

Community News

Kenneth D. Colen

Safety Check-up

January is an excellent time for a safety check-up. The holidays are over, the family and guests are back wherever they came from, and it is just you and your home (finally!). Ask yourself a simple question: What should I do if ...

Do you enjoy walking or biking in the community in the evening or early morning hours? If yes, do you wear reflective clothing, carry a flashlight for signaling oncoming traffic, or have proper red/white lights on your bicycle? If you enjoy walking in the community in cooler weather, I am the first to admit that I sometimes forget to take precautions. Note to self: practice what I preach!

If you had a kitchen fire, would you have a fire extinguisher handy, and could you use it? If your unit had a water leak, would you know what to do or who to call?

When you get out of the tub or shower, is your bath mat absorbent and non-slip? Do you have a properly installed grab rail in your tub or shower?

Have you overloaded extension cords with too many plug-in items? This is much more common than you think!

Do you have a first aid kit at home? How old is it? Do you maintain an up-to-date emergency contact list? Do you remember where it is? When was the last time you checked it? Do you keep a legible list of your current emergency contacts, your primary physician, and any medications you take in a labeled vial in the refrigerator? You will also want to post a reminder on the refrigerator door that vital information is stored there. This is essential in case emergency responders are needed.

Association Meetings & Board Meetings

The annual Master Association meeting was held on Dec. 3, 2025, in Circle Square Cultural Center. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize residents of all member associations with the Master Association’s purpose and operational areas, and to adopt an annual operating budget. Approximately 130 people were in attendance.

A question was asked regarding the Envera gate systems. Because this system serves multiple communities, the logical choice was to place the contract with Envera within the Circle Square Ranch Master Association. The cost of each gate system serving an individual community is paid for by the community association that receives the benefit. The cost breakdown from Envera is billed based on the number of homes sold and occupied within each community, together with a flat, monthly maintenance charge allocated across all communities served by the entry system.

The annual meeting for Weybourne Landing was held on Dec. 8, 2025, at Circle Square Cultural Center. Approximately 200 residents attended, with some joining via webinar. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a general update on the community and to have the board adopt an operating budget, which they did.

The Indigo East annual meeting was held on Dec. 11, 2025, at Circle Square Cultural Center. Approximately 120 members were in attendance. Some residents also joined the meeting via webinar. The pending Marion County project to four-lane SW 80th Avenue was briefly discussed. The County reports that the project will not begin before early 2026. Given my experience with “Marion County time,” we expect the project start to slip to mid-2026.

Additionally, information was disseminated on On Top of the World roadways that will be under construction in the near future to provide residents with alternative means of travel while SW 80th Avenue is under construction, namely SW 90th Terrace Road extension that will meet up with SW 63rd Street and then cross over from Stone Creek into Calesa Township and up and out at SW 38th Avenue. The proposed operating budget for 2026 and the updates to the schedule of fees were presented to the

Explore 250 Years of American History

By Tim Thompson

Master the Possibilities (MTP) invites lifelong learners to journey through 250 years of American history with a lineup of extraordinary speakers. This term’s special presentations highlight pivotal moments, influential figures, and the ideas that have shaped the United States, from the Revolutionary era to the Cold War, from presidential leadership to cultural milestones.

Even better, each event is just \$8 for members and \$13 for the general public, offering exceptional value for world-class expertise.

Featured speakers:

- Edward Lengel, award-winning historian and former director of the Washington Papers Project, brings decades of experience interpreting military and presidential history. His insights into figures like George Washington and pivotal battles reveal the forces that shaped the nation.
- Fredrik Logevall, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and Harvard professor, provides an unmatched perspective on U.S. foreign relations and the international events that defined America’s global role.
- William and Sue Wills bring 36 U.S. Presidential couples to life, showcasing how leadership, character, and historical context have influenced American history.
- Peter S. Onuf and Frank Cogliano, preeminent Jefferson scholars, illuminate the political and intellectual foundations of the early republic.
- Colin Calloway, Dartmouth professor, explores Native American history and its central role in the nation’s first 250 years.
- Craig Whitlock, investigative re-

porter for The Washington Post, offers deep insight into modern military and political history.

- Julia Ott, historian of capitalism, examines how economic forces shaped American society and policy.
- Greg Clements of NASA Kennedy Space Center and Gary Powers Jr., son of U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers Sr., share first-hand perspectives on aerospace, Cold War history, and national service.

And more, including Steve Kochersperger (US Postal Service historian),

Paul Sparrow, Rick Kistner, and Christopher Daley.

As part of MTP’s Exploring 250 Years of America term, each presentation connects attendees to the people, events, and ideas that defined the nation. From the founding era to contemporary history, these experts bring America’s stories to life.

“Each of our special speaker events is a window into extraordinary lives and fascinating stories that have shaped our nation over the past 250 years,” says Michelle Shideler, Director of Education at Master the Possibilities. “With speakers like Edward Lengel and Fredrik Logevall, our community has a rare opportunity to explore American history through the insights of some of the nation’s most respected historians.”

Seats are limited. Reserve your spot today and experience history in a way that’s engaging, insightful, and affordable > MasterthePossibilities.org.



Health & Wellness Expo - Time to Fit Up

By Dave DeAngelis
World News Writer

So, did you stick to your New Year’s resolutions from last year? Come on, did you ... really? I’m getting visions of Pinocchio here. I didn’t stick to mine because I forgot what they were. But no problemo! We can redirect ourselves in 2026 starting with the Health & Wellness Expo! It’s a new year with new goals to meet!

On Saturday, Jan. 24, visit Circle Square Cultural Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. where you can explore a wide range

of wellness resources available right here in Marion County! Sponsored by On Top of the World and AdventHealth Ocala, the Health & Wellness Expo will feature something like 80 on-site health-care providers, offering information and answering health-related questions. Oh yes, some will be handing out freebies at their display tables as well.

On stage, fitness instructors from On Top of the World and The Ranch Fitness Center & Spa, and On Top of the World

clubs will provide demonstrations, highlighting fitness classes and the dynamic club offerings in our community. And the instructors, who practice what they preach, really make fitness fun at your own pace! Do what you can do. The Health & Wellness Expo focuses on fitness for the body and mind. Refreshments will be available from the Friends of SPCA. If you can’t make it, ask someone who can to grab some brochures (and freebies) for you.

The Health & Wellness Expo is free and open to the public! See you there on Saturday, Jan. 24, at Circle Square Cultural Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The freebies sold me.

For more information, please contact the Recreation Center office at 352-854-8707 ext. 7533 or visit facebook.com/circlesquareculturalcenter/events

Health & Wellness

EXPO

Saturday, January 24, 2026
10 AM - 2 PM

SPONSORED BY:

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FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Veterans Day Ceremonies

By Phil Panzera
World News Writer

Since the end of World War I, Veterans Day (formerly Armistice Day) has been an important time to pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by veterans and their families to protect our nation’s freedoms. Each year, our Veterans Club, masterfully led by Charlie Calhoun and First Mate Fran, hosts two ceremonies in remembrance.

This Veterans Day, a morning ceremony was held at the Veterans Park. Flags were displayed at half-staff, there were brief remarks, and members of the Marion County Memorial Honor Guard fired several rifle volleys.

The main ceremony was held at the Recreation Center. The keynote speaker was Staff Sergeant Joe Marquis, a U.S. Army tank commander and infantry scout in Vietnam in the late 1960s. Joe is a double Purple Heart winner with a bizarre story: he was shot, medevaced by helicopter, and then persevered through more injuries when the helicopter was shot down.

Joe spoke eloquently about the need to not just remember the hardship and sacrifices of our veterans while they served, but also to be aware of the ongoing challenges veterans and their families still face today, and the ongoing need for support for their physical, financial, and mental well-being.

He also complimented the veteran community for continuing their ethos of

service by remaining active in veteran affairs and continuing to provide charitable support.

Charlie Calhoun provided a special recognition to Kenneth D. Colen for his continued support of several Marion County veteran organizations.

A unique feature of this year’s ceremony was a push-up contest, with some contestants proving that age is just a number. The top three finishers were Marvin Jendro, Jim Crane, and Larry Reyes, respectively.

The ceremony included performances by the Poms Dance and Cheer Squad, the Dancing Jewels, and the Ovation Dancers. Thanks also to Carlos Erausquin for the opening prayer, Amber Marsh for singing the National Anthem, and the West Port High School Junior ROTC Honor Guard for posting and retiring the colors.

As Joe reminded us, it is necessary to keep alive the memories of our veterans’ sacrifices, courage, and dedication. You will see many charity events supporting veterans throughout the year (like the Cranksgiving article published in this issue).

Even if you haven’t served, please consider supporting our veterans with whatever you can spare, “paying it back” for the life you now enjoy. As the saying goes, “Freedom isn’t free,” and may we never forget those who paid the price.



Photo by Phil Panzera

Veterans Day ceremony at the Veterans Park.

PRESENTED BY: SPONSORED BY:

ELVIS & THE LEGENDS OF COUNTRY

Samantha Chambers as Dolly Parton

Michael Collier as Johnny Cash

Alex Mitchell as Garth Brooks

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Community News

► Continued from Page 1A

board and membership, and the operating budget and the schedule of fees were approved by the board with one update clarifying that the Gateway of Services pass fee is for up to two members.

The Candler Hills annual meeting was also held on Dec. 11, 2025, at Circle Square Cultural Center. This meeting was well attended, with approximately 350 members in attendance. Some residents also joined the meeting via webinar. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss community updates. An update on the extension of SW 80th Street and the construction of SW 92nd Avenue was also presented, along with other roadway updates. The proposed 2026 operating budget was presented to the membership. Both the budget for 2026 and the schedule of fees were adopted by the board.

The On Top of the World (Central) Owners Association annual meeting was held on Dec. 17, 2025, at Circle Square Cultural Center. The current board is well into its third transition, with seven members resigning, and new volunteer members being added. My personal takeaway, based on my experience with similar transitions on other boards, is that they still haven’t found their footing in what their role as a board really is. Overseeing the financial affairs of a community is a major part of a board’s function. Micromanaging the daily functions of a management company is not. I will briefly touch on three other impressions from the almost three-hour meeting.

In no particular order, the chairman expressed concerns about not being consulted on AppFolio and two other items. The AppFolio association management app has been deployed since 2021 over multiple communities that Parkway Maintenance & Management LLC (Parkway) manages. The Management Company needs to use a single software platform across all communities to be efficient. AppFolio was implemented in 2021 in On Top of the World (Central). The previous vendor used in On Top of the World (Central), Jenark, was acquired by another company just before that. Shortly after, their support slowed and eventually ceased. After thorough due diligence across several property management software companies, Parkway came to understand that AppFolio is the best-in-class for community management software.

The treasurer brought up the fact that AppFolio had been “hacked.” This is not entirely accurate, as the hack was of a third-party vendor that AppFolio uses. When Parkway received notice of the problem, IT professionals were engaged to conduct a deep dive into any risks to the integrity of individual accounts. It was determined that the threat was external, brought in by a third-party vendor, with no effect on individual accounts. Parkway continues to have confidence in the AppFolio operational integ-

rity and the internal IT team to manage the community’s digital security.

The complete transition to payments for your community services fee (CSF) will take place on Wednesday, April 1. As to the setup of AppFolio on your mobile devices, Parkway will be holding instructional sessions. Please refer to Heather Ray’s column on page 5 for a list of all available sessions. We know that not everyone has gone digital or may have challenges to the successful use of the app. To that end, Parkway has installed kiosks that connect to AppFolio in both the Resident Services and Accounting Department lobbies. Assistance is available to ensure ease of access. If any of these options prove unworkable for you, please discuss your concerns with Resident Services, as a solution can always be found.

The association is carrying a \$1.35 million surplus in its account. The impression left during the meeting was that Parkway somehow controls this surplus; it does not. These are association funds and are in the association bank account. To that point, this surplus arose because the association’s insurance broker, Marsh, provided good-faith estimates of insurance expenses to the manager for fiscal year 2025-2026 for budgetary purposes. When the final policies were bound, the cost was \$1.35 million below the estimate, because Marsh continued to pursue quotes from qualified insurers right up to the time of budget adoption. They did very well in saving the association significant property coverage expense.

Parkway proposed to the then-comprised board that the budget be amended to reduce monthly expenses to residents proportionately. The board adopted the 2025-2026 budget as proposed and retained the surplus to be applied to next fiscal year’s budget. Had the budget been amended, residents would have seen a reduction of approximately \$20 per month off the CSF for the 2025-2026 budget year.

That surplus remains in the association’s bank account, as the board is fully aware, which brings me to the third point, which is that at least one member of the board has made no secret of wanting to terminate Parkway’s contract. They detailed four options: Fire Parkway outright; Do not pass a budget, thereby forcing the Management Company contract to terminate; Litigation; or leave everything as is.

The author’s perspective is that if the board wishes to litigate with Parkway, as they suggested by their comments during the meeting, they will need to fund significant dollars in the 2026-2027 budget for legal fees, thus squandering much of the surplus currently belonging to the association and, by extension, its members.

Terminating Parkway would have profound impacts on your community and the way of life you expect. If Parkway is not contracted to collect CSF, none will be collected, and all maintenance would immediately cease. The board danced around this matter, despite a very pointed question from the last speaker of the day. I write this statement not as a threat, but to highlight the reality that if a business isn’t paid, it won’t deliver

goods or services.

It is my hope that cooler heads prevail and that a 2026-2027 budget can be successfully adopted after consultation between the board and Parkway. The first draft of the budget is scheduled for release to the board in early January.

I truly believe that the vast majority of residents find life in On Top of the World (Central) affordable and a great value given the amenities and services provided. Don’t let members of your board endanger that for you.

The majority of amenities constructed in the communities are based on the demand for their use within the community. Adding amenities is always welcomed by residents, but it is important to remember that the additional operational costs are paid for by residents through their monthly community service fees. Ideally, the timing of additional amenities keeps pace with the addition of new homes to keep monthly fees in line.

Community Updates

THE SUMMIT: Progress continues at Longleaf Ridge as this 20,000-square-foot amenity nears completion. Both the main pool and the resistance pool now have waterline tile and coping installed. By the time this article is issued, the pool deck and the perimeter fence around the pool should be nearing completion. We will soon remove the temporary fence and replace it with lush landscaping. Please be mindful of all construction warning signs, and do not use this pathway until it has been deemed safe. The grand opening is tentatively scheduled for early 2026.

AZURA FITNESS CENTER: Masonry walls are being erected and we should be close to starting structural steel by mid-January. This will be a state-of-the-art facility featuring top-of-the-line fitness equipment and a 5,000-square-foot pool. The project is estimated to be completed by the fall.

RECREATION CENTER: Planned renovations to the front of the main building are in the works. The plans are still in review for permitting due to Marion County’s new permitting process. This permit is taking longer than expected. We are hopeful this permit will be in hand by January. The work will be completed in phases and will include landscaping and improvements to golf cart parking.

THE WOOD SHOP: This project has been suspended indefinitely. The cost estimates of the earthwork were beyond anything budgeted. SCA Amenities will consider building this project at a different location where earthwork costs can be better managed, provided it has a clear path forward with the current board.

SHUFFLEBOARD COURTS: The new surfaces are complete and look fantastic. These new courts will provide better control of discs and improved play. Let the games begin!

IRONS 9 PITCH & PUTT: Momentum is building at the future Irons 9 location, where essential site work is now well underway. The project has officially transitioned into a new phase, with crews commencing the first lift of paving for the main parking lot. Once this foundational work is complete, the focus will shift immediately to integrating the final landscape features. The building should start early in 2026 once sitework is ready. The cooler weather will delay turfgrass establishment, so look for a late summer opening.

NEW WEYBOURNE LANDING GATED ENTRY: A design is underway for a new entry off the SW 90th Terrace extension, which will include a gate system and monument sign. This will be along the new construction section of SW 90th Terrace.

Roadway Improvements

SW 90TH TERRACE: The Weybourne Landing multi-modal path extension is complete from the gate to SW 80th Street.

Work is ongoing on the extension of SW 90th Terrace from SW 79th Street Road, North to SW 63rd Street Road. The contractor’s goal is to complete this roadway before major construction of SW 80th Avenue begins, providing an alternate northbound route. Construction of this road is scheduled for completion in late December. The crucial objective of opening this thoroughfare before the County’s planned expansion of 80th Avenue remains firmly on schedule. The project has now transitioned into the final landscaping phase, marking the completion of major paving and site preparation. Concurrently, the realignment of the SW 63rd Street Road intersection is underway and is scheduled for completion in tandem with the adjacent

90th Terrace project. Paving operations have been successfully completed. The project is now focused on landscape and irrigation installations, which are scheduled for substantial completion by the end of December. We anticipate the full opening of this road to residents in late January.

SW 92ND COURT ROAD: The construction of the Phase 2 extension remains on schedule. Significant progress has been made, with both landscaping and paving activities now finalized. The project’s current focus is the final phase: the installation of pavement striping and regulatory signage. Once this essential work is complete, the extension will be submitted for final regulatory approval and subsequently opened for resident access. The project is currently in its final clearance phase, verifying all necessary approvals and inspections. Residents can anticipate the full operational opening of this road by January.

SOUTHWEST 80TH AVENUE: As you are aware, Marion County is widening SW 80th Avenue, which is broken into two phases (Segment 1A & 1B). Segment 1A is from SW 90th Street to North of SW 80th Street, and Segment 1B picks up from where 1A leaves off and continues to SW 38th Street.

To avoid construction-related travel delays, if you are driving into Ocala, we strongly encourage residents to use the new SW 90th Terrace Road extension to reach SW 63rd St. Rd. SW 63rd St. Rd. connects to SW 80th Avenue, well north of the Segment 1A Phase of construction. Another option is to use the SW 90th St. Rd. exit. While this intersects the start of the Section 1A construction zone, you may continue driving east to get to SR 200, hopefully with minimal delays.

As Segment 1A is completed and Segment 1B is commenced, the path of travel may be reversed to avoid the worst of the construction. As I’m writing this, I’m thinking that the most impacted access will be Sholom Park, especially in the Segment 1B stage. Fortunately, the cart path should remain open, so you can walk, run, bike, or drive your cart to Sholom Park.

MELODY PRESERVE: This new housing development north of Indigo East has officially begun. Melody Preserve will be a 55-plus HOA community, but will not be a member association within the Circle Square Ranch Master Association or On Top of the World in any way. Melody Preserve will have its own self-contained amenities and services. We are pleased to confirm that the project is advancing on schedule.

Construction & Your Safety

On Top of the World is a growing community with new neighbors moving in every day. Throughout these new neighborhoods, houses are at various stages of construction. We have a strong desire to protect On Top of the World residents and visitors from potential hazards on a construction site. That is why we ask that all unauthorized persons avoid entering a construction site. An example of an authorized person would only be employees of the Builder directed to enter the construction site, or employees of the contractors who are directed to construct the house.

As you drive around the community, you may notice “No Trespassing” signs posted at construction sites for new houses. These signs are in place in accordance with Florida Statute 810.09 (2)(d) 2. This statute states that the “No Trespassing” signs say: “This area is a designated construction site, and anyone who trespasses on this property commits a felony.” Florida Statute 812.014 (2)(C) 10 further states that “It is grand theft of the third degree and a felony of the third degree” if property of any value is stolen from a construction site.

The Florida Statute is very strict for a reason. Trespassing can lead to injuries that are otherwise avoidable. Additionally, job-site theft losses impact everyone, including contractors and consumers, through delays in construction, higher prices, and higher insurance premiums.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in job-site trespassing and theft, impacting all stakeholders. This Trespass Notice covers not only the home site but also everything on it, including the construction dumpsters. The Marion County Sheriff’s Office takes all crimes very seriously, including construction site trespassing and theft, because they are concerned about your quality of life.

We encourage you to notify the Marion County Sheriff’s Office or Resident Services if you see anything suspicious occurring on or around a construction homesite.





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Resident Services

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Happy New Year! As we welcome a new year at On Top of the World, January brings important updates and opportunities for residents to stay informed and engaged.

Association Meetings

The annual Association meetings in December 2025 were a great success. We thank all who attended in person or virtually. If you were unable to attend, you may access the Zoom meeting links via AppFolio.

The On Top of the World (Central) board meeting and budget adoption are

On Watch

Geoff Oldberg



When I was younger, I could remember a complete grocery list for two weeks without writing a single thing down. I’d ask my kids what meals they wanted, head to Publix, and come home with everything – rarely forgetting an item. These days, if my wife calls and says, “Can you stop and get some milk? And maybe some...,” I tell her to text the list, even if it’s only one more thing. I don’t remember like I used to.

The truth is, we all need a little help remembering – whether it’s a list, a text, or just a gentle prod. Consider this your prod.

Recently, Resident Services has received an increase in complaints about door-to-door solicitors, especially roofing companies. They’ll offer a “free” in-

spection and, surprisingly, always seem to find damage. I won’t dive into the tactics they use to turn that “inspection” into a way to take your money. What you do need to remember is simple:

AppFolio

We kindly request that all residents activate their Owner Portal in AppFolio. You can access AppFolio via the mobile app or on your desktop. Resident Services will need to send you an activation link. Please reach out to request one.

Effective Wednesday, April 1, all owners will be required to make their association assessment payments directly through the AppFolio Owner Portal.

This transition allows each owner to securely control and manage their banking payment information in AppFolio, ensuring faster, more efficient processing. You may sign up for ACH or pay with a credit/debit card via AppFolio.

If you have not already done so, please log into AppFolio and set up your payment preferences before April 1 to en-

sure uninterrupted processing of your association assessments. A step-by-step “how-to” guide was enclosed in the annual mailing to assist you with setting up your account and payment options.

For additional assistance with your AppFolio Owner Portal or setting up automatic payments, please contact Resident Services at otowservice@otowfl.com or 352-236-6869. We will be happy to help guide you through this transition.

