

Trumpet

Photo: Linda Pyche

Maranatha Village
Trumpet • Fall 2025

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Summer at Maranatha

Jonita Barram

Temperatures spike. Humidity rises. Daily forecasts often include rain showers or thunderstorms. And to top all that, summer is hurricane season. Welcome to summer in Sebring!

It's no wonder the snowbirds left early and many year-round residents have escaped Sebring for visits to friends and family in cooler climes.

Some may think that with so relatively few people left in the village, nothing happens. But that's a wrong assumption. This issue of the *Trumpet* will look at a few of the opportunities residents enjoyed this summer as well as a few from this past winter.

This issue also attempts to wrap up the previous four issues, intro-

duce several people, and remind readers of opportunities here.

Have a wonderful autumn.

Summertime Groaners (a.k.a. Dad Jokes)

1. What do sheep like to do during summer?

Have a baa-baa-cue!

2. What pet makes the best company on a hot summer day?

The chin-chiller.

3. How does Rapunzel keep cool in summer?

She uses her [h]air conditioner.

4. What do bees say in summer?
"It swarm, isn't it?"

5. What's the most mathematical aspect of summer?

The tan lines.

Maranatha Office

Administrator
Brian Halstead

**Business
Manager**
Jerry Wells

Office Manager
Kathy Withers

**Accounts
Payable**
Katie Gray

**Marketing &
Development**
Kaye Halstead

**Director
of Operations**
Bill Katka

**Volunteer
Coordinator**
John Pyche

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address or
website URL
on the bottom
of this page and
following pages.
Find past newslet-
ters on the web-
site under the
Newsletter tab.

Present with the Lord

Marie Moore

Between May 2 and August 13, we said good-bye to these friends:

Don Sawtelle (former resident), 7/29
Ellie Johnson (former resident), 8/13
Martha Martens, 6/16
Phil Terrill (RVer), 7/3
Ilene Coyle (former resident), 7/27

Meet the Willises

Scott and Janet Willis are new residents on Job Street. They learned about Maranatha Village from Doug and Marie McLachlan, who “graciously invited us to stay with them whenever we were coming to Florida.”

Scott and Janet come directly from Tanglewood in Sebring, where they lived for 10 years. Before moving to Florida, they lived near Nashville for 12 years.

Scott and Janet have nine children, thirty-four grandchildren, twenty-six great grandchildren, and three more on the way. You may remember news coverage about the loss of their six youngest children in a fiery van accident in 1994. Scott and Janet testify that “God’s grace alone has been our strength. We thank and praise Him.”

Scott served as head of a charitable organization, the Khesed Foundation, before retiring. Previously, he and Janet served as pastor and wife at Parkview Baptist Church in Mokena, Ill., for 5 years and then at Parkwood Baptist Church in Chicago for 18 years. They say, “The truth of God’s Word has been very precious to us, our lifeline, throughout our 58 years of marriage,” and they invite readers to visit their website, scottandjanetwillis.com, to learn how the Lord has worked in their lives.



Scott and Janet Willis

New Horizons Fund Update

Jerry Wells, Brian Halstead & Jonita Barram

Praise the Lord, the New Horizon Fund has \$148,832.01.

While God has provided volunteers, more are needed. Please pray about these needs for volunteers:

- Pool repair service expert (deck resurfacing, grouting, sealing, and tile repair)
- Water and sewer line repair technician

The village would like to raise funds for or be gifted with a **full-size backhoe** with 4-wheel drive (CAT, JD, or similar); an **extend-a-hoe**; a **compact power trencher**; **steel girders** for roof replacement; **composite decking** (Trex or similar)

for a dock; and **SCH80 PVC pipes** for the village's infrastructure.

If you are able to volunteer or know someone who can, please contact Brian Halstead, and keep the New Horizons Fund in your prayers.

Meet Board Member Phil Schmitt

Judy Meyers



Phil and Dianne Schmitt

Phil and Dianne Schmitt were missionaries with Baptist Mid-Missions for 21 years, retiring from fulltime service in 2013. When they leased a home at Maranatha in 1998, it was a place to come to on furlough from missionary service in Slovakia, Eastern Europe. They later served in Ireland, then in 2005 they moved permanently to the village and went to work at EBI (Editorial Bautista Independiente).

