



FLEET BEAT

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THE FLEET LANDING RESIDENTS' NEWSPAPER

April 2025

Paddle Into Spring

By Carol Smith

Photos by Mary Faria, Ed Hollender, Paul Mocko, and Isobel Spink



Picture-perfect weather brought residents to Lake Constellation on March 14 for “Paddle Into Spring” to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Fleet Landing. The first order of business was the dedication of Vickie’s Paddledock in honor of Vickie Rose, an avid paddleboarder who has inspired numerous residents to get out on the water. Charitable Gift Planning Director Kathy DeSiena and Chief Operating Officer Brian Weiss presided over the ceremony. Attendees enjoyed champagne and shortbread cookies, including some shaped and iced to look like paddleboards.

The Fleet Landing Yacht Club then took center stage for the Blessing of the Fleet. Resident Howard Burdick explained that we have four fleets: the 14.6 American Fleet, the RC (Radio Controlled) Fleet and the kayaks and paddleboards housed at Vickie’s Paddledock. Resident Christopher Martin, a retired Episcopal priest, conducted the Blessing of the Fleet as the various watercraft went by. Members of the Yacht Club are looking for support for an addition to the fleet in the form of pedal boats. With so many options, we expect to see many residents enjoying the beautiful lake in the coming months.

While activity on the water took center stage, folks also enjoyed the avocado bar, complete with delicious ceviche and other tempting toppings. There was also popcorn as well as ice cream with toppings that offered perfect springtime snacks. Caribbean music by the Conch Fritters enticed many to dance, led by the line dancing class.

All of the afternoon’s activity took place under the watchful eye of Mama Osprey perched in her nest atop the gazebo.



The crowd gathered for the paddledock dedication as viewed from across the lake



Vickie Rose with Kathy De Siena and Brian Weiss



Paddledock dedication sign and refreshments



Blessing of the Fleet: Howard Burdick (l) and Christopher Martin

March Residents' Council Meeting

By Howard Burdick

Residents' Council President Bob Peterson convened the March 18 council meeting in Johnson Hall.

Management Perspective. Chief Operating Officer Brian Weiss reviewed the status of projects in progress or anticipated, including those around the Coleman Center and at the apartment buildings as well as the bicycle pavilions, house roof replacements, and signage. He reported that Jay Jernigan had been promoted to the newly created position of Manager of Campus Operations, which will encompass interior and exterior maintenance. Keith Hawk will serve as Assistant Manager for Interior Maintenance, and Jernigan will assess the need for an Assistant Manager of Exterior Maintenance. Carl Helmers is leaving for a new opportunity as Operations Manager at Jacksonville's Florida Theatre.

Council Reports.

Vice President's Report. Carol Smith reviewed the procedures for the Residents' Council election. Nominating Committee Cochairs Ann Bell and Ernie Bio introduced the seven candidates. Nominating Committee members Lory Doolittle, Katherine Harlan, and Nancy Sander were given a round of applause. (Complete information about the election can be found starting on page 4.) Candidate bios and photos found in this issue will also be displayed on posters at various sites around campus.

Treasurer's Report. Lynette Beitz's report of continued solid financial footing included piecharts of composite Fleet Landing portfolio trends over the past three years. Details may be reviewed in the Dinda Library.

Marketing/Human Resources. Ernie Bio introduced Dustin Wigglesworth, the new Executive Chef of Main Street Dining. He was previously the original chef at 30 North. The March Staff Member of the Month was Marie-Claire Allen of Transportation. Blair Anderson of Therapy was the "Catch of the Month." English as a Second Language and Spanish classes will be offered to staff. Occupancy levels remain high. Marketing staff, who recently participated in a national senior living sales and marketing conference, were accorded a number of honors: The Nocatee Team was named the Blue Sky Sales Team of the Year. Marissa Rambo, of the Nocatee Team was recognized as a finalist for Marketing Coordinator of the Year. The Atlantic Beach-based team was nominated for Operational Team of the Year, and Jill Pennington was a finalist for Senior Living Counselor of the Year.

Wellness and Transportation. Ken Hollinga reviewed the very full calendar of Wellness events between this council meeting and the next. He named the nine members of the Wellness Committee, which meets quarterly. Transportation statistics for 2024 showed an impressive 17,131 trips, with over half conducted for dinner service.

Health Services/Safety and Security. Judy Solano noted that nursing students from the University of North Florida and Florida State College at Jacksonville will be working with our health team throughout the remainder of the year. Safety and Security staff remind residents to observe pet regulations and to keep garage doors closed when not in use and at night.

Dining Services and Housekeeping. Ann Bell described a recent wine tasting comparing Old and New World offerings in descriptive oenological lingo.

Facilities. Stephen Dick cited the March to June schedule for inspections and the quarterly meeting. The pilot recycling program initiated by Bunky Johnson in the 8000 Building will be expanded to the other apartment buildings.

Communications/Suggestions. Secretary Julia Pet-Armacost reviewed the new Fleet Link "Health Services" section, which covers all aspects of our capabilities. She reported on four suggestions, which are too detailed to cover here. They may be reviewed in council meeting minutes found in the Dinda Library and posted around campus and on Fleet Link under "Residents' Council."

Smith reported on the status of Senate Bill 1656 and House Bill 1429, which affect CCRCs. Charitable Gift Planning Director Kathy DeSiena and residents Robert Freeman and Dave Ritchie traveled to Tallahassee on March 17 for the first of the Senate committee hearings on the bill. Freeman, who with Ritchie testified in opposition to provisions of the bill, reported on the meeting. There is reason for optimism that our concerns are being heard.

Editor's note: A video of this Residents' Council meeting can be found on Fleet Link under "Video Library."

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All the news that fits...	
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FLEET BEAT News

By Enith Vardaman

In this issue, we welcome two new members of the *FLEET BEAT* staff. As a copy editor, Mary Ellen Reed will help keep our publication as error free as possible. Kathy Vanderbeck has joined the ranks of our photographers. Some of the photos in the “Diamonds in the Rust” article on page 17 are hers.

Meet Naomi Charles, Fitness Instructor

By Chet Davis

Naomi Charles recently joined Fleet Landing staff as Fitness Instructor, replacing Margaret Carr who has been promoted to the position of Manager of Fitness Services.



Charles, a Neptune Beach native, attended Fletcher Middle School and High School before getting a degree in international studies with a focus on Asian Studies at the University of North Florida (UNF). Her father was the founding professor of the art program at UNF. She and her husband, a commercial

banker, live across the Intracoastal, but are fortunate enough to have one child at Fletcher High School and one at Atlantic Beach Elementary. Charles has always loved movement and became involved with aerobics at age 14. For the past 15 years, she has focused on nutrition and managed a Native Sun food store. She is a certified yoga instructor.

Charles appreciates the warm welcome she has received and wants to get to know everyone better. Charles is ready and willing to help residents set up or revise their exercise program.

Stop by and get better acquainted!

Feathered Fleet Landing Resident

This barred owl appears to have found Fleet Landing to its liking. It was spotted by two residents in recent weeks.



Left: Photo by Kathy Keller.
Right: Photo by Bob Burkart.

The Baker's Dozen

By Chet Davis



A packed Johnson Hall welcomed Yale University's Baker's Dozen a cappella group for a late morning concert on March 11. The pandemic prevented the group's originally scheduled March 2020 appearance here. During this second attempt, we were rewarded with a marvelous concert full of humor, antics, and beautiful singing.

