

THE *Magnolia* NEWS



NEWS OF INTEREST TO THE RESIDENTS OF MAGNOLIA POINT

VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 3

MARCH 2024



OUTSIDE • I, NUTRIA

FOREWORD

'George Washington is the only president who didn't blame the previous administration for his troubles'
-Anonymous

It's that time again, Election Time. It's time to get up, get out, and be counted. The entire process is detailed in this month's 'Association News', **page 3**.

Following that, excellent reporting by Landscape, Access and Covenants Chairs, on **pages 4-7**.



This month's 'Playing Through' examines laser range finders, which sadly, still can't find your ball, **page 10**.

'Our Page' this month is a report on how the community helped one of our own, **page 12**. Thanks to Darin & Brenda Lee.

On **page 13** is a new photo feature, 'Reflections' which is a look at our world through familiar mirrors.



This month's 'OutSide' highlights the very special home of Helen & Jerry Slack on Barton Creek Trail. **Pages 14-16**.

'Batteries - Part 2' and battery management systems is our 'CartTrends' spotlight this month on **pages 18-19**.

Bill Blackwell sets the record straight on 'how sweet should cornbread be?' in his 'Traveling Fork' on **page 20**.



We may be done with the Nutria, but are they done with us? Another new feature, 'I, Nutria' begins this month. Looks like they're just getting started.

It's called 'The Palmetto State', but it's *not* about bugs! See Susan and Jenn's 'Taking Charge' report on **page 22**.



Just down 17 but a world away, Becky Hinson laces up her sneaks for a trek through Ravine Garden State Park in Palatka! **Pages 24-25**.



With tongue-in-cheek and drink in hand, we pay homage to the legendary Grady Law and what *never* would have stood if he were still with us, **page 27**.

The deer transcends myth and mythology enduring as one of nature's most admired creatures. We revisit our fiction roots in 'Doe Song', **page 29**.



THE MAGNOLIA NEWS

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THE PHOTOGRAPHER-IN-RESIDENCE

Becky Hinson

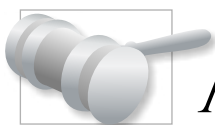
THE COPY EDITORS

Becky Hinson • Susan Mitchell

Front Cover: H. Slack

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Members Meeting and Board Election will take place on March 12, 2024, starting at 7:00 pm at the Clay County Fairgrounds (2497 SR 16 W, Green Cove Springs, FL).

The SECOND and Final Notice for the 2024 Members Meeting and Board Elections, along with the Meeting Agenda, Proxy Form and Ballot Form were mailed to all members via US Postal Service on February 15, 2024, and can be viewed at <https://www.magpt.com/p/2024-Members-Meeting-Details>

Board Candidate Worksheets for members vying for the two Board seats are available for review at <https://www.magpt.com/p/2024-Members-Meeting-Details> Members are reminded of the following:

- Only ONE proxy and one ballot for each lot in the Association will be accepted.
- Please follow the instructions provided in the second & final notice for filling out your proxy and preparing your ballot.
- The PINK Proxy Form should be placed in the envelope stamped PROXY in PINK.
- The BLUE Ballot must be placed in the envelope stamped BALLOT in BLUE, and then placed in the WHITE envelope.
- You must SIGN and fill in your address on the WHITE envelope or your ballot will not be counted.
- Both Proxies and Ballots can be mailed to MAY Management at the address printed on the envelopes, placed in the drop box at the front gate, or delivered in person at the Members Meeting.
- Proxies and Ballots must be received at MAY Management or placed in the drop box NO LATER THAN 12:00pm on March 12, 2024.
- Members delivering their Proxies and Ballots at the meeting must do so PRIOR to the Call to Order at 7:00pm on March 12, 2024. Ballots will not be accepted after 7:00 pm.

To hold an official Members' Meeting, there must be a quorum present (30% of the members) either in person or by proxy. Owners are requested to submit their proxy early, even if planning to attend, to ensure we have a quorum when the meeting is called to order. In the absence of a quorum, the Members' Meeting will be rescheduled at a later date.

The Community Manager, Laura Burgess, is in need of volunteers to help check members in when they arrive at the meeting, and to count ballots for the Director elections. If you are interested and willing to assist, please call her at 904-940-1002 ext. 398 or email her at cam@magpt.com.

- JON BASTRESS



LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION

Your L & I Committee has started work on various projects we hope to accomplish in FY 2024!

Since our last report, Committee members removed half of the 'Jack Frost' variegated ligustrum shrubs in front of the sign at the Magnolia Point Blvd. entrance on Harbor Rd. and transplanted them along the hedgerows at the Magnolia Point entrance and the community property in front of Exit Realty where some of the existing plants



Jean Fox, JoAnn Johnson, Jane Myrick and Raymond Ferrara

have died. We will complete the removal and transplanting process this month, and are planning on adding flower beds and sod to enhance the beautiful hardscape of the raised planter/sign in front of the sign.

We are continuing cleaning, refreshing and planting the flower beds at the two entrances, the gatehouse and the sign at the "T" the Muirfield/Colonial/Magnolia Point Blvd intersection. The Committee planted red and white dianthus for the bed in front of the gatehouse because they are shade tolerant, and cold tolerant flowering plants. We have installed cold tolerant snapdragons and violas at the Medinah gate and the sign at the "T" intersection beds as these beds are in full sun. In addition, we will be replacing dead shrubs in these areas and moving and adding additional shrubs.

