

The Oak Tree

President's Message

If you had not already heard, since we had two candidates for the two open seats, a 2024 Board election was not necessary. Therefore, the Board officially welcomes the return of Vic Natiello and the addition of our new Board member, Al Petrie. On behalf of the Board, I also want to thank our departing Board member, Mike Frichol, for his six years of service and offer him our best wishes in his future endeavors.

*L-R standing: Denise Gallo, Rob Carlton, Al Petrie
seated: Ed O'Brien, Vic Natiello*



As we enter the New Year and experience a significant increase in local residential construction, the Board reaffirms its commitment to ensure that Grand Haven maintains its status as one of the premier communities in Flagler County. Our overall lifestyle, broad range of activities, natural beauty, resident support system and attractive home sites comprise the defining features which sets us apart from other communities. As a result, Grand Haven is a highly desirable location in which to invest in a home. This is highlighted by the fact that there are a minimal number of resale properties available and selling prices are at an all-time high.

A major objective of the Board is, and has been for a number of years, to ensure that our community is fiscally sound, our properties are well maintained, the investment in our homes is consistent with or exceeds the local market value and the lifestyles of our residents are both enjoyable and personally rewarding.

The Board of your Master Association takes pride in that heritage and pledges to do all in its power to ensure that your vision for our community is not only fulfilled but is also enhanced in the years to come. As the Board begins its new term, we are committed to continuing to work toward that difficult balance of both meeting the needs of our entire community while also addressing the more specific needs of our individual property owners.

We view our relationship with the members of the Association as a partnership and truly appreciate the fact that with very few exceptions, our residents are committed to maintaining their properties in accordance with our governing documents. When I hear about issues and problems facing HOA's similar to Grand Haven, I become increasingly convinced that as a community, "we are truly getting it right."

On behalf of the Board, I would like take this opportunity to express our appreciation for your continued involvement and support and extend our best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2024 to you and your families.

Submitted by: Rob Carlton, GHMA President

GHMA Meeting Schedule

The Board of Directors of the Grand Haven Master Association (GHMA) meets on the next to the last Friday of every month (unless otherwise noted.) All property owners are welcome to attend.

WHEN: 2 PM, Friday, February 16
2 PM, Friday, March 22
2 PM, Friday, April 19
2 PM, Friday, May 24

WHERE: Creekside Amenities Center
2 North Village Parkway

GHMA Board Members

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The Oak Tree

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	Gail Moro	Janet Young
	Vic Natiello	

The Oak Tree is always looking for articles with ideas and topics for future issues, especially those that would be of interest to Grand Haven residents—Grand Haven activities, clubs, happenings, sporting events, resident volunteer activities and opportunities.

Please contact Nancy Carlton at ncarlton096@gmail.com with your suggestions



An Ibis at Long Nature Preserve on a recent sunny morning

Photo credit: Marie Lanier

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The Eagles' Nest

The Nesting season started off as usual with sticks and moss being delivered, as Gabrielle (Gabby) and V3 began their nest "renovation" for the new season. V3 was not present at the nest as much as usual, so he was very likely off-site protecting the nest territory. As usual there were a few rogue eagles visiting. One particular male was vying for Gabby's attention. She did not appear to be attracted to him, but showed no aggression nor did she escort him away.

The one important thing missing between Gabby & V3 was mating. Then in mid-December mating was finally observed. Nine days later Gabby laid her first egg. It was appropriate at this milestone to officially name V3. The well-deserved name "Beau" was chosen, as the name mirrors him in many ways.

Typically, both adults share the incubation duties, but the female does most of it especially through the night, as the female's larger body gives better egg coverage.

However, early on Gabby did ALL the incubating. Consequently, the egg was unattended frequently. Three days after the egg was laid, when Beau arrived at the nest, he saw the egg in bewilderment and buried it! When Gabby arrived, she did not appear to dig for it. This seemed like odd behavior, but wildlife provides much uncertainty to us humans. Then the next day Gabby laid another egg. Again, Beau never showed interest in incubating, nor did he. However, on the 11th day he finally incubated and progressed after that. He was learning his part, and it seemed that everything was falling into place. Beau's behavior confirms he has never bred before.