The group, billed as the one of the oldest a cappella group in the country, was formed in 1947 by 13 young men who wanted to sing. Subsequently, the group has toured the world. Its current membership includes students from around the country, plus one member from Jamaica and one from Korea. During the self-introduction, the young men had the audience in stitches with their “stories.” For example, one student stated he had learned nothing as he was majoring in psychology and reverse psychology.

To say that the group was dynamic would be an understatement. Great personality and rapport with the audience were hallmarks of their performance. After a standing ovation, they sang an encore to loud applause. It was a great morning of entertainment.

Voter's Guide for the 2025 Residents' Council Election

By Carol Smith

The election of four members of the Residents' Council will officially start Friday, April 25, and end at 10 am on Wednesday, April 30. The terms of Bob Peterson, Ernie Bio, Ann Bell, and Lynette Beitz are expiring. Bio and Bell served as cochairs of the Nominating Committee. They and the other members, Katherine Harlan, Lory Doolittle, and Nancy Sander, assembled a slate of seven candidates who provided the biographical information below.

The following procedures will be used for the election. A live "Meet the Candidates" presentation will take place in Johnson Hall at 3:30 pm on Wednesday, April 23. On Thursday, April 24, a video of the presentation will be posted on Fleet Link. Assisted living and healthcare residents who are life care residents will view the video on April 24 in the Leeward, North Point, and Derfer activities rooms and vote immediately after the end of the program. Additional time will be given to those unable to attend. Independent living residents will have their ballots delivered to their residences on April 25 by current members of the Residents' Council.

Residents may vote for up to four candidates. Completed ballots must be signed. Signatures will be cut off before the ballots are counted. Ballot boxes will be available at the concierge desk in the Coleman Center, in Windward Commons near the main entrance, and on the first floor of each apartment building from late afternoon Friday, April 25, until 10 am on Wednesday, April 30. The ballots will be counted by eight residents who are not candidates or members of the Residents' Council. The results will be announced on Fleet Link after counting is complete, and the candidates have been notified. The candidate with the most votes will serve a three-year term. The next three candidates will serve two-year terms.

Absentee voting is available at the concierge desk in the Coleman Center, April 8 to 18.

The Candidates



LtoR: Dave Russell, Bob Hunter, Skip McAlexander, Shann Purinton, Jim Dobson, Kathleen Kraslawsky, Lynette Beitz

Dave Russell

My wife, Dian, and I have been married for 53 years, and have lived at Fleet Landing for three years. We have three children and five grandchildren. I have undergraduate and master's degrees in electrical engineering from Georgia Tech and Naval Postgraduate School respectively. My 30-year Navy career primarily involved ship maintenance, which brought us to Mayport for my last assignment as Supervisor of Shipbuilding and Repair in Jacksonville. I worked for a defense contractor supporting aviation maintenance for several years following my Navy career. Both my military and civilian work involved significant amounts of project management. Since retirement, Dian and I recently served as project managers for a construction project for our church in Fernandina Beach. I am actively involved in the Woodworkers Club, coordinating our Help Your Neighbor Program. I assist with the Follies, and I get as many miles a week in as I can on my bike. Fleet Landing is a wonderful place to live, with a

great staff and wonderful residents. I like to be helpful, and would appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Residents' Council and do my part in keeping Fleet a great place to live and enhancing our sense of community.

Bob Hunter

Syracuse, NY, was home until enlisting in the Navy. My education on IBM equipment led to two years aboard ship. Upon leaving the Navy, I returned to Syracuse, working at Marine Midland Bank for 22 years as vice president of three data centers and office automation across the bank. I also implemented automation for an affiliate bank in London. I got a degree in business from Empire State College.

After moving to Jacksonville in 1988, I worked at Computer Power Inc for 15 years, the last 10 as Executive Vice President and Director of Business Partners. I developed partnerships with over 100 companies in the

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The Candidates

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mortgage industry, providing systems and internet products, while also serving on the board of Northeast Florida Red Cross and two HOAs.

Moving to Austin, TX, I purchased a food service franchise, which proved challenging for three years. We moved back to Atlantic Beach and into Fleet four years ago.

I'm involved in golf, Think Tank, bowling, Fleet Hearts, trivia, canasta, Tuesday poker, and as an enthusiastic Ambassador, giving me some insight into many residents' issues and concerns.

The Residents' Council pursues our health, welfare, safety, security, and happiness, and I will contribute to that effort.

Skip McAlexander

My 27-year Navy career included command of an aviation squadron, the Miami recruiting district, and eight years serving in the Pentagon. My final assignment was Naval Attaché to Brazil.

After the Navy, my next career was as President of St. John's Military School in Salina, KS. Like Fleet Landing, St. John's was a 501(c)(3), and I learned much about the management of a "not-for-profit" organization. I stayed in Salina for another retirement career as a Trust Officer in a regional bank. During those years, my volunteer activities included serving as an officer for the local Habitat for Humanity, the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, and in non-officer positions for several other organizations. My last retirement career involved traveling to African countries to manage the training of soldiers to serve in Peace-keeping Missions.

During our years in The Villages, I was active in our church, serving as an Elder. I was also President of our neighborhood social organization and organized pickleball tournaments.

I am confident that with the help and patience of my wife, Pat, I have the energy and intellect to contribute to the Fleet Landing Residents' Council. Thank you for your support.

Shann Purinton

My husband and I moved to Fleet Landing in 2023. This is one of the best decisions we have made in 53 years of marriage. Making new friends and participating in the many "well-inspired" activities has expanded our social contacts and enabled us to keep learning. As an active member of Fleet Hearts, I enjoy working on projects that serve residents and the local community.

I grew up in Palatka, FL. Scholarships allowed me to earn a B.A. and M.A. from the University of South Carolina, and a Ph.D. from Florida State University. I worked in many educational settings. As Vice President of Student Affairs at St. Johns River State College, I

oversaw student service functions on three campuses.

As a Rotarian, I served in leadership roles, including Club President and District Governor, covering 57 clubs in Northeast Florida. I served on and chaired numerous local and state boards and coordinated several volunteer groups.

Having worked with many organizations, I know the value of teamwork. The Residents' Council is a team that serves as liaison between Fleet Landing management and the residents. I welcome the opportunity to be a part of this team and serve as your representative.

Jim Dobson

Hello, I am Jim Dobson. My wife, Susan, and I moved into Fleet Landing May 2023, and we both really love it here. The facilities are wonderful, and everyone is very friendly. We moved from Massachusetts to Jacksonville 16 years ago and settled in Historic Springfield.

I obtained a Ph.D. in physiology from the University of Virginia. For 40 years, I was a professor of cardiovascular physiology and medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School before moving to Jacksonville. At the medical school, I was campus faculty representative to the Board of Regents, where I delivered faculty issues and orchestrated solutions. I enjoyed helping faculty, staff, and students with their issues. Also, as department chair, I was able to help faculty rise professionally. Recently, I have been a board member of Groundwork Jacksonville, serving as its treasurer and governance chair. Groundwork is instrumental in construction of the Emerald Trail and restoration of Jacksonville creeks.

I am currently serving as president of the Woodworkers Club, where I also assist residents needing help with their projects. As a Residents' Council member, I plan to advocate for resolution of issues and problems by rendering solutions to make Fleet Landing better for everyone.