AppFolio Training Classes

For those needing additional assistance or simply wanting to learn more about AppFolio, training classes will be offered as follows:

- On Top of the World (Central) in the Recreation Center Ballroom from 10 a.m. to noon on Thursdays, Feb. 19 and March 26.
- Candler Hills in The Lodge at

- the phone.
- Payment: They demand unusual payment methods: cryptocurrency, gift cards, and wire transfers. No legitimate business or agency accepts payment like this. This guidance applies to anyone trying to sell you a service or product – roofing or otherwise. Soliciting is not allowed in On Top of the World, but some still find ways in. Please report them as soon as possible by emailing communitysafety@otowfl.com. Provide as much detail as you can:
 - Description of the person
 - Description of the vehicle
 - Business name, if availableYour awareness helps keep the entire community safe.
- Pressure: They insist you must act immediately – threatening arrest, lawsuits, fines, or limited-time “deals.” Hang up. Legitimate agencies do not threaten you over

Candler Hills, 10 a.m. to noon on Thursdays, Feb. 5 and March 12.

- Indigo East in the Indigo East Community Center from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays, Feb. 3 and March 17.
- Weybourne Landing in The Landing from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays, Feb. 10 and March 10.

Golf Cart Rule Changes

Reminder: golf cart rules have changed for On Top of the World (Central), Weybourne Landing, and Candler Hills. Resident Services will no longer conduct golf cart inspections or issue golf cart decals. Please note that if you own a golf cart or low-speed vehicle, you will need to complete a waiver and release of liability form. These forms can be sent out via email, or you may stop by Resident Services.

OWN A LOW SPEED VEHICLE (LSV) OR GOLF CAR?

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Active Newcomers Club

Linda Baker



Happy New Year! The board would like to welcome all our new and returning club members! We are hard at work planning our 2026 events. Our mission is to provide opportunities for our members to meet and form friendships with new people from all neighborhoods.

The club hosted our annual Holiday Hoopla on Friday, Dec. 19, 2025. Over 110 members enjoyed delicious food from Pasta Faire. Tim Hargis had everyone out on the dance floor. We closed out the evening with an epic snowball fight! Thanks to all our members who attended this great event.

The Active Newcomers Club annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 5 to 6 p.m. at the Arbor Activity Center Event Room I. The 2026 board will be introduced after a review of 2025 activities. Board members are President Ellen Attenson, Vice President Liz Allen, Treasurer Mitzie Jewitt, Marketing Director Linda Baker, Small Groups Director Sandie Butler, Compliance Director Debbie Haddad, Public Relations Director Andrea Wallet, and Member at Large Donna Witts.

The board would like to express our

appreciation to outgoing board members Cora Schlifkin, Cathy Mammolenti, and Ginger Allshouse for their contributions. The board would also like to recognize all 2025 small group leaders: Joel Attenson, Linda Baker, Suzie Bayliss, Cerece Buckler, Doug Buckler, Josephine Cardone, Michelle Corder, Sheri Engelhart, Barb Feller, Barbara Katz, Susan Lehman, Brian Lomasky, Jan Ruder, Cora Schlifkin, Nancy Sgroi, and Sue Southworth.

Doing donuts will take place on Sunday, Feb. 1, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the Arbor Conference Center Large Card Room. Bring a beverage and enjoy donuts on us. This event is open to all residents who are eligible to join the club, as well as current members. Reserve the evening of Friday, Feb. 27, for Winterfest at The Lodge at Candler Hills.

The project of forming lunch, dinner, wine, foodies, and gourmet groups is underway. These groups will start meeting in February. The book, golf, hiking, bunco, mahjong, and games groups will meet this month. Watch our Facebook page and your email for more information.

Please note there is a four-week lead time from when your application is received to when you are placed in some of the small group activities. If you have not submitted your 2026 membership application yet, do it today! Any applications received after Friday, Jan.



Photo by Dee Pohl

Hiking club members at Sweetwater Wetlands Park.

9, will not be processed in time for participation in February small groups.

Membership applications for 2026 are available at activenewcomers.org. All current members who wish to continue to enjoy club activities must complete a new application. New members are also welcome. Membership is open to

anyone who has lived in the community for less than 4 years.

To learn more about the Active Newcomers Club, visit activenewcomers.org. Members can also visit our Facebook page. Email us at activenewcomers34481@gmail.com for more information.

Candler Connection

Debra Keirn



Our annual holiday party was a great success. Gourmet Affair Catering catered an amazing meal. Ross Getek kept us entertained with dinner-and-dancing music, and we presented a \$1,000 check to a local charity. The gift certificates were a hit. Thank you to all of the volunteers who made this party a success.

Candler Connection is scheduling another year of entertainment.

The first event of the year will be on Valentine's Day, Saturday, Feb. 14. The Flying Ivories will keep us entertained for the evening with their comedy and piano talent. You bring your own snacks, and we provide the delicious dessert bar. Tickets go on sale on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Jan. 6 through Jan. 22, for \$25 per resident and \$27 per guest. This event is from 5:30 to 9 p.m. What a great time we all had last year at this event, so come out and enjoy another great evening.

The next event will be a Craft and Trunk Sale on Saturday, March 28. Baked goods, coffee, and water will be for sale. The crafters and bake sale will be in the Ballroom. There also will be raffle baskets. Last year's Trunk Sale was a huge success. This event is open to all residents. More information will follow.

All events and ticket sales occur at The Lodge at Candler Hills (unless otherwise noted). Ticket sales occur from 10 a.m. until noon; you must present your resident ID. If you are purchasing tickets for other residents, please have their resident ID and telephone number available. Candler Connection events are outlined in The Happenings, our Facebook page (Candler Connection), and on the OTOW App.

We also have the following events planned for the year:

- Monday, May 25: Memorial Day Ceremony with honor guard presentation.
- Sunday, June 21: Ice cream social

from 3 to 5:30 p.m. with five different flavors, a variety of toppings, and root beer or orange floats.

- Saturday, July 4: Picnic.
- Friday, Sept. 18: Cheeseburger in Our Paradise (Jimmy Buffett-themed event) with The Caribbean Chillers. Cheeseburgers, salads, and desserts will be provided.
- Saturday, Oct. 31: Halloween party.
- Saturday, Dec. 12: Holiday party.

The Candler Connection Social Committee is always looking for volunteers. We meet on the last Wednesday of the month in Meeting Room 1 at 4 p.m. Your fresh ideas are welcome.

We wish you a happy and healthy 2026. May many blessings be yours this year. We are truly blessed by living in On Top of the World.

See you around the neighborhood!

Crescent Ridge Happenings

Carol Lewis



Our December 2025 social attendees enjoyed an array of Christmas favorite foods brought by residents. A gift exchange game was held, but instead of the usual gift-stealing, dice were used to determine who passed the gifts. A lot of laughs were heard around the room.

Beginning in January, we will be

meeting in the Arbor Conference Center Large Card Room. The dates will remain the second Sunday of the month, time from 3 to 5 p.m. Bring a dish to share and your beverage of choice.

To get faster information for Crescent Ridge/Crescent Green residents, you may join our Facebook page (OTOW Crescent Ridge Neighbors) or send an email crneighbors@yahoo.com to be added to our email list. You will only receive emails regarding Crescent Ridge information.

Happy 2026 to all.

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Blue Indigo East Democrat Club

Lydia Kuust



The Indigo East Democratic Club meets on the fourth Monday of every month in the Indigo East Community Center Ballroom. Starting in 2026, we will meet at 4 p.m., not 2 p.m. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 26.

For various reasons, we decided to cancel our holiday gathering in December 2025. Discussion is ongoing to reschedule this for an early spring celebration. Stay tuned for further information.

For our January meeting, we have invited Thomas Tull to speak. With the opening of the new legislative session, he will share information about some of the initiatives that will be addressed by the Florida Legislature. This should be an interesting talk with an active question-and-answer session to follow.

Our Nov. 24, 2025, meeting was an organizational event, planning for 2026, with our members brainstorming and coming up with some very creative ideas for our organizational structure and committees that keep us going, hearing from speakers running for office in 2026, and planning social events.

Our community outreach program

continues. We have chosen two organizations to support. The first is Isaiah’s 117 House. This organization will be building a facility soon to provide a more supportive, less traumatic environment for children in transition who are waiting to be placed into foster care. Before the house is built to house the children, they need lemonade mix and paper cups to offer people who stop by their booth at local farmer’s markets and other local events. So please think about bringing some of those to our next meeting.

The second outreach program is Interfaith Emergency Services of Marion County. They are continually in need of food donations. You can donate non-perishable food items at our monthly meetings.

In this time of uncertainty, we need to connect and support one another. Attending and participating in our meetings, regardless of your party affiliation, offers an opportunity to become informed about current issues and to be with others who share similar beliefs. Since our inception, our member roster has grown each time we meet. Democrat or not, you are welcome. If you need a ride to this meeting, please call or text me at 802-345-0669 a few days beforehand. Please leave me a message, and I will return your call. You may also send an email to

ldrincal@yahoo.com. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Indigo East Social Club

Janice Liberton



The Indigo East ladies luncheon committee holiday luncheon was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

A message from outgoing Chair Beth Griner and Co-Chair John Griner of the Indigo East Social Committee: “We had 91 residents attend the holiday social. DJ Jimmy, an Indigo East resident, provided the entertainment. We had a lot of food and many door prizes. It was a good event. We had chicken tenders, pulled pork sliders, shrimp cocktail, meatballs, cocktail wieners, sausage cheeseballs, deviled eggs, spinach dip, cheese platter, fruit, and vegetables, and a lot of desserts. John and I have enjoyed serving Indigo East and have done our best to provide entertaining events at an affordable cost. Thank you to all the people who assisted us with the events and helped make them possible, and thank you to everyone who attended. Thank you, Janice, for your dedication as our communications person over all these years. You are a true asset to our community.”

Message from incoming Chair Teresa Davis: “I’m excited to share that we’re launching the new Indigo East Social Club on Jan. 1, and I’d love for you to be part of it. My goal is to kick off a fresh, welcoming way for neighbors to connect. This club is all about bringing everyone together, long-term residents, new arrivals, and everyone in between. I hope to create a space that feels upbeat, easygoing, and open to all, while keeping in mind the diverse social needs and interests across our community. This year, we’ll be focusing on fresh starts, real connections, and simply enjoying our time together. I don’t have a Pollyanna view of the world, but I do my level best to create an enjoyable experience for as many people as possible. I hope you’ll give the club a shot and see if we can reach a large audience.”

Auld Lang Syne is a Scottish poem and song written by Robert Burns in 1788. The original meaning of the song is “since long ago.” The practical meaning is “for old times’ sake.” The song is used every new year. Canadian band leader, Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians started the tradition in 1929 in the Hotel Roosevelt Grill in New York City.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2026. I will see you around our neighborhood.

Balfour Buzz

Kurt Larson



November 2025 was a busy month as we pulled off our Friendsgiving. Friendsgiving started as a small gathering at Mike and Deb’s home last year. This year, with almost 70 friends and neighbors in attendance, we had to move this event to The Lodge at Candler Hills. Everyone had a very enjoyable evening. There were no strangers by the end of the night. The menu consisted of smoked turkey, Cajun deep-fried turkey,

roasted turkey breast, and ham. Plus a huge assortment of sides and delicious desserts.

Many thanks to the Balfour social committee for all their planning and hard work. A special thank you to all who helped with setup and cleanup.

A Native American dancer, a Muscogee Creek member, a Florida native, and a local historian, Jim Sawgrass, entertained us. He provided a wonderful visual and oral presentation of Florida Native American history. I believe we all found this very interesting.

The Balfour social committee is planning four themed events for 2026. Stay tuned for announcements. Until then, a very happy 2026 to all.

Avalon Social Group

Laura Gavey & Sharon Hall



Happy New Year, Avalon! We hope everyone enjoyed our events in 2025, and we look forward to what 2026 has in store. Join us on Monday, Jan. 12, for a catered dinner by La Casella Catering and music entertainment by Anthony for singing and dancing. We will also be collecting nonperishable food items for Interfaith Emergency Services. Tickets are still on sale. Reach out to Sharon Hall (avalonsocialclub@gmail.com) if you would like to attend. The deadline for tickets is Monday, Jan. 5. Join us for another fun evening.

Mark your calendar for our events on the second Monday in March, May, July,

September, and November! The committee is working on fun events for our Avalon residents, bringing you additional opportunities to meet your neighbors. Reach out to Sharon if you would like to join the planning committee, share ideas, or help at our upcoming events. We need everyone to keep this group successful.

Are you new to Avalon or our social events? For up-to-date Avalon news and upcoming events, we encourage you to join our Facebook group (Avalon Social Club). This is a private group, and you will be asked to provide your address to verify that you are an Avalon resident. If you have trouble finding the group or getting in, please email us at avalonsocialclub@gmail.com, and we’ll send you the group link. If you would like to be notified of future events by email, please send your request to the email address above.

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Longleaf Ridge Friends

Michelle Migdal, Sandra Ritchie, Debra Vitale, & Judi Walsh



“Every January, the year begins again with whispers of possibilities that didn’t exist before.” – Maya Angelou

Larry and Dana Sommerfeld graciously offered their home for the second annual Friendsgiving, co-hosted by John and Michele Marcinek and Tom and Sandy Mansfield. Sixty neighbors gathered to give thanks on a beautiful Thanksgiving Day, enjoying an afternoon of fellowship while feasting on turkey, ham, and all the traditional side dishes.

December was full of lights and celebrations. Dozens of holiday parties and open houses were held throughout Longleaf Ridge. Many thanks to Ken and Nan Key, as well as to Carol and Jon Fiedler, for decorating our entry monuments. Peter and Nancy Kiziu organized the annual snowman drive-through display, which has become a tradition for residents visiting neighborhoods to enjoy holiday displays. Many neighbors lined their drives and pathways with luminaries.

A group of ladies enjoyed a holiday luncheon at Mimi’s Café, a wonderful way to usher in the festive season. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming as neighbors caught up. Many attendees expressed their appreciation for the delicious food, making the luncheon a truly enjoyable experience for all.

Among countless activities, neighbors dine together, tour together, watch

Kestrel Knowings

Lyn Yanss



Wishing everyone a joyful and prosperous 2026! The Kestrel holiday food drive successfully collected over 650 pounds of food, which was donated to Interfaith Emergency Services. This generous contribution will bring happiness to many families during the holiday season, exemplifying the true spirit of giving and community support.

The holiday season was filled with engaging activities, including a delightful cookie swap and craft event attended by 24 ladies. Participants enjoyed a variety of cookies, some of which were taken home. While the cookies were humorously described as fat- and calorie-free, the event was truly enjoyable and fostered camaraderie among attendees.

Additionally, the Holiday Music Singo attracted enthusiastic participation from 80 Kestrel residents, creating a lively, festive atmosphere. Such events not only entertain but also strengthen neighborhood bonds, and plans are underway to host more similar activities in the future.

The entrance of Kestrel was beautifully decorated by Gene and Linda Duncan, along with their dedicated team of volunteers: Marv, Joe, Scott, Jim, and Deb. Their efforts helped create a warm, welcoming holiday ambiance for all residents and visitors.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Joe and Trish Froehlich for their ongoing commitment to honoring our veterans and military families. Their dedication is reflected in the flag displays on Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day, serving as a meaningful tribute to those who have served our country.

Looking ahead, the social committee is excited about the upcoming year, with plans for more community events and initiatives. As a special gesture, they extend a heartfelt New Year’s wish to all residents, hoping 2026 will bring joy, unity, and continued community spirit.

A New Year’s Wish

By Lyn Yanss

From Kestrel’s heart, a wish we send.
To neighbors dear, our cherished friends
May 2026 bring skies so clear
With hope and joy throughout the year.

Health to keep your spirits bright,
Wealth to lift your days and nights,
Happiness in every place
A world of smiles on every face

Together here, we stand as one,
Underneath the rising sun –
On Top of the World, let’s do a cheer,
Towards a brand new, shining year!

So raise a glass and hold it high,
With dreams that soar beyond the sky –
Kestrel sends this wish so true,
A happy New Year from us to you!
Be well and see you around the neighborhood.

college sports together, play bocce together, enjoy concerts together, dance together, and celebrate holidays together. It should come as no surprise to new neighbors that we live in an exciting community full of opportunities to socialize and make new friends.

Dr. Michael Wolosky of Podiatry Services of Florida gave a presentation to the men’s group at their monthly luncheon. He spoke about the typical ailments he treats, their treatment protocols and recovery, and the latest advancements in his field. For information about upcoming block events, please check with a member of the social committee in your phase. As our neighborhood continues to grow, we look forward to welcoming all the many new neighbors to Longleaf Ridge. Please remember to join our private Facebook page (OTOW Longleaf Ridge Friends) and provide your phase, lot number, and address. Please send questions to otow-longleafridge@gmail.com.

OneBlood Bloodmobile

Sara Sommer



The Big Red Buses were here in December 2025. We had a great turnout. We collected 35 units of whole blood and eight units of double red blood. Each donor received a long-sleeve sweatshirt and a \$20 E-card to be used at many places in the area and online. What a way to end the year.

To begin the new year, the Big Red Bus® will be here on Friday, Jan. 2. We continue to provide Friday hours three times a year. The Big Red Bus will be parked in the Recreation Center parking lot from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The regular bimonthly drive will continue on Monday, Feb. 2. The Big Red Buses will be parked in the Recreation Center parking lot from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Be sure to eat a good meal before donating. Drink plenty of water both before and after. All types are needed. Please help save a life.
See you on the bus!

CONSERVATION FUN FACT
There's a bat house on
The Links Golf Course!



Photo by Sandra Ritchie

Dick Ritchie, Dave Protsik, Gary Kutty, Jodi Protsik, and Liz Kutty enjoying college sports together.

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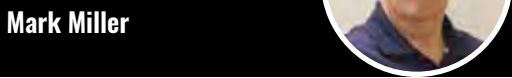
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Democratic Club



The Democratic Club generally meets on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios II-IV at 6 p.m.

Our Nov. 20, 2025, meeting featured Meghan Bowman, a repeat presenter from Your Florida and WUSF. Your Florida is a reporting project that aims to help residents understand how state government works.

We did not meet in December 2025, but we look forward to another strong year and achieving many club goals in 2026.

Our first meeting for 2026, on Thursday, Jan. 22, will feature a representative from the League of Women Voters and an inaugural presentation from our new committee – the FLAG team. You’ll need to attend that meeting to find out what they are doing and who they are.

You might want to sign up with them after you are aware of their initiatives!

We continue to support the Ocala Ritz Veterans Village. The veterans residing there need our support for many items we all take for granted. Priority for donations is laundry detergent. Other required items include pillowcases, twin-size sheets, twin comforters, a 1.7-cubic-foot refrigerator, a small microwave, men’s razors, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, lotions, shaving cream, and toilet paper. The following food items are needed: canned meat, canned chili, ramen noodles, macaroni and cheese, microwaveable rice, boxed milk, cereal, canned fruit, crackers, individual snacks, and coffee. They do not need clothing except for shoes. Please bring your donated items to our meeting.

If you are unable to attend any meetings, please let us know, and we’ll do our best to deliver your donations to the Ritz. Alternatively, you can drop them off before the meeting starts. If you’d like, you can go online and have the items delivered directly to the Ritz. Please email

us to get the shipping address, etc.

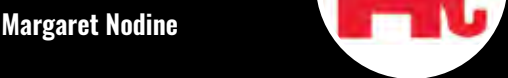
If you need a ride to any meeting, please call or email the club to arrange it at least three days in advance of the meeting.

For more information, contact Mark Miller at 443-848-8549 or demclubotow@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on Jan. 22.



Eleven members posed at our November 2025 meeting.

Republican Club



In 2025, the Republican Club welcomed 83 new members. Thank you for joining! We hosted a variety of guest speakers who kept us informed on the political climate within the county, local, and state governments.

Kathy Bryant and Carl Zalek, two county commissioners, met with us and spoke about county issues. Bridgette Smith, chair of the Marion County Republican Executive Committee, spoke on election matters. Allison Campbell from the Marion County School Board presented the state of education in the county. Two state representatives, Ryan Chamberlin and Senator Stan McClain, discussed the recent legislative session and property tax issues.

Jessica McClain, president of Old Florida Partners, gave us an inside look at how the state legislature operates. Of course, we were honored to have our popular sheriff, Billy Woods, join us for

a meeting! He always enlightens us on the status of the sheriff’s office and how the staff is helping improve our county life.

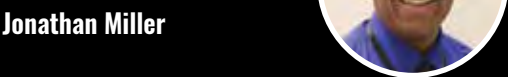
The executive committee will be working on our list of presenters for 2026. Our election of officers will take place on Friday, Feb. 13. We will continue to meet on the second Friday of each month in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-IV –doors open at 4 p.m., meetings begin promptly at 4:30 p.m.

Our schedule is as follows: Fridays, Jan. 9; Feb. 13; March 13; April 10; May 8; June 12; July 10; Aug. 14; Sept. 11; Oct. 9; and Nov. 13. We hope to see you. New members always sign up at each meeting, and guests are welcome.

We will happily continue to support Operation Shoebox and the Marion County Honor Guard. Both groups give of their time and are dedicated to helping our troops, those on duty, retired, and those who have passed on.

Wishing all members, their families, friends, and residents a happy and healthy 2026!

Safety First



The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has extensive regulated literature on personal protective equipment (PPE). Most people think it’s just job-related, but it is much more.

You have tools and equipment that you use every day at home. Even the very name, PPE, should give you an indication that it is more than an occupational term. Let’s relate PPE to your everyday life, shall we? Although OSHA does not regulate equipment in the home, such as ear and eye protection, gloves, and footwear, it is good practice to inspect the condition of your PPE.

How often do you think about your safety when it comes to your hobbies? How can PPE be integrated into your daily life? Please allow me to share some tips on protecting yourself while you play.

Everyone pretty much has a special interest, whether it’s walking, hiking, cycling, mountain climbing, boating, gardening, or even cooking at home. Personal protective equipment is important. Here is why you should invest in PPE.

What would you need to protect yourself from injuries? If you like the water, life jackets and gloves for kayaking, knee pads for roller skating, and safety glasses for woodworking. With hundreds of hobbies, there is something designed for your protection in each hobby or sport.

Let’s give ourselves another example. Take power walking or running. Concrete is tough on the knees, ankles, and joints. There are shoes for this activity. Pickleball requires quick takeoffs and sudden stops. Are you wearing the proper shoes or muscle bands for this sport? It is in your best interest to investigate what is required from your body to participate in certain sports activities.

With some sports, such as pickleball, tennis, and basketball, you may not even realize that you are placing excessive stress on your joints, which can come back to haunt you later in life. However, with proper shoes that absorb shock, the pounding on your joints can be reduced.

