

THE
Magnolia
NEWS

NEWS OF INTEREST TO THE RESIDENTS OF MAGNOLIA POINT

VOLUME 6 • ISSUE II

NOVEMBER 2025



GIVING THANKS

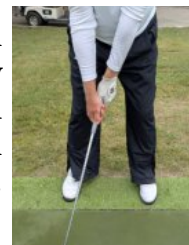
Welcome November!

Giving thanks is the order of the day (month!). May your holidays continue with joy and happiness, and we suggest attending this year's 'Rock the Reindeer' fest and lend your hand; with just a few hours' time, you can help us 'deliver' this year's reindeer to Magnolia Point!

Saratoga Springs: We bring ou our exclusive interview with their management, on **page 3.**



Playing Through this month is 'Lessons in the Takeaway and Backswing', and you won't want to miss this, on **pages 26-27.**



It's the 4th annual 'Rock the Reindeer' event at the Greiner's! There's something for everyone to do, no special skills required! But you gotta love reindeer! **Page 10.**



You're invited to Thanksgiving dinner on Curly's 'Gravy Boat' in this month's 'HIP', **page 28.**

Maggie P gives thanks with new pasta shapes and new traditions on **pages 11-13.**



The Mitchell girls are back to checking off items on their bucket list in this month's 'Taking Charge', **pages 32-33.**



Speaking of traditions, Bill brings to our table the iconic *Paella*, perfect for a holiday table, **pages 18-19.**



Can you roll with a punch? Maggie P is counting on it; check out her party-sized favorite on **page 34.**

It's 'Our Mens Group', the oldest new golf 'league' around these parts, out for a round at NAS Jax, **pages 23-24.**

"OMG"

THE MAGNOLIA NEWS
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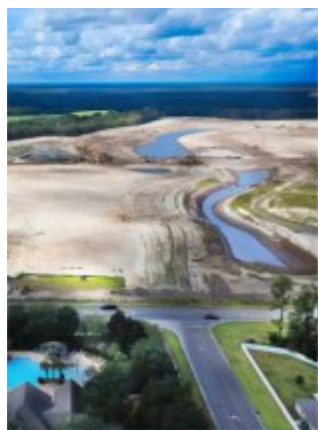
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We do not accept political, social commentary, or opinion pieces for publication.



Saratoga Springs: Where Farming Meets The Front Porch



Our new neighbor

An exclusive **Magnolia News** interview with with **Freehold Communities** and **Convivial Foodscapes**

What do you see as the most exciting part of this community for future residents?

Saratoga Springs will be Clay County’s first Agrihood community, bringing fresh, meaningful experiences to residents. With multiple

working farms and a farm share for every household, residents can enjoy fresh harvests, volunteer in the fields, and take part in farm-to-table gatherings that celebrate the land.

Farming is such a unique feature; what kinds of crops or farm experiences do you hope to highlight in this development?

The farm will showcase a wide variety of crops that thrive in North Florida’s climate, with seasonal rotations including mixed greens, tomatoes, squash, sweet potatoes, peppers, and more. Residents can expect an abundance of beets, broccoli, okra and onions, alongside cut flowers, and herbs like basil, rosemary, thyme; fruits such as blueberries, figs, citrus, and pomegranates. Beyond the harvest, the farm will offer hands-on experiences for all, from volunteer days and farmers markets to educational workshops and you-pick gardens that invite everyone to get involved.

How will you make the most of Florida’s climate and growing season?

Farming is very site specific. Florida’s long growing season allows us to grow a wide variety of crops throughout the year. We carefully select varieties suited to the state’s climate and soils, emphasizing pest and disease resistance. As organic farmers, we know healthy soil is the foundation of every successful harvest. Through practices like cover cropping, crop

rotation, composting, mulching, reduced tillage, and alley cropping, we continually build and maintain soil health to sustain a thriving, resilient farm ecosystem.

How do you picture residents being involved in the farm; will there be opportunities for hands-on gardening, markets, or classes?

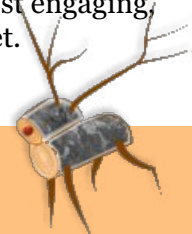
At Saratoga Springs, the farm is designed to be an active part of daily life. Residents will enjoy volunteering in the fields or participate in workshops and join a variety of events that celebrate the Agrihood lifestyle. The Farm Share program will offer a convenient way for residents to enjoy fresh, locally grown produce right from their community. The You-Pick and Children’s Gardens invite hands-on engagement for all ages, while the Farm Store and Farmers Markets will showcase locally sourced products and goods from across Northeast Florida, reflecting the community’s commitment to sustainability, connection, and healthy living.

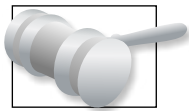
How do you see the community connecting with surrounding neighborhoods and towns?

We hope to cultivate meaningful relationships within the broader Clay County community through future farmers markets showcasing a variety of local vendors offering farm-fresh food, art, goods, and music.

Are there examples from other agrihoods you’ve developed that you’ll be bringing here?

Freehold Communities continues to refine its Agrihood approach with each new community, building upon the successes and insights gained from previous developments. Its newest Agrihood, Carnes Crossroads in Goose Creek, SC, has already demonstrated the power of meaningful engagement, with the Farm Store and amenities, which opened in May 2025. Signature programming such as 4th Friday Farmers Markets, hands-on gardening workshops, locally sourced goods, and volunteer days where neighbors connect through shared experiences all inform future designs. Drawing from these proven initiatives, Saratoga Springs is envisioned to be one of Freehold’s most engaging, connected, and dynamic Agrihoods yet.





ACCESS CONTROL

One of our committee members, **Paul Werring** was recognized at the October HOA meeting as the 'Sleeves Up' Volunteer of the Quarter. Paul chaired the Access Control committee for the past four years and continues to volunteer his time to assist me with the many issues that arise. His effort is greatly appreciated and I felt it was important he be recognized for his efforts. Thanks Paul!



C. Francisco



Other News: Equipment issues encountered in October included the rear entry, left-side gate was intermittently not opening and the visitor kiosk was not accepting all valid visitor passes. The gate issue was corrected by fixing a bad connection on the control board. The kiosk issue was determined to be database related where the resident's account was restricted to the main gate only. The database was corrected for accounts found with these restrictions.