Phil served on the village maintenance team for seven years. Experience gained in learning how the village operates and understanding its infrastructure prepared him for further service to the village. This year he became the president of the nine-member village board.

**“OUR PURPOSE IS TO MEET THE NEEDS
OF THE MARANATHA COMMUNITY,
SERVING OTHERS TILL JESUS COMES,
AND TO SHINE
AS A LIGHT FOR CHRIST
IN THE LARGER SEBRING AREA.”**

“We’re here, as a board, to serve, and to set the policies that will guide the staff in the running of the village” emphasizes Phil. The village “was established in 1973 as a retirement community for Baptist pastors, missionaries, Christian workers,

and laypeople to fellowship together with those of like precious faith and to further the cause of Christ in this age.”

One way the board members maintain the integrity of the village is by carefully reviewing all village residency applications to be sure that doctrinal beliefs of future residents align with the village's historic Baptist doctrine.

Phil's goals for the board include having an open door, inviting villagers to share their praises, comments, and concerns with board members; meeting residents' needs and helping maintain harmony in purpose and practice; and identifying villagers with expertise to serve as advisors/consultants regarding village concerns.

Within the next three years, four members of this self-perpetuating board will retire after their eight years of service. Phil anticipates filling vacant board positions with knowledgeable, younger villagers who have the ability to bring the village in line with our digital age.

Early in his young adult life as a Navy petty officer, Phil learned the importance of teamwork. Phil desires to keep as a priority the board's teamwork and close communication with the MV staff. He says, “I try to talk individually with maintenance and office workers, and often with Brian Halstead, the village administrator. Our purpose is to meet the needs of the Maranatha community, ‘serving others till Jesus comes,’ and to shine as a light for Christ in the larger Sebring area.”

Celebrating the Fourth

Seventeen golf carts and a family on bikes participated in the 2025 Fourth of July Parade. Find more photos on page 11 and the insert.

Photos: John Miller

Near Right: Linda Peacock, July 4 Parade coordinator, checks in with participants.

Far Right: Earl and Sue Ellen Barton won the “Most Historic” award.



The “Most Fun” award went to Ed and Barb Henderson, whose golf cart featured music, lights, and Uncle Sam.



Bill and Ellen Katka won the “Most Patriotic” award for their American Eagle and flag-draped cart.



Keith and Ginny Thompson won the “Most Spiritual” award for their cart featuring a Bible and signs that honor God and ask His blessing.



Dee Young
Photo: John Miller



Ginny Thompson
and Vicki Ivester with Chase
Photo: Colene Price



Bobbie and Doyle Wolford
Photo: Colene Price



Ted and Pat Wells shown from both the back and the front of their cart.
Photos: Colene Price



Butch Riley with Dolly
Photo: John Miller



Dave Tinkham and Barb Stahl
Photo: John Miller

Lights Shining for Christ

Jonita Barram

Maranatha Village needs volunteers both to steward what God has provided and to keep costs down. But “serving/helping others till Jesus comes” isn’t limited to life in the village. For example, in the Winter 2024–25 *Trumpet* (p. 7), we saw that Elaine Haines serves on the board of the Sebring Historical Society and oversaw many areas of Sebring’s 2024 Pioneer Daze. This led to opportunities for Maranatha residents to serve by shuttling visitors or representing Maranatha Baptist Church in a choral ensemble.

Others from the village minister in a local jail or prison, and still others teach the Bible to elementary students in local schools. They are fulfilling the Great Commission outside the village to a variety of people they might not otherwise meet. And there are others I don’t know about who are serving the Sebring / Avon Park / Spring Lake communities.

Ginger Edwards is yet another example of serving our neighbors outside the village—as a poll worker. Many years ago, she’d been laid off work and needed the \$70 she could earn as a poll worker. Finding that she enjoyed the work, she kept at it.

In 2016 at the Florida DMV, Ginger was asked if she was willing to serve as a poll worker and was told she wouldn’t be called unless they were desperate. “They must have gotten really desperate,” she says, “because they did call and placed me at Precinct 22, our own Maranatha Village.”