The buried egg is considered non-viable. It will be interesting to see if the second egg hatches, as it was left unattended at length a bit in the earlier days. If so, the estimated hatch date is January 27 (prior to this mailing). If the egg does not hatch, it is possible for Gabby and Beau to re-clutch and start the mating process, etc. all over again. Time will tell!

*Submitted by: Gretchen Butler
Audubon EagleWatch Nest Monitor Volunteer
American Eagle Foundation Volunteer
Bengals2@earthlink.net*



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Bocce League News

Grand Haven Bocce League Wraps Up Inaugural Season with Wild Success

The Grand Haven Bocce League recently concluded its inaugural season and, by all accounts, it was a resounding success filled with camaraderie, competition, and unexpected triumphs. The league started with 64 enthusiastic members forming eight distinct teams, most of whom were new to the game of bocce.

One of the many highlights of the season was the crowning of the 2023 Champions: The Wild Ball Knockers at the 1st Annual Bocce Banquet. The Wild Ball Knockers team led by Captain Gayle Hey and her team of Mark Hey, Wayne & Rochelle Harrison, Jerry & Dana Hunt, Michelle & Bob Benkendorf, and Fran Bennett, defied all expectations. Despite starting the season playoffs as the 6th seeded team out of 8, they emerged victorious, claiming the championship title undefeated. The banquet was held in the Grand Haven Room where John Lukansky and his team along with Tiffiani and Chef Steven helped contribute to a delicious and memorable night.

As the league gears up for its 2024 season, the participant count has soared to 125 members forming 12 teams, showcasing the rising popularity of bocce in Grand Haven. The schedule for the upcoming season is already in the works, with plans to kick off the first week of March and run through the end of May. League games will be scheduled on Wednesdays and Thursdays each week, featuring four games per day starting at 3 PM, 4 PM, 5 PM, and 6 PM. This flexible scheduling allows each team to play only one day per week, accommodating the diverse schedules of the participants.

The overwhelming response from the participants contributed to the success of the league's first season. Friendships blossomed among Grand Haven residents as they engaged in the enjoyable, friendly competitive and strategic game of bocce. Such positive feedback and enthusiasm appear to have spread beyond into the community, as the league has experienced significant growth heading into its second season.

To welcome the influx of new members for the 2024 season, the Grand Haven Bocce League has planned two introductory sessions in February. "Bocce Mike" Debitetto, the GH Bocce Commissioner, encourages all new players to attend these sessions to familiarize themselves with the rules and flow of the game. Official Bocce rules for the 2024 season are available at the Amenities office.

As the second season approaches, starting the first week of March, we look forward to welcoming the new members of the Grand Haven Bocce Family. With the community's enthusiasm and the success of the inaugural season as a solid foundation, the Grand Haven Bocce League is poised for another season of fun, friendship, and fantastic bocce action. Thank you "ALL" for your cooperation & goodwill towards myself and each other during this season.

Wild Ball Knockers Winning Team: Kneeling L-R: Mark Hey, Michelle Benkendorf, Gayle Hey, Front row; L-R Rochelle & Wayne Harrison, Back Row; L to R Dana & Jerry Hunt, & Fran Bennett



*Submitted by: Mike Debitetto
GH Bocce Commissioner*

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No Rest for the Wicket

The **Grand Haven Croquet Club** wants to wish everyone a Happy New Year and share with the community, in pictures, some of the fun and events we had in 2023. We also want to give a shout out to the club's 3 Golf Croquet Instructors, Dave Paukovich, Nancy Crouch & Dorothy Silliman, and our newest 6 wicket instructor, Marsha Cargill. **Congratulations!**

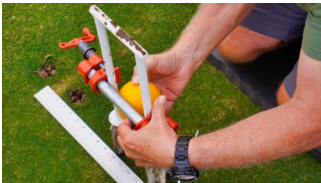
To see more pictures and learn about the **Grand Haven Croquet Club**, you can go to our website and Photo Gallery: <https://www.ghcroquetclub.com/photo-gallery.html>. Enjoy!

Those interested in **free** lessons to learn croquet contact us at www.ghcroquetclub.com or our Membership Director, Marsha Cargill at owdmac@gmail.com.

Come join us and try something new, make new friends, and just have fun.

See you on the courts!

