LOCAL

+ BUSINESS

Jolly was $10M shy, adviser says

He says national Dems wrote off Florida races

John Pacenti
USA TODAY NETWORK - Florida

During the final stretch, Florida Democratic gubernatorial candidate David Jolly teed up several negative political television ads that the campaign hoped could sway undecided voters in his race against Republican Byron Donalds.

He never got to take that big swing. The ads never aired. The campaign was out of money.

"We had everything. There's so much on the cutting room floor right now. It makes me sick to my stomach," said Mark Riddle, who was Jolly's senior campaign adviser.

In an interview two days after the Nov. 3 election, Riddle talked about how Donalds' $173 million in campaign funds just couldn't be surmounted, how that big war chest scared national donors away from Florida and whether U.S. Senate candidate Angie Nixon, the Florida Democrats' national star this election, kept donors on the sidelines

See JOLLY, Page 5C



Supporters of Florida Democratic gubernatorial candidate David Jolly at his final rally of the election in Wilton Manors. JOHN PACENTI/USA TODAY NETWORK-FLORIDA



Naples veteran learned to adapt

Naval intelligence officer witnessed history

Liz Freeman Fort Myers News-Press & Naples Daily News | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Scott Wilkins spent nearly 31 years as an intelligence officer with the U.S. Navy in a fascinating career that sent him around the world. ● He did three tours in Vietnam, which included daily briefings to his boss, the late Sen. John McCain, a few months before McCain's capture. McCain was a prisoner of war for 5½ years and later served 35 years in Congress. ● Wilkins was at the fall of Saigon in 1975. He is matter-of-fact about that day in history marking the end of the prolonged war. He had a job to do. ● Assignments took him to the Middle East, the Persian Gulf region, East Africa, Panama. Pretty much everywhere, he said, except Australia. ● He met his wife, Alexandra, who is British, in Bahrain. ● "The Navy let me see the world as they advertise, and it taught me an awful lot," Wilkins, 84, said.

See WILKINS, Page 4C

GETTY IMAGES

TOP: Naples resident and military veteran Scott Wilkins, 84, displays some of his medals. ABOVE: Wilkins was an intelligence officer for the U.S. Navy for nearly 31 years, from 1964 to 1995. He is retired but remains active with veterans' causes at the senior community. RICARDO ROLÓN/FORT MYERS NEWS-PRESS & NAPLES DAILY NEWS; PROVIDED BY SCOTT WILKINS

Keep an eye out for drift cards

They help track water movements, pollution

Jodie Wagner
Palm Beach Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Palm Beach residents are being asked to watch for small orange cards washing ashore as part of a study tracking water movement and potential pollution hot spots in local waterways.

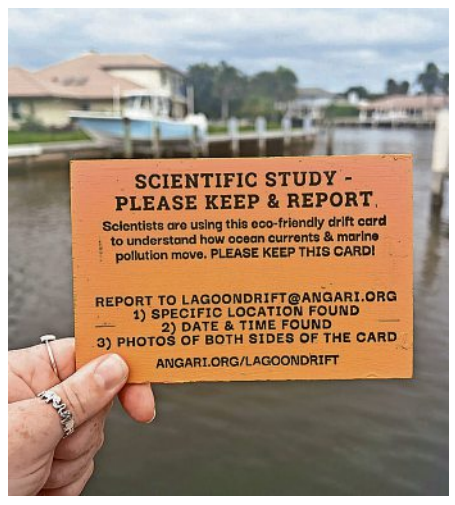
The Angari Foundation, a West Palm Beach-based nonprofit focused on marine and environmental science, will conduct its 16th Lagoon Drift Card Study on Tuesday, Nov. 10, with 14 deployment sites across Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and Brevard counties.

In Palm Beach County, 320 bright orange, 4-by-6-inch cards are expected to be released at noon from nearly a dozen sites, including the inlet off the northern tip of Palm Beach, Manatee Lagoon in Riviera Beach and the public dock in West Palm Beach.

Made from environmentally friendly materials, the cards are designed to drift with the water.