Other community projects we are planning and working on are:

- 1) Cleanup of the area on the exit side of Magnolia Point Boulevard at Harbor Road.
- 2) Crapemyrtle trimming - there are approximately 74 crapemyrtles on community property that will be trimmed and shaped this month.
- 3) Tree planting funding has been approved for purchase, transport and installation of 4 large trees.
- 4) Further discussion of wrapping utility boxes with floral or wildlife designs. We have made contact with the Orange Park government staff to ask about their implementation of their utility box wrapping project. Examples can be seen on Orange Avenue & US Route 17 in Orange Park on the corner of Kingsley Avenue at the Government Center, at the Wells Road and Milwaukee Avenue intersections.
- 5) Planting flowers at the bases of the columns on the entrance and exit sides of the Magnolia Point Boulevard entrance.

Additional projects:

- 1) Identification of areas in the community where trees and/or park benches can be installed.
- 2) Heavy trimming or possible removal and replanting of the overgrown and declining shrubs on the Borden Lane median between Magnolia Point Boulevard and Borden Lane that were originally planted to hide the utility boxes and other utility equipment located on that median.
- 3) The committee received approval for the release of funds to power wash and stain the wood privacy fence along the side of the cart path on the entrance side of Magnolia Point Boulevard: We have contacted the vendor selected for the project and are working on verifying the required licensing and insurance documentation.

FYI: The Hardiness Zone for our area was revised to 9B from 9a in 2023 meaning that plants that require a slightly warmer average temperature are now recommended for planting in our area.

In addition, different areas often have varying micro-climates. For example, the Eastern part of Clay County tends to be more temperate due to the warming effect of the St Johns River in the winter and the cooling effects in the summer. Even your property has different planting conditions on the various sides of your house. One side may block the effect of cold prevailing winds in the

Continued



COMMITTEE BLAST • II

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

MARCH 2024

winter. The different sides of your house often have different types and amounts of sun exposure - whether it's shaded, receives morning, afternoon or full day sun exposure and presence or absence of a tree canopy which can protect against frost. The same species of plant may survive the cold weather on one side of your house and die off on the other. [USDA Plant Hardiness Map](#).

March Planting Tips: This is a good time to begin planting warm season bedding plants while the cool season ones are still doing well. Begin pruning your trees and shrubs, including citrus now as they begin to come out of dormancy. Pruning stimulates growth so try timing it to coincide with when you see new growth on your shrub or tree. Fertilize palms, azaleas, camellias, and other ornamental shrubs if needed. Choose a fertilizer with at least 30% of its nitrogen slow release. Check your sprinkler system for problems such as broken or misaligned spray heads and heads that may have been covered by overgrown sod. Now is the time to start

planting warm weather vegetables such as tomatoes, squash, beans and corn,

We would like to invite our fellow Magnolia Point community members to join the committee and help us move forward on our various renovation and beautification projects. Please contact Cindy Francisco at pltluvr44@aol.com or any L & I Committee member listed on the MPCA website under committees.

Other FREE community programs for gardeners- every 4th Monday of the month at 11:30 am, to 12:30 pm, the Clay County UF-IFAS extension provides a Free Horticulture Advice Series for Clay County residents at the extension facility adjacent to the fairgrounds on route 16. The program for March 25 is "How to Fertilize".

- CINDY FRANCISCO

NEW GROWTH



Orange Bird of Paradise, *Strelitzia reginae*, member of the banana family (Musaceae). Hardiness zones 10-12, grows 3 to 5 feet tall, clumping. On a walk in the neighborhood the last week in February I saw the beautiful large bright tropical blooms of this plant, a standout in North Florida winter. This plant is a SURVIVOR judging from its size (it appears to have been around awhile) and seems to be thriving in the wrong Hardiness zone as we are 9b!

It usually takes 2 to 3 years to bloom when first planted, from seed 3 to 5 years, and is considered to be virtually problem free. This example is planted in partial shade in well-draining sandy soil and we have experienced a wet (it likes high humidity) relatively mild winter: no temps in the 20s and very few nights at or near freezing. *The right plant in the right place!*

Continued



COMMITTEE BLAST • III

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REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

MARCH 2024

ACCESS CONTROL

The HOA Board approved at their February meeting the funding to put a new street light in the vicinity of 3455 Olympic Drive. This new street light will have a Visionaire light fixture which will provide maximum illumination. If you are not familiar with this area it has a curve that has no lighting which makes it very dangerous. Also, there is a wooded lot across from this address that has been used to gain access to our neighborhood to conduct criminal activity. This new street light will help with both of these issues. Our electrical contractor, T&M Electric, is acquiring the materials needed and they hope to have the new light installed this month.



Over the past year we have had a couple of incidents at the back entrance gate where the metal gates have closed on vehicles causing minor damage. In order to ensure this doesn't occur again we had Reflective Photobeam Sensors installed in February that will prevent the gate from closing when it's beam is broken by a vehicle.

At their September meeting the Board approved funds for upgrades at the back (Medinah) gate. This work included adding a kiosk (for eventually opening the gate to non-residents), replacing the cameras, and upgrading the associated electronics. The equipment has been installed but testing and adjustments still need to be made. The new cameras feature a 3 in 1 camera unit that contains a camera that looks at the gates, a camera that looks at the island where the new kiosk is located, and a camera that looks down Medinah Lane towards SR 315.