Submitted by: Patti Paukovich



Club's volunteer ground crew setting the wickets & getting courts ready for play



Mallet Madness participants, guest & volunteers from the GH Woman's Club



March 2023 GHCC Championship Tournament Golf Croquet Championship participants



National Croquet Day—having fun and kicking up heels

July 4th Celebration



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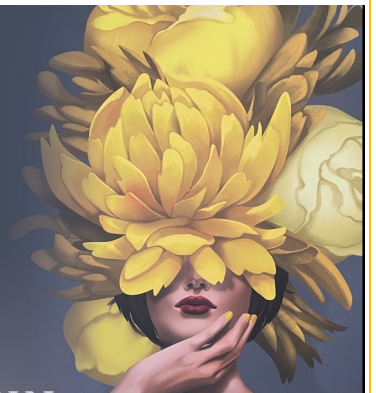
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CDD Corner

Coming Soon.....A new Grand Haven resident information website

- Which is all about everything Grand Haven
- Created by residents (on the CDD Fact Finding Communication Group) who want information quickly without exploring multiple websites
- Formulated so you only need to look on one website to get your questions answered
- Easily distinguishes the different responsibilities of the CDD and GHMA
- User friendly
- Lots of FAQ's -with answers
- Don't always know who you should contact regarding a house issue or a problem within GH? This website is for you!
- This website will be released on or before March 15th
- An eblast from the CDD will be sent out with the website information. Not enrolled for eblasts? - Contact the CDD office: 386-447-1888 or office@ghcdd.com. Also, information will be posted at the Village Center and Creekside.
- If you have difficulty finding the website after March 15th, please feel free to email me: drmer-rill@ghcdd.com

Submitted by: Dr. Merrill Stass-Isern

Tennis Anyone?

Many Grand Haven residents celebrated Sunday, January 14 in what may become an annual tennis party at the Grand Haven Village Center. The tennis players in attendance owe many thanks to Grand Haven resident, Donna Wormser who organized the event. It featured a DJ, a photo booth and dancers led by Magdalena Pierkarz from local business 2LeftFeetCure.com..Yes U Can Dance.

Submitted by: Didi Pakel





For those of you who are new to the Grand Haven community, or those not familiar with the Haven Family Fund, let us explain what we do for Grand Haven residents.

- Medical transportation to and from medical appointments, call 386-597-7585.
- In Home Assistance – If you are a caregiver, we will come to your home while you do needed errands so your loved one is not alone call 386-237-4202.

We are currently considering 2 new groups, based on volunteer participation:

- Computer Help (Assistance) not tech geeks, but so many have simple issues that they need guidance with (Passwords, copying, scanning, etc)
- Home repair estimates. Those living alone are skeptical allowing strangers into their home. You would just have to be present when estimates are scheduled.

Volunteers are the only way we can provide these free services.

Let's get our new projects started. Please send an email to bthomas@vestapropertyservices.com to be added to our new or already established groups.

Please register your email address by calling the Village Center, (386-447-0192) or visiting the Village Center, to be informed of all the activities provided by the Village Center and also the Haven Family Fund. Assisting others makes Grand Haven a very special place to live, please, be part of our journey.

Submitted by: Janet Young



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Florida Panther

In the November, 2023 issue, we shared information about the Bobcat and indicated that this issue would include the information about the Florida Panther.

Panthers are usually yellowish tan in color, with white under the chin and black on the back of the ears.

Florida panthers' method of hunting is to creep up as close to their prey as possible and launch a short spring ambush – at speeds up to 35 mph for a few hundred yards! Deer and wild hogs are their preferred food, but panthers will eat raccoons, rabbits, rodents, opossums, and birds.

Panthers are most active at dusk and dawn, they can travel 15-20 miles a day, often moving in a zig-zag pattern, though they tend to rest during the daytime, travel & hunt during the cooler hours of the night. Panthers can swim and will cross wide bodies of water. They have a keen sense of smell and a field of vision of 130 degrees, they have excellent depth perception but lack the panoramic view that deer have.