If you happen to experience issues with your visitors not being able to gain access at the visitor kiosk using a valid pass, please email us at access.control@magpt.com with specific details and we will try to get resolution. Please remember that it may take a few minutes between the time you generate and send a pass to one of your visitors to the time it is recognized by the kiosk.

The rear gate license plate reader cameras which failed during a thunderstorm in mid-August were finally replaced and put back into operation on 10/18. These cameras are critical for identifying vehicles that run into and damage our gate equipment. A proposal was recently provided to the board to implement a lightning protection system for the rear gate equipment.

- CHUCK COX

LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION

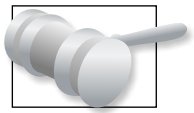
The Committee has been busy conducting work sessions, purchasing new ornamental grasses and having them installed, working on our first installation of vinyl wrap on one of the large electrical utility boxes, prepping for the community Holiday Displays, checking and repairing the outdoor electrical receptacles and working on water leak repairs along Magnolia Point Boulevard. October accomplishments:

Landscaping:

- Weeded and removed, cut down the oak tree suckers in the bed around the live oak behind the gatehouse. The Caladiums and holly ferns have rooted and are growing well.

Continued





- Weeded and deadheaded the coleus plants in the flower bed in front of the gatehouse
- Transplanted two limelight hydrangeas donated by Cissy Burnette to the bed in front of the wood fence on the entrance side of Magnolia Point Blvd.
- Purchased and planted ornamental grasses around the smaller utility box at the Magnolia Point Boulevard/Constancia intersection.
- Replaced a dead lorepetalum in the bed in front of sign at the intersection at the end of Magnolia Point Boulevard.
- We had an ISA arborist inject trees and soil in the Magnolia Point Blvd. area that are showing signs of stress and decline.

Irrigation:

Two new water leaks occurred on our property near the Exit Realty Building, one on Constancia, and another along Magnolia Point Boulevard on community property in front of the Exit building. It appeared that the line on Magnolia Point Boulevard had been cut when AT&T had been working in that area.



Photos: C. Francisco



Next up:

- Trim and limb up the trees that are encroaching on the roads throughout the community.
- Pruning the trees in the medians and sides of Magnolia Point blvd.
- Continue replacing the flowers in the beds at the Harbor Road/Colonial intersection and Medinah entrances.
- Continue our fall planting along the shadow box fence on the entrance side of Magnolia Point Boulevard.
- Replace the dying/dead jack frost ligustrum and other plants in the community owned property in front of Exit Realty.
- Continue the renovation of the islands/medians at the Constancia/Red Hawk/Magnolia Point Boulevard intersection.

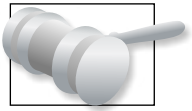
Nov 2025 Planting Tips:

Now is a good time to plant the newest addition to our ornamental grass collection. While not a Florida native (native to Arizona and New Mexico), bamboo muhly is an excellent choice to add if you are looking for a large ornamental grass to add to your garden. Its stems resemble bamboo and it has a large billowy, fine leaf structure that sways and moves with the breeze. Its scientific name is *Muhlenbergia dumosa*. It's heat tolerant and cold resistant to 10°F, and prefers full sun.

- The following are some suggestions that can be planted now in our area (zone 9b):

Continued





- Bedding plants: pansy, viola, snapdragons dusty millers, allyssum and chrysanthemums
- Herbs such as cilantro, dill, fennel, parsley, sage, and thyme.
- Vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, kale, and lettuce.
- Trees such as redbud, fringetree
- Shrubs such as Camellia

Lawns will be going into dormancy and do not require as much watering. Do not fertilize your lawn this month as the grass will not be able to use it.

We would like to invite our fellow Magnolia Point community residents 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.

FREE community programs for Clay County gardeners from the Clay UF-IFAS Extension: 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. This month, on Nov 24, 2025 is 'Unlocking the Secrets of Keyhole Gardening'.

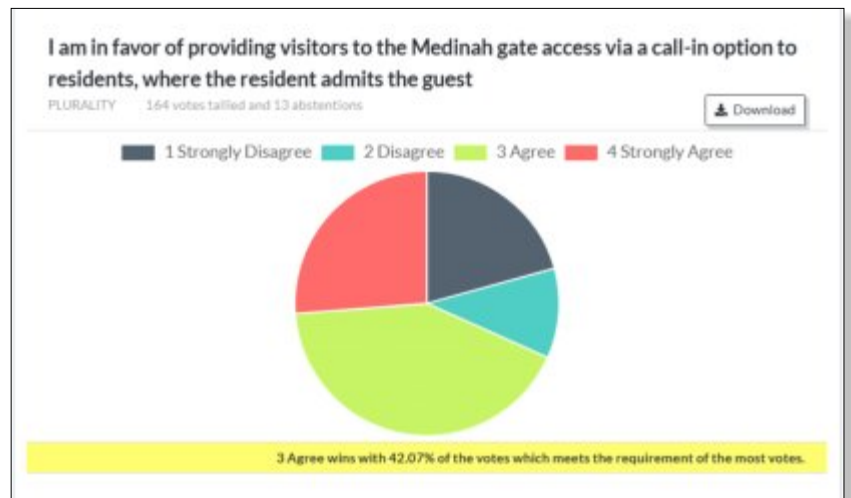
- CINDY FRANCISCO

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The recent Access Control Survey was the first to be published through Election Buddy. The SPC is currently reviewing the results and compiling the data to present concisely to the residents.

As this was the first use of Election Buddy, there were many learning opportunities and interesting findings:

- Surveys are administered through the "voting" mechanism. Out of an abundance of caution, this first survey was limited to the 333 people who've opted in to Electronic Voting. A test was done in which the word "Vote" was edited out, so it may be possible to expand future surveys to anyone with an email address in May Management's system. So don't be left out, register for Electronic Voting!
- Only 177 people out of the 333 participated in the survey. SPC would be interested in feedback on why the remaining 156 chose not to participate. You can send that feedback directly to the SPC – spc@magpt.com. Your responses will not be shared with anyone outside this committee.
- The response options are quite varied, and narrowing down the choices may be in order. Some found the questions confusing or unclear, so SPC has some work to do regarding formulating our questions.