Drift cards from previous experiments also have been found along Palm Beach's shoreline, including near the north end of the island and near El Brillo Way, said Diane Buhler, founder and executive director of Friends of Palm Beach, a nonprofit that organizes

See DRIFT CARDS, Page 4C



An orange drift card used in the Angari Foundation's Lagoon Drift Card Study includes instructions for reporting where and when it is found. PROVIDED BY ANGARI FOUNDATION

Tony Danza to bring 'Sinatra & Stories' to Glazer Hall

Jodie Wagner
Palm Beach Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Television audiences may know Tony Danza as a less-than-bright cabdriver on "Taxi" or a street-smart housekeeper on "Who's the Boss?"

But the actor has another side: a love of music, tap dancing and performing as a song-and-dance man.

Danza will bring those talents to Palm Beach on Nov. 14 with "Sinatra & Stories," a show at Glazer Hall featuring Frank Sinatra classics, tap dancing, ukulele playing and personal anecdotes about the legendary singer.

Backed by a four-piece band, Danza mixes Sinatra classics with stories about the singer and his own life in show business.

Still, Danza, 75, is best known for starring in "Taxi" and "Who's the Boss?" during the 1970s, '80s and '90s. His other credits include film roles in "Angels in the Outfield" and "Don Jon," as well as turns on Broadway in "The Producers," "A View from the Bridge" and "Honeymoon in Vegas."

His mother introduced him to

See DANZA, Page 5C

Wilkins

Continued from Page 1C

The couple moved to Vi at Bentley Village, a retirement community in North Naples, this year from Bonita Springs.

He is active with his homeowners association and with the Bentley Veterans Association when he's not playing golf or logging 10,000 daily steps.

For Veterans Day on Nov. 11, he will be a part of the parade at Bentley with decorated golf carts.

He and other veterans at Bentley support Freedom Waters Foundation in Naples which provides therapeutic boat outings to veterans and others with disabilities.

His military career may be behind him but the honor of service has never left him. He retired from the Navy in 1995 with the rank of captain.

"The interesting thing about veterans is you cannot see one of your pals for 10 years. Then you see them, and it's like yesterday. It's an amazing thing," he said. "And I think one of the other things is you learn responsibility when you are in the military, and you also learn adaptability."

Veterans Day to him is about the camaraderie. There's a lot of that at Bentley.

"We've got guys who did two years in service and guys who did 30 years. And we're all the same."

From college to Vietnam

Raised outside of Boston, Wilkins graduated from Bates College in Maine in 1964. The military draft was in place. His plan to become a Navy pilot was dashed because of his eyesight.

"When I couldn't be a pilot they said, 'Do you want to be a navigator?' And I said, 'no.' And they said, 'Do you want to be an air intelligence officer?' And I said, 'Yeah, that sounds exciting. Let's do that.' "