They can run up to 35 mph but only for a few hundred yards, their preferred method of hunting is to creep up as close to their prey as possible and launch a short spring attack. Panthers do become used to man-made noises and frequently crossroads. They are attracted to woodland fires and may stay near burned sites for days as deer and other prey are drawn to new vegetation. When humans approach an area, they will either be still, disappear, or attempt to circle behind. Panthers can live up to between 12-15 years in the wild. A male can measure 7-8 feet from the nose to tail tip and weigh 100-160 lbs. Females are about 6 feet in length and weigh between 60-100 lbs. An adult Florida panther needs to eat around 20 pounds of meat per day to survive. That said, female Florida panthers with cubs may need to catch around twice that much.

The Florida panther serves as the official state mammal of Florida. At the same time, the state also recognizes the West Indian [manatee](#) as its official marine mammal and the [bottlenose dolphin](#) as its official saltwater mammal. Other animals to make the list of state animals in Florida include the sailfish, Florida largemouth bass, [American alligator](#), horse conch, northern mockingbird, and zebra butterfly.

What are the Threats?

Humans are one of the panther's greatest threats. Road kills, habitat loss, and development in panther range continue to be threats. Florida panthers are still inching back from the brink of extinction. The construction of new houses, roads, and airports in Southwest Florida continue to squeeze the panthers out and fragment their habitat, increasing the likelihood that cats will be hit by cars.

Bobcats vs. Panthers

Unlike the bobcat, the Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*), a subspecies of puma, is protected under the Endangered Species Act. It is extremely rare to spot a panther in the wild in Florida, as fewer than 200 of them exist across the state with the majority living in south Florida.

Another difference between the bobcat and the panther is that the panther is much larger – up to four times larger than the bobcat. An adult male panther weighs about 130 pounds and an adult female panther weighs about 80 pounds. A panther also has a much longer tail than a bobcat.

One of the quickest ways to identify a wild cat is by looking at the tracks they leave on the ground. An adult panther's front paws leave tracks 3 inches long by 3 inches wide, and its rear paw tracks are slightly smaller. Both adult and young panthers leave larger tracks than bobcats – they are actually more similar to the tracks of coyotes and dogs. Panthers are usually yellowish tan in color, with white under the chin and black on the back of the ears.

Good to know:

Bobcats have an innate fear of humans and will not attack unless cornered, provoked, or habituated in some other way. Otherwise, they are shy creatures who avoid human interactions. A bobcat can become hostile on rare occasions, and rabies-infected bobcats can attack and infect humans.

Panthers want very little to do with us and do not view humans as prey. Avoid a negative encounter with a panther: Do not run. Running could trigger a "chase response" from the panther.

Submitted by: Gail Moro



Small Steps

Plastic has changed our way of life.

It's hard to believe we managed without it prior to the 50's. But for the most part, we did ok! And we never saw multicolored forever-chemical trash washing up on our shores. Our sea creatures didn't swallow toxic particles and strangle themselves with plastic loops. Our newborns didn't carry microplastics in their bloodstreams.

In the US alone, 88 billion bags are used each year. Only 1 out of 100 gets recycled. And each takes an estimated 500-1000 years to decompose. (Lisa McLaughlin, "Paper, Plastic, or Prada?", Time, August 13, 2007, p. 49)

Many of our personal and household products are available in refillable bottles, bars and dissolving paper. There is no need to clutter your laundry, kitchen, bathroom and recycling bin with large plastic bottles.

Studies have shown microplastics significantly damage cells in the human body, leading to serious health effects, including cancers, lung disease, and birth defects. (Earthday.org June 2023)

If we knew more about the actual materials, methods, and ecological impacts of the household products we buy, we might make wiser choices, encouraging a marketplace of products that really do make everyone's life better.

There are databases, like the *Ethical Consumer*, *Shop Ethical*, and the *Good Shopping Guide* that provide in-depth coverage of a wide range of products and businesses. The *Green Stars Project* promotes the idea of including ethical ratings (on a scale of one to five) and supplies data to Amazon and Yelp.

People are swallowing hundreds of thousands of microscopic pieces of plastic each time they drink a liter of bottled water...a revelation that could have profound implications for human health. A new paper released 1/8/24 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found about 240,000 particles in the average liter of bottled water, most of which were "nanoplastics" — particles measuring less than one micrometer (less than one-seventieth the width of a human hair)."

Nanoplastics are much more dangerous than microplastics because they invade the brain, the liver, lungs, blood.