New camera at Medinah entrance

Also included are two new IR license plate reader cameras. As we get the kiosk fully online, we are still deciding on what mode(s) to utilize for granting access to visitors. There will be several options that can be individually configured for our neighborhood as we see fit on Kiosk Home Screen.

Continued

- PAUL WERRING



COMMITTEE BLAST • IV

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

MARCH 2024

COVENANTS REVIEW AND CONSOLIDATION

As the Committee reported to the Board in February, our initial goal of having a proposed consolidated Declaration of Covenants ready to present for membership approval this spring was overly optimistic. Merging the two existing Declaration texts is only one of ten tasks that must be undertaken to update the Association's governing documents. We will be discussing with the Board how to manage and coordinate these tasks as almost all the organizational structure of the Association will be involved. An expanded scope of what the Association needs to do translates into a greater need for resources and a longer project timeline.

If you would like more information about our current activity go to our Committee webpage on the Association website. If you have a question or comment for us, contact us at: covenants.consolidation@mgpt.com

- ALLEN EASTMAN





March



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UPDATE

- SANDY WALDRUP

It has been a quiet month news-wise. The Club continues hosting Hand, Knee & Foot on the first Wednesday and Samba on the third Tuesday of each month. General member meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, beginning at 3:30 p.m. in the Magnolia Point Clubhouse. Members enjoy informative and fun programs each month, presented by a wide variety of guest speakers. Maggie's Beekeepers are keeping busy packing monthly meals for families in need at Charles E. Bennett Elementary School. A slate of officers will be presented to members at the March meeting, who will lead our group in 2024-25.

Dinner Theater Outing a Success!

The reviews are in! "Outstanding". "Wonderful". "Can't believe this is in our backyard". "Too much food". "Excellent". "We're coming back". On Friday evening, February 23, 60 members and their guests attended the



Spotlight Center, a new dinner theater located in Fleming Island. Upon entry, attendees enjoyed a small dessert first, followed by a wonderful dinner provided by Take Away Buffet, near the theater venue. The servers and staff were very attentive to the group. After the dinner hour ended, the group sat back and enjoyed the exciting, fast-paced performance of "Breaking Up is Hard to Do", featuring music

by Neil Sedaka. The cast members were excellent and their vocals were superb. During intermission, more food was offered – dessert in the form of Key Lime pie or cheesecake. The Women's Club evening was arranged by **Cindy Triay**, our Activities Director, and there may be plans in our future for a return outing. The theater has an exciting 2024 schedule, with shows offered for all ages.

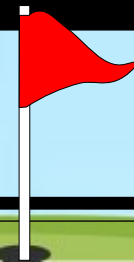
And did you know the Women's Club also had a celebrity performer? **Marsha Fields** was called onstage and participated in the number "Sweet 16" and enjoyed every minute of her fame. Marsha was a good sport but she was kind of stingy giving out autographs! If you were lucky enough to get one, hold onto it as it might be worth money if Marsha decides on a second career!

New Members!

We recently had 3 new members join us – welcome **Lynn Powers**, **Clara Gilbert** and **Stephanie Sessions**. Lynn and Stephanie are both fairly new Magnolia Point residents, but Clara has been a long-time resident. Our membership is 193 strong. If you know of someone who would like to become a Women's Club member, they can join at a reduced fee of \$15.00 (covers directory and binder) for the period January 1 through April 30. You can find our membership form on our website at www.mpwc.org, or email Membership Director **Marguerite Martin** at memsells@att.net. To join, you must be a Magnolia Point resident or property owner or be a member of the country club.



PLAYING THROUGH



LASER RANGE FINDERS

Golf laser rangefinders represent a remarkable fusion of precision technology and sports utility, revolutionizing the game of golf for players of all levels. These devices employ cutting-edge laser technology to accurately measure distances on the golf course, enabling golfers to make more informed decisions about club selection and shot execution. The most common types are:



1. Standard Laser Rangefinders: These devices provide basic distance measurements from the golfer to the target, typically the flagstick. They are known for their accuracy and ease of use.

2. Slope-Edition Rangefinders: These rangefinders take the standard functionality a step further by calculating elevation changes between the golfer and the target. This feature is particularly useful on hilly courses where the slope can significantly affect club selection.

3. Hybrid Rangefinders: Combining GPS and laser technology, hybrid rangefinders offer the best of both worlds. They provide precise distances to the pin and pre-loaded course maps with distances to hazards and layup points.

4. Stabilized Rangefinders: Designed for golfers with unsteady hands, these rangefinders come with stabilization

technology that reduces the effects of hand movements, ensuring accurate measurements.

5. Advanced Feature Rangefinders: Some rangefinders come with additional features like pin-seeking technology, which helps isolate the flag from background objects, and jolt or vibration feedback, which indicates when the laser has locked onto the target.

In practice sessions, laser rangefinders can be invaluable tools for improving a golfer's distance control and course management skills. Golfers can use rangefinders to measure distances to various targets on the driving range, helping them fine-tune their club selection and swing for each shot. By practicing with a rangefinder, golfers can develop a better understanding of how environmental factors, such as wind and temperature, affect their shots.