Ginger praises Highlands County for the thorough training the workers get. It includes a three-hour class teaching them their jobs, how to use new or updated

equipment, a strict code of conduct, and any changes in election laws. This thorough training “guarantees you a safe and honest election,” she says.

Ginger enjoys meeting new workers and the camaraderie they share. She is especially glad to serve in Precinct 22, because of the love Maranatha shows to the precinct workers (for details, see p. 11 in the Fall 2024 *Trumpet*). “The pay is nice too,” she says. “I don’t really do it for the money anymore but rather for the experience, and I love doing it.”

If you volunteer as a poll worker, you might not be assigned to Precinct 22. But if you want to fulfill a patriotic role and meet people from the community outside Maranatha, this may be the way to do it. Now is a good time to start praying about applying to work the polls in 2026.



Ginger Edwards drives Wanda Gough, front, and Evelyne Metzler. Photo: Colene Price.

**“GOD . . . HAS GIVEN US THE MINISTRY
OF RECONCILIATION, THAT IS,
THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST
RECONCILING THE WORLD
TO HIMSELF. . . . NOW THEN,
WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST.”
2 CORINTHIANS 5:18–20, NKJV**

Update: Make a Splash Fund

Gary Little

As of August 12, the fund had \$28,661.47. In November, construction will begin on a 12' x 50' open-air seating area and a 12' x 20' covered seating area, as well as a 12' x 12' storage shed. Additionally all the pumps, heaters, etc. will get a new roof. About \$18,000 is needed to finish the project.

Fellowship, Fitness & Fun

Jonita Barram

Florida's winter weather is ideal for outdoor sports and activities. Summer—not so much. The pool, however, is a popular place year-round. Summer residents especially enjoy its being less crowded during the summer months.

When the weather prevents outdoor activities, staying indoors is the perfect time to catch up on reading, and the library is open for business. Check it out if you haven't already!



Life goes on during the summer months—you know, the everyday things and the extra activities like church and doctors' visits, volunteer work, serving neighbors, and fellowshiping at village suppers. During the summer, most activities are still available here, things like women's pool aerobics, crafting, Mexican Train, and chair exercises.

The early morning hours are conducive to walking and biking, while late afternoons and early evenings are a great time to be indoors (because it's usually raining, and do we appreciate the rain!).

Enjoy these photos of winter and summer activities, neighbors, and friends (pp. 7–11).



Walking with Friends



Volunteering



And More Volunteering



Working Out in the Pool
before Fellowshiping
in the Pool



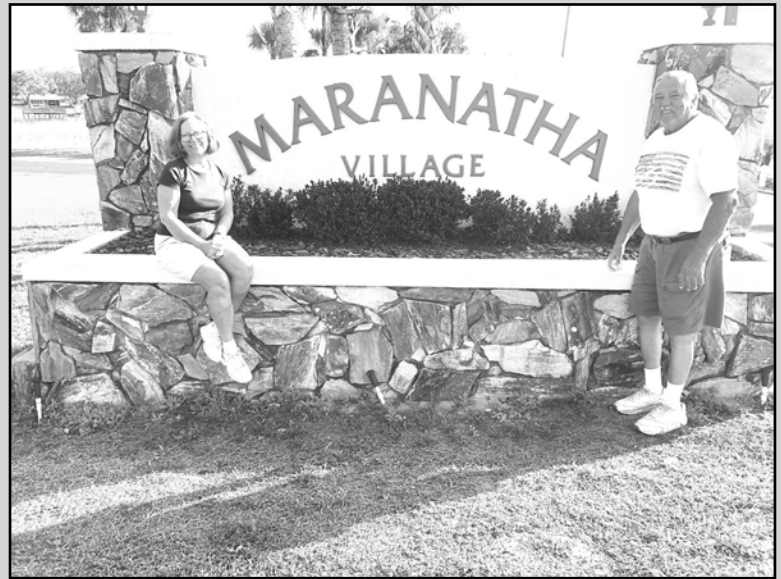
Watching the July 4 Parade



"Walking" the Dog



Enjoying Visits
from Family and Friends
(and Biking)