If you worry as I do, about our children's and grandchildren's future, may I suggest a simple act? If you're still using plastic bags, and large plastic bottles, stop.



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Holiday Donation

Many of the Wild Oaks residents contributed to their annual Holiday gift for a local charity and this year they selected the Flagler County Education Foundation's STUFF Bus, which provides essential supplies to students in need. Here Laura Kagan presents the contribution worth over \$9,000 to the FCEF staff.



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Submitted by: Linda Lake



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Pickleball, Anyone?

Have you noticed? Grand Haven Pickleball is growing at a rapid pace. Nationally, it's the fastest growing racquet sport. It's easy enough for small children and for those who have never played a ball sport. The paddle is short and light and the ball is big and slow-and after 30 min or so- presto, you're playing Pickleball!

If you or your family member has an interest in learning, playing or just watching the shenanigans at our delightful Grand Haven facility, feel free to send your email address to Alan Roffman, aaroffman@gmail.com, and we'll keep you in the loop about clinics, events and schedule changes.

Or, check the Amenities Website for Community Pickleball, come on down and introduce yourself. We'll be happy to get you started.

Taking your health more seriously?

One of the studies done comparing the health impact of popular activities showed that Pickleball players saw significant improvements in their cholesterol levels, blood pressure and maximal oxygen uptake, a measure of cardiovascular fitness.

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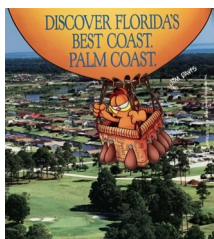
Palm Coast Historical Society

By the time International Telephone and Telegraph announced plans to build a planned community in Flagler County, northerners had been attracted to Florida's temperate climate for more than 150 years. Biographer Gene Burnett credits author and abolitionist Harriett Beecher Stowe's travel writings for turning Florida from "an obscure down-under tip on the map into a beckoning, lush tropical paradise."

Concerns about tuberculosis and malaria no longer hindered travelers by the time ITT's Community Development Corporation began developing and marketing Palm Coast in 1970. In 1985 they hired Garfield cartoonist Jim Davis to promote "The Good Life" with an array of brochures, billboards, and pamphlets.



In "A Field Guide To Stalking A Palm Coaster" the intrepid feline is seen wearing a camouflage hat, peering through binoculars to spy on Palm Coasters swimming, boating, laughing and generally having a good time with their new friends and neighbors. On the cover of another booklet he encourages prospective buyers to "Discover Florida's Best Coast. Palm Coast." The pages that follow picture relaxed retirees enjoying a game of tennis or golf in a community that is "Close To Everything And Away From It All."



While we still experience the insects, snakes, excessive summer heat and winter cold snaps that Stowe warned her readers about, the negative aspects of living in the Sunshine State have not discouraged tens of thousands of new residents from relocating here. Less than 8,000 people lived in Palm Coast when Garfield arrived. Approximately 98,000 live here today with hundreds more arriving each month.

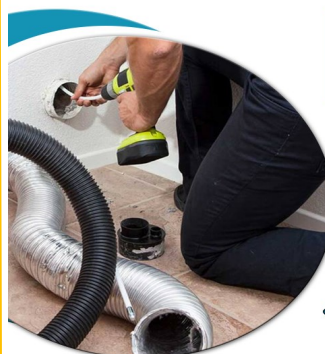
To learn more about the history of Palm Coast and our Speaker events visit our website at www.palmcoasthistory.org, follow us on Facebook, or stop by our museum in Holland Park. We are open Wednesday and Saturday from 1 - 3 pm or by appointment.