Research your hobby to ensure you have the necessary protective equipment. PPE can add years to your enjoyment of an activity. Your physical being relies on your personal interest to take care of, well, your personal interest.

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Newcastle Social Committee

Nancy Monaghan

Newcastle neighbors finished 2025 in style, thanks to the many elves who dedicated their time to making the holiday season special for everyone. The Newcastle entrances were beautifully decorated before Dec. 1, 2025. Neighbors gathered to have hot cocoa and other refreshments as the “switch was flipped” to light up Newcastle. Hallmark movies have nothing on us when it comes to holiday celebrations! Thank you to Jim Gilleland for leading the entrance decorating and to Ivan and Ivy Vazquez for hosting the evening.

Bing and PJ Bingham welcomed neighbors on a crisp Saturday morning for a coffee-and-tea social. Neighbors gathered around the pool area and fire table to enjoy hot drinks, cookies, breakfast casserole, and more. It was a lovely time to relax and enjoy neighborhood friendships during the very busy holiday season. Speaking of cookies, thank you to Debbie Bianchi for hosting a cookie exchange and to the participants whose cookies were shared at the holiday party. Your love of baking is appreciated by the neighborhood, Deb!

Newcastle celebrated the holidays with a fabulous holiday party on Dec. 5, 2025. The theme of the party was “Cheers to Five Years,” and the displays decorating the ballroom depicted five years of wonderful parties.

The “Gift of Neighbors” was the theme of our very first holiday party in



2025 Newcastle elves.

2021, and the room was decorated with stacks of large gift boxes. The favor was a wooden ornament shaped like a gift tag, and tables were decorated by residents through a centerpiece contest.

Year two was “Light Up Newcastle,” and there were hundreds (many hundreds!) of white balloons, lights, and white birch trees decorating the space. In keeping with the theme, year two was also the first year for the entrance light displays. Partygoers received a Newcastle decorated light bulb favor.

“It’s a Wonderful Life in Newcastle” was another fabulous party in 2023, with a large painted bird’s-eye view of the neighborhood homes, a bell, and a moving moon to lasso. Bell-shaped favors with residents’ pictures were created by Meg Kajewski, who has made the favors since 2022 – a huge thank you to Meg.

Last year’s theme, “Shake It Up Newcastle,” featured a snowglobe theme, with a photo area where attendees could step into a snowy scene for a snowy picture.

The 2025 team of elves managed to combine all of the themes with five different displays – smaller-scale vignettes from each of the parties. In addition to the displays, Anne McCauley captured wonderful memories by making very creative posters for each year’s area. Great job, Anne, and also to the rest of the elves: Sherry Bright, Sandy Randles, Sheila Hymes, Bea Keleman, Patty Snyder, Brett, and Joni Sinclair. Your creativity and hard work are appreciated. Other neighbors gave their time to help along the way, and also to set up and take down the evening of the event.

With gratitude for the gift of neighbors, Newcastle wishes everyone a happy, healthy 2026!



Photo by Nancy Meininger

Old friends Marcia VanDell and Georgia Magee enjoy sharing holiday memories.

Williamsburg Neighbors

Nancy Meininger

No matter what week the calendar recorded, something special was happening in Williamsburg in December 2025.

It began on Sunday, Dec. 6, with the annual holiday party at Stone Creek Grille, where the chef, Carlos Rojas, is a Williamsburg resident. Chicken Cordon Bleu, beef tenders, a baked potato bar, and strawberry-topped cheesecake were the menu choices, followed by a silent auction of talent and treasures.

On Wednesday, there was already anticipation at the men’s luncheon and bocce for the holiday trivia night on Thursday. The neighbors’ dinner out downtown Ocala allowed us to see the city in its holiday-lit best while dining out at the Bank Street Patio Bar. This event was closely followed by a holiday progressive cookie walk to three homes, spreading even more Christmas joy!

But wait!! That’s not all ... on the very last day of this magical month, the neighbors gathered to chase the old year out and welcome 2026 in while standing in the shadows of France’s Eiffel Tower at the Arbor Conference Center Large Card Room. You see, France celebrates our midnight at 7 p.m. EST, which allows residents earlier pillow time! Music was provided by Brian McDonald and appetizers by the attendees.

January opens the door to a whole new year of events already in planning by the wizards of Williamsburg, Carmel Kessler, and Gwen Fabian.

New nights and new rooms for some events, like the men’s luncheon, which is moving to the Hobby Building Event Room on Wednesday, Jan. 14. Trivia night will now be on Mondays starting Jan. 5, at 6:30 p.m. in Arbor Activity Center Card Room II.

Sunday, Jan. 18, at 1 p.m. in the Arbor Conference Center Large Card Room is the Williamsburg annual meeting luncheon. Bring soup, salad, sandwiches, and suggestions for a new year of activities that neighbors can share and enjoy together.



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Lifelong Learning

Michelle Shideler
352-387-7571
michelle_shideler@masterthepossibilities.org



As our nation prepares to commemorate America 250 in 2026, Master the Possibilities is proud to join communities across the country in reflecting on the people, events, and ideas that shaped the United States. Over the next six months, our “Exploring 250 Years of America” curriculum will invite participants and lifelong learners to dive into the milestones, movements, innovations, and stories that built our shared national experience.

But this anniversary is more than a date on the calendar. It is an opportunity. A chance to look back with honesty, curiosity, and appreciation. A moment to understand who we have been, so we can better see who we are becoming. Our commitment to offering this special catalog of courses stems from one core belief: history is not distant. It is alive in the decisions we make, the rights we exercise, and the communities we build. Understanding our past gives context to our present and anchors us as we navigate an increasingly complex world.

Through June, participants can expect a rich line-up of presentations, discussions, and explorations led by historians and nationally known expert educators. Whether examining the ideals that shaped the American colonies, taking virtual tours of landmark institutions, or studying defining moments such as the Whiskey Rebellion, these courses are designed to illuminate the triumphs, tensions, and transformations of our American story.

Education plays a vital role in how we commemorate America 250. Learning encourages reflection, and reflection cultivates understanding. When we take the time to thoughtfully explore our history, we gain insight into the challenges previous generations faced, the resilience they demonstrated, and the ideas they worked to preserve or change. These lessons remind us that the American experience has never been static. It evolves with each generation, shaped by countless voices and viewpoints.

Master the Possibilities believes that lifelong learning strengthens civic engagement and fosters deeper community connection. By studying our nation’s beginnings and the centuries that followed, participants not only expand their knowledge but also engage in meaningful conversations, conversations that help build bridges across backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences.

America 250 is a celebration, yes, but it is also an invitation. An invitation to listen, to question, to honor, and to learn. Over the next six months, we hope our participants will take part in this national moment by exploring the inspiring, the complicated, the courageous, and the ever-evolving stories of America with us.

As we reflect on 250 years of our shared journey, Master the Possibilities is honored to provide a space where curiosity thrives and understanding grows. To explore all the course opportunities, we invite you to visit masterthepossibilities.org. The entire curriculum of classes is available online, including events added since the print catalog. Don’t forget to check out our instructors and review their pretty impressive biographies while on the site.

Those interested may also stop by our main office or call for registration assistance from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at 352-861-9751.

Finding Zen

Misty Frye
info@sholompark.org



Sholom Park is inviting residents and visitors to step into 2026 with intention, wellness, and a renewed appreciation for nature. Known for its serene landscapes, winding trails, and mission to inspire peacefulness, the privately funded park is launching a variety of winter programs designed to help the community reconnect with the outdoors during Florida’s most inviting season.

January marks the return of several visitor favorites, including guided nature walks, wellness activities, entertainment, and special park programs that highlight the beauty and ecological

diversity of Sholom Park’s 44 acres. With cool temperatures and crisp, clear mornings settling in, we encourage guests to take advantage of one of the best months to explore the park’s botanical offerings.

“January is a time for fresh starts,” park leadership notes. “At Sholom Park, we strive to create a space where people can begin the year grounded – whether that means joining one of our programs, enjoying a quiet walk, or simply finding a moment of reflection in nature.”

This month also introduces the first performance in the park’s 2026 Park After Dark music series, with Americana musician Brad Edwardson kicking things off on Thursday, Jan. 15, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. His warm, roots-inspired sound is expected to draw a relaxed crowd ready to enjoy acoustic melodies under the evening sky.

In addition to scheduled events, Sholom Park would like to remind the com-

munity that its gardens, open spaces, and signature peaceful environment remain open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day for visitors seeking calm, creativity, or connection. We encourage our visitors to take slow strolls through the gardens, observe wildlife near the pond, and experience the subtle shifts that mark winter in Central Florida.

As a privately owned and privately funded park, Sholom Park continues to thrive through community support, donations, and responsible visitation. All guests are reminded to review park guidelines, respect the natural environment, and enjoy the grounds with mindfulness and care.

With a full calendar of winter and spring programming ahead, January sets the tone for another year of inspiration at Sholom Park – where the mission remains simple but powerful: to offer a sanctuary of tranquility and peace for all who enter.

Community Emergency Response Team

Jane Belz & Debbie Snyder



The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) congratulates four new graduates of the basic CERT training class. Azenith Butao-Rao, Fran Maurino, Dave Rowson, and Phil Wood recently completed the five-week class offered at the Marion County Sheriff’s Office Division of Emergency Management. Our group sent 13 members through training this year, with another class starting in January.

Annual elections were held in November 2025. Co-leader Linda Blair has stepped down, and Jane Belz will continue as leader. Jon Fiedler will also continue as an assistant team leader, joined by Nancy Giammarella and Anthony Pressley. One of the most common reasons members attend the monthly meetings is that they always learn something new. With this challenge in mind, the new leadership team is already planning topics and events to add to members’ knowledge, keep their skills sharp, and find new ways to challenge them.

CERT is a nationally recognized program through FEMA, and we are trained locally by the Emergency Management

Division of the Marion County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) and supported by On Top of the World. Members attend an initial five-week class on Saturdays and receive training in light search and rescue, damage assessment, basic first aid, and hazardous materials, preparing them to assist our community during a disaster. Ongoing education and drills are conducted through our monthly meetings.

We request prospective members attend the monthly meetings before, during, and after their training class. Attend one of our meetings to learn more. In 2026, we are changing our date to the second Wednesday of the month and are moving our meeting location to the Hobby Building Event Room. Our first meeting of the year will be on Wednes-

day, Jan. 14, from 9 to 11 a.m. Applications for training and additional information are available at each meeting. For more information about CERT or upcoming meetings, please email ontopttheworldcert@gmail.com.

Community ham radio operators can assist us from home by tuning into Simplex frequency 146.565. When deployed during a disaster event, we need neighborhood reports on building damage, blocked roads, medical emergencies, and other vital information. Our ham radio operators meet at our designated Command Center and establish contact with Marion County Emergency Management. For information regarding ham radio operations, contact Bruce Twiss at brucetwiss@yahoo.com.



Photo courtesy of Marion County Sheriff’s Office

Newly graduated CERT members.

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Annual Food & Toy Drive Goes Over the Top

By Ray Cech
World News Writer

It was the dedication of all volunteers, Colen Built Development employees, and most of all, the generosity of our On Top of the World and Calesa Township neighbors, that made this year’s food and toy drive a fantastic success.

For the last eight years, office manager Vanessa Andujar has had the pleasant challenge of coordinating the annual event. In this year’s drive, tapping into what has worked in the past, Vanessa and her 15 volunteers took the 2025 food and toy drive over the top.

The drive was well publicized in the World News, on social media, through word of mouth, and on posters – and it all paid off. Vanessa told us that more than 12,000 pounds of non-perishable food and personal hygiene items were donated. Toys for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program ranged from teddy

bears to wind-up cars.

“The success of the drive,” Vanessa said, “was in the hands of 15 dynamic volunteers and, of course, the generosity of our neighbors. I can’t say enough about the volunteers; they really made it happen with their can-do spirit, always going the extra mile. They collected donations every day, sorted them, and delivered them to the main storage facility. It was a yeoman’s job, and they got it done. I can’t thank them enough.” In addition to the high-energy contributions from volunteers, Vanessa told us that resident clubs this year came together and made outstanding contributions to the food and toy drive.

The Colen Built Development team extends a giant thank you to all who participated in the 2025 food and toy drive and wishes everyone a very happy, healthy, and prosperous 2026.



Photo by Vanessa Andujar

Volunteers loading up food donations for Interfaith Emergency Services.



Photo by Phil Karcheski

Phil Karcheski’s garden with a two-foot fence to protect his tender new greens.

Eco Gardens Busy with Growth

By Phil Karcheski

Returning in early September from snowbirding in Wisconsin, I found the Eco Gardens flush with plants being harvested and new ones being planted.

October was cooler, and in November, it was cool enough to kill some warm-weather crops. Undeterred Eco Gardeners continued to plant and harvest.

Now we are in Florida’s version of winter. The cooler and drier weather dictates what to grow in zone 9b in January.

January is the last good month to plant transplants for longer-maturing, cool-season crops. You can also direct sow quick-maturing greens and root vegetables.

Cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and kohlrabi should be transplanted now. They need the consistent cool weather to form heads/sprouts before the spring heat arrives.

Arugula, collard greens, kale, lettuce, mustard greens, spinach, and Swiss chard can be direct-seeded or transplanted. Plant quick-maturing lettuce and spinach varieties and harvest them often, as they will go to seed when the weather warms up.

Direct sow carrots, beets, radishes, turnips, and potato (seed potato) seeds.

English peas (shelling and snap/snow peas) are direct-sow seeds. They thrive in the cool weather and will need a trellis. Plant celery and onions for a spring

harvest.

Continue to monitor your rainfall and water new plants regularly until they are established.

Zone 9b can experience freezing temperatures. Be ready to cover tender plants if temperatures are forecast to drop below 32 degrees. Continue to fertilize your actively growing cool-season crops.

Collards and kale are tolerant of the region’s milder cool season.

Another excellent cold crop to consider is cabbage. Look for heat-tolerant varieties.

January is the perfect time to start seeds indoors for your long-season, heat-loving plants, giving them a head start before summer.

Start tomato seeds indoors under grow lights or in a protected, sunny spot. Transplant them outdoors in late February or March. Peppers grow slower than tomatoes so start them now. Start eggplant seeds indoors as well.

Now is a good time to prepare any new garden beds for your spring/summer crops.

Interested in gardening? Eco Gardeners welcomes you to join us at our Sunday, Jan. 18, meeting at 1:15 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room. For more information, email gardenc58@gmail.com, visit EcoGardeners.org, or our Facebook page.

Immersive Insight Into Ancient History

By Rosalina Norita

I am delighted to present an exclusive insight into one of Italy’s most captivating and historically rich regions: Puglia. This enchanting destination, situated in the heel of Italy’s boot, offers a remarkable blend of ancient heritage and breathtaking landscapes.

Puglia stands as a testament to millennia of history, a profound cultural crossroads where countless civilizations from across the Mediterranean and Europe have converged. Its strategic geographical position has made it a vibrant melting pot, with every corner revealing layers of historical narrative. While its significance waned during the Age of Discovery, its unique charm and historical depth were rediscovered by discerning travelers in the 18th century, and today, its profound history, stunning natural beauty, welcoming populace, and rich traditions are celebrated and studied with renewed vigor.

The region’s Roman legacy is particularly significant. Puglia served as a pivotal hub for trade, agriculture, and military strategy, effectively acting as a vital bridge connecting Italy to the eastern Mediterranean. Before Roman dominion, indigenous tribes flourished here, engaging in cultural exchange with Greek settlers and integrating their artistic and philosophical influences. Ultimately, Puglia became an integral and prosperous province within the vast Roman Empire.

However, Puglia’s most distinctive and unforgettable feature lies in its remarkable architecture, specifically the iconic ‘trulli’ houses. These extraordinary dry-stone dwellings, characterized by their conical roofs constructed entirely without mortar, are synonymous with the region, particularly around the UNESCO World Heritage town of Alberobello. Established in 1996, Alberobello, whose name thoughtfully translates to “beautiful tree,” is renowned as the “Trulli Capital.”

This town, home to approximately 10,000 residents, boasts over 1,500 of these charming structures. Visitors can explore two primary districts: Rione Monti, a vibrant area popular with tourists, and Aia Piccola, which offers a more authentic, residential atmosphere. Observers will note the symbolic motifs – hearts, crosses, and zodiac signs – adorning the trulli roofs, often representing good fortune or religious significance. Beyond Alberobello, an astonishing 50,000 trulli are dispersed throughout Puglia’s picturesque Itria Valley.

In contemporary Alberobello, many trulli have been thoughtfully converted into exquisite galleries, artisan boutiques, boutique accommodations, and fine dining establishments, though a substantial number remain cherished private residences. While the town experiences a lively influx of visitors during the day, with an estimated two million



Photo by Rosalina Norita

Monte San Michele ceramic gallery is housed in one of the trulli with a colorful red roof. On the interior, it looks well-mended and nicely decorated. The items for sale reflect the region’s most adorned antiques.

tourists annually, its true enchantment unfolds as evening descends. The illuminated trulli cast a warm, ethereal glow over the cobblestone streets, creating a truly magical, romantic ambiance perfect for a leisurely evening promenade

through Rione Monti and Aia Piccola.

For those contemplating an Italian sojourn that transcends the ordinary, Puglia and its captivating trulli present an unparalleled experience. We trust this glimpse into its wonders has ignited your wanderlust.

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The Hearthsides House.

Rhode Island Group

Judy Parisi

Did you ever connect limestone with Rhode Island? It was an important ingredient in colonial plaster and mortar, and key to the building of stone-enders, a unique Rhode Island style of architecture in which homes had massive end chimneys and the stone covered the entire side of the home.

Lime was mined in the Village of Lime Rock, a historic district in Lincoln, which has 21 historically significant properties, three quarries, and the ruins of several lime kilns. These historic properties include the Eleazer Arnold House, a stone-ender built in 1687; the Moffett Mill; Israel Arnold House; and Hearthsides, the 1810 house built by Stephen Hopkins Smith, and the adjacent Butterfly Mill, built in 1811 by Smith.

Stephen Hopkins Smith built the Hopkins mill from local quarried stone. When a stone cutter split one of the stones, he noticed that the two halves resembled butterfly wings. These were set in front of the building, and its unique design earned it the nickname the Butterfly Mill. In 1813, Smith purchased a bell to hang in the mill.

During the War of 1812, the USS Constitution achieved victory over the British ship HMS Guerrier. The bell was removed and sold with other naval scrap. It hung in the belfry of Butterfly Mill until it was donated to the USS Constitution Museum. Regrettably, the mill was not particularly successful and was used for different purposes over time.

Folklore indicates that around 1810, Stephen Hopkins Smith won \$40,000 in a lottery. He used it to construct a home for his fiancée, who said she must live in a grand home. However, when it was completed, and he took his fiancée for a buggy ride along Great Road, she said that while it was beautiful, it was too far out in the wilderness for her to live. They returned to Providence, and he never married nor lived in the house. Legend calls the house “the house that love built” or “heartbreak house.”

The Hearthsides was a private residence for almost 200 years, and in 1996 it became a public building, offering guided tours that not only delve into the home’s unique federal-style architecture but also provide insight into daily life in the antebellum Hearthsides.

If your travels take you to Rhode Island, consider a trip to Lincoln. No longer the wilderness of Hopkins Smith’s fiancé there is much to explore, including the Hearthsides House. And after, it is a quick drive to Bally’s Twin River Casino for gaming, dining, and entertainment, along with a hotel and event center.

Our Rhode Island Group meets periodically to share stories and remembrances. If you have not attended prior lunches and would like to join us, please email judith.parisi@gmail.com so we can add you to our email list. We welcome all who have lived, worked, studied, or served in Rhode Island and their family members.



Photo by Nancy Meininger

John and Patty Paul with vocalist Linda Sisco.

Michigan Club

Nancy Meininger

Michigan Club wrapped up 2025 with a holiday performance by award-winning vocalist and resident, Linda Sisco.

Because of this season’s limited attendance at our monthly meetups, the club has decided to cancel all remaining monthly dinners except the Coney Island picnic, which is scheduled for Sunday, April 5, at the Veterans Park pavilion at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$5 each and will be available from Sunday, Feb. 1, through Sunday, March 15. Contact Nancy Meininger at 352-554-0757.

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Tech Tips from Bridgenet Communications

Shane Bobson
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Call Before You Dig

811 is the national call-before-you-dig phone number. Anyone who plans to dig should call 811 or visit sunshine811.com before digging to request that the approximate location of buried utilities be marked with paint or flags so that you don't unintentionally dig into an underground utility line.

Underground infrastructure, when struck, can have a variety of effects. Damaging a telephone line can shut off the service of a home or the larger community. Failure to notify can re-

sult in fines, something that can grab homeowners' attention. The worst-case scenario is that damage resulting from a no-call, or illegal, excavation leads to severe harm or life-threatening injury. For many homeowners, taking a shovel to the front yard is not a big deal. But, if they knew the risk of striking infrastructure under their property, or if they knew the actual societal costs of damages to underground infrastructure – \$30 billion in the U.S. in 2019 alone, according to the CGA (Common Ground Alliance) – they'd stop viewing the 811 calls before you dig process as optional.

You should call 811 or visit sunshine811.com at least two full business days before you begin any digging, including common projects like planting trees and shrubs or installing fences and mailboxes.

You will need to know the address of where you plan to dig, including the

Technology Club

Chris Kilbride



Every Saturday at 9 a.m., the Ocala Tech Club meets for an hour through our weekly online Zoom meeting. We aim to help resident members stay informed about the ever-changing technology surrounding us through discussions on Android, Windows, and Apple devices, including current issues. OcalaTechClub.org offers a wealth of valuable information about our group.

When you take your cellphone camera and hold it up to and click on a small square, filled with lots of dark and light patterned pixels forming what looks like a maze, you've just used a QR code to transport you to an online website link, or for other uses.

In the 1960s, the overwhelming number of supermarket products challenged cashiers who manually entered prices, as customers grew impatient. Even though barcodes were patented and used in 1952, it wasn't until the 1970s that linear scanning was adopted in collaboration with IBM and the grocery industry as Universal Product Codes (UPCs), or the barcodes known today.