Kathleen Kraslawsky

My husband, Walter, and I will celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary on May 26 of this year. I have two sons and one grandson, all living in New England. While raising my boys, I worked as a swim instructor and coach, while earning my degrees in computer science. In 1992, I moved to D.C., working as Technical Support Leader. In 1999, I moved to the National Security Agency, where I held positions of project manager for cyber research and development, Deputy Cyber Chief at Pacific Command in Hawaii, Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, VA, and Future Operations of US Cyber Command. I retired in 2013 and moved to Ormond Beach, FL, where I served on the Board of Directors for our condo community, voting

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The Candidates

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on building improvements and budgets.

Moving to Fleet Landing in 2022, first into the 8000 Building, then to Capella Court, was an accomplished dream. We have made many friends, joined groups and clubs, while contributing to the community at large. With my background in project management and oversight, as a member of the Residents' Council, I will contribute and communicate to the Fleet Landing community, while learning "behind the scenes" operations.

Lynette Beitz

My name is Lynette Beitz. I am a dairy farmer's daughter, Bill's wife of 40 years, a mom of three adult children, with five grandchildren. I am a conservative money manager, a lover of education, and an avid reader. I love movies and Jaguar games. I've lived here four years, love our Fleet family, and want to participate in our growth and success.

Professionally, I am a retired CPA (Certified Public Accountant) and CMA (Certified Management Accountant) focused primarily on nonprofit organizations, including the Jax Chamber, Daniel's Kids, and Girl Scouts. I have served as chapter and state president of Institute of Management Accountants. I have reported to boards, finance committees, and prepared and monitored budgets, financial statements, forecasts, etc.

Currently, I serve as your Residents' Council Treasurer, reporting financial results and managing the Residents' Council Gift Fund of nearly \$1 million. I attend Board Finance Committee meetings, serve on the Residents' Finance Committee, and am an Ambassador.

If reelected, I want to continue as Treasurer, bringing continuity to this position. The process requires extensive time, and the software is complex. I love Fleet and want to communicate with residents and explore how we can participate and enhance our lifestyle.

Celebrating Mardi Gras

At Fleet Landing, Mardi Gras was celebrated by humans and in decor.



*Left: Bob and Dana Neal (photo by Isobel Spink).
Right: Jackie and Dave Smith's lion (photo by Enith Vardaman).*

Duo Arpeggione

By Chet Davis



Duo Arpeggione returned to Johnson Hall on March 13, showcasing works by Chopin, Fauré, and Saint-Saëns. The duo, made up of Dr. Catherine Lan on piano and Dr. Claudio Jaffé on cello, appeared at Fleet Landing last May. They have also performed here alone and/or with another musician. They bring excellent talent and musical interpretation for the enjoyment of all. For this concert, Jaffé provided historical perspective on the composers and their music, which increased understanding of the works.

The concert included a mystery piece, identified only after it was played. The audience was encouraged to listen and offer their interpretation, and some indeed did so. The work was then identified as Fauré's "Papillon" ("Butterfly"), Op. 77. (Those who attended the concert could understand why they been warned in advance that it was not Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee.")

Both Lan and Jaffé have performed for audiences worldwide. Fleet Landing residents are fortunate to be able to hear musicians of this caliber right here on our campus.

Lake Donnelly?

Photos by Frank Donnelly



When this "lake" formed at the home of Rae and Frank Donnelly after the heavy rains of March 9-10, the "No Wake" sign in their front yard seemed appropriate.

Republic Services Recycling Center

By Chet Davis

Photos by Chet Davis and Shann Purinton



Tour group with a rather enthusiastic employee



If you wish to know about recycling, the Republic Services Recycling Center is the place to go. Twenty Fleet Landers ventured forth on March 27 and were rewarded with a very interesting lecture and a facility tour. What was remarkable was the dependence upon staff to remove undesirable materials from each production line. If something is missed it could easily shut down the entire plant.

Republic recycles, and has a market for, its glass, aluminum, plastic, and cardboard products. Recycling tips were aplenty! Republic recycles all plastics with numbers 1 through 7. It will not process styrofoam. Many non-recyclable articles are routinely found and sent to the trash. These include needles, batteries of all types, tires, construction materials, car parts, and sanitary products. To be effectively recycled, containers must be clean. One bottle of catsup can contaminate an entire truckload of material. Goods to be recycled should not be bagged in either paper or plastic, as those bags will not be opened, but instead deposited directly in the trash. This is a safety feature for employees, who will not know what is in the bag.

The plant handles over 300 tons of material a day, using two shifts. It accepts material from recycling companies serving St. Johns, Nassau, and Duval counties.

It was a most informative trip, capped off with lunch at Jenkins Quality Barbecue before returning to Fleet Landing.



Mallets and Wickets

By John Rogerson

Photos by Eunice and John Rogerson and Jerry Upson



Left: John and Eunice Rogerson.
Right: Miles Nogelo and Anna Bio.



Left: Ernie Bio. Right: Bob Palfy.

You may have noticed an increase in the number of residents dressed all in white around the campus the past several weeks. Well, that's because the Fleet Landing Golf Croquet Club is in the midst of its annual singles tournament.

Eighteen club members were divided into two divisions of nine players each. The preliminary round-robin matches began on Sunday, February 23, and would run until Thursday, March 20, assuming no illnesses or rain delays. The photos above are from those matches.

The Championship single-elimination tournament was scheduled to run from Saturday, March 22, through Friday, March 28, with the Consolation and Championship matches on Sunday, March 30, at 2 pm and 3 pm respectively. The top four players (based on won/loss record) in each division will qualify for the Championship round.

At this writing, all preliminary round-robin matches had been completed, and based on their records, the following players would move into the Championship round: Ernie Bio, John Neyhart, Miles Nogelo, Eunice Rogerson, John Rogerson, Mary Steinke, Jerry Upson, and Scotty Willis.

The following players are new to croquet this past year and have never competed before: Bob and Sarah Chrisman, Mike and Shann Purinton, the Rogersons,

and Upson. All newcomers have been doing remarkably well, thanks to the generous time John Neyhart and Miles Nogelo have given to teaching the basics and fine points of croquet to all club members.

Two Remarkable Suffragists

By Nancy Lundgren



On Saturday, March 15, the League of Women Voters Jacksonville First Coast (LWVJAXFC) presented, and the Beaches Museum Chapel hosted, readings of two one-act plays. Fleet Landing residents were involved in all aspects of the event: Toby Armour was the author of the plays, Bernadette Miron and Sandy Martin contributed to the effort behind the scenes, eight residents read the plays, and Frances Jones directed. Area resident Lanelle Phillmon, President of LWVJAXFC, welcomed the audience of more than 100 people, inviting them to join in the continuing battle to protect voting rights in America.

The first play, titled "Aunt Susan," recreated an 1896 interview with Susan B. Anthony, age 76, and 31-year-old journalist Nellie Bly. Nancy Wright as Anthony beautifully portrayed her core belief in women's self-reliance and agency, a key tenet of the women's suffrage movement. Each question posed to Anthony evoked memories of past events that came alive as the readers slipped in and out of the larger interview structure.

The second play, titled "Her Tennessee Waltz," featured Carrie Chapman Catt, Anthony's successor, 17 years later, as she battled for, and won, ratification of the 19th Amendment in Tennessee in 1920. Carolyn Johnson, as Carrie Chapman Catt, showed the audience that Catt's determination to win ratification could overcome the challenges of racism, blackmail, and betrayal.