During a round of golf, a laser rangefinder can significantly enhance a player's strategy and decision-making. By providing

accurate yardages to the pin, bunkers, water hazards, and other course features, rangefinders help golfers make informed club choices and approach shots. Slope-edition rangefinders are particularly useful in adjusting for elevation changes, although they must be disabled during tournament play as per the rules of golf.



Laser rangefinders have revolutionized the way golfers approach the game. Ultimately, the best use of a laser rangefinder comes down to the individual golfer's preference and the specific challenges presented by each course. With the right rangefinder in hand, golfers can confidently aim for lower scores and greater enjoyment of the game.

-Editor



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OUR STORIES, OUR OWN OUR PAGE

- DARIN & BRENDA LEE

Magnolia Point resident Darin Lee is technically blind. It's a fairly recent development which forced him to retire from a 26-year career in law enforcement, and years in Afghanistan as a DOD International Law enforcement expert. He lives with his wife Brenda on the corner of St. Andrews Court and Colonial Drive; their home was featured in the October 2022 issue of The Magnolia News, [here](#).

Darin navigates daily life with the help of a Guide dog, 'High Speed', a Premier Labrador both loyal, loving, and highly trained in her mission of finding safe passage for Darin in his daily activities. Last fall, while Darin and High Speed were walking down Colonial Drive, the driver of a golf cart failed to yield to the stop sign on the corner of Shinnecock. This forced High Speed to take a defensive maneuver to protect herself and Darin from getting hit. Words followed. This actually happened twice in a 2 week period, prompting the Lees to even meet with the owner of the club. First, some history:



According to Brenda, "Darin waited close to two years for High Speed once all the physician interviews, documents, extensive background checks, attendance for mandatory four months OMT training (mandatory to receive a service/guide dog) were all completed and organized by the nationally accredited school. He was then invited to meet new his partner and attend a rigorous 24/7 training program with her. Once successfully completed, we had to sign extensive legal contracts, undergo spot unannounced home visits, and several other contractual obligations."

"Just 2 years old, High Speed was raised by a private highly trained "puppy raiser" until going to Darin. She lives everyday at 100% high speed and loves to "work". When she is not "working" she loves to cuddle, but only on Darin's lap or directly at his side. There is an amazing, impenetrable bond that forms immediately between the Service/Guide Dog and the Master/Handler. You may hear experienced Master/Handlers refer to their partners as their super heroes."

Because Colonial Drive is narrower in the Lee's neighborhood than roads elsewhere in the community, it was unsafe and hazardous walking on the shoulder side of the road for Darin and High Speed. While others (who are sighted) walk their dogs, they can see vehicles coming at them and move out of the way, if and when they get too close. Darin does not have any such visual cues. High Speed is Darin's eyes and ears. It took 3 months to get signage on Colonial installed, on the recommendation of the Green Cove Springs Police Department and the Florida Highway Patrol, a process that was not without its own frustrations and challenges.

"She can be found everywhere Darin is," Brenda says, "There are a lot of people that do not understand the life of a blind or visually impaired person who can show you the boundaries of their own yard, every step of their house, including where every single piece of furniture is, and every single light switch. However, now that we have the signs posted on the road outside our property on Colonial, High Speed and Darin are back to taking their 'controlled command walks' every day and throughout the day, but now much more safely."

She adds, "We would really love to please respectfully ask everyone's assistance when they see Darin and High Speed by slowing down and moving over to allow plenty of room for everyone."



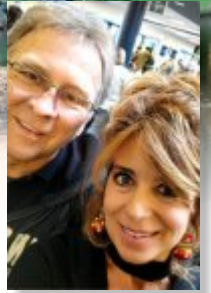
REFLECTIONS



dp



OUTSIDE



How long have you lived at Magnolia Point?

Since 2019. We were so delighted that we found such a beautiful neighborhood. We discovered so many of nature's delights right in our own backyard. We have made many friends and have gotten to know many of the wonderful people that live here. We are blessed to have such wonderful neighbors making our lives that much richer.

What do you like best about your outside spaces?

We have such great gathering spaces for entertainment. There is a beautifully landscaped cabana pool to our north, a jasmine trellis covered deck with amazing water views to the south (which includes a "Beach Area" and a lanai and top floor balcony for relaxing and enjoying the magnificent sunrises and nature all around you. We are able to enjoy quiet evenings while also interacting with the numerous walkers and bikers that pass by.

The seasons obviously can affect your time outside, how do you adapt to them?

In the winter time, we enjoy the enclosed patio with our fire pit for those chilly mornings while our babbling brook keeps us company. During the spring and fall, our jasmine covered deck provides a beautiful view of the sunrise over the pond and the warm rays masking the crisp, cool air. Together with the view of the golf course and the peaceful sounds of the preserve, it's an ideal setting for that perfect cup of morning coffee. In summer, our cabana pool provides just enough cover to allow us to enjoy the water, sunbathe and with just the right amount of sunshine all while enjoying the view of the course.



Continued



3568 BARTON CREEK CIRCLE



Tell us about the Cabana Pool.

It's a 16'x40' pool with a solid roof supported by 22 gorgeous Mediterranean style columns. We are greeted by the sunrise in the early summer morning and the sunset in the evening. The pool provides for a welcoming environment during even the hottest summer days.

What are you particularly proud of?

The combination of the magnificent landscaping set against such a beautiful home. The view from across the pond showcases the many palm trees as well as various plants and flowers set against the two-story home, the property-length bulkhead and the cabana pool provide for quite a magnificent view. Sunsets against this backdrop have provided some of our most astonishing photos.

