



### BEST ELIGIBLE BACHELOR

Len Jennings

**A** BC-7 anchor Len Jennings came to news from sports, and he's not just a sports fan, he's an athlete who enjoys golf, tennis and kayaking. His loyalty to Boston College hints at his university years, but he's also lived in Vermont and Michigan. Notice a pattern here? We suspect he misses the cold (his Facebook portrait substantiates our theory), so a first date with this bachelor might get off the ground over a cup of hot chocolate at the Germain Arena ice rink. (Brrrrrrr) Len's smile, however, is decidedly non-frosty; it could melt many a girl.



### BEST CHURCH MARQUEE

Southwest Baptist Church of Fort Myers

**A**t the Southwest Baptist Church of Fort Myers, they have a sense of humor. Drive past the church (right behind the Tanger Outlets on McGregor) and the marquee out front is almost certain to give you a chuckle. Various people in the church take turns coming up with and posting catchy phrases designed to turn heads and woo parishioners. The ladies in the office proudly show a hardcover book of church signs across America, in which their church was included, and giggle as they recall sayings under consideration, such as "Read the Bible — It'll scare the Hell out of you!"

### BEST PERSON TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED WITH AT AN EVENT

Kelli Burns

**T**his holds especially true if you're having an extremely bad hair day, have just had an outbreak of acne, or have just had several skin cancers removed from your face. Because no one will likely be looking at you in the picture. We look at Kelli every night on NCB-2. We like looking at Kelli. The effervescent Ms. Burns also serves on so many boards and hosts so many fundraising and special events that it's impossible to see her without thinking of her as a friend. She's an intrinsic part of the fabric of Southwest Florida life, a seemingly tireless role model who's always cheerful in the face of the words "Say cheese!"



### BEST PENSION PLAN

Florida's Drop Program

**T**his is the best retirement deal going. A loophole in the state retirement law allows double dipping — collecting a state pension while still getting a regular paycheck from taxpayers — and a number of public officials have quietly cashed in on the program. To begin collecting that pension, legislators, judges and local officials, including Lee County School District Superintendent James Browder and Lee County Property Appraiser Ken Wilkinson, retired for a month then returned to work with their monthly retirement checks and their salary to fatten their wallets. That costs taxpayers about \$300 million a year, according to the Florida Retirement System. Public service has never been so lucrative.



FLORIDA WEEKLY FILE PHOTO

Sanibel, voted Best managed city, is more beautiful than ever today.

### BEST ADVOCATE WHO WON'T GIVE UP

Roy Meidinger

**R**etiree Roy Meidinger has been a thorn in the side of the health care industry, particularly hospitals, for more than a dozen years. Since 1997, he's been suing hospitals (he calls them the Hospital Industry Oligopoly) claiming they customarily charge more than they should, causing the government to overpay for services. His latest federal suit, filed in 2006 and naming Lee Memorial Health System and others, was recently dismissed. He couldn't afford expensive legal counsel and the law won't allow him to go it alone. He wrote the entire 26-page federal complaint himself, complete with legal citations. And he's likely not deterred. He just needs to find a good lawyer who works cheap. Hell, Roy does all the work.

### BEST BUMPER STICKER

Riverside Bank (Heart)s me

**R**iverside Bank of the Gulf Coast may love you but the FDIC sure didn't love the bank. Regulators seized it in February. Headquartered in Cape Coral, it had as many as 15 offices but loan losses related to real estate and general market slowdown depleted Riverside's capital, regulators said. The bank was absorbed into TIB Bank.

### BEST LOCAL POLITICIAN'S HOME

U.S. Rep. Connie Mack IV's residence at 64505 Via Amante, Palm Springs, Calif.

**S**ure, Rep. Mack (aka Cornelius H. McGillicuddy) swings by Southwest Florida about once a month like clockwork, cutting ribbons, giving short speeches or feting service academy appointees. But when it's time to go home, he's off to the sunny California desert with his wife Rep. Mary Bono Mack. Rep. Connie Mack, however, does keep a Southwest Florida address, an apartment on Tamarind Cay Court in Fort Myers. But who's seen him at an unscheduled local event or out to dinner or at the grocery store? We couldn't find anyone. But who could blame him? The California house is worth about \$1 million, while his Fort Myers' apartment has a taxable value of just \$126,000. It's good to be in government.



### BEST MANAGED CITY

Sanibel

**T**he Sanibel City Plan was developed in 1974, severely restricting land use. City leaders have adhered to the plan, and 35 years later, the island is low density, with no high-rises, no traffic lights, no street lights and nearly half its acreage set aside as wildlife preserve. Though some would argue that the city is not friendly to business, the local government did a great job of getting the island up and running again after Hurricane Charley's rock-em-sock-em punch in 2004. Today, Sanibel is more beautiful than ever, a destination loved around the world for offering a totally quieter, more natural beach experience.

### BEST GOVERNMENT IDEA

Cape Coral's Utility Project

**F**or once, the Cape finally did some realistic planning. Realizing that the constant influx of people would overtax its shallow water supply and its septic systems could run afoul of government regulators, the city's management embarked on an ambitious (and expensive) program to bring water and sewer to the entire city — nearly 120 square miles. Cape Coral has been on the cutting edge of utility technology for decades (reverse osmosis, reclaimed waste water for irrigation). Sure, there's been some pain. Growth and change always comes with a price. But when you turn on the tap in May after a prolonged dry season and clean water splashes into the bowl, one forgets the pain.

### BEST BAD GOVERNMENT IDEA

Cape Coral's Utility Project

**T**he on-again, off-again, on-again, off-again Cape utility project has been a nightmare for some residents forced to shell out as much as \$25,000 for some plastic pipes in their yard and the privilege of paying some of the highest utility bills in the state. Back in the boom time, circa 2005-06, a homeowner could wait a couple months while his or her property appreciated at a double-digit rate, refinance and pay the bill. But it's not that way now. The huge premiums the city paid its contractor-partner for the Rolls Royce water and sewer system no long fly with residents. And now the city's backed itself into a corner by building a new water plant that needs more customers (which it can't have without building more utility lines) to pay the bills. Welcome to paradise.