A standing ovation followed the play readings. The Fleet Landing cast also included Nancy Lundgren, Buffy Wells, Carol Smith, Eileen Theis, Walter Kraslawsky, and Robert Freeman. Credit for making this all happen must go to Jones for taking on this important project of bringing the stories of two remarkable suffragists from "script to show." Thank you, Frances, for your coaching and patience. And also a special thanks, Toby, for sharing your plays with us.

March WELLInspired Learning Series

By Enith Vardaman



LtoR: Liz Breindel, Dee Waiters, Sue Dukes, Chris Gotschall, Rachel Carmack

The March 26 session of the WELLInspired Learning Series featured five speakers: Independent Living Executive Chef Chris Gotschall, Registered Dietician Liz Breindel, Dining Services Manager Rachel Carmack, Health Services Executive Chef Dee Waiters, and Wellness Services Director Sue Dukes. They provided a wealth of detail about dining services.

The first topic was differences between independent living dining and assisted living and skilled nursing dining. The multiple independent living venues offer an experience ranging from casual to upscale. Most have daily and weekly specials. Depending upon the venue, the menu changes every four or six weeks. Each of the healthcare facilities has its own dining venue offering three meals per day. There is a menu of always available items, plus two daily chef-prepared specials. Menus rotate regularly.

The menu planning process differs between independent living and the healthcare settings. In independent living, the chef of each restaurant creates a menu, which is then reviewed by the Executive Chef and the Wellness Director. In assisted living and skilled nursing, the chef has a menu system to aid in developing menus, while calculating dietary requirements monitored by the in-house Registered Dietitian. Therapeutic diets, such as carbohydrate consistent, no added salt, renal, and low residue are also available.

Other useful pieces of information included the following: Fleet Landing orders from vendors who provide high-quality, nutrient-dense options. The icons for WELLInspired, vegetarian, gluten-free, and no salt added available menu items were noted. Residents are encouraged to ask questions of the servers, who have taste panels on a regular basis to sample and discuss menu items. All campus dining venues focus on freshly made items, so customization requests will be accommodated whenever possible. A dietary restriction form, available for independent living and healthcare residents, allows information about the restriction to appear automatically when an order is placed.

Editor's note: The slides from this presentation are available on Fleet Link. Go to "Fleet Landing Presentations" and then "WELLInspired Learning Series."

Woodbine Opry Outing

Photos by Ann Bell and Jackie Smith

Fleet Landing's luxury coach was nearly full for the March 15 trip of less than an hour to the Woodbine Opry in Georgia. There, residents enjoyed an evening of old-time country music and dancing.



Library Notes

By Enith Vardaman

The Library Committee thanks recent donors: Estate of Bob Dinda, Don Husmann, Ann Linn, and Isobel Spink.

Price Schwenck has generously donated a copy of his book, *When a Company Loses Its Soul: A Prescription for Transformation*. The book can be found on the Fleet Landing Authors shelf.

Forest Bathing

By Victoria Freeman; photos by Craig Miller

On the bright Monday morning of March 24, folks from Fleet Landing went forest bathing together at the Jacksonville Arboretum. The practice originated in Japan. With guidance from resident Maureen Miller, a certified forest therapy guide, the event unfolded as a series of activities designed to encourage physical and mental health via connection with the natural world. Participants were asked to remain silent in the woods and to put their cell phones on silent also. A short walk ended in a wooded area where participants were asked to fan out and locate a tree that seemed to invite connection. A number of individuals were attracted to some of the long leaf pines, a species of tree that once covered North Florida.



Maureen Miller

When the group reconvened, Miller asked if anyone wanted to mention what they had noticed about their selected tree that might relate to humans. Several individuals mentioned the way the trees seemed to share sunlight and support one another.

Several 15-minute periods were devoted to each of the five senses. The final activity was the creation of decorated tables on which to have a tea ceremony. Nothing was to be pulled from the trees but items “given by the forest” were placed on a large rocks which Miller had covered. The items placed on the tables ranged from crimson leaves to pure white ones with golden trims. Tiny tea glasses were put around the natural elements.

While the tea tables were being created, participants were encouraged to find someone he or she did not know well to play with. Individuals skipped down the path, peered into to lily pad-covered lake, and investigated the many raised beds. Laughter was everywhere.

The tea ceremony itself featured yaupon tea, which is a natural Florida tea with an interesting history. As the sole caffeinated tea grown in the Northeast, it was used by indigenous people in religious ceremonies. It is now being grown and sold commercially.

As the forest bathing portion of the morning finished, Wellness Services Manager Mary Faria called everyone to picnic tables for a feast of excellent sandwiches and chips. Miller told the group that forest time is supposed be good for a triple period of reduced stress, which means the three hours spent at the Arboretum might be worth almost an entire day of peace and calm back on the Fleet Landing campus.

Another forest bathing day is scheduled in October

at a different forest. When asked how many of the participants might attend another day, every hand went up.



A “NoteAble” Irish Evening

By Maureen Miller



Craig Miller enjoying Irish coffee prepared by Victoria and Ed Fahy.



It’s not often a holiday gets extended, but this year Fleet Landing residents were able to experience “wearing of the green” twice—once on March 17 and again a week later for The NoteAbles St. Patrick’s Day Sing-along. While the original sing-along was cancelled due to illness, the extra week gave NoteAble members (Ron and Sue Myers, Walt Trevaskis, Julie McLaughlin, Joyce Ezell, John Rietveld, Ed Fahy, and Bob Huhta) extra time to review their repertoire.

Fortified by a wee bit of Irish Coffee—and with NoteAbles members interspersed throughout the Johnson Hall audience—the intimate, enthusiastic crowd was soon ready to test their lubricated vocal cords.

Following the words on the big screens and accompanied by Karen Sturtevant on piano, we managed to work our way through ten popular songs, including “My Wild Irish Rose,” “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,” “Sweet Rosie O’Grady,” “An Irish Lullaby” and “Danny Boy.” A surprise song, “Easter Parade”—in recognition of the next holiday—preceded the awesome doo-wop version of “Goodnight Sweetheart, Goodnight.”

The Myerses, who led the singing, provided short introductions to each song, often accompanied by humorous banter and reminiscing between the two and the audience. For example, Ron frequently reminded us that none of the songs we were singing were written by a person from the Old County, but rather by “a man from Michigan” or “a man from Buffalo.” Sue’s discussion of Rosie O’Grady led to comments around fishwives and memories of her favorite college-days bar in New York City.

In the end, we all agreed, that, even if not all songs were clearly sung, we had fun. And, if we keep doing this year after year, one day we might get those lyrics right!

Wedding Anniversary Celebration

Photos by Jerry Miron Jr



February 27 marked 60 years of marriage for



Bernadette and David Miron. The Miron, who met while serving in the Peace Corps in Ibagué, Colombia, celebrated their anniversary on March 1 with family and friends in The Retreat. A

reception was followed by an exchange of promises and rings and then dinner.

Eat Your Yard

By Mary Durkin

Photos by Mary Durkin and Mary Faria



Left: Tim Armstrong digs his hands in the dirt at the Worm Farm.

Right: Miss Gordita.

On March 26, sixteen Fleet Landers took an excursion to Eat Your Yard (EYY), a nonprofit edible and medicinal plant nursery and educational center located in the northwest section of Jacksonville. Tim Armstrong founded EYY 15 years ago to entertain his special needs son. Since then, it has become a nonprofit educational tool providing tours, workshops, and events throughout the year as well as offering retail sales.