On another topic, SPC has sent our formal recommendation regarding website upgrades to the Board. We will ask the Board at the next meeting to vote to move this project forward for implementation in 2026.



ANN SIMS

SATURDAY - DECEMBER 13

Magnolia Point Women's Club: 25th Annual 'Light Up Magnolia'

The Magnolia Point Women's Club is delighted to announce the 25th annual luminary night, known as "Light Up Magnolia", scheduled for Saturday, December 13, 2025. This cherished tradition is often described as the most beautiful night of the year for our neighborhood. During this event, the streets are gently illuminated by glowing white paper lanterns, lovingly purchased and displayed by residents. The evening becomes even more memorable as neighbors stroll through the community, visiting one another at various outdoor street gatherings.

LIGHT UP MAGNOLIA!

Supporting Education and Community

For a quarter of a century, this event has served as a fundraiser for the Magnolia Point Women's Club. All proceeds from the luminary night go directly toward scholarships for young women at Clay High School, making this celebration both a festive and meaningful occasion.

Luminaria Kit Information



Starting November 9th, volunteer block captains from the Women's Club will deliver Luminaria pamphlets to every household in the community. Residents can buy Luminaria kits with cash, check, or online credit card payment using the QR code provided on pamphlets. Residents can also conveniently place and securely pay for their orders via the Magnolia Point Women's Club website [here](#). Each Luminaria kit is priced at \$8 and contains supplies for 10 luminaries: 10 white bags, 10 cups, and 10 candles. It is recommended to place a luminary every three feet, allowing one kit to cover approximately 30 feet of street frontage. Many residents also choose to line their driveways for an even more spectacular display. For those who prefer, donations can

be made instead of purchasing kits. All donations directly benefit the scholarship fund.

Kicking Off the Holiday Season

The event also marks the beginning of the holiday season for Magnolia Point residents. In addition to the enchanting luminaria lighting, starting around 5:00 PM, the Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club will host a golf cart parade. Residents interested in participating are invited to decorate their golf carts and join the parade along a designated neighborhood route. Prior to the parade, a golf cart decorating contest will be held. Additional details about the parade route will be provided by the Country Club as Luminary Night approaches.



Community Appreciation and Involvement

Sincere thanks go out to everyone who takes part in this special event, which not only brings the community together but also supports the education of senior girls at Clay High School. Residents are encouraged to welcome newcomers and invite them to join in the celebration.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the Luminaria event, please contact me at mills27801@comcast.net or by phone or text at 904-891-3807.



- NANCY MILLS
Chair, Luminaria Committee



Designer Bag Bingo

By **Nancy Catudal**, Fundraising Director

Magnolia Point Women's Club hosted its first fundraising event on October 23 – Designer Bag Bingo -combining fun, fashion, and philanthropy to support local charities in Clay County. The event brought together over 120 participants to play bingo for a cause. Winners took home designer bags from Kate Spade, Michael Kors and Coach, and helped ensure charities would be assisted. Participants from all over the region came together to play and hear how the Women's Club is making a positive impact within the County. Having an array of local businesses sponsor the bags defined the night. Sponsors included the Elks Lodge #1892, Beyond Custom Flooring (Travis Wickam), Exit Realty (Rosalind Arnold), Ed and Cindy Poucher, Mike Boucher Roofing, Dream Vacations (Jenny Hartwig), Magnolia Home Services (John Cardinell), Bunco Babes of Magnolia Point, Pan Asian Cuisine Sushi and Grill, Princess Zoe and Wawa, Scott Baltes of Magnolia Point and Winn Dixie, as well as an anonymous donor. Representatives from Challenge Enterprises were also present to collect discarded bingo paper to recycle and shred in conjunction with Shred-It. The evening concluded with an extravagant raffle table in which many participants got the chance to choose their prize. A huge "thank you" goes out to Nancy and the many Women's Club volunteers who helped make this event a success!



Scholarships

With the start of luminaria sales beginning on November 9 for the "Light Up Magnolia Point" event on December 13, Scholarship Director Marsha Fields has delivered applications to Clay High School in preparation for the March 2026 deadline. The profit from the luminaria sales funds the scholarship program, and every spring, the Scholarship Committee reviews the applications and awards scholarships to deserving young women graduating from Clay High School. Magnolia Point residents have been very supportive of the scholarship program through their purchase of kits and donations. The event brochure also highlights a past scholarship recipient; this year, **Kyleigh Edenfield**, a 2022 recipient and now a third-grade teacher at Middleburg Elementary, describes in her own words what receiving a Women's Club scholarship meant to her – be sure to read her story when the volunteer block captains deliver forms to each resident.

Candy Donations - Green Cove Springs Police Department's Trunk and Treat

The Women's Club donates candy each year in support of the Police Department's Trunk and Treat event. Members were extremely generous in their support this year, and on Thursday, October 16, Activities Director **Susan Hanline** and Committee members **Jackie Maneval** and **Bonnie Sprinkle** delivered the

donations to the Police Department, who were very appreciative of our assistance. Thanks again to all who supported this annual event.

Mt. Dora Outing

Twelve members journeyed to Mt. Dora on Tuesday, October 14, for a fun day of shopping at the many boutiques and antique stores the quaint Florida town has to offer. After shopping, the ladies met up for lunch

Continued





at a well-known Cuban restaurant for much needed nourishment and refreshment. Thanks to the Activities Committee for organizing the outing.

November Member Meeting

Veteran **Leon Jacquet** will be the guest speaker at the November 12 Women's Club member meeting. Mr. Jacquet, spouse of member **Barbara Jacquet**, will speak about benefits that are available to veterans. A very timely program as we remember our veterans on Veterans' Day, November 11.



