only the most dedicated, or the reporters.

After a while, there is a kinship between the respective players. You spend an awful lot of time together, no matter what side of the fence you are on. It also doesn't matter which team you are playing on, there is a common ground. The reporter can talk to the commissioner and the Town manager can confer with the videographer, or the Town attorney.

There is a Wave of continuity that goes around the room, as I remember seeing at a football game in the past. (Second Hint)

So, it isn't so amazing that while the items on the agenda were being handled, there was an undercurrent of excitement, of expectation.

It wasn't the stack of dimes on the table, which had lent to the evening in the past. No, it was something else.

The dimes, you ask?

Why, since we saw midnight come and go one rare regular commission meeting, we started to choose a time when the meeting would end.

Monday night I chose 10 o'clock sharp.

Larry Burke, the Observer came in at 9:35 p.m. as I remember, and Town Attorney David Persson said he was betting on 9:05.

There were others, but it was hard to concentrate with everything else going on…

It was the whispering happening between unlikely whisperers that gave it away, and from across the room I heard a low whisper – Gators, 21 to 14.

That was it.

The College Football Nationals, which dared to play their championship game on a regular commission meeting night.

It was then the Mayor leaned over and whispered, "Who has the score?"

Somehow, while the business of running a municipality was being carried out, and well, the smell of new grass and the thunder of running mixed in with the Wave right there at Town Hall.

Who won the dimes? I'll let you figure it out.

The meeting ended at 10 o'clock sharp.

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