After viewing a short YouTube video about EYY, Armstrong began a tour of the grounds. He started with the demonstration gardens, including vegetable, herbal, and medicinal. We sampled pods, herbs, and berries while Armstrong provided extensive historical uses, such as goldenrod teas as an aid for asthma and allergies, and local Indians using yaupon holly as a caffeinated beverage. There are several bamboo circles around the grounds, with space in their interiors providing cool picnic tables during hot summer months. There are numerous lanes to walk down—fig, berry, pear tree, and nut tree, for example.

A large barn-like structure has been built that will eventually house a classroom. Next door is the animal husbandry area, with chickens, rabbits, and a large pet pig named Miss Gordita. Nearby is the Worm Farm,

where worms are cultivated in black dirt, and digging their hands in dirt is always popular among the tour-goers. Throughout the tour, Armstrong was full of scientific and horticultural knowledge as well as knowledge of edible and medicinal usages of every plant in the nursery. He amazed us with his wealth of information.

On the way home, we stopped at Junior's Seafood Restaurant and had delicious fried fish, fries, and hush puppies. We made it back to campus in time to sit in on the Wellness "Navigating Nutrition" talk, which is why we appreciate Fleet Landing: There is something for everyone.

Fleet Classics

By Enith Vardaman



Fleet Landing has a robust schedule of resident musical offerings, and on March 20, it was the turn of Fleet Classics to present a concert. True to the name of their group, Musical Director Julia Pet-Armacost (flute and piccolo), Bunky Johnson (clarinet), Charles Winton (French horn), Karen Sturtevant (piano), De An Winton (alto saxophone), Eunice Rogerson (soprano and tenor saxophone), and Bob Armacost (12-string guitar) performed a program of classical works. The date of the compositions ranged from the 18th century to the 20th century. A highlight of the concert was Sturtevant's performance of Debussy's "Clair de lune," and the ensemble's performance of Puccini's "Nessun dorma" accompanied by the men of Fleet Harmony humming the melody because not all know Italian.

The next performance of Fleet Classics will take place on June 12. In the meantime, residents can look forward to concerts by resident Guy Van Syckle on April 22 and by The FleetLanders on May 8. In between those two concerts will be the next "Fleet's Got Talent" on May 3, a display of both musical and other talents.

Marine Corps One: A Story of Presidential Helicopters

By Pat Kluever



LtoR: Joe Ruthenberg, Pat Kluever, Dick Beltson

The March 27 meeting of the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA) Historic Mayport Chapter drew a large crowd of 175 residents to Johnson Hall. They came to hear Lieutenant Colonel Joe Ruthenberg, USMC (Ret.), discuss the mission and role of Marine One in transporting and protecting the President of the United States. Ruthenberg covered the mission of the Presidential Helicopter Squadron (HMX-1) and the variety of helicopters used through the years to transport presidents from Eisenhower to Trump. Unique features of the various helicopters were pointed out, including the variety of interior colors, which are chosen by the First Lady. Ruthenberg recounted amusing anecdotes about the first families, including ones involving the Reagan's dog Lucky and the aversion of Amy Carter's cat to riding in helicopters.

The brief was informative, the crowd was interested and attentive, and Ruthenberg answered questions at the end of the presentation. Many residents showed their appreciation after the session during discussions and photos with Ruthenberg. This meeting was one of the best attended in several years. The setup and Sue Dukes's technical assistance was very much appreciated. Thanks to chapter Vice President Dick Beltson for a rousing and entertaining introduction of Ruthenberg!

FLAG Tournament

By Isobel Spink

We had great weather at Windy Harbor on March 13, and the course was much better, having been mowed after all the rain. We'll play on Blue Sky next month and reestablish our evening prize dinners in the Atlantic.

To our astonishment, no player, man or woman, hit the green to win "closest to the pin," so that prize will earn \$10 next month. Better practice up! Nancy Sander won the ladies' long drive, and Mike Tucker, as usual,

took the men's. We're happy to have such a fine golfer join our Fleet Landing players.

Team 2 with Captain Sharyn Jenkins, Tom Gonwa, Tucker, and Robert Brown, took first prize with 70 and 4 birdies. Captain Tom Holloman's Team 4, with Dave Smith, Bob Ellis, and Nancy Sander took second with 72 and 2 birdies. Team 1, led by Captain Larry Sander, secured third place with team members Isobel Spink, Eldon Gogolin, and Rick Rochelle, achieving a score of 74 and two birdies.

Bob Neal mentioned the pace of play and reminded us that if you can't improve a shot, don't bother to hit.

The Birdie Trophy went to Jenkins's team, and she gave it to Tucker. They also won the Sandbagger Trophy, and Brown took it home.

Several of us had putting issues, and Bob Hunter noted that his team was great until they got to the short grass and that little round hole. Holloman mentioned putting his putter in "time out." All the captains praised their teams, and we had another fun FLAG (Fleet Landing Association of Golfers) day.

North Florida Land Trust

By Chet Davis

The title of Allison DeFoor's March 5 Johnson Hall talk was "Conservation in North Florida: It's Now or Never." Resident Lory Doolittle, who has a long history in land preservation efforts, introduced DeFoor, the



President and CEO of the North Florida Land Trust. DeFoor is a seventh-generation Floridian from a cattle and orange grove family—in other words, land people. While serving as a judge in Key West, he was approached by several groups trying to conserve land in the Florida Keys. Besides managing the Trust, DeFoor has been instrumental in establishing other trusts within the state, and he was involved in the preservation of the Everglades.

The Trust buys land that will never be developed and facilitates purchases by municipal entities. The Trust controls 120,000 acres valued at over \$51 million. Other potential property acquisitions are under discussion. The wetlands around the J.T. Butler Boulevard and Atlantic Boulevard bridges are examples of Trust property. The Trust also works with developers who wish to place property in conservation as part of new residential or business developments.

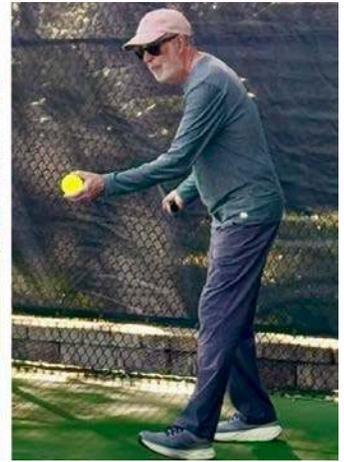
The reason for the title of DeFoor's talk became clear: The time is now because land conservation is running up against a growing population and declining resources, especially water. The Trust needs additional members, additional monetary resources, and most importantly, leads for land that might be suitable and available for conservation. Information about the Trust can be found at nflt.org

Pickleball “Fun” Tournament

By Enith Vardaman

Fleet Landing’s first Pickleball “Fun” Tournament, which took place on March 13, began with an exhibition match refereed by resident Richard Wong. Fitness Services Manager Margaret Carr and resident Reva Bond faced off against Wellness Services Director Sue Dukes and resident Alison MacCord. For their efforts, Carr and Dukes were awarded “pickles” that tell dad jokes when pressed.

The tournament, which had drawn 16 players plus substitutes, followed. Tournament coordinator Skip McAlexander kept everything moving along smoothly. The awarding of medals, miniature trophies, and cards for free drinks concluded the tournament.



Exhibition match



Left: Sue Dukes (l) and Margaret Carr with their “pickles.”