Then, in 1994, the ingenious QR codes tracking tool was developed by engineer Masahiro Hara at Denso Wave, a Japa-

nese manufacturer of automobile parts, producing a two-dimensional code that could store even more data than barcodes. QR codes can be scanned faster, storing contact information, text, URLs, and more, improving marketing and tracking.

By 2010, QR codes were popular and used throughout the retail, event, and advertising industries. This was when smartphones with cameras, internet access, and apps became the norm, and the use of these codes expanded globally.

Within that overall QR code square, data is encoded in the modules, which can be read by a digital device with an integrated camera and QR scanning capability, like your smartphone. That lets us shop online stores, purchase event tickets, access product details, download apps, etc., making it easier and more secure than ever.

Customers are choosing to use contactless payments by scanning a QR code, so others don't have to handle their phone. More companies are using mobile marketing by simply placing QR codes on their business cards, websites, or advertising layouts. Even sectors beyond retail, like healthcare, hospitality, and education, are using QR codes for inventory, data, and a host of other benefits. QR codes would be safe as long as you are on a reputable website.

Information can be transferred on the QR code, linking you to research regarding real estate listings, product manuals,



county and nearest cross street, as well as the type of project you're completing and the exact area on the property where you're planning to dig. Whether you call 811 or make your request online, you'll need the same information.

You must wait a few days before breaking ground to ensure that all utilities have responded to your request. Once all utilities have marked their buried lines, carefully dig around any utility marks and consider relocating projects near buried utilities.

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restaurant menus, schedules, passes, self check-out, donations, well...the list is long!

Residents are welcome to join our club. Yearly dues are \$10 per resident or \$15 per resident couple. You can contact us through the Contact page at OcalaTechClub.org.

Members enjoy Thursday in-person help sessions in the Hobby Building, where they can discuss issues with their Windows or Apple computers, smartphones, or tablets. In-person classes are held on the first Friday and Saturday of each month, with online Zoom meetings on other Saturdays.

Freethinkers

Kathy Bell



"Preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."
— Carl Sagan

Happy 2026! This month, Freethinkers is focusing on preserving the earth for future generations with two presentations that will really get us thinking. Care for the environment is one of the humanist commitments.

On Sunday, Jan. 4, we are fortunate to have as our guest Lars Andersen to speak on "From Prairies to Rivers: Florida's Lifeblood is Water." Lars is a renowned outdoorsman, naturalist, and the author of "Paynes Prairie, The Great Savanna: A History and Guide." Drawing on years of experience exploring Central Florida's rivers and prairies, Lars will share his knowledge of the region's history, wildlife, and ecosystems and the role of water in Florida's story. He will also address the challenges posed by a changing climate and what it means for the future of the area's natural resources.

And on Sunday, Jan. 18, Heather Grove, director of the Prairie Creek Conservancy in Gainesville, will discuss options for our ultimate disposition and an ecologically sound return to nature. Heather will take us on a virtual tour of Prairie Creek. It encompasses 93 acres, a larger portion of the 606-acre Prairie Creek Preserve, which

is managed in partnership with the Alachua Conservation Trust. A key idea is conservation – not only is the individual naturally returned to the earth, but the fee also supports land protection, restoration, and management. Prairie Creek Conservancy is a not-for-profit organization.

Freethinkers finished up 2025 with an excellent presentation on Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025, by our own Domenica Genovese, who challenged us with a science versus belief conundrum – "The Shroud of Turin: Separating Fact from Faith." Few artifacts have inspired as much fascination – or controversy – as the Shroud of Turin. It is the most studied object in history, examined through decades of scientific testing in fields from chemistry to forensics. Yet its deep religious significance makes objective evaluation difficult. Domenica helped us to explore what science has revealed, why debate still rages, and what mysteries continue to defy explanation despite rigorous investigation. And on Monday, Dec. 8, 2025, our book club members examined the premise of the 1961 book "Black Like Me" by John Howard Griffin. Racially disparate treatment occurs to this day and was the main topic of discussion.

Freethinkers is designed as a safe and comfortable space for the non-religious to learn and socialize. If you find yourself anywhere on the freethinkers continuum from religious skeptic to avowed atheist, you are welcome at our meetings, which are held on the dates listed above from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room. In addition to our Sunday meetings and book club, we also have three dining-out opportunities each month. We are a growing community with an attendance of 40 to 70 at our Sunday meetings. For more information, visit FreethinkersFlorida.com or email us at FreethinkersFlorida@gmail.com.

CONSERVATION FUN FACT

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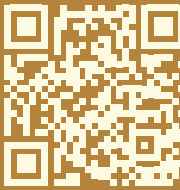
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Holiday Golf Cart Parade.

Global Diversity Asian Social Club

Rosalina Norita



The Global Diversity Asian Social Club participated in the annual Holiday Golf Cart Parade, celebrating this revered holiday. Our team received valuable assistance from James Burbo, who helped construct a wooden base for our golf cart’s nativity holy family, and from Donna Sherman, who generously donated the nativity, made of straw.

The enchanting atmosphere surrounding Christmas is a cherished recollection for many, stemming from their childhood experiences and prompting a lifelong endeavor to recapture it. Numerous fond memories of youth persist, including penning letters to Santa Claus, marveling at street and home decorations, singing festive songs, and performing in school and church concerts, all leading up to the most anticipated day of the holiday season, Christmas Day.

Christmas is a significant holiday honoring the birth of Jesus Christ, observed on Dec. 25 by Christians worldwide. It is a time for familial bonding, friendships, and exchanging gifts, typically marked by traditions such as decorating trees, singing carols, and savoring festive cuisine. This tradition fosters a sense of belonging, togetherness, and mutual appreciation. Christmas celebrations foster a sense of connectedness, positivity, and altruism among all members of the community.

The significance of the holy nativity embodies peace, joy, unity, and guidance. Jesus’ birth in a manger rather than a palace exemplifies humility, teaching believers the importance of modesty, kindness, and caring for others. The Christmas spirit originated with the holy family, marking the beginning of God’s presence among humanity. This foundational event fostered love, compassion, and a deep sense of community among people.

The cultural facets of Christmas encompass family and togetherness, sharing meals, and fostering relationships. Generosity and kindness are paramount, expressing gratitude through gift-giving and selflessness. Individuals also use the

holiday to reflect on the previous year and set intentions for the upcoming one. For individuals who do not observe religious traditions, Christmas is a time to embody peace, compassion, and hope, and to nurture connections with others. Fostering understanding and empathy among people is crucial for cultivating love, unity, and cooperation. Establishing behavioral standards and promoting constructive interaction help mitigate hostility, enhance human relationships, and minimize social misconduct. This embodies the spirit of Christmas and its significance in our community.

Finally, Christmas holds a universal meaning that touches people regardless of their beliefs. At its core, the holiday promotes peace, compassion, hope, and connection among all. These values extend beyond religious practice, offering a message that encourages humanity to care for one another, extend grace, and work toward harmony. It is this universal spirit that allows Christmas to unite communities in celebration and goodwill.

Best wishes for a happy new year.

The Jewish Club

Bruce Kanner



Jewish Club members learned all about the Marion County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) helicopter search and rescue unit during a trip into a secured hangar at the Ocala International Airport (OCF) on Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025.

The unit, officers, and fleet are so elite that Paramount+ made a TV show about them. Called “Chopper Cops,” the program – having completed two seasons on the streamer – is a reality documentary that follows MCSO officers on various calls as they work with officers on the ground to find the missing and capture the alleged criminal.

Jodi Kanner of the social committee organized this trip, and 19 club members really enjoyed the up-close-and-personal look at the helicopters, as well as the explanation of the unit’s role in the overall protection of Marion County.

At the Jewish Club on Sunday, Nov. 16, 2025, at the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-IV, Shelley Kline started his presentation to more than 100 people by declaring: “My job is to save you all money.”

Kline, a longtime club member, has been in the home improvement business since he was eight years old, when he started building tree houses. Kline

used a dry toilet as his first visual aid to discuss ways to unclog a clogged commode and replace the toilet tank internals.

“Today’s toilets are designed for 10 to 15 sheets (of toilet paper) per flush,” he pointed out. He demonstrated the use of the recommended “beehive” plunger, as well as an inexpensive plastic tool with small spikes on the sides, to unclog a sink or shower.

“Drano doesn’t work,” he lamented. “Drano is something that, if your sink is totally clogged, it will loosen it up, but will not get rid of it (the clog). This (drain tool) will get rid of it.”

He pointed out how to troubleshoot a kitchen garbage disposal that is not working by checking for a “humming” sound. Kline also showed how to easily fix a hole in a wall or drywall and how to replace a wall light switch.

He offered one piece of advice that seems simple but is not always followed. Before performing any electrical work, he said, “Turn off the breaker.”

You do not have to be Jewish to belong to the Jewish Club. The club promotes understanding and respect for Jewish people and their history, customs, and culture through social and educational activities. Annual dues are \$18 per person.

For more information about the Jewish Club or for membership inquiries, please contact Audrey Wolotsky at audw27@gmail.com.



Photo by Marion County Sheriff’s Office

Jewish Club members got an up-close and personal tour of the Marion County Sheriff’s Office aviation unit featured in the TV show “Chopper Cops.”

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Birders' Beat

Linda Monaco



The members of The Birding Group will journey to the Ocala Wildlife Sanctuary on two dates in January. The sanctuary is primarily dedicated to owl rescue, but also cares for many other animals on site. We have scheduled two visits because the group size is limited to 10 people on each day. The two dates are Wednesday, Jan. 14, and Wednesday, Jan. 28. Each presentation is scheduled for 11 a.m. and will last 60 to 90 minutes.

The sanctuary’s goal is to rescue and rehabilitate birds found in distress, ultimately releasing them into the wild whenever possible. If a bird cannot be released, it will be cared for at the facility for the rest of its life. Currently, the center houses 33 owls from five different

species, ducks, geese, tortoises, deer, numerous tropical bird species, and a talking crow.

Unfortunately, many of the creatures that now reside at the center have been victims of animal cruelty and abuse. The sanctuary is generally not open to the public, but permits scheduled visits to raise awareness and educate people about the birds and the need to preserve natural habitats.

If you would like to join the group for this trip to the Ocala Wildlife Sanctuary on Wednesday, Jan. 14, or Wednesday, Jan. 28, please contact Margitta Claterbos at mclaterbos@gmail.com. Let her know which date you prefer. A wait list will be created once the maximum number is reached for each date. Therefore, if you want to go with the group, please register immediately. If you do register and later find you cannot attend, please contact Margitta quickly so the next person on the waiting list can be added to the group.

The sanctuary is located at 2020 SW 5th Avenue, Ocala, Florida. We will meet in the parking lot of Friendship Center, just outside the SW 99th Street gate for On Top of the World, near Bank OZK, at 10 a.m. to carpool. Parking is limited at the facility. The group will enjoy lunch together at the Mellow Mushroom located at 2 West Fort King Street, Ocala. Both the restaurant and the sanctuary are about 30 minutes from On Top of the World.

Unfortunately, bird flu is a problem at this time, so everyone who visits the sanctuary must have their hands and feet disinfected. Plan to wear comfortable shoes that the antiseptic won’t damage. The organization is a nonprofit that depends upon donations. They can always use trash bags (large and small), paper towels, bottled water, parrot food, laundry detergent, and fresh fruits and vegetables. We hope you can join us on this birding adventure. It promises to be interesting on many levels.



Photo by Nancy Stephens

Spectacled owl.

Moonstruck Astronomy Club

Cammie Fairburn



I was up all night wondering where the Sun had gone, and then it dawned on me.

Speaking of the Sun, solar activity, such as sunspots and solar flares, rises and falls in an eleven-year cycle. In 2025, solar activity reached its peak, also known as a solar maximum. This increased solar activity included a giant sunspot, AR 4294-4296, which is about eight times the size of the Earth. This giant sunspot is made up of two sunspot groups, AR 4294 and AR 4296. They appear as two large sunspots, side by side, near the Sun’s equator.

Sunspots were first recorded in China around 700 BCE. They are regions of strong magnetic fields that emerge from the Sun’s interior. Sunspots tend to emerge near the Sun’s equator during solar maximum. They appear dark because they are cooler in temperature than their surroundings. Sunspots can be viewed and imaged through telescopes, binoculars, and cameras equipped with solar filters. Also, be sure to wear solar glasses when viewing the sun.

On Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, we had a Christmas party organized by Barb and Steve Hovlid. We played “Name That Astronomical Tune” by guessing the name of a song with just a few musical notes. The songs included “Bad Moon Rising” by Creedence Clearwater Revival, “Total Eclipse of the Heart” by Bonnie Tyler, “Space Oddity” by David Bowie, “Shining Star” by Earth, Wind, and Fire, and, of course, “Rocket Man” by Elton John.

We also voted for the club’s board members for 2026. They are President Jim Di Paolo, Vice President Larry Isenberg, Treasurer Beverly Bergmann, and Secretary Shari Schopp. Individual club members were also recognized, including Doug George for his night-sky presentations and Glenn Cohen for his moon-minute presentations. And thanks to Ed Hayes, our “weatherman,” who alerts us to the best nights for our telescope viewing events.

Besides attending club meetings, you can also learn more about astronomy at Master the Possibilities. There are classes on introductory astronomy, the planets, the constellations, and the universe.

Regular meetings of the Moonstruck Astronomy Club are on the first Thursday of every month from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room. There will not be a meeting in January because the first Thursday is

a holiday. All residents are welcome to join the club, and new members are welcome! Club dues are only \$20 per year, and they include a subscription to the quarterly Reflector Magazine.

For information or club registration, please contact club President Jim Di Paolo at moonastroclub@gmail.com.

More information is always available at moonstruckastronomyclub.org.

Keep looking up!

What’s Cookin’?

Nancy Grabowski



Are you looking for something new or different in the line of appetizers? Here are two that may be just what you are after.

Cranberry Orange Cream Cheese Pinwheels

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup dried cranberries, chopped
1/4 cup orange marmalade
1 tablespoon orange zest
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
4 large flour tortillas
1/4 cup chopped pecans (optional)
Fresh parsley for garnish (optional)

Mix the softened cream cheese with the cranberries, marmalade, zest, and cinnamon. Spread on the tortillas, then sprinkle with pecans. Roll each tortilla and cut into wheels, using a serrated knife. Arrange on a platter, sprinkle with parsley. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Holly Jolly Antipasto Cream Cheese Log

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup roasted red peppers, chopped
1/2 cup green olives, chopped
1/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped
1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning

Combine all the ingredients and mix well. Place the mixture on a sheet of Saran Wrap and roll it into a log. Refrigerate for several hours to firm. When ready, unwrap and place on a serving dish, surround with a variety of crackers and veggies.

Happy New Year!

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Southern Connection Club

DarLene Stevens



January in the South arrives quietly and reflectively, with the holiday season now just a memory. The new year awaits, arms open wide with the promises of new possibilities.

January is a clean slate – time to plant new dreams, try bold things, and chase what stirs the soul. Each of us has the chance to be mindful and fully present

Pennsylvania Club

Linda Casey



There is so much to enjoy during the holiday season, and the Pennsylvania Club members once again shared a memorable evening at our December 2025 meeting. We celebrated with festive decorations, appetizing food, and a lively dirty Santa exchange.

As 2026 is upon us, we think of the traditional New York City ball drop. Now here's a different twist on this custom

– eyes open, hearts ready, and spirits stirred by new possibilities. It's time to live fully, love deeply, and savor every sweet moment. The South, ever gracious, welcomes you to the journey ahead.

Southern Connection wants to be part of your journey. Be with old friends or make new ones at our next meeting on Sunday, Jan. 11, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-II. Please bring a dish to share. Beverages provided or bring your own. Dues are \$10 per person per year. For more information, please contact Bob Czopek at 904-540-1726 or bobczopek@gmail.com. See you there!

celebrated in our own state. Hershey drops a huge candy kiss, Bethlehem a giant Peep, Lebanon a 150-pound bologna, Dillsburg a yellow pickle, and Kennett Square a stainless steel mushroom. We welcome new members to join us at our Wednesday, Jan. 14, meeting in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studio. Our monthly theme will be "tailgating fun." So bring your team spirit by wearing your favorite team's attire. We have great cooks, so there will be plenty of crowd-pleasing dishes to enjoy.

Happy 2026, and hope to see you there! For additional information, please contact Lacinda Hobbs at hobbsslw319@gmail.com.



Photo by Heather Tahan

The "World" saves Fernando. Stray cat on our grounds has found his forever home!

SPCA of Marion County

Heather Tahan



Let's start 2026 with some truly happy-ending rescues made possible by the generous animal lovers in our own community. It takes a "World" to do good. Who says one person can't make a difference? Tell that to Fernando and Lucy. You never know how your small acts of kindness impact others, but they do.

Around Halloween, my husband and I noticed a young black cat roaming the bushes behind the On Top of the World accounting building. As we approached, he hid under a bush but was meowing loudly. The office staff confirmed that he was a stray cat, but extremely friendly. The office staff had been taking care of him, especially one young lady who brought him to the local rescue V.O.C.A.L. to have him neutered, micro-chipped, and vaccinated. The office staff vigilantly watched out for this little boy and named him Fernando.

We posted a plea on the SPCA of Marion County's Facebook page. Several lovely people from our community offered to foster Fernando until we could place him. Serendipitously, a wonderful woman from Quality-of-Life rescue contacted us with a pre-approved adopter looking for another cat. Within a day, Fernando was adopted and is now safe and happy in his new home. He also has a sister to snuggle with and keep him company. Without the many individuals



Photo by Evelyn Sarns-Holiday

Little Lucy is rescued by SPCA member Evelyn Sarns-Holiday after being carelessly abandoned.

who shared his story, offered help, and supported rescue organizations, this happy ending would not have been possible.

Lucy, a Havanese/Shitzu mix with open dog bites on her shoulders and matted fur, was dumped in the middle of a local road around Thanksgiving. A good Samaritan picked her up, and our own SPCA member Evelyn Sarns took her in. The SPCA of Marion County had her vetted and groomed. Now, she has a new lease on life. It's amazing how forgiving and resilient animals are. After medical treatment and plenty of love, she is now safe, healthy, and thriving in her new home.

Our monthly member meetings are in the Recreation Center Lounge on the third Thursday at 1 p.m. Our first 2026 monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 15. We welcome you to attend and check us out.

If you love animals, please consider joining the SPCA of Marion County, a 501(c)(3) organization that helps Marion County pets in need. Drop by our table at the Circle Square Commons Farmers Market on Thursdays.

To learn more, please visit SPCAofMarionCounty.weebly.com, follow us on Facebook (Marion County FL SPCA), or email spca.marion.county@gmail.com.

Donations of pet food and supplies will be accepted at the porch of Evelyn Sarns Holiday, 8880-C SW 94th St, Ocala, Florida 34481. To avoid accidental ingestion by a pet, please do not use staples to close open bags.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." – Aesop



Photo by Linda Casey

Edna Albeck, our bingo champion!

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- Former Staff Writer at Tom Collins Music Group in Nashville
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SAMPLE MUSIC

Lions Club

Gail Morris



Welcome back to all those snowbirds who waited until after the holidays to join us.

Our club members were busy helping our Marion County community schools and veterans with a Thanksgiving meal, which Walmart employees shopped for and our members delivered. We were able to provide Thanksgiving meals to 107 families.

In December 2025, we continued to serve the community with our Toys for Tots Christmas tree in the Recreation Center Lobby, and, at this writing, we are delivering toys to the Toys for Tots distribution center. Thank you for your support of this event.

We also took time to celebrate each other at our holiday party for our diligent work during the previous months. It was a good time, and all 20 members enjoyed a good meal.

New year. New projects! As you con-



Lions Club members and spouses.

Photo by restaurant staff

sider what your calendar will be filled with this spring, please consider adding our Casino Night fundraiser to your calendar.

Casino night will be held on Sunday, March 22, from 3 to 6 p.m. at Circle Square Cultural Center. This is a major fundraising event for us and is open to the public.

The event’s proceeds allow us to serve our community as we did in 2025. Your ticket purchase will help us to continue to support some of our Marion County schools, Veterans Helping Veterans, Isaiah House, and our quarterly donations to a variety of sight-saving organizations such as Dogs, Inc., Lions Saving Sight,

Florida Center for the Blind, and others. Tickets are \$50 each and include \$300 in gaming money, food, and drink. Lions will be selling tickets during Ticket Tuesday. Our ticket limit is 300. Don’t miss out on a fun night.

Lions Club meetings are on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month in the Arbor Conference Center Event Room II at 5 p.m. If you would like further information, you can contact Bert Perkins, our membership chair, at 909-262-8407.

Women of the World

Lois Rowland



Women of the World is a social and charitable organization. Our mission is to entertain, inform, educate, and inspire our members through our monthly meetings and to contribute to the local community by providing much-needed goods to those in need in Marion County.

Our bunco fundraiser was held on Monday, Nov. 17, 2025. Over \$4,800 was raised. This money will be used for our end-of-year donations to the groups that the club members decide upon.

On Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, Peggy Carey, a ventriloquist from “Willie and Company,” entertained us with the help of her wooden friend, Willie. He was a pretty outgoing little cowboy who told jokes and sang songs. Granny, the oldest wooden member of the group, joined the show, and both of them sang songs while Peggy stood there speechless. It was a delightful show!

Our charity speaker was Pastor David Houck from the Help Agency of the Forest. He and his wife founded the project in 1993. Thousands of children and their families live in poverty within the

Ocala National Forest. This nonprofit group feeds more than 7,500 people each month. In addition to meals, the agency provides financial assistance, education, mentoring, teen pregnancy prevention, and opportunities to create better futures. Their mission is to give hope and opportunity to as many children as possible by breaking the cycle of poverty. School and summer programs are provided.

The December 2025 meeting featured Broadway Moves. The SPCA of Marion County was the charity. They requested cat and dog food, as well as snacks made in the USA.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 15, at noon in the Recreation Center Ballroom. All meetings going forward will be on the second Thursday of each month (except March, when we will have the 23rd annual Fashion Show). The Fashion Show will be held on Wednesday, March 18. Tickets will be going on sale in January.

We also support Operation Shoebox each month by donating items for inclusion in care packages sent to our military personnel overseas.

The club is open to all women residents with a valid resident ID or Gateway of Services pass. If you are interested in joining us, please call Michele Croud, club president, at 586-872-1966.