Were these outdoor spaces here, or were they remodels or additions, and if so, what did you do?

We were fortunate that most of the outside spaces were very well thought out and constructed when we purchased the home. One thing that we did was to enclose both the lanai/patio and the second floor balcony. While we enjoy

OUTSIDE

Continued





the company of the bountiful wildlife found in Magnolia Point, we much prefer that they remain on the outside of our living spaces. We did make significant changes to the ‘beach’ area by adding palm trees and additional landscaping and seating to enhance our ability to enjoy this space. These changes make it more enjoyable to take advantage of this space as well as improving our view from the jasmine covered deck space as well.



Photos: H. Slack





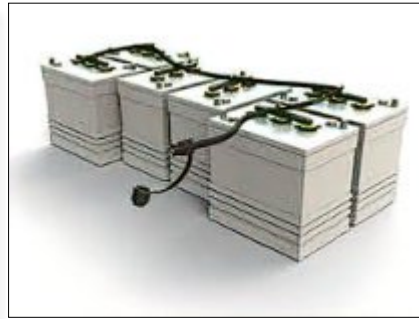
BECKY HINSON



LET'S TALK BATTERIES - PART 2

So, we discussed in our last article the difference between lead acid batteries and Lithium batteries. Now we'll be making sure you get the longest life out of them. Taking care of your batteries can be cumbersome for most, while for those with light forms of OCD, a snap, and we gladly put it on our calendars as a reminder to get it done.

Whether it's a 36-volt or a 48-volt cart both need to be maintained. It starts with distilled water. But why? Why can't we just use regular tap water? Or rainwater for that matter. It's because tap water or rainwater is full of impurities which can cause damage to a flooded lead acid battery and more specifically, the plates that are inside. When you put anything other than distilled water the impurities stick to these plates like plaque on one's teeth. Over time, this also causes your batteries to not properly charge as well or last as long.



You can also overwater a battery and do harm to it as well. Most battery experts recommend only filling the batteries up to about 1/2 of an inch from the tops of the batteries plates and to also never let it get below the plates. Putting too much water in a battery can also lead to sulfation

which is bad. What is sulfation? Once again it is like plaque on your teeth. Too much can lead to weak batteries. Follow this rule: fill a 1/2 inch from the top of the plates. Ok, so how often should you check my batteries water levels? About every 60 days. Goto your local grocery store and get a gallon of distilled water and that should last you for quite some time. Different brands of battery companies use different vent caps. Some screw off for each cell and others have a quick release to check all at one time.

We have covered how to water a battery, what type of water to use, how much to water them and how often. Now on to the different watering tools out there to make life a little easier than just using a gallon jug and a funnel.

There are a variety of watering systems to keep you from worrying about the possible threat of getting acid on your hands or body, from gravity water fed systems to water filler jugs to pump systems. The only way to get around watering your batteries like a rose bush is to go *Lithium Ion*, which nets you no watering and easy stress-free ownership. Not to mention not having to deal with batteries leaking or bulging over time. Let us not bring up the fact of that odor that batteries discharge from time to time when you go out to the garage. That is a smell that will alarm and worry most. It is a gas that escapes on occasion and is normal. No worries unless you see a substance under your golf cart.

Checking your battery cables on each battery is important in taking care of your cart's batteries. Wiggle them from time to time to make sure they are all tight. If not, your cart's batteries won't be getting a proper connection and can lead to other problems. Corrosion happens as well and making sure to check that is equally as important. There are a few factors to consider letting you know it maybe time for a new set of batteries:

- Reduced Capacity. Is your cart not going as far as it once did? It's probably time.
- Swelling or leakage from the batteries? It's definitely time for a new set.
- Slower cart? The batteries are losing power and yes you guessed it. It's time for a new set.
- Low voltage or the warning light comes on? Could be a dead cell or bad battery in the batch. This will cause all the other batteries to overwork and will lead to them all going bad.

In the end the lead acid battery is the more affordable way of ownership when it comes to powering your cart over a lithium-Ion unit, but they all come with a cost. So, let's remember these tips as follows to keep those batteries lasting as long as possible.



Continued



- Charge your batteries regularly. Do this every time you use your cart whether it was for a casual ride to the clubhouse and back or the trek of playing 18 holes. The experts say that a battery that is used several times and not charged will not completely charge to 100% capacity. Charge your cart after every use.



- Use distilled water only and don't let those levels get too low or over fill your batteries. Rule of thumb is 1/2 inch over the plates.
- Keep your battery terminals clean and corrosion free. Checking them regularly to ensure that batteries are charging and running properly is necessary.
- Using a proper charger to charge your batteries is necessary. If that old charger isn't working call a local shop and or go online and order a new one.
- Finally Don't overcharge your batteries or let them get to low before you do charge them.

*John Poluga
for The Magnolia News*



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THE Traveling Fork

This month, a timely discussion of cornbread. Yes, cornbread! My focus is on what has become the evolutionary practice of chronically sweetening cornbread. This practice has resulted in sweet cornbread even at such traditional country cuisine purveyors as Cracker Barrel Restaurants.