Right: Skip McAlexander with the medals.



Some of the participants with their miniature trophies



St. Patrick's Day Parade

Fleet Landing's traditional St. Patrick's Day parade brought out residents and staff in golf carts and vintage cars and on bicycles. Of course, the event would not have been complete without a bagpiper and our roller skater. As usual, Safety and Security staff were on hand to keep everyone safe.



CSX Transportation Insights By Chet Davis



Jeanette Williams (l) and Peggy Smith

On March 25, representatives from the railroad freight company CSX provided interesting insights into its operations and philosophy. Jeanette Williams addressed sales and marketing, while Peggy Smith spoke about community affairs and railroad security.

CSX is the result of a merger of Chessie System and Seaboard Coastline Industries. Its vision is to be the best in the US, with a safety goal of 100 percent compliance with rules and regulations. The system includes 20,000 miles of track serving 26 states; Washington, DC; and Ontario and Quebec in Canada.

With access to 70 ocean, river, and lake port terminals and connections to 240 short line railroads, CSX can ship anything almost anywhere.

Williams and Smith both pointed out the involvement of CSX in the local community.

Smith highlighted Operation Lifesaver, which has resulted in a decline of car/train collisions from 12,000 to 2,000 incidents a year. Interesting graphics highlighted the issue of stopping a train once danger is detected. The bottom line is it takes over a mile to stop!

To conclude this informative presentation, Williams and Smith answered the many questions asked by the Johnson Hall audience.

Fleet Landing in the News By Enith Vardaman

Fran and Pete Sheridan probably hold the record among Fleet Landing residents for the number of times they have contributed to the "Letters to the Editor" column of *The Florida Times-Union*. Their latest piece appeared in the March 30 issue.

Celebrating Irish Traditions

By Patricia Payne

The annual Irish Tea is a popular social event at Fleet Landing, and this year's March 7 tea, held in Johnson Hall, drew the usual large crowd. Staff from several departments collaborated to set up tables with crustless sandwiches, scones, and festive sweet treats to accompany the Barry's Gold and Twinings tea served throughout the event. Local musician Sue Tice returned to play traditional Irish music, switching from her lyrical harp to her lively fiddle. Some residents were there to celebrate their Irish heritage; others came simply to enjoy the occasion.



Staff who made the tea such a success

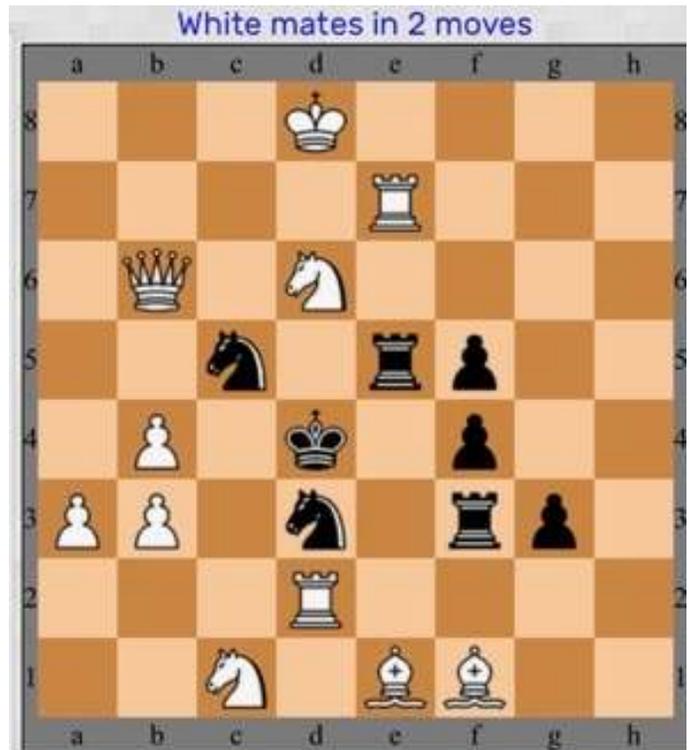


Chess Club News

By Richard Wong

The Chess Club meets Tuesdays at 1 pm in the Windward Commons lobby.

This month's chess problems:



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Chess Club News

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Ping-Pong Tournament

By Chet Davis



A large number of Fleet Landing residents play ping-pong daily. There are beginners, intermediate, and more advanced players who compete on friendly terms regardless of skill level. The January/February tournament was held for the intermediate players. The round-robin competition called for 45 matches, with each competitor playing the best of three.

After some intense competition, Ann Esse emerged victorious, winning all nine of her matches. Tied for second place were Susan Mathew and Dick Keith, and tied for fourth place were Eunice Rogerson and Sue Myers. Other competitors included Ann Bell, Miriam Putterman, John Rogerson, Jeannie Sullivan, and Carol Bowser.

Most participants noted that this competition helped increase their skills, was a lot of fun, and they met players they did not know before.

Tutorial sessions are scheduled weekly for those wishing to try the game again or to improve their game. If interested, contact Chet Davis, Jim Pope, Carl Tungli-Giese, or Don Husmann.

In Memoriam

David Bailey
1932-2025
Barbara Pieper
1926-2025

Steve McMahon
1943-2025
Nancy St. John
1935-2025

Diamonds in the Rust

By Isobel Spink

Photos by Isobel Spink and Kathy Vanderbeck



Kathy Vanderbeck labeled this scene an "animal version of a CCRC."



Entrance to the booths



Country and western band
(continued on next page)

Diamonds in the Rust

(continued from preceding page)



Residents had a nice day for the outing.

Where the deer and the buffalo roam—and all sorts of other animals. On March 22, a full bus headed west and a bit south to Jacksonville's Diamond D Ranch, a family-owned and operated 500-acre ranch offering horseback riding, field trips, festival events, and more. The weather was perfect for walking, talking, shopping, and eating, and we had both Wellness Services Manager Mary Faria and Communications Manager Megan Clemensen to herd the cats.

Cowboys and cowgirls on horseback directed the never-ending stream of cars and trucks. Once off the bus, we were taken by a huge tractor-drawn farm wagon to the entrance, where we exited next to a field of donkeys and bison. A nearby lake with a small island in the middle housed a group of goats.

Over 200 booths awaited us, with one-of-a-kind pickins', antiques, furniture, thousands of handmade items from rugs to clothing, animal skin rugs, plus a variety of food trucks. Take your pick—Mexican arepas or burgers to lobster rolls or ice cream. The vendors come from all over the country. To add to the festivities, a country and western band entertained the visitors, which included many families with babies and older children, and pulling trollies to carry their purchases.

We separated down the many different aisles for 2½ hours of fun. I'm pretty sure few of us came home without a purchase or two, but I, for one, was happy to have a seat for the ride home. The next "Diamonds in the Rust" will be in November—sign up early.

Strikes and Spares ...

By Jim LeBlanc

In the fall of last year, a disastrous hack of the National Senior League (NSL) website resulted in the loss of all data on the site. Dennis Berkholtz, the Jacksonville founder of the NSL, decided to retire rather than rebuild the NSL site and software program that was used to run the league. As a result, our Fleet Landing teams were advised in January that the NSL would cease operations, ending 14 years of NSL Wii Bowling for seniors at over 35 CCRCs in the US (80 CCRCs before COVID-19). A disappointing end? Not so fast!

