

# SCARIEST PEOPLE 2010

## FEAR AND LOATHING IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA

For all the uniformity of Halloween frights — drugstore witches, lawn tombstones, shrieking soundtracks — “scary” is subjective. Some folks get jumpy on a darkened street. Others chuckle at snuff films. Still others can’t sleep at night, worrying their Halloween candy is tainted with Melamine.

Folio Weekly’s annual Scariest People issue is another matter entirely. Whether or not you’re actually frightened by the people on these pages, there’s no doubt that they scare the hell out of some people. So grab one of our five clip-and-wear masks and join in a truly local bit of hellraising.

### ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHAD CROWE

#### Ryan Dettra

Ryan Dettra doesn’t seem to understand that when you have a job as a government employee, your behavior must be classified under the rubric milquetoast. When he took over the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, he actually delivered great music and large crowds. That was wrong. Someone should have told him that his goal was to blend in, to perform only adequately and not to aim higher than routine bookings like Eddie Money, Gallagher or “Sesame Street Live.” But Dettra actually had a mad plan to alter the atmosphere of St. Augustine with bands like The Flaming Lips, Los Lobos, Bonnie Raitt, The Decemberists, even the folksy “Prairie Home Companion.” Not satisfied with his little Amphitheatre realm, Dettra has also helped bring several community festivals back to life, including the nearly dead Lincolnville and Gamble Rogers festivals. Unfortunately, this is unacceptably ambitious in a county where anything louder than a pair of golf slacks gives local officials heartburn, and fake history is preferred over actual progress.

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## **Brenda Rothwell**

This woman was terrifying enough in 2007 when she was running Nassau County's Animal Care and Control agency — a period during which hundreds, perhaps thousands, of animals were euthanized without the required paperwork, and when household pets were rounded up and killed after a specious exposure to rabies. But things got even scarier this year when Rothwell, Nassau County's chief code enforcement officer, headed south to the Bahia Mar hotel in Ft. Lauderdale, accompanied by three other county employees, for a taxpayer-subsidized junket. Though pitched as a way to improve county hurricane preparedness, a secret videotape showed Rothwell had somewhat different priorities, including stumbling naked onto a very public balcony for a smoke, and straddling and nuzzling fellow county employee Daniel Salmon poolside. Rothwell and the other three employees are no longer on the county staff, but her legacy will continue to terrify Nassau residents for years to come.

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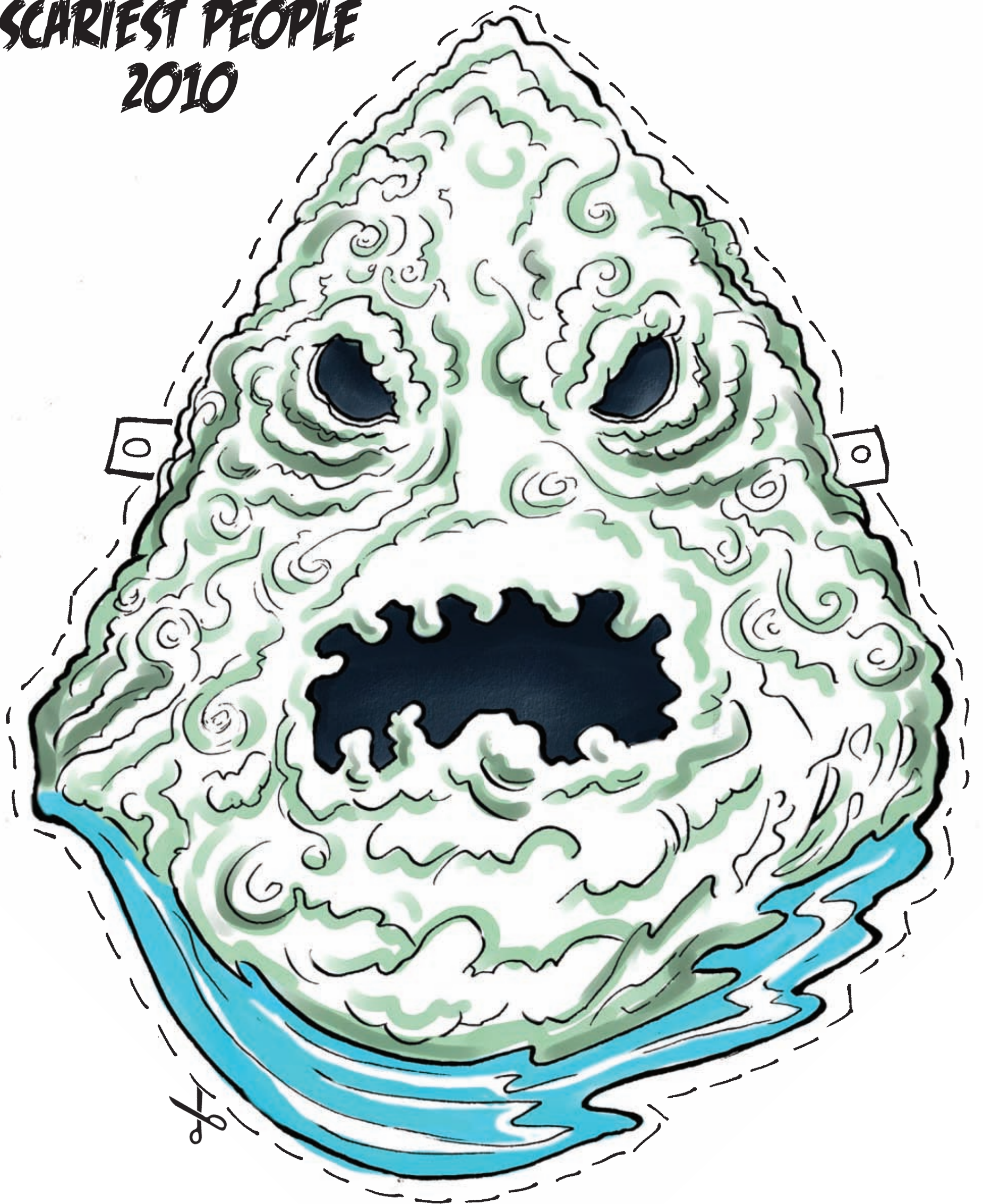
## Jennifer Carroll