Submitted by: Kathy Reichard-Ellavsky
President, Palm Coast Historical Society

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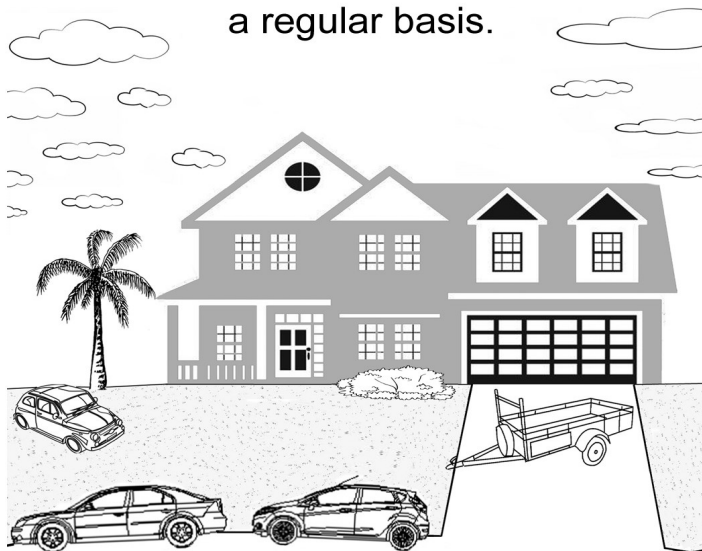
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Advent Health

Athletes' Ally: AdventHealth Athletic Trainer returns to Flagler Palm Coast High School

After a 16-year hiatus, AdventHealth athletic trainer Ron Steinwehr returned to Flagler Palm Coast (FPC) High School in 2021 after the hospital system became the [Official Health Care Champion for Flagler Schools](#).

Originally from New Jersey, Steinwehr earned his master's degree in athletic training from the University of Florida, and from 1996 to 2004, he was a full-time teacher and athletic trainer at FPC High School. After the birth of his third child in 2003, he wanted to spend more time with his family and left his role at FPC to become a Florida Virtual School teacher and work on the weekends as an athletic trainer.



Steinwehr's return to FPC High School has been welcomed by the community, with many feeling as though he never left.

As AdventHealth athletic trainer today, Steinwehr works with approximately 700 student athletes and stays on campus until the last athletic event ends, providing evaluations and treatments.

While many athletic trainers aspire to work in college or professional sports, Steinwehr finds fulfillment right where he is today, appreciating the pure enjoyment of the game among the students.

He also ensures the student athletes have comprehensive clinical support, connecting them with resources like team doctor [Dr. Michael Campbell](#), an orthopedic surgeon, at AdventHealth Palm Coast Parkway. Dr. Campbell is accepting new patients ages 14 and up. For more information, visit [VolusiaFlaglerOrtho.com](#).

AdventHealth's formal partnership with Flagler Schools represents a \$750,000 commitment to bolster student mental health, [provide care for student athletes](#), and establish more career pathways for graduates.

Grand Haven Woman's Club

As 2024 begins, the GHWC launches into the second half of its Club year, and we would like to thank all our residents who have supported the work of GHWC in 2023. As you have probably seen, GHWC collects donations of goods one day a month. For the first half of 2024, the collection dates will be: February 19, March 18, April 15 and May 20 and our volunteers will be in the corner of the Golf course parking lot. Be on the lookout for an eblast that is sent from the Amenity Center with a suggested list of items needed by the charities for whom we collect. Special thanks to Adele Large, Chair of the Health & Wellness Committee, who organizes the collections.

GHWC has also kicked off 2024 with its first fundraising event of the calendar year, the Annual **Day of Games**, which was held at the GH Clubhouse on January 22 and



raised over \$5000. Again, this was supported by not only our members but many residents of Grand Haven. Congratulations to Carol Walker and her committee for conducting another fun event, the proceeds of which will go a long way to help the 22 nonprofit organizations in Flagler County that we support with both financial and volunteer assistance.



Looking forward, GHWC will be hosting several events:
March 2 & 3 – Annual Book Sale in the Grand Haven Room, chaired by Jennifer Ames, JenStag@yahoo.com
March 22 – Learn & Grow with Dr. Jennifer Bugos, University of South Florida, Fulbright Scholar, will present the most current research and findings about **Music and the Mind**. chaired by Awilda Hamilton

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April 6 – Pickleball Fest, chaired by Laura McBride & Jenny Scott, bjscott01@aol.com

April 22 – Tennis Tournament, chaired by Maureen Pellegrini, maureenpellegrini@gmail.com

May 4 – Kentucky Derby, chaired by MJ Ellwood, Mar-yJo0613@gmail.com

GHWC held its Orientation Session for new and prospective members in January and 23 women attended to hear about the programs and events we have in addition to the charities we support. If you would like more information about what the GHWC does, please visit the website at GHwomansclub.org.

Thanks again to all of the Grand Haven residents who continue to support our charities by supporting the work of the GHWC.