Luckily, Fleet Landing resident Walter Kraslawsky came to the rescue. Kraslawsky, who bowls on our Lucky Strikers team, offered to design a new software program. Berkholtz, and residents Janice Flock, Jim LeBlanc and Kraslawsky met weekly during the program development phase. Berkholtz was so impressed with the final software program that he decided to relaunch the NSL just in time for the Spring Wii Bowling Season. Kudos to Kraslawsky for a great save!

Now, 110 teams, including 17 Fleet Landing teams (78 residents), from 24 CCRCs across the country are participating in the Spring Season. A major change was made to the format, transitioning from a scratch-score league to a handicap league. The advantage of this change is that it levels the playing field, allowing bowlers of varying skill levels to compete fairly and enjoy the sport together. Teams were assigned to conferences of eight teams according to their ability.

After two weeks of start-up rounds to determine averages, handicaps, and conference assignments, the teams have now completed two of the seven rounds of competition. Playoffs will begin after the seventh round, with Play Off Division positions determined by team total pins. Conference winners will automatically qualify for the playoffs.

Here are some notables from the first four weeks of play by our Fleet teams:

- 300 "Perfect" Games: Jim LeBlanc (5), Buzz Hassler (3)
- 299 "Oops" Games: Buzz Hassler (1)
- Difficult Splits Made: Buzz Hassler (6-10 split)
- Top 5 Scratch Bowling Averages:
- Jim LeBlanc 273
- Karen LeBlanc 264
- Buzz Hassler 264
- Sandy Taylor 247
- Ernie Bio 239

World Affairs Council: The Future of Democracy

By Bo Smith

Heather Cox Richardson and William Kristol were participants in a moderated discussion entitled "The Future of Democracy" at the University of North Florida on March 25. The presentation was simulcast to a large audience at Johnson Hall. This was the last World Affairs Council (WAC) Global Issues Evening for this season. Richardson, a historian, is a professor at Boston College and the author of several books, including the best-selling book, *Democracy Awakening*. She also writes a nightly newsletter, *Letters From an American*. Kristol is a political analyst. He has served as a professor at Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania, held important posts in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, and is

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World Affairs Council: The Future of Democracy

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best known as founder and former editor of the *Weekly Standard*. Both speakers hold Ph.D.s from Harvard University, she in history and he in political science.

The subject, the future of democracy, served mainly as a platform for a wider discussion of the vagaries of political policy and the history of Western political movements as they relate to democracy. It was like a fascinating dinner conversation between thoughtful and knowledgeable people. Ideas and insights, rather than conclusions, were presented. What I interpreted at first as unfocused was more a vision of democracy as viewed by a traditional academician and a traditional 1990's conservative. Both now claim to be independent. It was wide-ranging and included, among other topics, the place of capitalism in democracy, the influence of Czarist Russia in the modern Russian mindset, the Civil Rights Act, dictatorship, the Dred Scott case, polarization, oligarchy, and even insights from the Van Buren, Cleveland, and Eisenhower administrations. Both took a historical view of the future of democracy that I would paraphrase as follows: There are warning signs, and no political system is guaranteed success. But we've been through stresses before, and democracy is surprisingly resilient. Both emphasized the need to respect the guardrails of our democracy: the rule of law, free elections, and the separation of powers. It was implied that those guardrails are being tested. Richardson seemed to feel democracy was in peril, particularly regarding the power of money in our political system. In her eyes, money wins and may be well on its way to victory. She acknowledged that we have been through worse as a nation and have always survived and grown. Kristol was more sanguine, more philosophical: Democracy is a strong idea, and strong ideas stand the test of time. Support the rule of law, free elections, and separation of power, and we'll be fine.

Welcome Aboard

5407 Teresa and Bob Allen (June '24)



Teresa and Bob Allen say they have come full circle: They met as students and fellow part-time job holders 52 years ago in Jacksonville. Discovering that they both had apartments in Neptune Beach, they began carpooling. Bob drove, and Teresa supplied their lunch sandwiches. Between bites and life stories, they fell in love, and despite parental objections,

married at 19 years old.

After tours at Naval Station Mayport; Naval Air Station Jacksonville; Monterey, CA; Newport, RI; and Guam, Bob retired as a Navy commander specializing in oceanography

at the Naval Oceanographic Office at Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. For the next two years, Bob fulfilled a lifelong dream of sailing around the world, crewing on different boats.

Teresa had a 25-year career as an educator in Mississippi. There, with her M.Ed. degree earned at the University of North Florida, she helped launch the state's K-6 guidance counselor initiative. She later worked as a high school administrator and as a director at the district office.

Now that they are back at The Beaches where they began, their plans include settling into life at Fleet Landing and a dual Alaskan trip this summer. Bob and one of their sons will drive and camp the ALCAN Highway to Alaska, where Teresa, their other son and their two grandchildren will fly to meet them. They plan to tour Allen Army Airfield at Fort Greeley, which was named in honor of Bob's father.

—Carole Watson

1211 Greta and Clint Coneway (September '24)

Greta grew up with a realtor father and mother who frequently moved around the San Francisco Bay Area. As a result, she attended a number of different schools and learned to meet a variety of people easily. Her flexibility was a powerful asset when she married Clint Coneway, a career Navy officer. During their 53 years of marriage, the Coneways have had two children and moved 28 times. They now have two grandchildren in California and three in Virginia.

Greta graduated from Sacramento State University with a degree in education. She taught school for five years and then substituted for additional years, including one day in Hawaii. She volunteered widely when she and Clint moved to new stations, and says, "I loved everywhere we went, except maybe the deep snow in Idaho."

Clint grew up on a Hereford, TX, farm and honed his work ethic from the time he was four years old. He graduated from the University of Texas, where he participated in ROTC and was commissioned an ensign. He served as the captain of two ships during his Navy career, and he was an adjunct professor at UC Berkeley in the '90s. After 30 years in the Navy, he retired and began to work for LB&B Associates. His recent assignment was using Mayport simulators to teach Navy officers how to drive ships safely.

Both Coneways revel in the many relationships they have established as they moved through different places and cultures. Fleet Landing is fortunate to have been chosen as their new home.

—Victoria Freeman

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Welcome Aboard

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8428 Judy Hinton and Dick Bell (June '24)

Dick and Judy have a lovely apartment with a porch for their two cats, Jetty and Sugar Ray, and they all love it here.



Judy is from Nashville, TN. Dick has been in Atlantic Beach since 1970 and is a true Jacksonville native. He was in the Army Reserve for six years, and after college he worked for Oscar Mayer and got to drive the Weinermobile, which looked like a RV hotdog.

After earning his degree as a certified gemologist, Dick eventually bought a wholesale

jewelry company. His company, PG&A (Professional Gifts and Awards) made money clips for golfers at the PGA Tour, Ryder Cup, US Open, The Masters and many others. Dick produced the Tour clips, which had the logo and the engraved name of the player, from 1986 to 2002.

Judy was—and is—a speech pathologist, having attended Vanderbilt and Colorado State. Her forte was teaching children articulation, grammar, and vocabulary. She even learned sign language to help children unable to speak distinctly. She worked with Barbetee Steele, another Fleet Landing resident, for many years. In 1987, she came first to Duval County, then to St. Johns County, where she worked in various schools. Judy loves trying all the different classes here and especially being in the dulcimer group.

Dick and Judy, having both lost spouses when they met and married, have a large and varied family of children, stepchildren, and grandchildren. They are very much involved with St. Paul's by the Sea Episcopal Church, and Judy runs a prayer group and a mahjongg group.