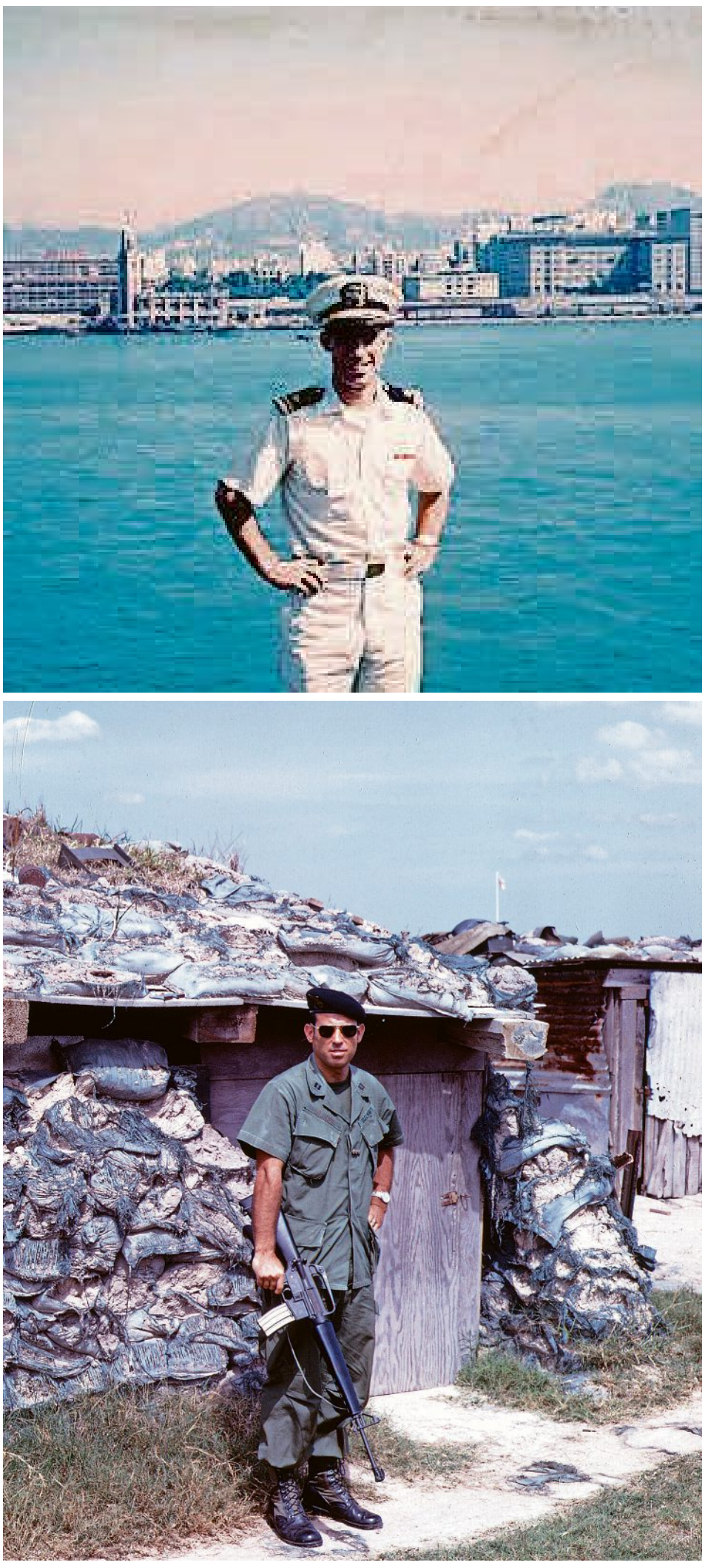
After training, he was deployed to Vietnam in April 1966 on the attack aircraft carrier, the USS Oriskany. On Oct. 26, 1966, the carrier suffered a devastating fire in which 44 died and 156 were injured.

To this day, six or eight junior officers aboard the Oriskany have a call on the Oct. 26 anniversary "to say hi," he said.

The carrier was rebuilt and deployed back to Vietnam in spring of 1967.

On July 29, 1967 the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal had a fire that killed 134. Pilots on the carrier were asked if they wanted to transfer to Oriskany.

"One of them who did was John McCain," Wilkins said. "He became the assistant operations officer and as the squadron intelligence officer I reported to the assistant operations officer, so John was my boss for three or four months."



Scott Wilkins, of Naples, was an intelligence officer for the U.S. Navy for nearly 31 years, from 1964 to 1995. He now lives in Vi at Bentley Village where, at 84, he is active with the Bentley Veterans Association and his HOA. PROVIDED BY SCOTT WILKINS

What was McCain like?

Wilkins described McCain as a real gentleman.

"I met him on a daily basis," he said. "I briefed him and he gave me instructions, pretty much like you would with any boss. He was very pleasant. I never heard him raise his voice."

McCain was shot down Oct. 26, 1967 over North Vietnam and taken prisoner of war.

"I heard he was shot down right after he was shot down, within a minute, because we would get the reports back that an aircraft had been damaged or a pilot had ejected," Wilkins said. "And he was shot down over Hanoi so there was no chance to rescue him."

There was nothing more for a long time.

"I'd say it was many months before we heard anything more," Wilkins said. "The last time I saw him was when he was released from captivity and I saw him in Jacksonville."

Wilkins debriefed many POW's when they were released but not McCain. They had no contact after McCain became a U.S. senator for Arizona.

The fall of Saigon

Wilkins was back in Vietnam for the evacuation of Phnom Penh and Saigon in April 1975.

"I was a senior intelligence officer on a carrier at that point," he said.

He didn't share how he felt about the historic event in Saigon on April 30, 1975, which marked the end of war with South Vietnam surrendering, or how so many Americans had opposed the war in protests back home.

"This is the business for the day. We're going to evacuate Saigon," he said. "It may sound strange but you had a job to do so you just did it."

He does remember whenever he was back in the U.S. before the end of the war, he would not wear his uniform in San Francisco.

"They didn't like us," he said. "Now people say 'thank you' for your service. Back then they were rather rude to you. You had a job to do and you did it. You didn't worry about that, the fact that there were a bunch of peaceniks who didn't like it."