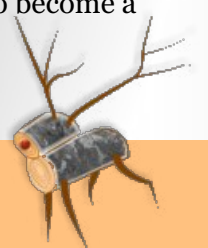
Reinhold Foundation – Annual Alumni Breakfast

Marsha Fields, Scholarship Director, **Donna Habing**, Past President/Advisor, and **Linda Werring**, Treasurer, recently attended the Reinhold Foundation's alumni breakfast held at Thrasher-Horne on Tuesday, October 14. The Paul and Klare Reinhold Foundation was established by its namesakes to support non-profit organizations that seek to improve the quality of life for residents throughout Clay County. Each year, the Foundation hosts a series of leadership classes that members from non-profits attend to improve skills to guide their agencies and also provides an opportunity to network with other not-for-profits in Clay County. The classes are taught by instructors from Rollins College and each attendee is given a monetary amount for attending that is sent back to the organization they are representing. The breakfast is open to attendees of the leadership classes held that year. The Foundation also hosts "Celebrate Clay", an annual awards program that

recognizes, rewards and encourages community service within the County. The Women's Club received awards in 2011 through 2013, 2016 and 2020 for the Maggie's Meals program that provided weekend food for children at Charles E. Bennett Elementary School.

New Members

New members are always welcome. Any woman who is a Magnolia Point resident or property owner, or a member of the Country Club, can become a member. If you know of someone who would like to become a Women's Club member, please have them contact **Diane Lochner**, Membership Director, at diane.scordio@gmail.com.



WELCOME ALL!

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Rain Date: Sunday, November 16

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[Podcast](#)



Photos: Editor



“BUON RINGRAZIAMENTO” (“Happy Thanksgiving”)



*Magliette di Pasta di Maggie P
 (“Maggie P’s Pasta Tees”)*

This year, the kitchens of **Maggie P** are proud to introduce a new line of custom-cut macaroni shapes, her ‘Parsta’ line, and are fêting a Thanksgiving gala for Magnolia Point at their expense. With a generosity that knows no bounds when it comes to her adopted neighborhood, Maggie is also offering the community her popular ‘*Magnoli Cannolis*’ with a scratch-off Florida Lottery ticket in each package, available exclusively in the refrigerator section of the Dollar General in Magnolia Layne Plaza!



Continued

Maggie P's Country Club Collection: '10 Pastas di Gated Glory'

Piccoli Spaghetti del Club delle Donne ("Little Spaghetti of the Women's Club")

Fine, delicate strands that knot themselves perfectly when planning begins for a fundraiser...or arranging group photos at the monthly luncheon. According to legend, Saint Catherine of Siena once used these to lasso three fugitive cardinals during the Avignon Papacy. Served with a complimentary praise-deflector bib.

Rigatoni del Solo Sentiero del Carretto ("Rigatoni of the Cart Path Only")

Legend holds that this pasta was once rolled by monks in Tuscany who took a vow never to drive on the grass. Its broad, tire-like ridges commemorate the sacred rule of "Cart Path Only." Pair with a Chianti and a firm lecture from the marshal about "pace of play" as divine virtue. Each piece can hold one divot's worth of sauce.

Rotini Siepe Potata del Comitato Paesaggistico ("Landscape Committee's Pruned Hedge Rotini")

Tightly wound, meticulously maintained curly pasta, tended by tireless, cheerful volunteers in sensible shoes. Modeled after the spirals in Dante's Purgatory, but with better hydrangeas. Traditional Italian law requires each twist to be exactly 47 degrees or the pasta turns back into hedge clippings.

Penne del Garante delle Regole ("Penne of the Rules Enforcer")

Rigid, upright, and spiritually inflexible, these sturdy tubes were crafted by Sicilian nuns who believed true holiness was measured in straightness and cleanliness, though most popularly served 'Dirty Roof' (*Tetto Sporco*) style in Squid Ink sauce. Proportion, of course, is everything: local legend says Saint Benedict himself once excommunicated a raviolo for being *'troppo gonfio'*... 'too puffy'!

Farfalle del Bridge Club ("Farfalle of the Bridge Club")

Bow-tie pasta shaped in the image of cherubs said to hover over Italian card tables during long Lent evenings. These little angels are delicate, fluttery, and impossible to divide evenly between four players. Ancient Etruscan prophecy states that whoever eats thirteen consecutive bow-ties will bid seven no-trump and be doomed to transform into a folding table for the Royal Court.

Tagliatelle Controllo Accessi ("Access Control Tagliatelle")

These wide, looping ribbons are said to have been inspired by Saint Peter's Golden Gates, or possibly by the malfunctioning resident's arm at the front gate. In Rome, they're traditionally cooked until al dente, then left to cool while the saints check visitor passes. Inspired by the Gordian Knot, except Alexander the Great's sword bent the gate, and the Securitas guard, a history buff, was thrilled to record the Conqueror's ID and they filled out an accident report together. Delicious with a hint of garlic and mild protest.

Orecchiette di Strade e di Bonifica ("Orecchiette of Roads and Drainage")

Little "ears" of pasta designed to resemble potholes; and yes, Maggie P assures you they'll never actually be filled, either. Pope Julius II once threw a bowl of these storied morsels at Michelangelo, screaming "FINISH THE SISTINE CEILING FIRST!" when the artist's take-out order was delivered. Legend insists the original recipe, carved in stone, was paved over in 1611 in favor of a better drainage plan.

Continued



Linguine Bucate in un Colpo ("Hole-in-Oneguine")

Legend among the faithful of Saint Mulligan, this pasta guarantees salvation on the golf course, or at least a plausible recount. Long, slippery, and blessed by the Vatican's first Golf Chaplain, Linguine alla Hole-in-One is rumored to appear only once per lifetime, preferably during a scramble. Saint Francis of Assisi invented these to feed birds, but they kept flying straight into the beaks of circling eagles.

Cavatappi di una Rivista di Architettura ("Cavatappi of an Architectural Review")

Corkscrew pasta so twisted it was originally banned by Florence's Council of Straight Lines in 1624. Each curve represents one appeal form. Ancient custom dictates it be served only after three denials, a blessing from the parish architect, and one heartfelt sigh from the repentant homeowner who must wear a hair shirt, polo-style permitted, during one round of golf.

Lasagna dell'incontro Annuale ("Annual Meeting Lasagna")

Layer upon holy layer of ricotta, minutes, bylaws, and regret. Said to have originated in Bologna when Saint Lorenzo accidentally dropped the parish rulebook into a casserole. Best enjoyed standing up at the community annual meeting with a fork, a glass of Chianti, and the quiet hum of democratic tension. Served with a complimentary *"If You Don't Like It Here You Should Move"* bib.



- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR & MAGGIE P



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November



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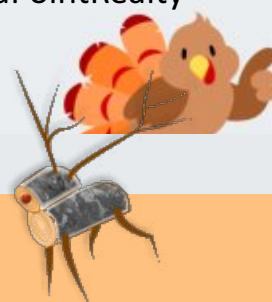
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This month's edition of THE TRAVELING FORK comes to you from Spain, where we recently docked in Vigo (northeast coast), Malaga, Cartagena, and Barcelona on the Mediterranean coast. While on the Viking Saturn, I participated in a one day cooking school with the Head Chef, the Kitchen Chef, and the dessert Chef. Afterward, I persuaded the boss Chef to give me a tour of the kitchen. This is a kitchen aboard ship that prepares food for 1,000 shipboard cruisers like us, most of whom come from the USA and Canada with a sprinkling of Asians and others. Food of such quality is an amazing accomplishment given the required volume for so many.

Without trying to sound like a commercial for Viking, I will say that their food product was truly outstanding! As proof of that, I gained 10 lbs. in 10 days. Surprisingly, the Chef told me to use plain olive

oil for serious cooking instead of extra virgin olive oil because in a Paella like the one featured here, longer cooking with the extra virgin oil would add a small bitter element to the product. Never one to argue with someone of his culinary expertise, I have adopted PLAIN olive oil for the Paella pan. We purchased ours in a 22 inch diameter. Speaking of the ship's Paella Pan, it was 42 inches in diameter and was set up on a large outdoor gas stovetop. It covered the entire stovetop. This large production of Paella was soon gone, understandably so, given its quality.



'Paese'

In future editions of The Traveling Fork, additional superb gastronomic creations from the onboard will be celebrated here.

Continued



CLASSIC PAELLA - SERVES 6-8

Base:

3 tbsp olive oil (non-virgin)
1 medium onion, finely chopped
3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 tomato, finely chopped

Protein:

8-10 large shrimp or prawns
8-10 mussels or clams
1 lb. chicken thighs, cut into chunks
½ lb. chorizo, sliced ¼ inch thick

Alternatively, if you want a pure seafood paella:

8-10 large shrimp, 8-10 mussels and/or clams
½ lb. squid rings or cut calamari
Small chunks of white fish (halibut, corvina, cod, etc.)

Rice and Stock:

2 cups bomba or calasparra rice (short grain Spanish rice)
4 cups hot chicken or seafood stock
1 pinch of saffron threads (soaked in a little water or toasted in a dry pan)
1 tsp salt and 1 tsp paprika

Vegetables:

½ cup green beans cut into ½ inch slices OR ½ cup frozen English peas
Optional: artichoke hearts or roasted red pepper strips for garnish, along with
Lemon or lime wedges and fresh parsley chopped



Preparation:

Prepare the Sofrito (the base) by heating the olive oil in a wide paella pan over medium heat. Add the chicken and chorizo and sear until golden; then remove and set

saffron and salt to taste. Return the chicken and chorizo to the pan; stir once to distribute the rice evenly; don't stir again. This helps to form the crispy bottom crust.

Cook the paella by bringing it to a boil and lower the heat to reach a gentle simmer. Cook uncovered for 15-18 minutes, rotating the pan for even cooking. After 10 minutes arrange the shrimp, mussels & clams on top. If the liquid evaporates too quickly, add more stock.

Create the *Socarrat* (the 'crisp bottom'). When the liquid is mostly absorbed and you hear gentle cracking, increase heat for the final 1-2 minutes in order to develop the crispy bottom layer, *but don't burn it!*

Remove from heat, cover loosely with foil or a towel and rest for 5 minutes. Garnish with parsley and lemon/lime wedges.

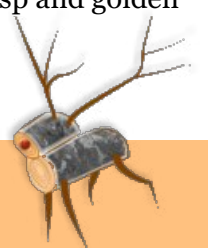
Tips for Perfection:

Pan width matters! The rice should be no deeper than ¾ to 1 inch. Don't stir after adding the broth; use good saffron, not artificial coloring. Stock quality is key, but our chef said that good bone broths from the grocery store are good, although he makes his own from fish trimmings in the kitchen. Test the *Socarrat* by tilting the pan: if the rice on the bottom is crisp and golden but not burnt, *it's perfect!*



aside. Add the onion and bell pepper, sauteeing them for 5-7 minutes until they are soft. Stir in the garlic, paprika, and tomato, cooking until the mixture thickens and darkens slightly, about 5 minutes.

Toast the rice by adding it to the Sofrito, stirring it to coat it for about 2 minutes. This toasts the grains and they absorb flavor in this way. Add the stock and the



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"I don't mind the sand trap. It's the 'call ahead' part."

dp



I, NUTRIA



dp

QUADRUPLICATE BRIDGE



OMG OUR MENS GROUP

A DAY AT CASA LINDA OAKS • NAS JAX

(Reader: while the events of this day are real, and accurately portrayed, the names of my playing companion veterans have been changed. Some victories are best enjoyed in person!)

I'll never forget that Tuesday morning, the kind of Florida fall day where the air is just starting to cool down, the humidity finally bearable. I pulled into Casa Linda Oaks at Naval Station Jacksonville right as the sun was climbing over the palmettos, and there they were: my 'OMG' contingent, Martinez, Hutchins, and old Tom Holtz, already waiting by in the pro shop with coffee in hand. And one for me.

We were one of three foursomes representing Magnolia Point, in the company of a total of 52 players from the area, both active and retired military. The course sits there on the base like a little piece of our old lives; you can still hear the occasional aircraft nearby, fixed and rotor wing, and there's just something about walking these fairways with guys who've served that never gets old, in step with that background music. And those views of the St Johns, which *never* get old.



Martinez claimed the first tee, of course. The man always does. I watched him settle into his stance with that familiar concentration I could remember from our CO in a hundred morning briefings. "Five bucks says I birdie this hole," he announced, and Tom just laughed, that same easy laugh from our days downrange. "Your handicap just went up two strokes, buddy."

The front nine played out like it always does, a good mix of ribbing and genuine shots. Hutchins, God bless him, has gotten better since his shoulder surgery; watching him stripe a 6-iron on the 4th was almost as satisfying as making a good shot myself. We were all competitive, nobody was out here to lose on purpose, but there was something different about it now. The stakes were friendly. No one's career hung in the balance. We were just some old soldiers and a sailor trying to keep score without readers and enjoy each other's company.