We are so pleased to have them as residents here.

—Isobel Spink

8321 Diane and Arnie Eger (June '24)

Diane is originally from Memphis, TN, and Arnie is from Aliquippa, PA, (the hometown of Henry Mancini) near Pittsburgh. They have been married for over 55 years and have a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandsons living in Jacksonville. The boys, who call Fleet Landing “The Land of Little Dogs and Old People,” have been here to enjoy paddleboarding, swimming, and



fishing on our lake.

Diane earned her undergraduate degree at Northwestern University and graduate degrees from the University of Pittsburgh. She had a storied career in speech pathology,

overseeing speech/language, hearing, and vision services for school-aged children in the 42 school districts surrounding the city of Pittsburgh. She also served on many professional boards, and she has already become active locally with the Women's Giving Alliance in the Jacksonville area.

Arnie began his professional career in optometry with his father. By the time he retired, the practice had grown to two surgeons, five optometrists, and twenty support staff. Arnie was very active in optometry professional organizations. He also served as president of his condo association while snowbirding in Fort Myers, FL, for the past 20 years.

The Egers still spend May to October at their home on 12 forested acres near Pittsburgh. The house was designed by Diane's architect brother. At Fleet Landing, Diane plays golf, canasta, and enjoys cooking, but misses entertaining at home. Arnie plays golf and pool, but also loves just “being a bum” after so many years of working. They are a welcome and highly intelligent addition to Fleet Landing.

—Isobel Spink

St. Patrick's Day Decorations

A parade and an Irish Tea were not the only observances of St. Patrick's Day, as this small sample shows.



Deferred Articles

The events below occurred too close to our publishing deadline to include in this issue. Look for articles about them in the next issue of FLEET BEAT.

- Hubbard House Stand Up & Stride Walk
- Vietnam Veterans Day Flag Raising
- Veteran's TAPS Ceremony
- Marineland River to Sea Preserve Trail Walk

Fleet Landing Residents Visited by Triglyceriders

By Pete Wait



In a vintage *Peanuts* cartoon, Charlie Brown is asked by one of his friends to describe “love.” Charlie responds by asking a question: “Have you ever ridden a motorcycle?”

All American motorcycle riders, “bikers,” know exactly what that means. Most of the rest of the world’s population have no idea. In all fairness, in much of the rest of the world (and residents Shirleen and Pete Wait traveled it extensively for 20 years), where motorbikes are essential, biking can be vastly different than what the typical American might envision and experience.

The Waits were visited on March 21 by several members of Pete’s Friday motorcycle breakfast/riding group that Pete playfully named “Triglyceriders” because most are retired and bothered by the usual retirement age problems; they all ride motorcycles; and they like to eat the stuff that’s not necessarily the healthiest of foods.

Pete grew up in Tampa under the authority of a father who frequently pronounced that no sane person, and especially a son of his who intended to live another day in his house, would ever ride a motorcycle. Needless to say, that early dream was unfulfilled for many years. Many years later, after our son matured and was living in a distant city, he visited us riding the biggest, loudest, blackest, and most ferocious looking Harley-Davidson that we had ever seen—and we didn’t know that he was even interested in motorcycles.

However, that visit rekindled an old flame, and, coupled with a desire to build stronger bonds with our son, Pete bought a used Honda Silver Wing, 750 cc, from a friend and learned to ride in the Sears & Roebuck overflow parking lot of a Tallahassee mall in his late 50s. Pete retired at age 57, and used his Honda for transportation during his subsequent seminary training. Upon returning to Tallahassee afterwards, he traded up for a 1200 cc Harley-Davidson Sportster, and finally to the dream bike: a 2006 Harley-Davidson 1450 cc Herit-

age Softail, cobalt blue and silver. Pete and son and son-in-law (currently in the Atlantic Club) have spent many glorious days together, covering much of the Southeastern United States and making many special rides to Key West, Milwaukee, Natchez Trace Parkway, Blue Ridge Parkway, Tail of the Dragon, and Pacific Coast Highway, plus participating in events from Daytona Beach to Sturgis, SD (including Mt. Rushmore and the Devils’ Tower).

Currently housed in the garage at Fleet Landing is Pete’s 1690 cc, 2011 cool blue, Harley-Davidson Tri Glide on which he and Shirleen have toured all of Florida and much of Georgia with the Triglyceriders and the American Legion Riders, Post 316. Pete is Chaplain for the Post and the Riders.

Pete is recovering from lymphoma and as such has been unable to meet and ride since last October. The group missed him and decided to make a visit and encourage Pete and Shirleen to hang in as good news was expected to be declared when he met with his oncologist. One of the members closed the visit with a prayer of thanksgiving and for continued healing.

It was the first visit to Fleet Landing by a long-time Orange Park resident, and he expressed much surprise and admiration for the lifestyle here—including acceptance of a bike-riding old man like me.

North Florida Swing Collective

By Carol Smith



Fleet Landing residents were treated to an afternoon of improvisational jazz by the North Florida Swing Collective on March 28 in Johnson Hall. Pianist Joshua Bowlus introduced Taylor Roberts on guitar and Ben Adkins on drums. All three have performed at Fleet Landing with other musical groups over the years. He welcomed Brandon Robertson from South Florida who joined the ensemble on bass for performances in the Jacksonville area. Robertson was featured in several numbers and could literally make his instrument sing. In addition, he is a talented composer, and the audience was entertained with several of his works.

Pine Castle Tour

By Mary Durkin



On February 28, fifteen Fleet Landers took a short bus ride to Pine Castle in central Jacksonville. Established in 1952, Pine Castle is dedicated to empowering adults with intellectual and developmental differences by providing opportunities to learn, work, and connect, fostering their independence and enhancing their quality of life. Our tour guide, Wendy Mayle, Director of Development, led us through the expansive 10-acre facility and introduced us to Pine Castle’s unique programs, known as Pathways curriculum.

The Learning Pathway offers a college-like schedule, where participants gain essential skills, such as community engagement, citizenship, and money management. Classrooms are creatively named, including “Coffee Shop” and “The Music Shop” to enhance the learning experience. Participants can also engage in extracurricular activities like band, chorus, and Special Olympics. The Employment Pathway prepares participants for the workforce through pre-vocational training in on-site product assembly shops, wood shop, culinary arts, and custodial services, allowing them to earn a paycheck while developing their skills. The Residential Program fosters self-reliance and independent living by teaching self-care and homemaking skills, such as cooking, laundry, and grooming. Pine Castle operates five group homes that provide housing for 38 residents.

During the tour, we met several inspiring participants:

Darren, the first resident of Pine Castle’s group home.

Datryl, who shared her passion for fashion and her dream of owning a dress shop.

Arron, a member of the campus custodial crew, who works two days a week, earns a paycheck, and is working toward a certification for community employment.

Anna, who balances her roles in the Culinary Crew, community employment, playing in the band, and competing in the Special Olympics.

Percy, who was born with cerebral palsy and founded Pine Castle’s own radio station, AM1670.

Jesse, a staff member who oversees the Wood Shop, which is one of the largest regional suppliers of contractor stakes for surveying and construction.

Following the tour, we had a lunch prepared by the Café, featuring sandwiches, fruit, and cookies. We all remarked on the warm and welcoming environment

created by both the participants and staff. The friendly greetings, handshakes, and waves we received throughout our tour made our experience very special. We left with an appreciation for Pine Castle’s mission and the incredible individuals it serves.