He remembers well how the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam didn't think Saigon would fall.

"So he was dragging his feet and ended up with the Marines going on in and clearing a landing zone at the embassy," he said.

The iconic picture of the helicopter on top of what was said to be the U.S. embassy was in fact taken the day before, on April 29, 1975 at a CIA annex and not at the embassy, Wilkins said.

"It was a better picture than the ones on the embassy grounds so that is why they use that all the time," he said.

Assignments all over the world

After Vietnam, Wilkins was sent on assignments in the Pacific and the Middle East.

He met his wife in Bahrain in 1983. They married three years later. He traveled extensively in the Persian Gulf region and East Africa.

He attended the Naval War College in Rhode Island and received his master's degree in strategic studies. He also studied Finnish and served from 1986 to 1990 in Helsinki as U.S. Naval Attaché. He traveled through Scandinavia, the Baltic states and parts of the Soviet Union.

"One of the duties of an attaché is to do a lot of entertaining in your home," he said. "We were required to have in-home functions six times a month."

He doesn't hesitate to say his wife was a big help in that duty.

"She had to keep the menu straight, the guest list straight and things like that," he said. "That's a lot of work."

Panama in the early 1990s

He completed Spanish language training and they spent four years in Panama starting in 1990. He was vice director of intelligence for the U.S. Southern Command, covering the region south of Mexico to Argentina and Chile.

"There were a lot of insurrections going on then and lots of drug stuff. We would try to stop the druggies. We'd send planes out to look for them. We worked closely with the DEA."

In Panama he and his wife got two Panamanian Amazon parrots.

"And we still have them, 34 years old. They're great pets."

After they left Panama he finished his Navy career in Washington, D.C.

Military honors include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with Combat "V," Air Medal, and the Finnish Order of the White Rose.

There's also three Meritorious Service Medals, two Navy Commendation Medals, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Navy Achievement Medal, and 26 campaign and unit citations.

Wilkins didn't end his working days after leaving the Navy. He worked as a defense contractor.

He and his wife moved to Florida in 2005, and he commuted to Washington for his private defense work, including time with Boeing, for about two years before retiring in 2007.

Retirement has not meant twiddling his thumbs. There's golf three times a week, doing things for the HOA first at their residence in Spanish Wells in Bonita Springs and now at Bentley.

"All my time is taken," he said.

Liz Freeman is a health care reporter. Reach her by emailing lfreeman@naplesnews.com

Drift cards

Continued from Page 1C

beach cleanups. Her group has participated in the study for several years, deploying cards from the C-51 canal.

The ongoing study, which began in 2017, helps researchers better understand how water moves through the Lake Worth Lagoon, Palm Beach County waterways and the Indian River Lagoon, the foundation said. By tracking where the cards are found, researchers can learn more about how floating debris travels and where it may accumulate.

Anyone who finds a card is asked to keep it rather than throw it back into the water. They should photograph both sides and email the photos to lagoondrift@angari.org, along with the location, date and time of the discovery.

During previous experiments, drift cards have traveled considerable distances, according to the foundation. Some have been reported 276 miles north, beyond Jacksonville, while others have been found as far south as the Hillsboro Inlet in Broward County.

More than two dozen organizations, schools and community groups are helping with the effort, including creating, decorating and deploying the cards and participating in educational programs.

This year, Buhler's group will work with Sea Turtle Adventures' iCare program, which serves adults with special needs, to help deploy the cards.

Buhler said the project also gives children an opportunity to learn about the science behind the study and how debris affects wildlife and the environment.

"I met Angari many years ago, and their work is spectacular with the kids," she said.

"They get the kids involved to understand not only the movement of debris, but their own natural environment where they are deploying these cards. It's a conversation with them, and then the kids decorate the cards. The children are understanding the science and the daily impact it has on not only animals, but on their natural South Florida world."

The foundation maintains an online interactive map and dashboard where the public can explore findings from previous experiments dating to 2017. The map includes reported card locations, deployment sites and environmental observations from the days the cards were released.



Eco Scouts take part in the Angari Foundation's Lagoon Drift Card Study, helping deploy cards that researchers use to track water movement and the travel of floating debris. PROVIDED BY THE ANGARI FOUNDATION

The information can be viewed at Angari.org/LagoonDrift-Data.

More information about the study is available at Angari.org/LagoonDrift.