The state-rep-turned-candidate-for-lieutenant-governor should strike fear into the hearts of any who believe that state-mandated financial disclosure forms need to be even remotely accurate. As Folio Weekly reported in September 2009 (<http://bit.ly/cm1Tcs>), the four-term Republican legislator filed financial disclosure reports that were wrong, incomplete, mathematically impossible, out of compliance with the required disclosure format — or all four at once. (Her net worth fluctuated from \$23 million in 2004 to \$202 million in 2005 to \$206,783 last year.) She also failed to disclose a trip to Turkey, paid for by the culturally conservative Amity Center in Jacksonville, despite being required to report gifts worth

more than \$100. But Carroll was having trouble accounting for things as far back as 2003, when she initially denied that she'd spoken to the Green Cove Springs police chief about a speeding ticket that was subsequently, inexplicably, dismissed. (Carroll told a Folio Weekly reporter that she'd "forgotten" that exchange. <http://bit.ly/cOPNPu>) Given her history of financial mistakes and faulty memory, Carroll might seem an improbable running mate for some, but she's sharing a ticket with Rick Scott (<http://bit.ly/9GXH6g>). Given his similar baggage, it might just be a match made in heaven.

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## River Foam

Possibly toxic, terrifyingly persistent and mysterious in origin, the thick, meringue-like foam that began washing up on the banks of the St. Johns River in July is a frightening reminder of just how badly the river needs help. The foam followed the summer's extensive algal blooms and massive fish kills, which provided stark, stinky and horrifying evidence of the river's ill health. The foam was just

the figurative icing on the cake. (As Riverkeeper Neil Armingeon said, "It looks like you could cut it and serve it.") The only thing scarier is the fact that polluters and regulators are still fighting to preserve the status quo.

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## Mike Mike Mike Weinstein

This outwardly boring lawmaker doesn't immediately register as evil, which just demonstrates his mastery of the dark arts. Until this year, he's managed to "pass" for an actual human being, not a terrifying zombie, but the mask has slipped. The first indication of his true nature was the aural hostility of his campaign song, an unlistenable bit of pop music penned by Weinstein's own spawn that managed to blatantly rip-off and simultaneously be more annoying than the theme from "Footloose." The video for the song went viral, a fact for which Weinstein has still failed to atone. Worse yet was his early enthusiastic endorsement of the single most terrifying candidate in the 2010 elections, Rick Scott, a man whose appearance in the first "Poltergeist" film should've been enough to warn any lawmaker to keep his distance. But Weinstein's alliance with Scott will be money in the bank if Scott wins the governor's race — he can offer no clearer indication that he's sold his soul.

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## Don Redman

Don Redman is a barber by trade, and if that's all he was, he surely wouldn't have earned his Scary People title. But Redman chose to become a City Councilmember, thereby injecting himself into public life and subjecting his constituents to his uninformed and terrifyingly small-minded views. Not bright enough to fend off lobbyists, or really even to deliver his thoughtless soliloquies on religion, Redman this year staged the council's defining moment when he stood to challenge the appointment of a Muslim professor to the city's Human Rights Commission. His brief, stumbling request of Dr. Parvez Ahmed — "I would like to ast [sic] you to say a prayer to your god" — caused every observer to wince with embarrassment, and prompted the council's own attorney to sprint to the microphone to get him to stop. Redman eventually apologized, but his inflammatory comments torched a lot of community goodwill, and proved that nothing is more terrifying than righteous ignorance. □

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