Enjoying Life in the Village

Competing in Pickleball

Photos: John Miller



Michelle Johnson and Mary Lynne Peterson



Diann Murphy



Diann Murphy and Mary Ruth Lowe



Michelle Johnson



Miriam Hill



Foreground: Joanne Duvall

Playing Mexican Train

Photos: John Miller



Carole Festa



Dolores Sorrells



Jim Mitchell and Paul Hefflebower



Phyllis Shafer



Left: Bruce Soulsby, Dave Kinter, and, in the foreground, Grace Kintner



Nancy Mendoza, Earl Barton, and Eloise Skillman



Joe Festa, Bruce Hendsbee, and Phyllis Shafer



Richard Rounds



Dolores Sorrells and Carl Barton



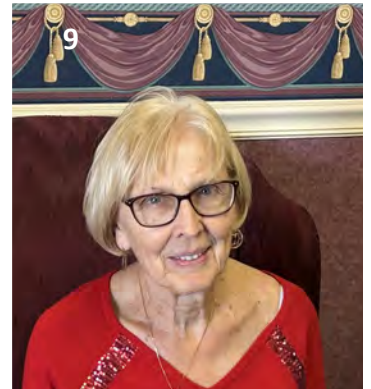
All Aboard and Ready to Go!

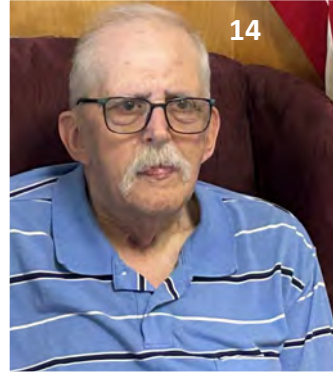


Bob Watterson

MV Vets & Their Wives/Widows

Photos: Carole Vawter





1. Calvin and Joanne Duvall
2. Cliff and Ruth Owens
3. Mary Lynne Peterson
4. Kirk and Denise Vitzthum
5. Ed and Beth Sarapata
6. Jeff Cline
7. Jim and Sandy Murphy

8. Greg and Pam Kruger
9. Betty Cusson
10. Tim and Vicki Edem
11. Barb and Ed Henderson
12. Fred Faust
13. Phil and Pam Terrill
14. David Hughes

Summer Continued



Pastor Edison (kneeling, right) and teens from First Baptist Church of Naples returned this summer to wash windows and move furniture.



Elaine Haines
Photo: John Miller



David and Janis (Ellsworth) Hughes
Photo: John Miller



Leo Mendoza
Photo: John Miller



Doug and Linda Peacock
Photo: John Miller



Annette Williams and Wendy Schittone (driving), with Vicki and Chase in the back
Photo: John Miller

Trumpet Staff

Thank you, *Trumpet* staff and distribution team. We have so many volunteers who deliver the newsletter every quarter and too little space to include photographs of them, but you (and those to whom you deliver the letters) know who

you are. Sincere thanks!

Special thanks to Kathy Withers for copying the inserts each quarter, to EBI for printing the letters, and to all those who have contributed to the *Trumpet* in the last 12 months.



Bob Watterson posts the *Trumpet* on the Maranatha website, while Ruth proofreads the birthdays and anniversaries lists and identifies people in photos.

Photo: Colene Price



Kathi Weaver is on the distribution committee, which prepares the newsletters and inserts for distribution. Jim Weaver is a *Trumpet* proofreader.

Photo: Colene Price



Pauline Dark donated her time and talent as graphic artist in 2024.

Photo: John Miller



Kaye Halstead regularly provides photos for the *Trumpet*. Brian Halstead, village administrator, provides direction and help.

Photo: John Miller



John and Sharon Miller moved around the parade route so John could take a variety of July 4 Parade photos.

Photo: Colene Price



Lori Barram serves on the distribution committee and helps her sister, editor Jonita Barram, with technical issues.

Photo: John Miller



Above Left: These two ladies—Judy Meyers and Colene Price—volunteered when the *Trumpet* asked for additional help with writing and photography. Above: Linda Pyche—who is usually behind the camera in addition to writing—accepts donations at the Legacy Booth during the Legacy Stroll.



Could you be the next editor of the *Trumpet*? Contact Brian Halstead for details.