Those who love real country-style cornbread are aghast at receiving the sweetened, dessert style cornbread. When I want dessert, I will opt for a rich cake or pie product of the oven—not cornbread. It has gotten so bad that when I order from the menu, I always ask if the cornbread is sweetened. More often than not, the answer is “yes”, even at Cracker Barrel, a supposed-to-be source of country-style cuisine. This borders on sacrilege. So, this leads to my offering of a cornbread recipe which contains high-value protein along with other ingredients making it fit for those who know and love REAL cornbread. This recipe is not the only good version of cornbread as there are many good cooks who value the traditional style of cornbread, but this is the only one I even contemplate any more. It is born of my experiences in Texas and I have tinkered with it over the years.



I don't want to sound like a braggart but I have entered this cornbread in the baking contests of four county fairs in two states and it always wins a blue ribbon. I call it BILL'S TEXAS CORNBREAD; my wife, Marcia, calls it JALAPENO CORNBREAD. Feel free to attach any name to it that suits you. The number of jalapenos you use can alter the “heat”, but the modern jalapenos have lost much of their genetic “heat” by cross pollination with sweet peppers. Canned Mexican jalapenos are much “hotter”.

Bill's Blue Ribbon TEXAS CORN BREAD

Start with two bowls, one for wet materials and one for dry materials.

WET MATERIALS

1/2 to 3/4 cup olive oil
1 1/3 cup sharp grated cheddar cheese
1 1/4 cups buttermilk
1/2 cup chopped jalapeno peppers
1 cup creamed style corn
4 eggs beaten
1 cup chopped onions

DRY MATERIALS

3 cups corn meal
1 1/4 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon sugar

Carefully and thoroughly mix each bowl separately. Measure the olive oil first in a large measuring cup. Then, beating the eggs in that cup makes the eggs easier to pour out. Next, measuring the buttermilk in the same measuring cup makes it easier to pour out because of the oil residue. When each mixture is thoroughly mixed, pour the dry mixture into the wet mixture and blend both quickly with a spatula. Into a 9" X 13" (or similar) pan or casserole dish spray an aerosol cooking oil on the surfaces of the bowl. Move the batter into this bowl. Garnishing the top with a mixture of red and green pepper strips makes the finished product a beautiful presentation. Place the bowl containing batter into a pre-heated 375 degree F. oven and bake for one hour.

Take out, let cool, serve, and enjoy.

- BILL BLACKWELL



I, NUTRIA



dp

"Shreddin' Black Creek today with my new Mini-Mal Thruster"



Electric Road Warriors Susan & Jenn hit the highway.

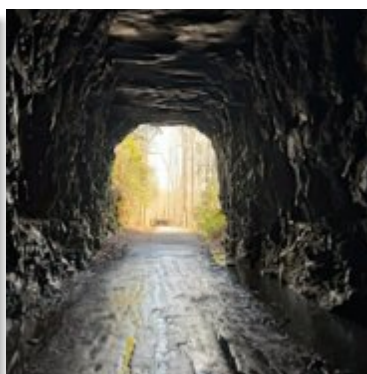
Taking Charge

South Carolina, The Palmetto State *(the palm trees, not the bugs!)*

February was spent at Devil's Fork State Park in Salem, South Carolina. It's a beautiful area where we were close to friends and family, and it only set us back \$743/month including utilities due to a 30-day special to lure snowbirds to northern South Carolina in the winter months.



Devil's Fork surrounds Lake Jocassee and is a fishing, boating, and diving park with a few trails and nice cabins and campgrounds for both RV and tent camping. The view from our rig was gorgeous and a pleasure to wake up to every morning.



Fun fact: Lake Jocassee is a man-made lake created by Duke Electric in 1973, in a project known as Bad Creek. It took almost 20 years to complete, and it now produces electricity for millions living in North and South Carolina. Lake Jocassee is the lower reservoir for the Project. Before the lake was formed, scenes from the movie *Deliverance* were filmed here. Cue the banjoes.

Observations while touring South Carolina:

- Though HOAs can be a pain, they do serve a purpose. We saw too many beautiful areas that clearly didn't have one.
- Dollar Generals are everywhere. In fact, one town with a population of just over 3,000 had three within a few miles.
- However, you can't beat a Walmart that has over 4,000 locations. They are great for travelers, not only for groceries and supplies, but also for prescriptions.
- There is a church on almost every corner, and even small towns have stately, well-kept buildings—clearly the pride of the community.
- The town of Greenville is bursting as land prep for very large communities is going on everywhere on the outskirts of the town.

RV Tip For This Month:

Be flexible: In the last 2-1/2 months, we have changed quite a few reservations during our travels as we learn more about parts of the country, charging an electric truck, etc. Just be sure to check the cancellation policy before putting a deposit on a reservation.

Ori has a new companion as we adopted a new kitty from a shelter in Georgia. "**Sixty**" is keeping us amused and engages Ori in a game of tag every early morning and late evening.



THE P • A • R • K • S

Featuring the fine stalking and camera skills of our own Becky Hinson on her visits to local wildlife preserves and parks

If your family enjoys hiking, the Ravine Gardens State Park is an excellent place to visit. Located at 1600 Twigg Street in Palatka, it's approximately a 35 minute drive from Magnolia. Point. Admission is \$5 per vehicle, but be sure to bring correct change as payment is made in an honor box.

Hours are from 8am until sundown for pedestrians and the paved loop, running around the gardens, closes one hour before sunset if you are in a vehicle.

Dogs are allowed. They must be leashed at all times on a six foot handheld leash and never left unattended. Pets must be well behaved and you have to clean up after them.