Photo by John Schnur

Dancing Jewels performed at the Holiday Fest and at local senior living facilities in December 2025.

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Active Singles Club golf cart winner. Photo by Gloria Buck

Active Singles Club

Jan Lindell



Welcome to 2026. It's great seeing all of our new members enjoying our many activities and making new friends. That's what Active Singles Club is all about. In 2025, we had 110 new members join our club. Our Active Singles Club won the trophy for "Best Club Representation" at the Holiday Golf Cart Parade in December 2025. Two of our members also won individual awards for the decorations of their carts. Our holiday and New Year's Eve parties were wonderful with dancing and excellent food. Our committees really outdid themselves. We were "sold out" for both events.



Active Singles Club golf cart winner. Photo by Gloria Buck

phy for "Best Club Representation" at the Holiday Golf Cart Parade in December 2025. Two of our members also won individual awards for the decorations of their carts. Our holiday and New Year's Eve parties were wonderful with dancing and excellent food. Our committees really outdid themselves. We were "sold out" for both events.

Check out our January activities and events on the calendar. Always sign up early to avoid being on a waitlist. We will continue to have tech help days in 2026 to help members use our online programs. Our travel committee has met and is working to put together long and day trips for our members. Our first group cruise in March is sold out with 30-plus members.

Our meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-IV. The doors open at 7:15 p.m., the meeting starts at 7:30 p.m., and a social hour follows. We welcome any single residents to visit one of our meetings to see what we are all about. You must have a valid resident ID or Gateway of Services pass to join our club.

We are looking forward to a very busy 2026.

On Top of the World NEWS

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SWANS

Lois Nix



2025 was a busy, active year for the Single Women Active Networking System (SWANS). Our club is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2026.

We are a group of single women from diverse backgrounds who have come together. The one thing we have in common is that we are all alone at this time of our lives. We offer support, socialization, and a sense of belonging. Our motto is "SWANS are never alone."

We have many networking activities to participate in. Included in our networking system are our monthly social groups, where six women meet to share appetizers, lunches, or a full-course dinner. While the groups meet for only six months, many of us are still close to other women we met years ago. It is all about networking.

We have many faithful SWANS who have been members since 2016. I have been a member since the beginning and have been a coordinator for 18 years.

Our volunteers are faithful in organizing our outdoor social activities. Many SWANS participate in many other social activities outside of our club.

One of our most popular trips is going to the beach. A group of SWANS just returned from a cruise. Participation is a choice.

Our club accepts new members at any time; we do not have monthly meetings. We meet only in March and September as a club. We do not collect club dues. A resident ID is needed to participate. A Gateway of Services is no longer needed.

Every Saturday, SWANS play samba at 10 a.m. in the Arbor Conference Center Large Card Room. If you are thinking about joining the SWANS and want to learn how to play Samba or Hand and Foot, check out the classes offered by Lois at Master the Possibilities.

Twenty years as a club is definitely something to celebrate, and we will be planning a celebration, perhaps in May or June. Our volunteers are already planning.

Happy New Year, everyone. Ladies, if you are single and would like to join us, call Lois at 352 854-0558.

SWANS are never alone. SWANS are never forgotten.

We Care Share Circle

J. Ashi Olshan



This is a facilitated talking circle club for everyone to feel comfortable revealing and healing. I was recently reminded of how helpful it is to be able to have a free and safe place – like the confidential anonymous programs – to share one's experiences and feelings, to discharge anxiety healthily, without receiving unwanted opinions, judgments, or advice.

As the primary caregiver for my wife, I found no local support groups to help me stay centered and nurture myself as well. As a group of caring people who value honesty, integrity, and a more humane humanity – in all walks of life – we are a non-sectarian, non-partisan, facilitated circle of friends, who support each other in the best ways possible, by compassionate listening with an empathetic heart – for any issues we each feel the desire or need to address.

In addition to our moving and often funny personal stories, we'll have some interesting and entertaining videos, communication exercises, guest speakers, and follow-up discussions on topics important to us.

Share your experiences, strengths, and hopes with us, so we can learn together how to heal the personal, relationship, and social anxieties that are often just a few discharged words (or learned skills) away from relief.

Sunday, Jan. 18, is our launch date. Then we'll meet on the first and third Sunday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon in the Arbor Activity Center Event Room I.

In addition, we already have an ongoing bocce group and will be scheduling other extracurricular activities for club members to enjoy. Depending on your feedback and the number of people who show up, the time and room for our meetings might change. To join, before you show up, so we can accommodate the number of people interested, contact Ashi (Jeff "Ashi" Olshan) at 707-280-3823 or info@AshiArts.US. I am an experienced group facilitator, licensed teacher, and author of "Resolutions: Resolving Human Conflict."

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Latinos Club

Silvia C. Garcia



¡Hola Amigos! 2026 brings the opportunity to make positive lifestyle changes, and what better place to do so than right here in On Top of the World! Many residents have moved to our community to enjoy life to the fullest, and our club is playing a big role in helping people realize there is so much more to life once you reach 55-plus. This year will bring even more opportunities to have fun, make new friendships, and nurture the wonderful ones you already have, making your membership even more valuable!

Our first event of the year will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 6, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Appleton Museum of Art. Members, you must RSVP via the invitation you received to secure a spot, which is bound to sell out quickly.

Our annual membership celebration and dancing event will be held on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-IV. It is very important that you RSVP — members, please reply to the invitations you receive! All tickets are sold in advance; no tickets are sold at the door. Ticket sales will take place during Ticket Tuesdays on Jan. 13 and Jan. 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studio III.

Volunteer opportunities – we need you! You can make a difference by joining our group of volunteers who help ex-

ecute successful, fun-filled events. For volunteer opportunities, contact one of the members listed at the bottom of this column.

Our last monthly dinner was held at the Fonda Dulce Dios Mio restaurant. It was an incredible evening for our members. The food was delicious, we were served promptly, the service was superior, our members danced non-stop to live music, and the grand finale was gift cards courtesy of the restaurant – the lucky winners were Vicky Pacheco and Raymond Villanueva.

Members got a glimpse of Winter Wonderland at the World Equestrian Center and were given a tour, including the rooms at the Equestrian Hotel; some members stayed to enjoy dining at the various restaurants within the center. We also got to indulge in Emma’s Patisserie, a delicious escape into the art of fine pastry.

Save the following dates for the first half of the year events:

- Saturday, Feb. 28: Wine tasting and dancing.
- Saturday, March 28: Greet, meet, rotate, and dance.
- Saturday, April 25: Oldiwed, Midwed, and Newlywed game and dancing.
- Saturday, May 30: Murder mystery dinner and dancing.
- Saturday, June 27: Luau Latino and dancing.

Weekly game nights and monthly dinners also continue throughout the year. Be sure to visit our Facebook page (OTOW Latinos Club Ocala). Join us! For more information, call Silvia C. Garcia at 561-801-8188, Ivan Vazquez at 727-403-9629, or Micky Crawford at 352-207-7153.



Latinos Club members at The Equestrian Hotel – World Equestrian Center.

Scandinavian American Club

David Wesenberg



The Scandinavian American Club has begun another season of fellowship, conversation, and learning about our Scandinavian American brothers and sisters. Our club meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. in the Arbor Conference Center Event Room. Our next meeting will be at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27, in the Arbor Conference Center Event Room. In our meetings, people talk about their experiences, hopes, successes, and failures with one another.

In November 2025, we had our annual smorgasbord Christmas dinner. We celebrated Scandinavian food and customs,

both traditional and modern. The food was great, the conversation interesting, and the reminisces thoughtful.

Are you at least part Scandinavian? Or are you just interested in the Scandinavian contributions to American society? What a great opportunity to hear and see from those who have experienced that immigration experience.

The Scandinavian American Club is a great place to enjoy fun, fellowship, and unusually good Scandinavian food. Join us. We love to share the fun.

Every meeting is an opportunity to learn more about our Scandinavian heritage and to share a meal and fellowship. For more information, contact Arlene Chilcott at 352-304-8779.

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Genealogical Society

Sid Levine

Our year ended on a high note with the annual holiday luncheon at Milano’s. We all enjoyed a nice lunch and conversations with our fellow family history researchers.

Our mission is to help new members get started and help experienced members conquer those hurdles that have stalled their research.

Our next meeting is on Monday, Jan. 19, and we will have a team of capable club members eager to work one-on-one with anybody who isn’t sure what their next step should be. You might just find a long-lost cousin, your name on a document, or even a skeleton in your closet. You just don’t know what you don’t know. Bring your laptops and your pictures, stories, and documents.

The Genealogical Society meets on the third Monday of every month in the Hobby Building Event Room at 10 a.m. Newcomers are welcome.

Happy 2026 to all.

Friends of Bill W Group

You are not alone on this journey. We come together weekly to share our experience, strength, and hope. If you are in recovery or think you have a problem with alcohol, please join us. We meet weekly on Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room. Please note that the meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 27, will be held, for this one date only, in the Recreation Center Lounge.

For more information or to be notified of schedule changes, please email friendsofbillwocala@gmail.com.

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World Traveler

Bill Shampine



Today, we are going to visit the Lauterbrunnen Valley, located in Switzerland. We are visiting this place because it is geographically unique and incredibly beautiful.

The valley is situated in the Bernese Alps. Many of the nearby mountains are more than 13,000 feet high. That is high enough to be snow-covered for much of the year, and it is home to many glaciers.

Lauterbrunnen Valley is one of the deepest valleys in the Alpine chain. It is a true cleft in the mountains. It is narrow, rarely more than 0.6 miles wide, with extremely steep cliff walls rising straight up to 1,000 feet, with sloped land continuing up to 3,300 feet. With tons of melting snow and ice every year, the valley receives water from 72 waterfalls!

The best known of these is Staubbach Falls. At 974 feet, Staubbach is the highest free-falling waterfall in Switzerland (free-falling means that once the water goes over the edge, the next stop is the valley floor).

Mattenbach Fall, also in the valley, is a cascading waterfall (meaning the water hits the cliff wall more than once on its way down). It is 3,051 feet high and is the third-highest cascading waterfall in the world.

With a 2020 population of 2,301, the

village of Lauterbrunnen is the largest in the valley and a tourist destination known especially as the mecca of the extreme sport wingsuit base jumping. For those of you not familiar with this sport, participants wear a specialized jumpsuit with webbed wings between the arms and legs to generate lift, allowing them to glide horizontally during a skydive. Base jumping is done by jumping from an object, such as a tall building or a high cliff, instead of leaping out of a perfectly good airplane. Frankly, I think this is one sport that I can easily live without.

Staubbach Falls, located just west of Lauterbrunnen, drops from an overhanging cliff. At 974 feet, it is so high that much of the water is lost as spray before it reaches the valley floor. For the smarter people, the village has built a hiking trail that will take you up the cliff face and behind the falling water. It is a great view, but be sure to take a raincoat, as you will get soaked.

If you want to see a bit of Lauterbrunnen without actually going there, you can watch the 1969 James Bond movie “On Her Majesty’s Secret Service.” Margitta and I watched this movie a couple of weeks ago. The latter half of the movie was filmed in Lauterbrunnen Valley. The restaurant, Piz Gloria, which crowns the Schilthorn peak, is described in the film as the hideout for Blofeld, the movie’s villain. For one of George Lazenby’s escapes, he, theoretically, skied down the mountain to reach the village of Murren, followed by a dramatic car chase. The photography is fantastic.



A view of Lauterbrunnen Valley, Switzerland

Travel Toppers

Mary Lamp



Travel Toppers Tours and its volunteers practice safety procedures for the residents of On Top of the World when participating in our tours. All residents (in golf carts and cars) are required to follow the direction of volunteers when entering and exiting the parking lot off 81st Loop. Anyone who does not follow the safety procedures will be denied a reservation on future trips conducted by Travel Toppers Tours.

Reservations for Travel Toppers trips can be made Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with the coordina-

tors listed for each event. Reservations can be made for only two people at a time, and guests will go on a waitlist. As this is a resident club, the board wants to give our own residents first opportunity to attend. If there is availability, guests from the waitlist will be asked whether they are still interested in attending the trip.

The Suncoast Dinner Theater production of “Come from Away» to be seen Saturday, Jan. 24, has been sold out. If you wish to be placed on our waitlist, call Linda Uhley at 352-854-8536. Beginning Monday, Jan. 5, Diane Knox will begin taking reservations for “Miss Saigon” to be seen Saturday, March 14. If interested, call her at 352-390-2386. Tickets for these productions are \$100 per person and include the performance, dinner and dessert, transportation and tips

for the driver and servers. Like all our trips, payment must be made by check only and is nonrefundable unless there is a waitlist.

A trip to Tampa Bay Downs has been booked for March 21. It is their 100th anniversary. Our trip will include bus transportation, entrance to the race-track, a lovely buffet meal in the Skye Terrace, gratuities and taxes. The cost is \$80 per person. The trip will depart at 9 a.m. and return at 6:30 p.m. If interested, call Sharon Stetson at 207-838-3776 beginning Tuesday, Jan. 13. Please do not make calls on Mondays for this event.

There is an extended trip planned from Sept. 18 through Oct. 4. Our “Get Your Kicks on Route 66” tour leaves from Chicago, then travels through eight states, ending in Los Angeles. The price

is \$4,719 per person and includes escorted tours, accommodations, transportation from and to Ocala, prepaid gratuities and travel insurance. The price does not include airfare. The deposit is \$649 per person with final payment due on Tuesday, June 30. Call Janet Wiles at 804-243-4008.

Traveltopperstours.com offers more details and up-to-date information about our trips. Trips sponsored by Travel Toppers Tours are open only to residents with a valid resident ID or Gateway of Services pass. Copies of Gateway of Services passes must be submitted with the resident’s check to prove the resident is current. Any non-resident who participates must be a guest of a resident club member.

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Battle of the Paddle is Back

By Mykenzie Hager

The second annual Battle of the Paddle Pickleball Tournament will return to On Top of the World from Friday, Feb. 27 to Sunday, March 1, 2026, bringing three days of high-energy play, spirited crowds, and a strong sense of community to the courts. After last year's successful launch, anticipation has been building for months as players and spectators alike prepare for another unforgettable weekend.

Participants can expect a full tournament lineup spanning all three days. Men's doubles will open the event on Friday, Feb. 27, setting the tone with fast-paced games and enthusiastic matchups. The excitement continues on Saturday, Feb. 28, with women's doubles, followed by the always-popular mixed doubles on Sunday, March 1. All divisions will compete in a round-robin format that ensures players get plenty of time on the court. Based on overall registration, some brackets may be divided into pools to maintain balanced play and competitive integrity.

Registration opened Monday, Dec. 1, 2025, at PickleballTournaments.com, and early registration is strongly encouraged. Players who register by Tuesday, Jan. 20, will receive an official commemorative tournament T-shirt (while supplies last). The final deadline to register is Thursday, Feb. 19. Each tournament day will begin with 7 a.m. check-in, with matches scheduled to run from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Spectators are welcome through-

out the weekend and are encouraged to bring their own chairs to comfortably enjoy full days of play.

Organizers say the momentum from last year's inaugural tournament helped

solidify Battle of the Paddle as a new annual tradition for On Top of the World and the surrounding region. With growing participation in the sport and increasing interest from players across Central Florida and beyond, organizers expect this year's turnout to exceed expectations. Many of last year's competitors are already planning to return, and new players are eager to join the event for the first time. The combination of strong community involvement, a welcoming atmosphere, and high-level

competition has made this tournament a standout addition to Florida's pickleball calendar.

Whether you're stepping onto the court or cheering from the sidelines, the second annual Battle of the Paddle is shaping up to be a must-attend event. With its energetic environment, competitive spirit, and community-driven focus, it promises a memorable experience for everyone involved.

For more information and to register, visit PickleballTournaments.com.



Photo by Phil Panzera

Cranksgiving riders departing from The Whistling Duck.

Cranksgiving Charity Ride

By Phil Panzera
World News Writer

On Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, a charity bicycle ride and food drive was held to raise cash and food for local veterans. The Cranksgiving ride was organized by Dean Fesette, in conjunction with Veterans Helping Veterans USA.

The 36 participants rode a six-mile route, stopping at Aldi and Publix, to buy food for a veteran's Thanksgiving dinner. Scrambling through the aisles, the riders generously bought a whopping \$2,930 in food items. The largest amount of food was purchased by Mikey Meyer, with a \$520 collection from the Active Singles Club.

Dean also contacted many local businesses and secured additional donations of \$2,400. Residents also donated many items, which were raffled and auctioned

before the ride, raising another \$1,720.

Altogether, this very successful charity event raised over \$7,000 for local veterans! We thank all those who volunteered their support and helped create smiles for many families during this holiday time. The food and money served a vital purpose in giving back to our veterans who have sacrificed so much for all of us.

Veterans Helping Veterans is not publicly supported and relies on private donations. They do tremendous and much-needed work in serving, supporting, and advocating for Marion County veterans.

Cranksgiving is held each year in November. For more information or to participate, contact Dean Fesette at fesette@aol.com or 561-542-1930.

Billiards Championship

By Phil Panzera

Time flies. This column marks the completion of my 10th year as your dauntless chronicler of exciting billiard events and intrepid deeds by our players. As much as I am honored by this responsibility, I would be delighted to pass the torch to another historian. All that's required is an active interest and participation in club events, and a modest command of the King's English. Sorry about the pay, though; it's really not all that competitive. If you're interested, please let me know.

Well-deserved congratulations go to Mark Gatchell's Team 6, who captured the league championship in our 2025 fall league. Team 6 also won the Wolves division, with the best win-loss record and the highest win percentage of all 10 teams in the league. Mark's team included: Co-captain John Anthony, Bill Walker, Dan Weiss, Denise Gatchell, Donna Gilmore, Edwin Rodriguez, Roger Mack and Windy Carleton.

Debbie Radicchi's Team 4 won the Lions division championship, with the same win-loss record as Mark's team, but with two fewer Games Won pro rata. This two-game difference decided the league championship, proving the adage, "Every game counts!" Debbie's team included: Cocaptain Jim Carnack, Fred Marsh, Jeff Dyar, Nikki Buehlman, Phil Franklin, Phil Panzera and Tom

Burck.

Runners-up in the Wolves division were Bob Epling's Team 9. Bob's team dominated the league in the early going, but Mark's team slowly gained on them and won the decisive match in the very last week. Team 9 had the distinction of earning the best win percentage in both divisions.

Runners-up in the Lions division were

Luanne Kerkhoff's Team 3, who had the highest win percentage in the division. Teams 3 and 4 were neck-and-neck throughout the league, but Team 4 won the tiebreaker by taking three of their four meetings, 78-66.

The 2026 winter league starts in mid-January, and a sign-up sheet is now available on the room counter. If you haven't played in a league before, give it a try. Almost every first-timer eventually comes up to me and tells me how happy they are that they joined. It's a great way to socialize, have fun, make new friends, and get your competitive juices flowing.

The club had a terrific Christmas dinner-dance last month, which also celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of our club. The club was founded in 1995 by Ray Stover, who served as its first president, and helped draft the original by-laws.

Still our senior statesman, Ray established the blueprint for what our club has become today, and he is one of a handful of members inducted into our golden circle for his outstanding contributions. If you see him in the room, please thank him for planting the seed that has been nurtured to become the great club we have today.



Photo by Bob Epling

2025 fall league champions.



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Golf

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Happy 2026 to you and yours from the On Top of the World golf staff. We also would like to thank everyone for a tremendous 2025, and we hope 2026 will be even better.

If you resolve to improve your golf game, we have the answer. Our professional staff has created a wonderful and exciting golf clinic schedule for 2026. The season kicks off on Saturday, Jan. 3, with a clinic on “Putting” at the Candler Hills driving range at 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. This clinic is \$15 per student. Please reg-

ister at the Candler Hills Golf Shop no later than Friday, Jan. 2, at 2 p.m. Look for the complete 2026 clinic schedule at both the Candler Hills and On Top of the World Golf Shops.

A friendly reminder from the golf staff that all shop credits will expire Friday, Feb. 27. All credit winnings to your account will be posted through the January events. Any winnings from February will be held until the beginning of March for posting.

The annual Jekyll & Hyde event takes place on The Links and The Tortoise & Hare Golf Courses on Friday, Jan. 23, at 9 a.m. This is a four-person scramble with nine holes set up very easily and nine holes set up extremely difficult. Registration is \$20 per player, and you may create your own foursome.

Here are the events scheduled for the

- month:
- Monday, Jan. 12: Monday Couples on The Links with a 2 p.m. shotgun start.
 - Friday, Jan. 16: Winter Wonderland on Candler Hills with a 9 a.m. shotgun start.
 - Friday, Jan. 23: Jekyll & Hyde on The Links and The Tortoise & The Hare.

World Accolades

THE LINKS: Roger Karsnitz, eagle #4. Bigelow Robinson, shot his age 78. John Mayfield shot 74, five strokes under his age. Lowell Kutzbach, eagle #3. Rudy Normandin shot 77, nine strokes under his age. Richard Shirley, eagle #3. Goldy Ware, eagle #3. John Kosempa, eagle #12.

Congratulations to all.

Golf Tip of the Month

How many of you get frustrated and upset after each missed shot? Golf is a funny game that, with one swing, can manipulate your attitude and demeanor for not only your round but the remainder of your day. Keep in mind that everyone hits bad shots, yes, including touring professionals. Don't let one swing ruin your round or even your day.

Every round, take a minute to appreciate your surroundings, the birds chirping, the beautiful flowers and trees, and the friends you have made playing this wonderful game. Don't let the wonderful things in life pass you by, and remind yourself that golf is just a game we all enjoy playing.

Have a safe and exciting 2026!

Men's Golf Association

John Yenne



The Men's Golf Association (MGA) closed out 2025 with the re-election of board members Kevin McGuinness, Tom Neville, and Joe Polizzotti to new three-year terms.

In addition, Joe Baumgartner was chosen through write-in votes on the December Chicken Day to serve on the MGA advisory panel.

We ended the year with 290 members, and membership dues of \$25 must be paid to continue participating in our weekly games in 2026. Use the envelopes in the players' lounge at the Golf Shop and drop them in the MGA box.

Our popular Chicken Day luncheons have been locked down at the Recreation Center for another year. In addition, the food and beverage committee is planning five food truck days. These events, funded by the MGA, have become popular additions to our calendar.