By the turn, the banter had shifted into that comfortable rhythm where half the conversation was just eye

Continued



contact and knowing nods. Holtz and I grabbed a cold drink at the clubhouse, and he told me his grandson was thinking about enlisting. I felt that old swell of pride and that new tremor of concern that I never used to feel for the men under my command. Different now, when it's personal.

The back nine gets tighter, and today was no exception. Martinez and Hutchins were locked in a battle for top money, "top money" being the twenty bucks we'd agreed to contest for the day, and Holtz and I found ourselves playing to win instead of just keeping up. Standing on the 14th tee, I was thinking that this was what I'd been missing most about active duty. Not the marching in formation in early mornings or the weight of command. It was this: four men who'd watched each other's backs in ways civilians will never understand, just walking across a beautiful course and being fully, completely present.

I hit what might be the best 7-iron I've struck in months on the 16th, watched it land softly and roll to four feet. For just a second, as I was walking toward the green, Martinez came up beside me and said, "Still got it, sir."

"Not yet," I said, grinning.



We finished up around noon, tallied the scorecard on the clubhouse veranda in the shade of the clubhouse, and Martinez settled his losses without complaint. He bought the first round of beers anyway, that's just how Martinez is. We sat there with

our cold ones, swapping stories about grandsons and new hobbies and how much we missed sleeping past 5 a.m. but wouldn't trade it for anything.

"Same time next week?" Tom asked, already knowing the answer.

"You're damn right," I said.

As I drove off the base that afternoon, I caught myself in the mirror at a red light. I was still smiling. Some chapters close, but the good ones, the ones where you find your people and they find you, those don't really end. They just move to a different part of the course.

- CAPTAIN AMERICA



OMG OUR MENS GROUP

We're a group from Magnolia who play courses in the area, and like to talk about it. We play most Tuesdays and seek courses within an easy drive of home. The competition is friendly, the bettings is interesting, and the tales are tall. Join us, y'all!



Happy Thankgiving



Kimi

PLAYING THROUGH

LESSONS IN THE TAKEAWAY AND BACKSWING...

In the golf swing, the downswing is mostly reactionary to what you did in the backswing. As a result, a faulty takeaway makes it very difficult for your body to adjust in the downswing to make solid contact. Solid contact is the name of the game and the key to shooting better scores, enjoying the game more, and avoiding injury.

There are a few keys that will enable you to set the swing off in the correct manner that will allow your body to react naturally as you start the downswing and move through the shot.

Width vs. Length - Everyone has heard that you want to get the club parallel to the ground at the top of your backswing on full shots. This is true for the most part, but there is a proper way of doing that. You can achieve reaching parallel by simply lifting your arms upward in the backswing and wrapping the club behind your head. This is the 'lift' and 'length' methodology, but too often it results in your shoulders not turning properly. This might look OK at the top (not really), but it serves little purpose as it relates to properly setting the club at the top of the swing and setting you up for a powerful delivery into the shot. A great drill to get the proper feeling is to take your club (say a 6-iron) and grip down on it to the metal and position the top end (grip) so that it touches

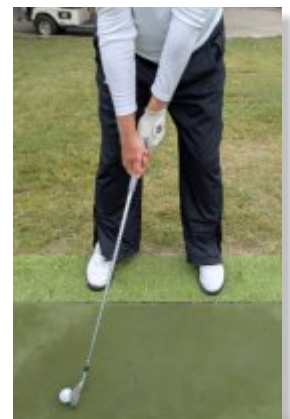


your rib cage. For the first foot of the backswing, as you turn, the grip should NOT break contact with your rib cage (again, this is a drill, you are not hitting the ball). This ensures that you are not lifting your arms, but turning with the club connected and gathering 'width'. Once the clubhead gets to about equal height to your waist, the grip will break away from your rib cage and continue to lift as you finish your shoulder turn. This ensures that you are making a full shoulder turn and the club is going along with that shoulder turn.

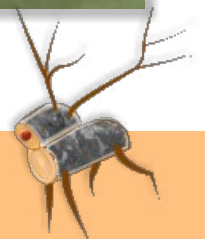
Another way to get this feeling is to put a golf ball behind your clubface at address (again, not hitting a shot), and roll it back just past your lead toe on your back foot. If you lift, the club will lift up over the ball. *No-no!*

Another way to get this feeling is to put a golf ball behind your clubface at address (again, not hitting a shot), and roll it back just past your lead toe on your back foot. If you lift, the club will lift up over the ball. *No-no!*

Spine Angle – I've harped on this in other articles but is worth mentioning again when it comes to turning properly in the backswing. When you set up to the ball, your spine should be at an angle (roughly 25 degrees) perpendicular to the ground. This is



Continued



PLAYING THROUGH

where you are bending over from your hips and creating space for your arms to fall directly down from your shoulders and the club shaft as it a bit of an angle (wrist angle) as it extends down to the ball. When you turn back, that spine angle should be maintained such that it is not getting more vertical (standing up) or more horizontal to the ground (hunching over). So, with the width you create in step 1 above, along with maintaining



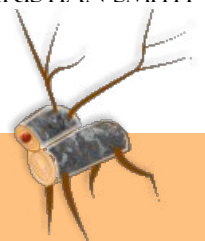
that spine angle as you turn back, the club should be on a plane that will allow the club to return to the ball properly. If you stand up in the backswing (spine angle gets more vertical), in the downswing, your body will have to crouch down to get back down to the ball. Conversely, if you hunch over in the backswing, you will have to stand up in the downswing. Both alter the club's path in the downswing and there is very little you can do about that when the club is in full motion. As the swing gets into full speed, the club gets extremely heavy and there is very little you can do to alter what you created in the backswing/takeaway.

A great drill for this is to put your butt up against the edge of your couch. Fold your arms across your chest and turn so that in the backswing your butt doesn't come off the sofa (your lead glute may come off, but your trail glute should stay in touch). As you turn the other way, you should find that your derriere will also stay on the edge of the couch with your trail glute coming off, but your lead glute will stay on the edge until you come into your follow through position.

