

The Singer Island Civic Association was born over twenty years ago in May of 1967... and the reason it was born was to stop the tailored zoning of what is now known as Sugar Sands. The villain, in those days, was the Continental Con-Dev Corp who wanted to build high rises and commercial properties on that part of Singer Island. An organizational meeting was held on May 18, 1967 and the following officers were elected: Carlton Smith, President, Emmett Roberts, Vice President, Jerome Kelly, Vice President, C. McManus, Secretary, and M.A. Ruth, Treasurer. A membership drive was directed at the business as well as the residential community on the Island. Legal counsel and a couple of City Planners were employed and the fight began!

The fledgling SICA found itself in a series of legal battles including a multi-million dollar suit against SICA and its Directors. Appeals to the City Council of Riviera Beach fell on deaf ears leaving SICA standing alone fighting this battle in court. Finally, SICA won; Continental Con-Dev gave up starting their project and sold their tract of land to the developers of what is now known as Sugar Sands. Part of the settlement was the dropping of the suit against SICA and at this point some of the members felt the battle had been won and there was no further need to keep SICA as an on going association. The majority, however, favored keeping the organization intact and to revert to a watch dog status to protect the interest and the beauty of Singer Island.

The next "cause celebre" was when the Greek freighter "Amarylis" was blown on our shores just south of the Rutledge Hotel. The owners abandoned their ship with its holdfull of bunker oil and various salvage companies felt it wouldn't pay them to remove the ship. It wasn't long before the ship began to attract sight-seers and soon it became a gathering place for noisy nocturnal visitors. When the carousing, drinking, and disturbances got out of hand SICA again went into the fray. They pointed out to agencies at each level that in case the hulk should split open and release the bunker oil that our beaches and wildlife would be devastated. Finally, after a lot of buck passing, they got Congressman Paul Rogers to listen to their appeal for help. He was able to convince the Corps of Engineers to pump the oil into barges and to cut up the vessel into pieces which were towed to sea to form an artificial reef that today helps propagate sea life off our shores.

Another milestone in SICA's history is something many of us today can easily remember ... that is the back ups on the Blue Heron Draw Bridge that would reach way down to U.S. Highway #1. These traffic jams, particularly during the winter season, not only were unbearable but became a threat to our safety as they denied police, fire, and ambulances quick access to the Island. God forbid, if we ever had a hurricane, what a bottle neck that bridge might become! SICA urged the representatives of Palm Beach Shores and Riviera Beach to join them in an appeal to Governor Askew after we had gotten nowhere with the Department of Transportation. The Governor and his Cabinet heard our appeal and gave its 100% approval for a new wide span type bridge and scheduled it for a 1976 opening

Unfortunately, SICA doesn't always win. For example, we went to Court to try and stop the 42 story Tiara from being built. We felt that a density of this type would just about ruin ... if not sink ... our beautiful island! Although we lost that battle, we did not give up until we got a new zoning and lower density laws finally approved by the Riviera Beach Council.

When MacArthur Park was in its planning stage, SICA sat in on every single open meeting. Our input was solicited in private sessions as well. When we didn't like a proposal we let them know and when we felt they were on the right track we gave them our support. When the project is finally completed, we feel that Singer Island's natural beauty will be enhanced and made available to both our residents and visitors.

Remember House Bill 114? It would have permitted unincorporated enclaves such as Lost Tree Village to be absorbed by their neighboring communities. SICA wrote every congressman and commissioner of their objections to this particular bill, which, thank goodness, was finally put to rest. Besides keeping an eye on legislation that is proposed by the county or the state, SICA representatives are sitting in on Riviera Beach Council meetings to keep an eye on what's in the pot as far as it might affect us here on the other side of the bridge.

And how about the Casseta case? When a Canadian developer wanted to fill in the wetlands to build another high rise, SICA collected about \$140,000 that was used in legal and other expenses in fighting this project. The Corps of Engineers eventually refused Casseta the necessary permit to fill in the pond ... and again, SICA helped keep our Island beautiful.

We could go on and on and talk about how SICA was instrumental in getting Riviera Beach and Florida Power & Light to improve the lighting from MacArthur Park to the Blue Heron Bridge ... how we've donated \$12,000 in 1987 to the beautification of the Island ... we take the credit for initiating road improvements and drainage on Singer Island ... we got into the fight to prevent development of high rises adjacent to the public beach at Riviera Beach and to the parking lot development that was suggested ... we offered to line Singer Island with palm trees at our expense and when we were turned down by D.O.T. we offered to help Riviera Beach in their plan to remove Australian pines and to help beautify the landscaping.

SICA of today is much more than a watch dog .. we not only keep our eyes and ears open to anything that might be harmful to our beautiful Island ... but we also keep our hearts open by supporting charitable projects such as: Rotary Scholarships, Reading Rooms in the library, the Redevelopment Agencies, baskets of food for the needy at Thanksgiving, gifts for under privileged kids at Christmas, just to mention a few.

SICA today is your consultant to the Department of Natural Resources in the development of MacArthur Park ... SICA is your previewer for the Corps of Engineers on any contemplated coastal construction. SICA's eyes, ears and heart are yours for the small price of a membership in the only organization dedicated to keeping your Island like you want it to be.