Tournament Director Jim McCormack reports that participation remains strong. Our hole-in-one pool currently has 43 players signed up for a total prize fund of \$215.

The board purchased \$5 scratch-off lottery tickets for all 156 members participating in the Dec. 3, 2025, Chicken Day. It also gave \$50 gift cards to each of our dozen lady volunteers who've kept

us well-fed and organized throughout 2025.

Please note the following Wednesdays on your calendar:

- Jan. 7: Chicken Day Scramble (The Links)
- Jan. 14: Individual Low Net (The Tortoise & The Hare)
- Jan. 21: Two Best Balls (The Links)
- Jan. 28: 12 Blind Holes Individual (The Tortoise & The Hare)

For upcoming events and a tip-of-the-month feature, visit otowmga.com.

Chicken Day Scramble
Dec. 3, 2025

Ladies 18-Hole Golf Association

Jo Della Penna



Quota
Nov. 4, 2025/The Tortoise & The Hare

Flight 1: -1-Gayle Lagrange. -4-Lisa Free. Tie at -6-Sharon Fairclough, Mary Jeannotte.

Flight 2: Tie at -3-Lynn Colomb, Diane Boston, Judi McGuiness. -5-Peggy Ellenberger.

Flight 3: -2-Katie Schriewer. -4-Janette Sheil. -6-Vickie Noltensmeyer. -7-Karen Schroeckenthaler.

Flight 4: Tie at -4-Donna Isaac, Ellen Brinn, MJ Strelec. -6-Cho Yulan.

Flight 5: -2-Brenda Hofmann. Tie at -4-Robin Le Master, Susanne Mullineaux. -6-Barbara Vincent.

The Links Flight: 51-Terry Smith, Don Channell, Joseph Mendola, Joe Baumgartner. 52-Anthony Morris, Rick Plesea, Russ Christopher, Mike Stanford. Tie at 54-Norm Hayworth, Rick Schriewer, Ed Vasoli, Thomas Mansfield; Dick Emmons, Rick Deroven, Gary Hassett, Kevin Broderick; Terry Hubbardt, Ray Christ, Stuart Martin, Bill Aman. Tie at 55-Dan Goggin, Patrick Whitley, Howard Gluckman, Douglas Cannatella; Donnie Perkins, Joseph Dunnack, Mike Carver, Bruce Venslavsky; Greg McDowell, Don Ropel, Bruce Green, John DiVito; Robert Coughanour, John Bojanac, Mike Kurlakowsky, Carl Zeiler; Garfield Gray, Mark Parker, Philip Petrozella, Terry Rizer.

Flight 6:
Tie at -1-Nancy Zielinski, Margie Williams. Tie at -2-Pamela Robison, Terry Lemesh.

Red, White, & Blue Scramble
Nov. 18, 2025/The Tortoise & The Hare

45-Marcella Nunez, Patty Whitley, Connie Lukas, Roxiann Dwyer. Tie at 47-Lynn Colomb, Karen Schroeckenthaler, Joann Ropel, Pamela Robison, Sharon Fairclough and Kathleen Goodwin, Barbara Vincent, Donna Brunell. Tie at 48-Laura McMillan, Debra De Matteo, Jean Czachor, Nancy Zielinski, Christine Giza, Ellen Brin and Jane Hall, Carol Carney, Lori Pizzini, Connie Sohl, Virginia Madura, Gretchen Normandin. Tie at 49-Laurel Staiger, Janette Sheil, Susanne Mullineaux, Margie Williams, Peggy Ellenberger, Christine McIntire, Joann Delmar.

The only person you should try to be better than is the person you were yesterday.

The Tortoise & The Hare Flight: 54-Rich Sievers, Jerry Williams, Terry Thomas, Curt Bingham. 55-Robert Kuhl1, Robert Walker, Joe Aldridge, David Bauer. 56-Tom Neville, Bryan McCleave, Cecil Avery, Charlie Taylor. Tie at 57-August Rosenberger, John Parnau, Larry Turner, Bill Dobbins; Guy Stiebing, Ken Belcher, William Cope, Gerald Schneider. Tie at 59-Raymond Tyler, David Emmons, Ralph Norton, Joe Ferris; Don McCrimmon, Larry Skoch, Scott Smith, Edwin Rodriguez; Philip Shaw, Bob Epps, Dennis Kerkhoff, Walter Knautz. Tie at 60-James McCormack, John Atwood, Robert Jorgensen, Donald Wheeler; Ray Kallai, Sam Feola, Jim Lefaver, Michael Dwyer; Denis Bricker, Bill Kenyon, Eugene Paradis.

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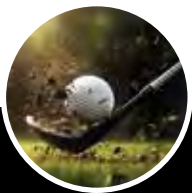
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Candler Hills
Men's Golf

Rick Pettit



Welcome back to Tuesday morning golf at the Candler Hills Golf Course! The summer really flew by, and golfing was wonderful at our two other courses while Candler Hills underwent restoration from tee to green.

As I have chosen to step down from the board, this will be my last column, as a new board member will take over this position. Information from the November and December 2025 board meetings, and an introduction to the new board members, will take place in next month's column. I truly enjoyed my three years, but with so many new members, I thought it was time for some new ideas from others.

While it will take a bit of time for our grasses to fill in completely, the greens are fabulous to putt on. Right now, the three courses have top-notch greens. On

that note, I would remind everyone to please repair your ball marks and a couple of others, please. There is nothing worse than seeing the small brown spots on our greens that result from not fixing or fixing incorrectly. Take a second to repair these; if not, the mower will shave the tops of them, and then we'll have ugly spots all over the greens. Do not just pound the marks with your putter; they need to be repaired properly. It is our course; let us take care of it.

We will be starting our second season of interclub play in January again. The team is composed of Candler Hills MGA members versus Stone Creek, Ocala Golf Club, and UF Bostick in Gainesville. The team consists of Jeff Richardson, Paul Siders, Joe Moenter, Wes Wendt, Brian Henderson, Rich Campbell, Mark Durso, Bill Wignall, Lonnie Page, Brian Bennett, Larry Skoch, Jeff Holmes, and Patrick Nagy. Good luck, guys!

Two-Man Best Ball
Nov. 25, 2025

A/B Flight 1: Tie at 66–Dave Falcone, Bill Gurbisz, and Jeff Holmes, Ray Parlato.
A/B Flight 2: 63–Bill Wignall, John Herman. Tie at

67–Brian Bennett, Ray Kallai, and Dave Smith, Steve Rudolph.

C/D Flight 1: 65–Ray Christ, Bryan McCleave. Tie at 67–Charlie Taylor, Mark Parker, and Dennis McCourt, Howard Gluckman.

C/D Flight 2: 64–Pat Cioffi, Bill Kenyon. Tie at 66–Mike Altomare, Gregg Keidel, and Gary Niland, Tim Beaty

Three of Four 4 Best Ball (Net)
Dec. 2, 2025

204–Larry Skoch, Bill Gurbisz, David Metzger, Loren Magsam. 205–Brian Bennett, Randy Kayewski, Rick Plesea, Joe Aldridge. 206–Jeff Holmes, John Herman, Billy Scholp, Gregg Keidel.

Candler Hills
Ladies 18-Hole

Beth Wolinsky



The Candler Hills LGA-18 is looking forward to another successful and exciting year. At our general membership meeting on Nov. 13, 2025, new by-laws were put in place and a new charity was selected for 2026 – Interfaith Emergency Services. A new board was elected, and the following were elected: President Sandy Snyder, Vice President Judi McGuinness, Secretary Eileen Gustavus, and Treasurer Mary Dawson. Congratulations, ladies.

We would like to thank the outgoing board – Janette Sheil, Katie Schriewer, and Janelle Gluckman. We would also like to thank Sandy Snyder for being the tournament director. You, ladies, did a great job this past year. Kudos to you all.

We have a new member, Kathy Sisti, who joined our league. We look forward to playing with you.

Dues collection for 2026 begins Thursday, Jan. 1. You can pay online using the website or pay by cash or check. Dues are \$25 plus \$5 for ringers if you choose to opt in. We hope to have great participation.

The combined holiday party for both LGA-18s was held on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025. As usual, there was a good turnout, and it was an enjoyable evening. Thank you, Patty Whitley, for organizing this and making it a great success.

Golf can be a stressful game, but it's important to keep your sense of humor. Laughter, in golf, as in life, is definitely a stress reducer. So, next time you're hav-

Stableford (Individual)
Dec. 9, 2025

Flight 1: 34–Wes Wendt. 33–Paul Siders. Flight 2: 36–Ron Lombardo. 32–Ken Acox. Flight 3: 36–John Herman. Tie at 34–Rick Schriewer, Kevin McGuinness.

Flight 4: 36–Pat Cioffi. 32–Ray Christ. Flight 5: Tie at 34–Mark Parker and Gerry Messenger.

Flight 6: 41–Gregg Keidel. 37–Tim Beaty. Flight 7: Tie 36–Philip Petozella, Omer Fannin, Danny Ball.

There you have it, my last edition. See you at Candler Hills!

ing a bad round, chalk it up to having a bad day and laugh. It really helps.

The Candler Hills LGA-18 is open to any woman resident. If you would like to join, please contact our president, Sandy Snyder, at freesand@icloud.com.

Finally, believe, achieve, and enjoy golf. As always, be careful out there.

Low Net (Best Ball) Foursome v. Field (Team)
Nov. 13, 2025

61–Christine Giza, Karen Schroeckenthaler, Robin LeMaster, Pamela Robison. 62–Virginia Combs, Patty Whitley, Cynthia Gersten, Marla Bennett. 63–Becky Bivins, Debby Wilson, Beth Wolinsky, Margie Williams. Tie at 64–Mary Jeannotte, Mary A. Cunningham, Chris McIntire, Joann Ropel. Janette Sheil, Mary Smith, Jane Hall, Jan Christ. Tie at 65–Lori Pizzini, Joyce Jones, Jean Czachor, Carol Clark. LuLu Kerkhoff, Beverly Ovrebø, Brenda Hofmann, Renee Middleton. Sandy Snyder, Judi McGuinness, Rhonda Tyler, Toni Stevenson.

Low Chapman (Alt. Shot) Team v. Flight
Nov. 20, 2025

Flight 1: 68–Lisa Free, JoAnn Delmar. Tie at 69–Gail Lagrange, Teri Stecker. Laurel Staiger, Brenda Hofmann. 70–Virginia Combs, Ellen Brin. Tie at 72–Page Falconer, Judie Anderson. Lynn Colomb, Janelle Gluckman.

Flight 2: 68–Yuhlan Cho, Robin LeMaster. 69–Debby Wilson, Marla Bennett. 71–Peggy Ellenberger, Terry Lemesh. 72–Janette Sheil, Joann Ropel. 75–Karen Schroeckenthaler, Anne Dahlen.

One Best Ball (Team)
Dec. 4, 2025

56–Linda Taylor, Virginia Combs, Joann Ropel, Pamela Robison. 58–Gail Lagrange, Alice Schwing-Smith, Beth Wolinsky, Toni Stevenson. 61–Laura McMillan, Karen Schroeckenthaler, Jane Hall, Roxiann Dwyer. 62–Donna Herberger, Liz Pruss, Kay Budd, Renee Middleton.

Weight Loss Group

Laura Gavey



Here's to a healthy and happy new year to all! So, the holidays are over, and your scale isn't being kind to you. You ate and drank too much, even though you promised yourself you wouldn't. What can you do? Join one of our weight loss groups to get you back on track. Join your friends and neighbors who are already members and who will be making better choices with their food and exercise in 2026 and reaching their goals!

There are two opportunities to meet each week. On Mondays, we meet in the Hobby Building Art Room. Weigh-in starts at 4:30 p.m., and the meeting begins at 5 p.m. The new leader is Lois Trepper. On Tuesdays, we meet in the Arbor Activity Center Event Room I. Weigh-in starts at 9:15 a.m., and the meeting begins at 10 a.m. Beth Green is the leader. Visitors are always welcome.

For questions and additional details, please email Lois at ltrepper@att.net or Beth at tandbgreen220@gmail.com.

Cornhole Club

Ray Nault




Open play continues to be well attended with several new players joining our group. A reminder that annual dues will be collected in January – \$10 per person will cover equipment costs and the picnic.

Monday and Wednesday are the most heavily attended, but Thursday is gaining popularity. Equipment will be set up at 4 p.m. for practice, with league play beginning at 4:30 p.m. If more than 20 players show, they can wait for the first available court (which usually doesn't take long) or play in the grassy area next to the regular courts.

We welcome players of all skill levels, including beginners and those new to the game. We offer a beginner's class to learn the techniques and rules of cornhole. The classes are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. To register for the class, please contact Linda Nault at Lnault52@gmail.com.


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Top Pickleball Club

Teresa J. Armstrong



Welcome to a year of fun on the courts, waiting for you! It is super easy to get working on those resolutions with the fun social atmosphere here at Top Pickleball Club (TPC). Go ahead, set those goals for 2026; you can get there from here.

It is super exciting to be having the second annual Battle of the Paddle. On Top of the World will host players from TPC and around the country and world. Mark your calendar for Friday, Feb. 27, Saturday, Feb. 28, and Sunday, March 1.

TPC will have many volunteers helping with the event. Watch your email, the club website, and the OTOW App for more information and to learn how you can register to play or volunteer. To register, go to www.pickleballtournaments.com.

For those interested in learning about the sport, lace up those court shoes, bring your eye protection, and come on over to join PBI01, Introduction to Pickleball, on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. and the first Saturday of each month. Come to the upper courts; no registration is needed. The training team will be there to teach you the basics of pickleball and safety guidelines.

Once you have been properly introduced to the game, having decided this is the activity for you, the next recommended classes are PB 102 Basic Pickleball Skills and PB 104 Coached Play for beginner-level players. You can check the bulletin board or the club website, or ask any board member for information on joining the club.

Not to worry; as you become a more accomplished player wanting to work on your skills, the training team has plenty of classes available at every skill level. Members can register for classes via the "Events" tab on the website. The club's playtime allocations are also available at toppickleballclub.com and courtside on the bulletin boards.

For those club members wishing to be rated. It is best to begin with the Rules class, which is held at the Arbor Conference Center Event Room on the first Tuesday of each month at 11 a.m.

The TPC annual meeting was held on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025, at the Recreation Center. The annual meeting is where updates and information are shared in person with the membership, and elections are held. Congratulations to our new club officers and very fond farewells to those vacating their club offices. We greatly appreciate the hard work, dedication, and selfless donation of time and energy they each have given to the club. Robert Young, vice president; Gabriella McConnell, secretary; James Stewart, director; and Gayle Roberts, director. Serving on the board of directors of any club is not for the faint of heart, and I wish to extend a salute of acknowledgement and handshake of warm appreciation to each of you. Thank you for a job well done.



Table Tennis Club board – Paul Schasel, Mary Jeannotte, Paul Stadterman, Jim Swift, and Michael Lowe.

Table Tennis

Paul Stadterman



The Table Tennis Club brought energy and excitement to the community last week, as members gathered for the club's luncheon and meeting. With a lively crowd, delicious homemade dishes, and an afternoon of spirited table tennis play, the event showcased why the club has quickly become one of the community's most vibrant and welcoming groups.

The afternoon began with a warm welcome from President Paul Stadterman, who led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance before inviting everyone to enjoy a festive luncheon. Members contributed an impressive spread of appetizers and desserts, creating a friendly, social atmosphere that set the tone for the rest of the day.

Following lunch, the club held its quarterly meeting, where board members presented updates on finances, upcoming events, and new developments planned for 2026. The club also held its annual election of directors: President Paul Stadterman, Treasurer Jim Swift, Secretary Mary Jeannotte, Director of Play Paul Schasel, and Director of Room Mike Lowe.

Special thanks to board members stepping down: Athena Drewes, secretary for five years, and Michael Berry, for an outstanding year keeping our room and equipment in excellent order.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the discussion about the club's growing popularity and plans, including updates on the new building that will eventually house the new table tennis room. Members also reviewed recent successes, such as the highly praised instructional sessions led by Mike Lowe and Nick Arkon, which will be offered again in early 2026 due to strong demand.

The Table Tennis Club is also exploring opportunities for friendly compe-

tition with neighboring communities, including a potential exchange with Oak Run and participation in the On Top of the World Games, scheduled for October.

Once the meeting concluded, many attendees moved to the tables to enjoy an afternoon of lively play, laughter, and friendly rivalry, with the rhythmic tap of paddles filling the room as players of all skill levels participated.

The Table Tennis Club continues to build its reputation as one of the most active, social, and inclusive groups in the community. Residents, whether seasoned players or curious newcomers, are encouraged to stop by, meet new friends, and experience the fun and fitness benefits of table tennis. Club membership is \$10 per year.

Come join us at the Arbor Conference Center. Intermediate singles/doubles, Tuesday, 1 to 3 p.m.; singles, Friday, 3 to 5 p.m. Ladies doubles/singles, Monday, 1 to 3 p.m.; doubles, Wednesday, 10 a.m. to noon; singles, Friday, 1 to 3 p.m. All level doubles, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, 5:30 to 7 p.m., and Saturday, 1 to 3 p.m. All level singles, Wednesday, 1 to 3 p.m. Intermediate/advanced singles/doubles, Wednesday, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Advanced, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

For more information, contact President Paul Stadterman at ptstadterman@yahoo.com.

POP Tennis

Beth Smith



As residents look for fresh, healthy ways to kick off 2026, POP tennis (also known as paddle tennis) is emerging as one of the most enjoyable and accessible options available. Combining fast-paced rallies, social connection, and a low-impact workout, POP tennis is quickly gaining popularity among players of all ages and skill levels.

Our group plays every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 8 a.m. at The Arbors lower tennis courts, inviting newcomers to join in the fun or simply swing by to observe. No equipment? No problem. Paddles are available onsite for anyone wanting to give the sport a try – meaning your only requirement is a willingness to show up and have a good time.

POP tennis is a smaller-court, easy-to-learn variation of tennis that provides several benefits ideal for starting the year on the right foot:

- Improves fitness without feeling like a workout: Shorter courts and lightweight paddles make it approachable for beginners while still offering a great cardio boost.
- Low-impact and joint-friendly: A smart choice for those easing into activity or returning after time off.
- Built-in social connection: Matches move quickly, partners rotate often, and laughter is practically guaranteed.
- Accessible for all skill levels: Whether you're an experienced racquet-sport player or a complete newcomer, there's a place for you on the court.

For those who want to develop their skills or learn the basics before jumping into group play, coaching sessions and clinics are available. Contact Brenda Foster at brenda@gcfonline.com for details.

For general inquiries or more information, contact Shizuka Campagna at shizukacampagna@gmail.com.

Start 2026 with a new hobby that brings fitness, fun, and friendship – all before breakfast. Come check out POP tennis this week and see why the courts are buzzing!

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Bocce Club

Kathy Nastally



Happy 2026! Take a breath and relish the moments and memories of your holidays. First, we honored our veterans on Veterans Day, then Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa.

The visits with friends and family, the food, sights, sounds, and smells, and the fun are all now memories. So why then does time seem to fly by? The perception of time can be complicated. Time, whether seemingly dragging or fleeting, plays a significant role in how our brains process and store information. In times of routine, it doesn’t have to work so hard; new experiences and encounters require much more effort.

Speaking of time flying, we are already three months into our bocce league season! Open competition is going strong. Many of our snowbird friends and family have returned. We’ve missed them. Many individuals are most definitely improving their skills.

Interested in the game? Come out and put those resolutions to meet new people and try something new on the court. The courts are behind the Arbor Fitness Center next to the tennis courts.

We want you to join us. Open bocce is on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8:30 a.m. You play when your schedule allows. Luck of the draw is our format; we draw cards to see who and where you play. Your teammate today may be your opponent next time. You must sign in and come a little early, as we are limited to the first 48 players.

League play is fully underway and is played on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., and on Thursdays at 10 a.m. In the league, team members are committed to playing with their team as scheduled. Team standings are posted each week on the bulletin board courtside.

Do you like more flexibility, or are you not interested in being on a team? How about becoming a substitute? Let us know, and we will add you to the list! As a sub, teams will call if you are needed, so you can play or not, based on your schedule. We also have friends from Longleaf Ridge, whose league is closed to new members, and they play on Mondays at 4 p.m. All open court time is posted on our bulletin board on the shed.

If you are interested in bocce, you may play three times before becoming a member. Come by, check out the game, and give it a try. Any member is willing to give pointers on how the game is played and will assist you. Everyone must complete the club and community hold-harmless forms and present a valid resident ID or a Gateway of Services pass. Dues are \$15 and are good through Sept. 30. For safety reasons, closed-toed shoes are required to play.

For any questions, please contact Pam Brown at 970-531-1890. Let the bocce balls roll!

Horseshoes Club

Vern Kessler



Horseshoes are the most fun you can have with two and a half pounds of steel – and it’s free!

Thank you to Bruce Rollins for taking the time to paint the horseshoes and the stakes in the pit areas. All club members very much appreciate the freshly painted stakes and shoes.

In November 2025, the club pitched a total of 3,240 shoes, played 79 matches, and threw 708 ringers. The club’s ringer percentage was 21.85%.

Special accomplishments for the month were by Betty DeLong, pitching three triple-doubles or six ringers in a row. Betty also had a personal high score of 82 with 22 ringers. Diane Poster had a personal high of eight ringers. Cliff Dallas and Dave Laliberte had a winning percentage of 100% and 83.33% for the month.

The club welcomes back members John Bunyak and Don DeLaney. New members of the club are Diane Poster, Carl Eddinghausen, Bruce Rollins, Paul Gutterman, and Dave Ackroyd.

The club has moved the time for pitching horseshoes on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. The club pitches at the pits in the Veterans Park and has open practices on Thursdays at 10 a.m.

The pits are available almost every day for residents. Shoes, brooms, and dustpans are available at the pits. Please remove the white PVC pipe covering the steel stake before pitching any shoes. Replace the PVC pipe when done, sweep up around the pits, and put away all the equipment used.

Contact Vern Kessler at 321-268-3179 or vkmicheal214@gmail.com with any questions.

R/C Sailing Club

Gene Mangold



Looking for a relaxing, fun, and unique way to spend your Sunday afternoon? Then head over to Tuscawilla Park in downtown Ocala and watch the fascinating world of R/C (remote control) sailboat racing!