Balance – the last piece to this is how your body is balanced in the takeaway and backswing. You want your weight to be evenly distributed in the middle of your feet throughout the swing. The death knell in the swing is moving toes to heels and vice versa. If you are too far forward towards your toes in the backswing, then you will have to fall back to your heels in the downswing, causing you to lift up. Conversely, if you are too far towards your heels in the backswing, you will have to compensate with the weight moving to your toes in the downswing and you end up getting stuck because you cannot rotate through the swing. Maintain balance between the arches of your feet, and your upper body will stay in a centered position as you change directions. The golf swing works from the ground up. Your upper body reacts to what your feet, legs, and hips do. If you stay centered with the lower body, your upper body won't wobble and neither will the path of the club. This is also important as it relates to the stress it puts on your body. A lot of people I have encountered with back and knee problems from playing golf are typically swinging out of balance and putting stress on parts of their body where there shouldn't be any.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone! Enjoy the cooler weather and let's avoid the goblins of the backswing!

- CHRISTIAN SMITH



HIP

Curly's annual Thanksgiving aboard the *Gravy Boat* was, as always, a mixture of warmth, gratitude, and structural uncertainty. The liveboards of the Red Bay Marina in Green Cove Springs looked forward to it the way others might anticipate a NASCAR pileup, equal parts dread and delight.

Curly, self-proclaimed "Marine Carpenter of Fortune," had spent the week refitting his galley table, which now doubled as a transom cover. "It's modular," he said proudly, thumping it with a palm. "Just don't cut the turkey too close to the hinge."

By late afternoon, the dock had turned festive. Captain Lila, retired tugboat pilot and reigning queen of marina gossip, arrived balancing a casserole of 'mystery stuffing'. "Don't ask," she warned, "but it does involve oysters and a misunderstanding at Publix."



First Mate Rico from Slip B9 brought a deep-fried turkey, still hissing from the fryer perched precariously in his skiff tied up aft. "Oil's reusable," he announced, before tripping on the transom ladder and baptizing the stern in a peanut sauce he made for the occasion, to no one's chagrin.

The marina cat, Old Rudder, slinked aboard with proprietary authority and claimed the best seat, a warm coil of rope near the galley. Curly, in his element, wore his favorite cap and a shirt that read, *'If It Floats, I Can Fix It'*. He ladled thick gravy from a saucepan so enormous it required its own berth. "Boat's named *Gravy Boat* for a reason," he reminded all.

Dinner began when the sun dipped below the pines and the river turned to gold. Plates clattered, laughter echoed off hulls, and the unmistakable scent of diesel with cranberry notes. Salty Tom, the marina philosopher, raised a plastic cup of boxed wine, "to staying afloat, spiritually and otherwise."

But nothing at Curly's gatherings stayed level for long. Mid-meal, *Gravy Boat* listed five degrees to starboard when Rico's chair leg punched through a soft patch of decking. "Adds character!" Curly bellowed, wedging a spare chart weight under the leg.

Dessert was an improvised pumpkin pie baked in a skillet, shared by flashlight after the inverter gave up the ghost. Lila tried to start a singalong, but her sloshy version of "*Anchors Aweigh*" slid into "*Sweet Caroline*" which all knew but none could start, or finish, in the same key.

As the tide rose, Curly stood astern with his coffee mug, actually a small paint can, watching the reflections of mast lights tremble on the dark water. "You know," he said, "boats and people aren't so different. Takes a lot of patching to keep 'em shipshape." The others nodded, half from sentiment and half from turkey-induced inertia.

By midnight, the guests had wandered back to their own boats, leaving Curly alone with the lapping water and the clink of dishes. He smiled, tightened the line on his bow, "Same time next year, if she's afloat, and if I am."

Gravy Boat creaked softly in reply, as if in agreement.

- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR





LADIES 9 LEAGUE

- DIANNE DEARTH

October 2 - A nice windy day on the course! The game played was Stableford on the Front 9.

1st Place - **Cheryle Newman, Janine O'Connor, Laurie Bracken** and (blind) **Bede Johnson** with 55 Stableford points.

2nd Place - **Anita O'Donnell, Rita Altman, Karen Lioce** and **Bede Johnson** with 54 Stableford points.



October 16 - An absolutely beautiful day on the course! It was Las Vegas Shamble on the front 9; a very close game!

1st Place - **Sandy Waldrup, Janine O'Connor, Barbara Shinn,** and **Sharon Sprott** with a Net 26 and 3 Eagles!!

2nd Place - with a Net 27: **Cheryle Newman, Anita O'Donnell** and **Donna Hirsch**. This team also had 2 Eagles!

October 23 - One fantastic weather day to play Hindsight on the Back 9! Eight players, two foursomes made for a fun day. Congratulations, all!

Flight 1

1st Place - Sandy Waldrup, net 20

2nd Place - Laurie Bracken, net 25

Flight 2

1st Place - Sharon Sprott, net 23

2nd Place - Laurie Bracken, net 25

3rd Place - Dianne Dearth, net 25



October 30 - Super fun but chilly day on the course to celebrate Halloween by playing Ghosts, Goblins & Skeletons on the Front 9. Congratulations to our winners! Thanks to all who participated and dressed their best!

Flight 1

1st Place - Laurie Bracken, net 25

2nd Place - Cheryle Newman, net 26

Flight 2

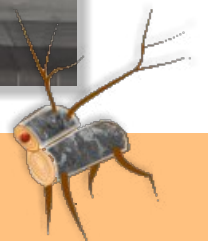
1st Place - Bede Johnson, net 26

2nd Place - Dianne Dearth, net 28

Continued



LADIES O LEAGUE





dp



Taking Charge



Bucket List - Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta: ✓CHECK!

We've been looking forward to camping at the ABQ Balloon Fiesta since we started to plan this RV adventure in 2021, and it only took 18 months of active planning to make it happen. (More on the particulars later.) With all that planning, we expected that something might not have lived up to the hype. But we were wrong. It is that spectacular.



After trying to make a reservation in the summer of 2024 for that October (and failing miserably), Jenn was on the computer when reservations opened in January 2025 and waited four hours to be helped. Of course, by then, it was sold out, but we added our name to the waitlist for the President's Compound. After three months, we got the email a spot had opened up! This camping area is on a bluff overlooking the field of 500+ balloons. Everyone sets up their chair along the fence (which you can leave and no one takes them!) overlooking the field. Board members (many who were also on balloon teams) are in the first row, and boy, what hospitality!