Thank you!

Photo credit to Lucie Lachance...thanks, Lucy.

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*Education is not the filling of a
pail, but the lighting of a fire.*

William Butler Yeats

Your 2024 Annual Assessment – As a reminder, your 2024 Annual Assessment of \$165 was due January 1st. If you have not paid it already, please do so ASAP along with the \$25.00 late fee and finance charges that have accrued until paid. The GHMA Annual Assessment funds the compliance activities for the community Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs), facilitating the Architectural Design Committee (ADC) review process, management, accounting services, legal fees, insurance, newsletter/communications and all other operating costs of the Association, including periodic maintenance of foreclosed/deserted properties. If you have any questions regarding your assessment please contact Southern States Management Group at (386) 446-6333.

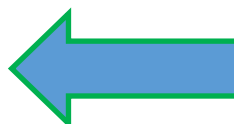
Submitted by: Troy Railsback, SSMG



SSMG, as well as the GHMA Board, would like to thank everyone for their efforts in keeping their property well maintained and getting advanced approval for requested changes to the exterior of your property. This is what keeps Grand Haven so Grand! A few things to remember for this year...

Mold/Mildew tends to accumulate this time of year and throughout the Spring. Not only is it unsightly, it also can be very slippery and result in a slip and fall on your property. Please regularly pressure wash the hard surfaces in front of you home including: Your entry walkway, driveway, sidewalk and the stormwater curb in front of your home (this is the concrete portion adjacent to the asphalt road and the grass in front of your property).

Lake Bank Maintenance – Each owner living on a detention pond needs to continually maintain their lake bank. Each lake bank (where there is not a concrete stem or retention wall) was originally developed and planted with spartina grasses. These are the feathery bushes or clumps of grass about 4 feet tall that were planted to keep the lake bank from eroding. **REMEMBER** – if your spartina has died or is not there, then you will need to replant them. It is each lake bank owner's responsibility to preserve those spartina grasses and keep the lake bank free of weeds, vines and/or wild growth. This maintenance responsibility is best accomplished with regular monthly attention. If you have questions about any of these items, please contact Troy Railsback at 386-446-6333.



Amenity Center's Happenings



Trivia Nights

Wednesday, February 21
Wednesday, March 20
Wednesday, April 17
5:00—7:30 PM

Karaoke Nights

Saturday, March 9
Saturday, April 13
5:00—8:00 PM

Bingo Nights

Tuesday, February 27
Tuesday, March 26
Tuesday, April 23
4:00—6:00 PM

* * * * *

*Be on the lookout for further
information about each of these
activities from the
Amenity Center emails*

LAUGHTER...it could just be the best medicine

With all the information disseminated about heart disease, there still remains a little secret to a healthier heart: Laughter!! Studies have highlighted how laughing decreases both arterial inflammation and stress hormones while it raises that good cholesterol, HDL. How is all this possible? Research from the University of Maryland indicates that laughter increases the blood flow of our endothelium (the inner lining of our blood vessels) thereby replicating the benefits of aerobic exercise. WOW - without a treadmill we can have an immediate and positive effect simply by having a hearty laugh.

Although in its infancy, laughter research has already shown that laughing increases anti-body cells which may lead to a stronger immune system. Coupled with the decrease in stress hormones the effect is relaxing the blood vessels allowing for better blood flow which can carry the immune boosting cells - a double benefit for the entire body. Other studies have shown that people who hold onto anger have a higher rate of heart disease than folks with an easy sense of humor and a more light hearted nature. It may just be that the least expensive medicine and the one with the least unwanted side effects is laughter.

A unique and fascinating study revealed that participants who watched the film "Saving Private Ryan" showed constricted blood vessels while those who saw "Something About Mary" had relaxed and healthier vessel circulation. These findings by Dr. Michael Miller support his recommendation that watching funny videos should be added to the existing list of exercise, eating right and laughing a few times each day as ways to help reduce heart disease. SO, if anyone would like to borrow my disk set of "Dean Martin's Celebrity Roasts" and lighten your day or evening perhaps your heart will be lighter and healthier for doing so.

Submitted by: Harriet Kohen, PhD, RN



GHMA NEWSLETTER

Grand Haven Master Association, Inc.

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