Every Sunday at noon, the R/C Sailing Club gathers at the park’s beautiful lake. For a short while, the lake transforms into a miniature racetrack for stunning, high-performance racing yachts, each measuring a sleek one meter in length.

- Action-Packed Racing: Races typically run from noon to 2 p.m., offering two hours of exciting, strategic maneuvers on the water.
- Try Your Hand: The club’s friendly “pilots” are always eager to share their passion. They will often let visitors take the controls and try sailing one of these miniature racing yachts themselves!
- Make it an Outing: Tuscawilla Park is the perfect spot for an afternoon adventure. On the south end of the park, you’ll find a craft brewery with food, and many other excellent restaurants are just a short walk away.

Come on out and see your neighbors, marvel at the beautiful boats, and maybe even discover a new hobby!

The club welcomes newcomers and even has a few used member sailboats for sale for those interested in joining the fleet. They can also recommend several sources for high-quality new boats. But first, just join us this Sunday and try one out!

The park is conveniently located downtown – just a quick nine-mile, 25-minute ride. We look forward to seeing you at the races! The address is

Again, we meet every Sunday at noon at Tuscawilla Park (600 NE Watula Avenue across from the basketball courts).

For more information, contact Gene via text at 772-678-5101 or Bernie at 816-678-3817. Visitors welcome. Free test drives!

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Photo by Kemp Howland

Race_CAL301.

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Archery Club

Robin Schiltz



The Archery Club’s holiday lunch social was held on Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025. It was a fun, festive event that brought everyone together after our monthly workshop. Along with enjoying the cooler weather on the range, the catered lunch provided by Sonny’s BBQ was a hit, with plenty of delicious food. Members shared stories, laughed, and talked about goals for the coming year. It was a simple afternoon built around good food, good company, and the shared love of archery, and it closed out the season on a high note.

We finished the year with 198 mem-

bers. This is the highest member count since the club was formed. We are proud to have archers of all levels, from beginners to competitive members, who continued to earn recognition in 2025 at the state, regional, and national levels.

Our 2026 membership renewal process is almost complete. If you haven’t already renewed, now is the time. Simply download, complete, and sign the renewal form available on the club website, then bring it and \$60 in cash or check to the range (plus \$40 if renewing an additional household member). We will be accepting renewals at the range on Fridays, Jan. 2, and Jan. 9, from 9 a.m. to noon, and at Sid’s Coffee Shop & Deli on Tuesday, Jan. 6, from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

The Archery Club manages the NFAA-certified range at the Veterans Park and welcomes archers of all skill levels, from

novices to competitive. Plenty of equipment is available for those new to archery or returning after a long hiatus. We also have a well-equipped maintenance shop to keep club and personal archery equipment in top shape.

In addition, we have practitioners of the traditional Martial art of kyudo, which emphasizes the spiritual and mental development of the archer. Kyudo’s slow, deliberate movements help practitioners achieve mental focus and inner harmony. To learn more about this meditative archery discipline, stop by the range during the kyudo archer’s practice time every Wednesday from 2 to 4 p.m. except the fourth Wednesday of the month when kyudo practice is held at Arbors Conference Center Dance Studio IV from 4 to 7 p.m. For more information, contact Brenda Foster (brenda@gcfonline.com).

Each Friday, we host “Freestyle Friday” from 9 a.m. to noon. Club mentors are on range and available to assist our novice archers with skill improvement. If you are considering joining the club, this is a great opportunity to meet members, learn more about archery, and have fun. For a quick introduction to the club, we invite you to stop by during Freestyle Friday.

We offer a variety of archery workshops during the year for club members. Patty Hoppe hosts “Archery Fundamentals and Shooting” workshops at the range on the third Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. Topics vary monthly, and a fun shoot is held after each workshop.

For more information, visit www.otowarcheryclub.org or contact us at info@otowarcheryclub.org. As always, keep it in the yellow.



Photo by Pat Wilbert

Tailgate party.

Co-Ed Recreational Softball

Pat Wilbert



The holidays are behind us, and a brand-new year has begun – which means it’s time to stick to those resolutions to get active. What better way than joining the Co-Ed Recreational Softball League?

Every Saturday at 9 a.m., players gather at the field to warm up, form teams, and enjoy eight innings of friendly competition. Games wrap up around 11 a.m., leaving plenty of time for camaraderie, exercise, and laughter.

The league recently celebrated its first tailgate party, hosted by Loretta Fenton, where players enjoyed great food and fellowship after the game. Equipment donations also keep the league thriv-

ing – thanks to Mike Hamlin from the men’s league, who generously provided three nearly new gloves. With plenty of bats, gloves, and tips from seasoned players, newcomers are always set up for success.

Softball offers a weekly dose of fitness through running, catching, and batting. For those who need a little help, volunteer runners step in until players are ready to take the bases themselves. Chris Lopez, who organizes the league, keeps everyone informed about upcoming events and ensures smooth operations.

The league is always looking for new players – especially women, whether experienced or simply curious to try the sport. Interested? Just stop by the softball field on Saturday morning and see what it’s all about.

Join our softball family, make new friends, and start the year off with fun and fitness. See you on the field!

Ohio Buckeyes Social Club

Amy Ingram



The Ohio Buckeyes Social Club has been enjoying cheering on the Buckeyes to a big 10 victory with hopes of winning another national championship. Go Bucks!

In addition to our game day watch parties, our club held its annual Holly Jolly Holiday Party. Members enjoyed a wonderful dinner with music, dancing, holiday giveaways, and friendship.

The current board will finish out their term at the annual membership meeting scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 13. The

meeting will be held at The Arbor Conference Center, Dance Studios III-IV, from 5 to 7 p.m. The club will be providing sub sandwiches, chips, and cookies. This will also be the time for existing and new members to either renew or join our club. Please RSVP for this event by Thursday, Jan. 8.

We are looking for members to step up and volunteer for board and social committee positions. Please reach out to a board member if you are interested in serving. If you are not a member and would like to join, email us at buckeyesfans34481@gmail.com.

Membership is open to residents with any ties to the state of Ohio. Annual dues are \$20 per person. Also, look for us on Facebook (Residents of On Top of the World Buckeye Social Club).



Photo by Amy Ingram

The Ohio Buckeyes Social Club members at a weekly game watch party.

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Photo by Joe Froehlich

Indigo East Personal Trainer Joe Froehlich.

Fitness Happenings

Leslee Stephens
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Kick Off 2026 With Exciting New Wellness Opportunities

The new year is arriving with incredible momentum at On Top of the World! January is packed with fresh wellness offerings, expanded programming, and brand-new ways for residents to stay active, engaged, and inspired. With personal training launching at Indigo East, Fitness on Demand rolling out, and additional classes expanding to The Lodge at Candler Hills and The Landing, this year is shaping up to be one of our most dynamic yet. If you’ve been waiting for the perfect moment to reconnect with your health and fitness goals, this is it.

One of the biggest highlights of the year is the Re-Discover Indigo East Fitness Center. A special open house event on Tuesday, Jan. 6, from 10 a.m. to noon (Indigo East residents only). This gathering invites Indigo East residents to explore what’s new, what’s improved, and what exciting opportunities await in 2026. Residents will be able to tour the fitness center, chat with the wellness team, learn about expanded services, and immerse themselves in the energy of a reimagined wellness experience.

At the center of the excitement is the chance to meet Indigo East’s new personal trainer, Joe Froehlich. Joe brings a strong background in exercise science, thoughtful coaching, and a passion for helping residents feel their absolute best. Beginning this month, he will offer personalized one-on-one training sessions tailored to support goals such as improving balance, rebuilding strength, increasing mobility, and boosting overall confidence. During the open house, residents are encouraged to stop by, get to know Joe, and discover how customized training can elevate their fitness journey.

Another enhancement for 2026 is the reintroduction of Fitness on Demand at Indigo East. This new digital class schedule offers a wide selection of high-quality workouts, including cardio, yoga, strength training, dance-based fitness, stretching, and more. Residents can enjoy professionally led classes at their convenience while still experiencing the structure, variety, and motivation that guided fitness provides. Fitness on Demand ensures there’s always something fresh and exciting to try.

During the event, team members will be available to assist with fitness equipment orientations, perfect for anyone wanting a refresher or seeking confidence in using the machines safely. These orientations help residents feel comfortable and supported, especially as they step into new routines for the

Rec Softball Club

Bryan Tully



The fall season ended on Dec. 12, 2025, with the Cubs locking up the top spot in the standings for the second consecutive season. Manager Dave Bauer will attempt to guide his team to another championship when the playoffs begin.

It has been another successful season. A major factor has been the influx of new players into the league, all of whom have made major contributions to their respective teams. As usual, the competitive spirit of all the teams never waned throughout the season, and no wins were ever assured. The quality of the bench jockeying also never waned, with the fans in the bleachers being treated to a very fun combination of hard-played softball, great music, and stellar comic relief all included in the free price of admission.

The winter season commences in January, which highlights one of the reasons we live in Florida: we get to play ball in winter. With the return of the league’s snowbirds and even more new players coming into the fold, the upcoming season is shaping up to be the most competitive yet.

We believe that on any given Tuesday or Thursday, there is as much or more entertainment to be found at the softball field than at other venues on a Friday or Saturday evening. Put on your sweats, bring a thermos of coffee, and judge for yourself. As Yogi Berra would say, “You can observe a lot just by watching.”

JANUARY 2026 FITNESS

RECREATION FITNESS CENTER CLASSES

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| 8:00 am | SPARC <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Step <small>DEBBIE</small> | Remix Bootcamp <small>ALDOY</small> | Step <small>DEBBIE</small> | SPARC <small>ALDOY</small> |
| 8:00 am <small>RECREATION BALLROOM</small> | Walk Fit <small>WIDRO</small> | | Intermediate/Advanced Tai Chi <small>JOY</small> | | Dance Cardio <small>AMY</small> |
| 9:00 am | S.O.S. <small>RONA</small> | Stretch, Flex & Balance <small>SULLIVAN</small> | S.O.S. <small>JOHN C.</small> | Body Burn* <small>DEBBIE</small> | S.O.S. <small>DEBBIE</small> |
| 9:00 am <small>RECREATION BALLROOM</small> | Chair Pilates <small>SULLIVAN</small> | | BEAT <small>LOREN</small> | | Stretch, Flex & Balance <small>SULLIVAN</small> |
| 10:00 am | Balanced Body <small>LARRY</small> | Chair Yoga <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Balanced Body <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Chair Yoga <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Balanced Body <small>SULLIVAN</small> |
| 10:00 am <small>RECREATION BALLROOM</small> | Chair Yoga <small>SANDRA</small> | | Chair Yoga <small>SCOTT</small> | | Chair Yoga <small>SCOTT</small> |
| 11:00 am | Get Fit While You Sit* <small>LOREN</small> | Brain Power <small>BOYD</small> | Get Fit While You Sit <small>JOE</small> | Sculpt* <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Chair Dance <small>AMY</small> |
| 11:00 am <small>RECREATION BALLROOM</small> | Dance Aerobics <small>LOREN</small> | | Zumba® Gold <small>AMY</small> | | |
| 12:00 pm | | Parkinson's B.A.S.E.* <small>CANDY</small> | | Move to Improve Parkinson's <small>KAC</small> | SATURDAY CLASSES: S.O.S. 9 am Chair Yoga 10 am |
| 1:00 pm | | Chair Chi <small>JOY</small> | | Beginner/Intermediate Tai Chi <small>NANCY</small> | |
| 3:00 pm | VYP Chair Yoga <small>JOE</small> | Balanced Body <small>LOREN</small> | Chair Yoga <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Balanced Body <small>CANDY</small> | |
| 5:00 pm | | Candlelight Yoga <small>YVES</small> | | Candlelight Yoga <small>SANDRA</small> | |

Recreation Fitness Center Hours: Monday-Friday 6:30 AM - 7 PM; Saturday 7 AM - 7 PM; Sunday 9 AM - 5 PM
Fitness Orientations are on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm, and Balance Assessments are on Thursdays at 2:00 pm.
These are free but space is limited. To schedule an appointment, please call (352) 854-8707 Ext. 7534.
*Seasonal classes run from October-April.

ARBOR FITNESS CENTER CLASSES

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 8:00 am | Inferno HIIT* <small>JOE</small> | STRONG* <small>BLODY</small> | Inferno HIIT* <small>RONA</small> | STRONG* <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Core & More* <small>JOHN C.</small> |
| 9:00 am | Yoga <small>SANDRA</small> | Pilates Fusion <small>JOE</small> | Yoga <small>JOE</small> | Pilates Fusion <small>LOREN</small> | Yin Yoga <small>MELANIE</small> |
| 10:00 am | STRONG <small>SUPREMO</small> | STRONG* <small>DEBBIE</small> | STRONG <small>JOE</small> | STRONG* <small>BLODY</small> | STRONG <small>RONA</small> |
| 11:00 am | Yoga* <small>SULLIVAN</small> | Yoga <small>SANDRA</small> | Yoga* <small>FRESH</small> | Yoga <small>LOREN</small> | ABC Yoga* <small>FRESH</small> |
| 4:00 pm | Muscle Fit <small>WICKA</small> | Strong and Steady <small>WICKA</small> | | Interval Training <small>WICKA</small> | Dance Fit <small>WICKA</small> |

Arbor Fitness Center Hours: Monday-Friday 5:30 AM - 8:30 PM; Saturday 7 AM - 8:30 PM; Sunday 9 AM - 7 PM
Fitness Orientations are on Thursdays at 1:00 pm. These are free but space is limited. To schedule an appointment, please call (352) 854-8707 Ext. 7638.
*Seasonal classes run from October-April.

ARBOR FITNESS CENTER INDOOR POOL

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|----------|---|--|--|---|---|
| 9:00 am | Deep Water Aerobics <small>LARRY</small> | Shallow Water Aerobics <small>SUE</small> | Deep Water Aerobics <small>TREH</small> | Shallow Water Aerobics <small>SARE</small> | Deep Water Aerobics <small>SUE</small> |
| 10:00 am | | Shallow Water Aerobics <small>SUE</small> | | Shallow Water Aerobics <small>SARE</small> | |
| 12:30 pm | | Shallow Water Aerobics <small>TRANG</small> | | Shallow Water Aerobics <small>WATERS</small> | |

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Broadway & Tap Dancing

Elaine Voorhis



Recently, I saw a video clip on TV of news anchors and weathercasters all saying, “Can you believe it’s Dec. 1? Well guess what? No, I can’t, and I definitely can’t believe January is right here and the year 2026, no less! Can someone tell me where the time has gone? So much food, parties, lunches, presents, and gatherings of family and good friends. It was a wonderful month, although a very busy one for us dancers! We hope you had a great holiday, and Santa was very good to you.

With December in the rear-view mirror, having done three performances in one month, you would think that we would be taking a break, but no. We practiced a lot for our annual Christmas recital, Women of the World, and Bridgewater and Brookdale.

The Broadway classes danced to Cher’s “DJ Play a Christmas Song” and “Officially Christmas” by Dan + Shay.

Not to be outdone, the tap classes tapped to Elton John’s “Step into Christmas” and “Doing Christmas Right.”

At the nursing homes, we were joined by dancers from Penny Berton’s Master the Possibilities dance classes. Our audiences never disappoint us and always energize us. We’re so happy to entertain everyone and see so many smiling faces

and tapping toes.

So, what’s next? The Health & Wellness Expo at Circle Square Cultural Center on Saturday, Jan. 24. We are scheduled to dance at 11 a.m. We hope you’ll watch us. We draw a pretty good crowd. Why not join them? We’ve got some really good routines in store for you.

Although that may not sound like a lot, in January the Broadway classes will also start learning another routine, and I hear it’s going to be great! We’ll have our usual six weeks to learn and refine the dance before performing it on the seventh class. All this is in addition to rehearsing other routines for the Health & Wellness Expo. It’ll be a lot of practice, but we’re up for it.

As mentioned above, our class recital is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 27, at the Arbor Conference Center, Dance Studios I-IV, at 1 p.m. It’s informal, and it’s lots of fun. Mark your calendar and watch for reminders here and on several community Facebook pages.

As the new year begins, Penny Berton and all the dancers in her Broadway Moves classes hope you enjoyed the holidays and wish you a very happy and healthy 2026. Turn up the music and keep dancing. If you haven’t started yet, there’s still time to make your resolutions.

For more information about our tap or Broadway classes, or if you would like us to perform for your neighborhood gathering or club meeting, contact Broadway Moves at broadwayandtap@yahoo.com. We’ll be happy to talk to you!



The Ovation Dancers – Janet Amend, Pam Kalamaras, Pati Bean, Lynn Hutton, Kathy Lewis & Michelle Trace – at rehearsal.

Jazz Dance Club

Liz Elliott Lieberman



“When you dance, you can enjoy the luxury of being you.” – Paul Coelho

The fall of the 2025 season was a very busy time for the wonderfully talented Ovation Dancers, the performing arm of the Jazz Dance Club. They danced in three murder mysteries, The Haunting of Ashford High at The Lodge at Candler Hills, and two shows at The Landing for SPCA of Marion County’s fundraiser, led by Marlene Hatch and her wonderful crew of helpers.

A couple of days later, on Nov. 11, 2025, we performed the exacting and mind-boggling number, “Favorite Son” from the Broadway show “Will Rogers Follies” at the Recreation Center for Veterans Day. Thank you for having us, Charlie Calhoun and the Veterans Club.

We stepped into the holidays as some of the Ovation Dancers performed at the Recreation Center’s holiday show on Dec. 19, 2025, when Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer, ran the premises amok with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Phew. The tail end of 2025 was certainly a whirlwind of activity for the Jazz Dance Club.

It is so important to keep moving as we age. I want to emphasize that you do not have to perform to participate in the jazz dance classes. The Ovation Dancers are the performing wing of this club, but you are more than welcome to come and learn our routines without having to perform them.

If you are interested in dancing with us, please come check out our classes and rehearsals from 10 a.m. to noon every Monday at the Arbor Conference Center Studio D. You are welcome to watch a class by appointment.

Wishing all residents a healthy, happy, and joyous 2026 with lots of dancing!

For any additional information, please contact Liz Lieberman at Lizzy-lieberman@gmail.com or 702-378-6300.



Tap and Broadway classes – Steam Heat.

Ballet

Eugenie Martin



The new year brings with it a very important anniversary for the Ballet Club. In the summer of 2006, Cheryl Sloan and I started the Ballet Club in a studio at the former Arbor Club (now Arbor Fitness Center), overlooking the indoor swimming pool. The location gave us dancing in the studio a beautiful view of the pool and the outdoors, and it gave swimmers in the pool a beautiful view of our classes.

That studio no longer exists. But the ballet classes continue, with five classes each week, taught by four teachers, including Cheryl, Susan Stewart, Liz Lieberman, and me. Dancers come – some stay – and some go. Each dancer brings something new and special to the group.

Pam Kalamaros wonderfully arranged our annual holiday party at Mimi’s Café. I talked to the group about 2025 and what might be coming in 2026. I made ballet jewelry for the dancers, and Santa also delivered some other jewelry. Jewelry is always fun, and has no calories, which we dancers watch!

Our classes, all free, except for a \$5 registration fee, are held in the Arbor Conference Center Studio D. Here is our schedule:

- Introductory/Beginner: Thursdays, from 1 to 2:15 p.m.
- Advanced Beginner: Tuesdays, from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
- Intermediate I: Saturdays, from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
- Intermediate II: Fridays, from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
- Technique (Advanced): Wednesdays, from 1:15 to 3:30 p.m.

To all potential dancers, for more information, please call Eugenie Martin at 352-854-8589.

Happy 2026 to all!

January 2026

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|------------|--|------------|-----------|
| January 1 | HAPPY NEW YEAR! Farmers Market and Tunes Cancelled. | January 2 | January 3 |
| January 8 | January 9 | January 10 | |
| January 15 | January 16 | January 17 | |
| January 22 | January 23 | January 24 | |
| January 29 | January 30 | January 31 | |

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Poms Dance and Cheer Squad at the Holiday Fest in December 2025.

Poms Dance & Cheer

Pamela Kalamaras



Poms Dance and Cheer started off December 2025 with their second annual holiday appreciation dinner at Stone Creek Grille. We had a lot to celebrate after being together for exactly two years, and several of us have been here since the very beginning. The dedication and commitment these ladies give every week to practice, and the extensive number of performances we had in 2025, are amazing. They enjoyed having a secret Santa and other treats, which were well deserved.

On Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025, we performed at the Holiday Fest in the Recreation Center Ballroom. This festival featured so many talented individuals and groups. What a fun night singing carols and eating cookies.

The ladies will have a much-deserved rest until Tuesday, Jan. 6. Then, we will begin revving up for performances at the Health & Wellness Expo and the Club Fair. It will also be a joy for us to travel to senior living homes in the spring. We hope you enjoyed our sock hop and patriotic medley, and we are pleased to announce that new routines are on the horizon for 2026.

Featured for the new year is one of

our Pommies! Kristin Millet grew up in Westchester, New York, studying dance, and had the opportunity to attend many Broadway and dance shows. She attended Tulane University, majoring in international relations while savoring every dance and theater class she could take. She is a member of the Broadway dance and tap groups, Ovation Dancers, and our group! Kristin loves the challenge of dancing in a group, learning steps and formations, and trying to be in sync with the entire team. She also enjoys walking and plays a wicked game of pickleball.

If you would like Poms Dance and Cheer to perform at your next event, we are available for future dates. We hope the love of what we do shines through in each performance. Our motivated group is committed to practicing many hours each week, as we build new skills and stamina. Teamwork is at the root of our accomplishments as we focus on communication, active listening, adaptability, and conviction. Go Pommies!

Please contact Pam Kalamaras at pammykal@aol.com for booking the Pommies for your club or next event. Please email our club for more detailed information, videos, pictures, or to view our rehearsals. If you are interested in joining our team, I can offer further information, guidance, and support. Entering this new world of dance and cheer is like no other in the community. We invite you to come and visit us to see what we are all about, and maybe even join in the fun.

Sidekicks Western Dance

Richard Gautier



Let me tell you, retirement got a whole lot better when we found Sidekicks! If you think this stage of life is just about golf carts and morning coffee, think again. Sidekicks is where you'll find laughter, rhythm, and a real connection – not just with music, but with your dance partner and a whole bunch of friendly folks who love to move.