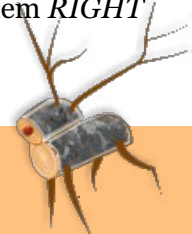
As we were by the fence trying to figure out what this chair etiquette was, a member approached us, told us the customs, offered us his chairs for the week (he had three and we were three), and then gave us his 2025 pin!

The fiesta begins the first weekend and runs for a little over a week through the second weekend. In the early morning hours, two balloons are sent up to check the winds and determine if the balloons

will fly that day. A green flag means everything is a go, a yellow flag means weather will be monitored and a red flag means flying is cancelled for the day.

On the field, there are hundreds of vendors selling food, souvenirs, and local arts and crafts. Every night there is a different drone show and fireworks—both incredible. During the day there are different balloon flights. Some are competitions. Some are mass ascensions. All awe inspiring. And sometimes the winds take them *RIGHT*

Continued





OVER YOUR HEAD! (If only I had a nickel for every time I said, “Oh my God!” and pointed to the sky.)

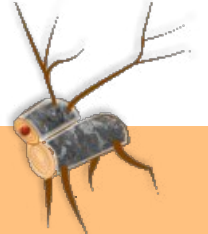
After all that splendor and excitement, it was time to move on. From Albuquerque, we headed west to Camp Verde, AZ and are camped at the Distant Drums RV Park that is on a Yavapai-Apache Nation reservation. The campground is one of the nicest we’ve stayed at and is within easy distance of Sedona, Phoenix, and Flagstaff. Next week, we’ll move just down the road with a view of the Red Rocks around Sedona.

Now for some planning tips if you’d like to camp at the Fiesta...

Camping reservations open in the middle of January for the fiesta that October. There is only one full hook up area, the President’s Compound. Technically there is no sewer, but you get a free service that will come and dump your tanks for you. No mess. You get one dump for every three days you camp. As our rig doesn’t boondock well, this camping was our only option. Everything we have is powered, and our solar is just factory. So, we need to be connected to electricity to function for more than a day or two. If you can boondock, there are a few other, very large camping areas at ground level (not up on the bluff), so for a great view you have to get up on your roof or walk over to the field. We highly recommend the bluff view!



- STORY, PHOTOS: JENN & SUSAN MITCHELL



MIX *majie* MAGGIE'S PUNCH



Ingredients:

- 1 bottle (750ml) bourbon (a smooth, mid-range Kentucky bourbon)
- 2 cups fresh apple cider
- 1 cup cranberry juice (not cocktail, pure cranberry)
- ¾ cup fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 4 cups ginger beer (added just before serving)
- 2 cups club soda

Optional Garnishes:

Fresh cranberries
Apple slices
Orange wheels
Fresh rosemary sprigs
Cinnamon sticks

Recipe:

In a large punch bowl, combine bourbon, apple cider, cranberry juice, lemon juice, and maple syrup. Stir well and refrigerate for at least 2 hours to meld flavors.

Pour in ginger beer and club soda, stirring gently to maintain effervescence.

Garnish generously with fresh cranberries, apple slices, orange wheels, and rosemary sprigs.

Serve in cut crystal punch cups or coupe glasses with a cinnamon stick stirrer. **Serves 12-15**
(approximately 4-5 ounces per serving)

Flavor Profile:

This punch strikes the elegant balance expected at a proper Thanksgiving gathering: bourbon provides a

warm, oakey foundation with notes of caramel and vanilla, while apple cider and maple syrup echo the season's harvest. The cranberry juice adds a tart sophistication that prevents cloying sweetness, and bright lemon juice keeps everything refreshingly balanced.

Ginger beer contributes subtle spice and effervescence, making this punch lively rather than heavy. The overall effect is autumnal and complex:

slightly sweet, gently spiced, with enough structure to complement your pecan pie without competing with it. It's spirited enough to be memorable, but measured enough that guests can enjoy a glass or two while still managing meaningful conversation about the the upcoming cotillion season!



- RECIPE, PHOTOS: EDITOR



MAGNOLIA POINT BRIDGE

New Players Welcome!

All games are friendly, and we welcome new players. Sign up with a partner or as a single. For social one prize is paid out for each table, i.e., if there are four tables, the top four scores win money. Duplicate pays first three winners NS and EW with Mitchell movement.

Duplicate and Social Bridge play on alternate Thursdays in the clubhouse dining room from 1:30 to 5:30PM. The fees are \$2.00 for Social and \$3.00 for Duplicate to cover the cost of prize money and supplies.

CONTACT

Social: Marty Essex mamers3@bellsouth.net

Duplicate: Jon Bastress JonBastress@gmail.com

Duplicate Bridge, Thu Oct 02

East/West Winners

1. Jon Bastress & Joe Thill
2. Evie & Joe Ezzell
3. Jim Cardozo & Ed Hayes

North/South Winners

1. Marty Essex & Cindy Jennings
2. Kim Belcher & Ann Link
3. Connie & Michael Byers

Social Bridge, Thu Oct 09

1. Connie & Michael Byers
2. Alice Lodge & Kaaren Tague
3. Jon Bastress & Joe Thill
4. Marsha Parker & Sharon Sprott

Duplicate Bridge, Thu Oct 16

East/West Winners

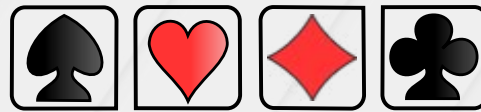
1. Connie & Michael Byers
2. Jon Bastress & Joe Thill
3. Marty Essex & Cindy Jennings

North/South Winners

1. Phyllis Boyed & Alice Lodge
2. Anne Porcello & Sandy Waldrup
3. Jola Greiner & Roy Gullick

Social Bridge, Thu Oct 23

1. Jola Greiner & Sharon Sprott
2. Evie & Joe Ezell
3. Connie & Michael Byers
4. Marty Essex & Cindy Jennings
5. Jim Cordoza & Ed Hayes



- SHARON MURPHY

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THE MAGNOLIA NEWS

It's Easy-Peasy!