The Ravine is 146 acres of natural and formal gardens famous for housing eighteen different types of azaleas. The peak blooming season is January through March

depending on weather conditions.



Photo: Florida State Parks

This park is all natural and not caused by flooding or a sinkhole. The spring fed creek, at the Whitewater Branch, is a permanent feature with water bubbling up from underground carrying soil and sand to the St. Johns River.

There are four trails to hike depending on your desired level of activity. I made a full day of hiking and did all four. I don't recommend trying this route unless you are in good physical condition. It was an enjoyable hike but I must admit with exposed roots and steep banks, I did take a

couple of tumbles. The ravines are up to 120 feet with some banks at 45 degree angles so stick to the paved areas if you're not accustomed to vigorous exercise.

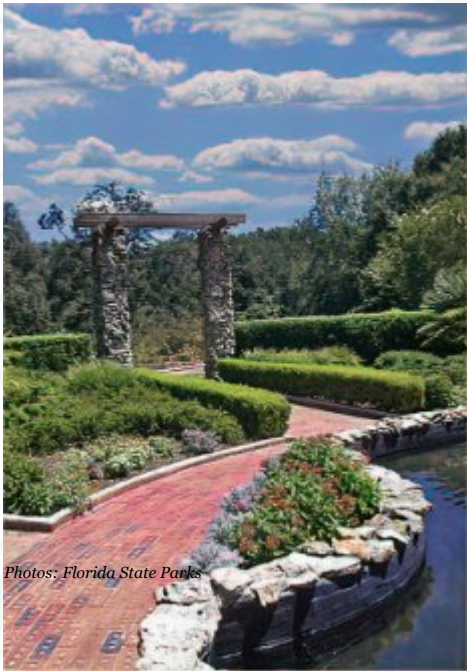
If you're looking for an easy trail, there are 1.8 miles of paved road running around the top of the ravine overlooking the spring fed stream. This path contains outlooks to view the scenery and is also open to walkers and bicycles. There are some steep elevations so beware unless you are in good physical condition.

The Whitewater Path at 0.72 miles is considered easy. Access to this path allows you to explore the bottom of the ravine. Keep in mind, the path is dirt and gravel and may be challenging if you don't exercise regularly.



Continued





Photos: Florida State Parks



Photo: Florida State Parks

If you're looking for a moderate hike, try the Springs Trail. It's only 0.6 miles and follows narrow ravine paths and historic stone stairs. Look out for exposed roots and steep slopes.



Ravine Gardens - 1941

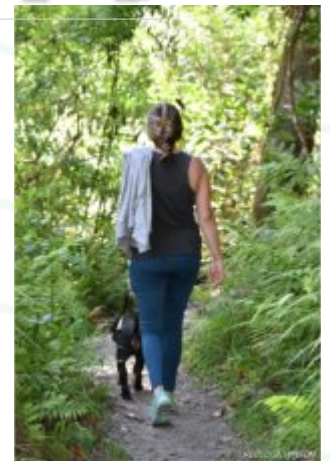
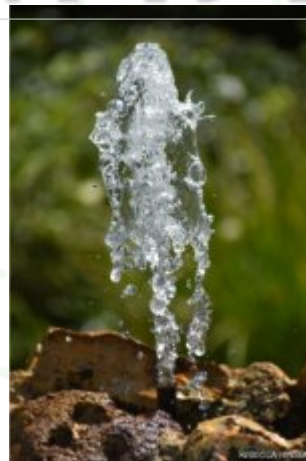
For those of you looking for a longer hike, try the Azalea Trail. It's 2.5 miles and has incredible views of the ravines with suspension bridges. Beware of the numerous stone stairs, steep elevation changes and lots of exposed roots on narrow paths.

There are numerous areas to picnic along the paved ravine perimeter road if hiking isn't your thing. You'll find picnic tables and grills at no additional charge. Look for stairways and trail access into the ravines near each picnic area. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted.

THE P • A • R • K • S

The paved road also offers bicyclists a great view of the gardens. Helmets are recommended for adults and required for all children 16 and under. If you're looking for a longer distance to cycle, check out the Palatka to St. Augustine Trail located over the bridge in East Palatka. There you'll find 19 miles of paved trail running through scenic routes and agricultural landscapes.

While I didn't see any birds or animals the day I visited, the scenery was incredible. It's not too late to see the azalea blooms so plan a trip soon! Don't forget to take some photos!



THE 9 HOLE LEAGUE - SANDY WALDRUP

February 1 – Stableford

First Thursday of the month is always our team game of Stableford. We had 9 golfers make up 3 teams. There were no chip-ins. The ladies also wished member **Judy Sessions** a very Happy Birthday, who celebrated an important milestone.

1st Place - **Dianne Dearth, Bede Johnson, Janine O'Connor**



February 8 – Hindsight

The game was Hindsight, an individual game but at the end of their round, golfers got to choose 3 holes to toss out their worst scores. The net low score for 6 holes determined the winner in both flights.

Congratulations to **Dianne Dearth** and **Janine O'Connor** - not only did they tie for first place in their flight but they also split the chip-in pot which had grown quite large. Janine had her chip-in on Hole 9 and Dianne had hers on Hole 8.

Flight 1 - 1st Place – **Cheryle Newman**; 2nd Place – **Sandy Waldrup**
Flight 2 - 1st Place – Tie – **Dianne Dearth & Janine O'Connor**; 2nd Place – **Judy Sessions**



February 15 – Mutt & Jeff

In this game, the team score is the net score of each team member on the Par 3s and Par 5s only. Congratulations to **Dianne Dearth** and **Cheryle Newman**, who had chip-ins and split the single day's chip-in money; Dianne had a chip-in on Hole 15 and Cheryle had a chip-in on Hole 10 for a par.

1st Place – **Dianne Dearth, Donna Hirsch, Judy Sessions, Sandy Waldrup**
2nd Place – **Shirley Orvosh, Jenn St. Mary, Barbara Shinn, Judy Sessions** (Blind Draw)

February 22 – Trouble, or Disaster

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the individual game of Trouble, aka Disaster. Trouble points are given to golfers who get into trouble, i.e. a bunker, hazard, 3-putts, during their round. The goal is to accumulate the least amount of trouble points. There were no chip-ins, so the pot rolls over. Oh, if you see **Dianne Dearth** out and about, ask her about a loan – she has been the winner, be it a team or individual effort, this entire month, not to mention her 2 chip-in winnings. Good for you, Dianne!

1st Place – **Dianne Dearth** – 1 trouble point
2nd Place (Tie) – **Shirley Orvosh & Judy Sessions** – 2 trouble points



Membership

Come join us! We welcome all female players with a handicap; although you can begin play without one, establishing your handicap while playing. The season is at the half-way point and one can now join at a reduced rate. Please contact **Cheryle Newman**, Vice-President/Membership, with any questions (fnewman@bellsouth.net).



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MAGNOLIA POINT BRIDGE NEW PLAYERS WELCOME!

All games are friendly and we welcome new players. Sign up with a partner or as a single. One prize is paid out for each table, i.e., if there are four tables, the top four scores win money.

Duplicate and Social Bridge play on alternate Thursdays in the clubhouse dining room from 3 to 6pm. The fees are \$2.00 for Social and \$3.00 for Duplicate to cover the cost of prize money and supplies.

CONTACT

Social: Rannel Westberry REW5538@comcast.net

Duplicate: Jon Bastress JonBastress@gmail.com

Duplicate Bridge, Thu, Jan 25

1. Sharon Sprott & Ed Szymanski
2. David Miller & Jerry Ritchie
3. Marty Essex & Jola Griener
4. Conie & Michael Byers
5. Jon Bastress & Joe Thill
6. Phyllis Boyd & Alice Lodge
Mary Kendall & Sharon Murphy
(Tied)

Social Bridge, Thu, Feb 01

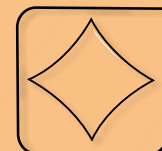
1. Connie & Michael Byers
2. Jon Bastress & Joe Thill
3. Val & Jeff Flemming
4. Jola Griener & Don Maneval
5. Phyllis Boyd & Sharon Sprott
6. Alice Lodge & Kaaren Tague

Duplicate Bridge, Thu, Feb 08

1. Connie & Michael Byers
2. Phyllis Boyd & Alice Lodge
3. Jim Cardozo & Rannel Westberry
4. Marty Essex & Cindy Jennings
5. Sharon Sprott & Ed Szymanski

Social Bridge, Thu, Feb 15

1. Jon Bastress & Joe Thill
2. Alice Lodge & Kaaren Tague
3. Jola Greiner & Cindy Jennings
4. David Miller & Jerry Ritchie
5. Kim Belcher & Sharon Murphy
6. Sondra Costa & Marsha Parker
7. Connie & Michael Byers



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*** SPECIAL FOR MAGNOLIA RESIDENTS!**





In the embrace of our quiet wooded haven our Whitetail journey unfolds, a dance of nurture and survival. Below the canopy of lush foliage and beside still ponds under a night sky, I conduct the overture of life for my two fawns. In seclusion among whispering boughs and the alcoves of lush woodland margins, I tongue my newborns clean until safe to tread softly upon the verdant stage we call home.

We graze velvety greens and fairways and on to the manicured harvest surrounding the private homes. I guide my fawns as we forage and scour, each step the ballet in harmony with the rhythm of days' journey into night, mists into rains, cool dawns into wilting heat, or blinded by the driving rain, kneeled by those shrouds, soaked to our skins. And huddled, our triumph sustained: another day survived, another day passed, together!

Veiled by foliage and thick understory, we cloak ourselves with our practiced arts of disguise. The wooded lots, undulating meadows, and tall fringes of still ponds become our sanctuary, shielding us from the watchful predators and the startled gazes of human passersby.

In the nocturnal ballet beneath the celestial canvas and Magnolia bough, we navigate automatic lights that split the night with otherworldly glare. We adapt, waltzing through the shadows with grace, mindful of the passing cars and carts, their startling sounds joining the bark of backyard guards, this fleeting madrigal of our being.

Yet, within this delicate choreograph, the heartbeat of our survival holds fast. To my fawns I breathe the hush of vigilance, the poetry of stillness when danger looms, and the balletic flight to refuge when threats break asudden.

In this private wooded residential symphony, our survival transcends the mundane and become as if our own kinds' chorale. With each rustling leaf and every quiet beat of our hearts, we wheel and leap through the trials and danger, leaving the faintest hoof-tracks on the canvas of our wooded tapestry for *you* to treasure and divine.

- Editor





BECKY HINSON