Here's the thing about Sidekicks: it's not about perfection, it's about connection. When the music starts, and you and your partner hit those patterned steps together, it's absolute magic. Every turn and shuffle brings you closer, both in rhythm and spirit. You don't just dance – you communicate through movement. You'll be surprised how quickly you start anticipating each other's next step.

We all join for fun, but we stay for the feeling. Every time we master a new routine, there's that rush of shared accomplishment. Even better, there's laughter when things don't go quite right (which is often, and that's half the fun!). The structured patterns are easy to learn, and the repetition builds confidence. You'll find yourself picking up something new at every session.

Sidekicks has the warmest bunch of people you'll ever meet. Nobody's judging, everyone's smiling, and newcomers are always welcome. Whether you've been dancing for decades or have two left feet (don't we all!), you'll instantly feel at home. There's something special

Call of the Wild Sports Club

Scott Bloch



While the weather remains warm, in-shore fishing remains hot. Fishers have been catching their limits. Being caught are both silver and speckled sea trout, hogfish, along with black and red drum.

Before going to a local lake, be sure to check out a marina and or a bait store for local information. Winter freshwater fishing slows down.

that happens when music brings people together – it builds a sense of belonging that feels like family.

Enjoy a lively evening of learning and fun every Tuesday in the Recreation Center Ballroom:

- Beginner (4 to 4:50 p.m.) with Janet and Sean Amend.
- Beginner Plus/Improver (5 to 5:50 p.m.) with Peggy and Alex Eizans.

Starting Friday, Jan. 9, join us for an upbeat practice on Fridays at the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studio from 9:30 to 11 a.m. for all levels.

Enjoy a fun afternoon of dancing and improving together on Sundays in Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios II-IV:

- Beginner Focus (3:45 to 4:15 p.m.)
- Beginner Plus/Improver (4:15 to 5 p.m.)

Each session focuses on learning, and relearning, our popular dances.

Every four weeks, the club hosts an all-level dance on Tuesdays from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Recreation Center Ballroom. The next one is on Tuesday, Jan. 27.

I promise you this – come once, and you'll be back. Dancing keeps the body moving, the brain sharp, and the heart happy. If you and your partner are ready for some genuine fun, Sidekicks is calling your name. Grab your dancing shoes, take that first step onto the floor, and join us. You just might discover that the best part of retirement starts right here—with a smile, a song, and a brand-new shuffle step.

For details, questions, or registration information, email partnerdancesidekicks@gmail.com or visit partnerdancesidekick.wixsite.com/otow or our Facebook page (Sidekicks Partner Pattern Dance Club).

There will be several gun shows in our area. Visit cotw.springly.org for information on dates and times.

In December, members voted in all new officers to run the club for the next two years. Our previous officers include Scott Bloch, Kim Di Joseph, and Mike Brajer. Thank you for all that you contributed to make the club grow. Our new officers include President Frank Chagoya, Vice President Wayne Phillips, Secretary Steve Sekac, and Treasurer Allan Watts.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room. Our next speaker will be Captain Katie Jo Davis.

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Photo by Joe Spencer

Line dancing at the Recreation Center Ballroom.

Line Dancing



Joe Spencer

Join our fun family of line dance friends and learn the newest mainstream dances done throughout the world, as well as popular classics. There are four levels of classes to choose from. The easiest is Absolute Beginner (AB), then Beginner, Improver, and Intermediate.

The first three levels are on Mondays in the Recreation Center Ballroom with practice sessions on Wednesdays. Intermediate is on Tuesdays in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-II with Weber Wen.

Along with the classes, there are also line dance socials.

Recently, there was an enjoyable line dance workshop with top instructor/choreographer Cody Flowers. There will be another workshop, possibly with two top instructors.

If you would like to join us, the next session will be in March/April. Tickets

Ladies Shuffleboard

Lois Nix



Happy New Year! 2025 was an interesting year for our shufflers. Our 10 courts were resurfaced and are in pretty good shape. The sand volleyball court was redone to prevent the ball from coming onto our courts.

Join us on Mondays at 5:15 p.m. and Wednesdays at 8:45 a.m. or at 10:45 a.m. The courts have been reserved for these three times of play for the ninth year. We ask non-club members to respect the reserved hour for club members only.

There are two official shuffleboard clubs in On Top of the World, and they maintain the courts for cleanliness. The equipment for non-club members and families is on the side of the building. A resident must accompany all guests.

You don't need to know how to play. Our ladies will assist you with safety issues and basic techniques. No open-toed shoes, no drinks other than water. A resident ID or a Gateway of Services pass is required.

We do not play aggressively; we prefer to use skill, strategy, and technique. This approach is more challenging. Our membership is nearly 60 women. Hope to see you on the courts.

November 2025

10-Barbara Russell, 8-Joanne Ahlert, Dee Caple, 7-Cari Martin, Diane Wanat, Ruth Greenfield 30-plus: 35 & 33-Marge Adragna, 33 & 32-Ruth Greenfield, 30-Caroline Hill, Donna Piergiogi, Jane Dormanen, Lena Stofel, Lois Nix, Rosemary Rhodes.

Happy shuffling.

Shuffleboard

Walt Lamp



The courts have flattened out and are faster than we expected. This is due to two factors. One, the constant playing seems to work its magic, and two, Paul Hodges's suggestion to use silicone "speed beads," which really hastened the repair. We are all set to keep our monthly scores again. 30-plus-Ray Nault, Scott Lyons, Robert Sapiro, Wendy Snyder, Mike Snyder, and Ben Travis.

On Saturday, Jan. 10, at 11 a.m., our free Introduction to Shuffleboard will be taught by Paul Hodges. It will include rule highlights, scoring, safety, and the basics of shooting the disc. Open-toed shoes are not permitted.

For 2026, let's try something new to do and learn.

Country Line Dancing

Judy Sullivan



I think we can all agree that moving is ... an adventure. Not the fun kind with souvenirs and nice restaurants either, the kind where you discover mysteries like, "Why do I own this?" and "How did this many boxes fit into one house?"

In the middle of all that chaos, I managed to lose my computer. I looked everywhere - under piles, behind boxes, inside bins - and finally, one day before this column was due, there it was sitting calmly in the middle of the garage like it had been waiting for me to notice it. So here I am, finally settled enough to write again.

During the week and a half I took off from dancing over Thanksgiving, I realized something important: I really missed dancing. Sure, I danced while unpacking (because who can resist a good beat when you're knee-deep in bubble wrap?), and yes, I did a little two-step on the bedroom rug while putting clothes away. I even tapped my toes in the bathtub trying to soak away all the "I-lifted-too-many-boxes" aches.

It's just not the same as dancing with my people - you all! None of those moments felt the same as being with all of you - moving in sync, sharing the music, sharing the joy. There is nothing like that moment when the music hits and everyone moves together like we're part of the same happy, boot-scootin' brain.

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A portrait of Vicki McGlamery, a woman with blonde hair, smiling.

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R/C Flyers Club

Ray Ihlenburg



Cheers to a new year, but before 2026 kicks off, perhaps let’s take this opportunity to recap our busy December.

Flying hasn’t been great, but the few nice days have been so enjoyable. While we haven’t been busy at the field, the club had a full month of change.

To begin with, we elected our officers and board of directors for the following year at our December 2025 business meeting. The results ensure another year of strong leadership. President Mike Betz, Vice-President Bob Krull, Membership Chair/Secretary Steve Schusselman, Treasurer Jack Kezelian, Field Marshall Don Fields, Safety Officers Tom DiSanti and Brad Kollbaum, Directors Steve Croxoll and Steve Armstrong. Here’s to a great year among friends who share a flying problem.

We held our 2025 holiday party at The Lodge at Candler Hills, which included fine food, great music, gifts, and prizes that kept all 110 guests laughing and dancing the whole night through. Much gratitude is extended to Ray Baker and his wife, Linda, for reserving the Ballroom and then planning the dinner and

music. Mike and Kathleen Betz coordinated the evening’s events between Ray Baker and Alex Fedele. Paul Garguillo and Alex Fedele set up the gifts and a raffle with a couple of twists and turns. In the background during the months of planning was Jack Kezelian, our treasurer, trusted with cost control.

DJ Cheryl Jensen played great dance music that was at a very enjoyable volume. In the evening, she led everyone in dancing and a Christmas carol bingo game. My bingo card was definitely one for the naughty kids. The card had one tune crossed out after eight songs, and it got worse from there.

One amusing thing happened with the video the DJ had scrolling; an inadvertent skip to what appeared to be something from the doctors’ waiting room about intestines. She promised we didn’t get charged extra!

Looking ahead, we are planning the Spring Fly-In for March/April. Then, we are waiting for news on the eventual relocation of our flying field due to the building growth adjacent to the flight limits.

If you have been thinking of joining our club and learning to fly, make it a resolution to visit otowrcflyers.com, come out to the field to talk with one of our members, and attend a club meeting at 9 a.m. on the first Monday of each month in the Hobby Building Event Room.



Party goes enjoy dinner.

Cycling Club

Nick Arkon



Wheeling Around the World is the official bicycle club within On Top of The World. Its president is Dennis Baker, and because of his efforts, our community boasts a vibrant and active cycling community, supported by several groups that welcome riders of all skill levels.

Whether you are a casual cyclist looking for fresh air and gentle exercise or an experienced rider seeking faster-paced group outings, there is a place for you within this thriving community. Bicycling is one of the most beneficial forms of exercise, utilizing not only major muscle groups, eye and hand coordination, but also helping you to become more aware of your surroundings.

The bicycling groups vary in pace, distance, and purpose – but all share a commitment to camaraderie, fitness, and safe riding. Most rides begin at familiar meeting points within the community and follow scenic routes through the well-maintained neighborhoods and nearby trails. With Florida’s warm weather and generally flat terrain, residents can comfortably ride year-round, making cycling one of the most popular activities in the community. All cyclists are encouraged to wear an approved cycling helmet, flashing red tail light attached to the seat post, carry a spare tube with an inflatable device (i.e., hand pump or CO2 cartridge), and obey local traffic rules.

For beginners or those who prefer a relaxed pace, the leisure riders group offers short, social rides not greater than five to seven miles and is designed for comfort and confidence-building. These rides emphasize bike-handling skills, proper road etiquette, and group communication. They are ideal for new residents who want to meet others while staying active. This group will generally weave through our neighborhoods. E-bikes, trikes, recumbent, and standard road bikes are welcome.

Those seeking a moderate challenge may enjoy the intermediate group, which rides at a steadier pace and covers longer distances. These cyclists value a balance of exercise and enjoyment, often riding 10 to 15 miles to build endurance and explore more of the surround-



Photo by Dan Oaks

Bicyclists are enjoying a brief break.

ing area. E-bikes, trikes, recumbent, and standard road bikes are welcome.

For the more advanced rider, the advanced road group offers a faster-paced ride, averaging 15 to 18 miles per hour, and focuses on fitness, technique, and disciplined group riding, with distances ranging from 25 to 50 miles. Many of these cyclists have achieved local and national recognition in competitive cycling. Safety remains a top priority, with all riders expected to follow established group-riding protocols. Road bikes only.

If you are interested in joining the leisure or intermediate groups, Wheeling Around the World members meet on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 8:30 a.m. at the Power Park. Contact Dan Oaks at 401-663-7085 or Dennis Cicotte at 561-339-3588 for specific details about group rides and destinations. The advanced group meets at various meeting places. For more information, contact Nick Arkon at nickarkon1247@gmail.com.

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Gerald Mills - Live and Let Live

By Paul DiSclafani
World News Writer

When you listen to Gerald Mills speak, his cockney accent reminds you of Roger Daltrey, the lead singer of the rock band “The Who.”

“You know the girls love my accent,” he said with a sly smile on his face.

Gerry turns 103 on March 15, 2026.

“It came up quickly,” the centenarian said about approaching 100, “It’s like Christmas. You just don’t think about it, and before you know it, it’s here.”

He has a passion for bingo, playing it five days a week throughout the area, but says the Wednesday night bingo at the Recreation Center is the best run of them all. However, he has never won the top prize, no matter where he has played.

How does he still have the energy to play bingo (and cards) almost every day?

“I do what I want, when I want,” he said. “It (playing games) gets you out, and you are only in this world once. I’m doing what I want instead of doing what I had to do.”

Originally from London, Gerry met his wife Daphne during the war at a café over tea, when she offered to share her rationed sugar with him. After marrying in 1950, they started a family.

Gerry’s father served in the British Navy during World War I, but when he enlisted to follow in his father’s footsteps, he found the Navy was full, so he switched to the army and infantry. British soldiers were given the choice of 200 cigarettes each month or a pouch of to-

bacco (for pipes). As a non-smoker, Gerry chose the cigarettes, hoping to make friends by giving them away. Instead, it made things more complicated because he didn’t have enough for everyone, so he chose tobacco and started his lifelong love of his pipe.

Although he didn’t serve in the Navy, he still found himself underwater during a mission that was supposed to end on a beach. He spent months waterproofing his massive weapon so it could be moved from the boats to the beach without getting damaged. Only their boat had stopped far from the shore, and he was underwater as he made his way to the beach, unable to touch the bottom. Carrying several pounds of ammunition for the weapon and grenades strapped to his chest, Gerry was able to hold his breath while trying to tread water with the heavy gun. But it was his pipe, floating on the surface, that helped him gauge how deep he was, guiding him until he could get his feet on solid ground.

After the war, they moved to the U.S. and settled in Detroit, where he opened a motor scooter shop. However, after several burglaries, they drove south through Arizona, Texas, and Arkansas, seeking a new business to buy.

When they returned to Detroit to try again, they were caught up in the late ‘60s riots and said goodbye to the north, heading south to Halfmoon Lake near Ocala. About 11 years ago, the fam-



Photos courtesy of Gerald Mills

Gerald Mills (left) and Gerald Mills with wife, Daphne (right).

ily moved to On Top of the World and settled in Candler Hills.

According to his daughter, his diet today consists of way too many sweets, which Gerry acknowledged with that sly smile again.

“I don’t know how I got here,” Gerry said when offering tips for longevity, “But if you are nice to people and give in every now and then, you’ll be alright. When someone tells me they are right, even if I know they’re wrong, instead of arguing with them, I just smile and say, ‘You could be right.’ That gets you out of an argument. It’s not worth losing a friend over a difference of opinion. Now I agree with everyone.”

Unless someone tells him it’s time to go to bed.

“I let my body tell me when to wake up and when to go to sleep,” he said, “I never get up early, except for bingo. I’ll get up early for bingo.”

And maybe someday he’ll win that grand prize.

The World News will be sharing stories about our Centenarian residents (100 years old) in the coming months. If you are, or know a resident who has already achieved or is approaching centenarian status, please get in touch with Paul DiSclafani at pdisco23@aol.com, or the World News at otownnews@otowfl.com.

The Legend of the Longleaf Ridge Evergreen

By Kathleen Taylor

There is a magical place called Longleaf Ridge where native trees are nestled against a beautiful open green space. Once upon a time, a scrappy little seed cone clung to her host tree and marveled as white orbs soared through the air, freed from terrestrial constraints by orb wizards. She longed to fly as well. Her fellow seed cones called her a dreamer and encouraged her to focus on the business of propagation.

One day, while dreaming of gliding across the beautiful green space, the

scrappy little seed cone lost hold of her branch and began to tumble. She tried to glide like a white orb but fell to the ground and bounced into an open space in a limestone boulder.

It was dark in the crevice, but there was light, moisture, and pollen. Over time, the scrappy little seed cone transformed into an Eastern red cedar. Recognizing the miracle of her survival, neighboring ridge folk and orb wizards honor the little juniper with decorations during this festive time of the year.



Photo by Kathleen Taylor

The Longleaf Ridge evergreen.



Photo by Lennie Rodoff

Jennie Stauffer, Phyllis Pastore, Ron Fulton, and Joe Wood.

Ticket Sales Begin for The New Pretenders

By Nancy Grabowski

The new year ushers in an exciting time for The New Pretenders, as we begin ticket sales for “Tonight’s Going to Be a Good Night!” The performances will take place in the Recreation Center Ballroom on Friday, Feb. 6, and Saturday, Feb. 7, at 7 p.m.; and on Sunday, Feb. 8, at 2 p.m. Sunday’s show coincides with the Super Bowl; however, there is no time conflict, and we’ll all be home in plenty of time to party!

The New Pretenders ticket sales will take place every Tuesday in January in the Arbor Activity Center Card Room III, from 8 to 11 a.m. Reserved tickets are \$12, and general admission tickets are \$10 each. We will also have tickets available for purchase before bingo each Wednesday in January from 3:30 to 5:45 p.m. and during intermission.

Just a note to remind you that no tickets are sold at the door. This allows us a few extra minutes to prepare for the many different aspects of our performance. Our crew of volunteer ushers will assist you in finding the correct seats.

With tickets in hand, we encourage you to take your seat 20 minutes before the start time. This will enable you to relax and enjoy our pre-show warm-up,

which begins at 6:45 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 1:45 p.m. on Sunday. It isn’t the same old, same old either. Our bold new concept is sure to “get the party started!”

Once the pre-show is completed, we encourage you to let your imagination soar! Our vision includes a vivid array of locations that will enhance your participation and heighten your enjoyment. Once again, Tom Miller will head the construction crew that builds the stage settings. These stage settings are enhanced by the creativity of Mary Ann Berardi-Schmitt and her crew of talented volunteers.

As always, once our bills are paid, the money we earn from ticket sales will be donated to local Marion County charities. We decide as a group which of these worthy causes we wish to help, so our thanks go out to you, our audiences, for supporting our efforts.

The New Pretenders will also appear at the semi-annual Club Fair, which will be held on Thursday, Feb. 19, in the Recreation Center Ballroom. Stop by and chat with us, join our organization ... we’d love to have you in our midst!

For additional information, contact any current member or Nancy Grabowski, director, at 352-209-4699.

Recreation

Shannon Prince
352-854-8707 ext. 7530
shannon_prince@otowfl.com



Happy New Year! As we welcome a fresh start and new possibilities, we invite you to make this year your most enjoyable yet. Explore a variety of activities, events and gatherings in the Life and Motion Wellness Connections catalog. You can also find details for all Recreation activities on the OTOW App, and on OTOWInfo.com. Most Recreation events in On Top of the World (Central) are free for residents with a valid resident ID; guests are welcome for \$5 per person. The OTOW App (available in the App Store and Google Play) lets you register for events, book rooms, and pay for trips or classes from any device. After approval (up to 72 hours), you’ll have 24/7 access. No smart device? Visit the Recreation Center to use our new OTOW App kiosks.

Social Committee

Looking to get involved and make a difference in your community? The On Top of the World (Central) Social Committee is always looking for enthusiastic resident volunteers to help shape the fun! The committee meets monthly to share ideas, offer feedback, and assist in planning, organizing, and decorating for upcoming Recreation events. Your input is a valuable part of creating activities that our community truly enjoys. Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Recreation Center Lounge. If you’d like to join us, RSVP by calling 352-387-7530 or emailing shannon_prince@otowfl.com. We’d love to have you on board. See you there.

Recreation Center

Happy Hour (Free)

Join us for Happy Hour Fridays from 5 to 8 p.m. in the Recreation Center Ballroom. A cash bar is always standing by for your beverage needs. Enjoy music, dancing, and The Pub. Resident IDs will be required to attend Happy Hour. Anyone without a resident ID is considered a guest. Guest fees apply at \$5 per person. Children under 15 are not permitted. Upcoming entertainment is as follows:

- Jan. 2 Automatic Duo
- Jan. 9: Kathleen Kane
- Jan. 16: The BadKitty Band
- Jan. 23: Pure Magic
- Jan. 30: Nature Coast

With the excitement of The Summit’s grand opening rapidly approaching, the tentative plan is to alternate Happy Hour locations between the Recreation Center and The Summit. More information will be provided in this column as things develop.

Tropic Trivia

If you would like to try your hand at Tropic Trivia, February tables will be on sale Tuesday, Jan. 6, through Friday, Jan. 16. A team representative can buy a table for the whole team every month. Tables of eight sell for \$40 on the OTOW App. After your purchase, please come to the Recreation Department to select

your table. First-come, first-served.

Karaoke (Free)
Karaoke is always fun! Sing your heart out or just come and enjoy the music. Karaoke is the second Thursday of each month at the Recreation Center Ballroom from 5 to 8 p.m.

Ladies Night (Free)
Ladies, you are invited to join us on Tuesday, Jan.13, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-IV. Lou Gagliardi is the musical guest for this night. Bring your beverages and snacks. See you there!

Movie Night (Free)
Join us for a cinematic night out featuring, when possible, a newly released movie! The movie license covers only the Recreation Center Ballroom; therefore, we are unable to transfer its use to other buildings. Join us on Thursday, Jan. 22, from 6 to 8 p.m. Movie title to be announced. Free popcorn and The Pub will be open. Feel free to bring snacks and non-alcoholic beverages. The Ballroom will not be accessible as a cut-through to and from the pool or The Pub during this time. Please make your way around the building so that the darkness of the “theater” can be preserved.

Ballroom Dance Class
Register for the February class and learn merengue/hustle with ballroom instructor Butch Phillips. Classes are held on the second, third, and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in the Recreation Center Ballroom. The cost is \$30 per month for three weeks of classes. See OTOW App for details.

For Recreation Department events requiring registration, please use the OTOW App. This includes events at all On top of the World amenities. The required payment is due at the time of registration. Please note that purchases are non-transferable. No refunds will be issued within 14 days of any event or trip.

The Lodge at Candler Hills

Virtual & Live Fitness Classes (Free)
Have fun and get fit!

- Mondays (9 a.m.): Chair Pilates followed by Chair Yoga at 10 a.m., both with a livestream instructor.
- Wednesdays (9 a.m.): Total Body Conditioning with loop bands and a live instructor.

Chair Volleyball (Free)
Have a blast in chair volleyball on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the Ballroom. Rules and teams will be determined on the day of the event. Come on out and participate in this exciting, new active aging sport.

From the Top Line Dance Class (Free)
Join Chuck and Donna weekly on Tuesdays for line dancing classes that start at 10 a.m. These progressive lessons are for all levels of dance.

Open Game/Card Play (Free)
Every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Card Room is open for game day. Bring your games and cards and have a great time. Time ends at 2 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month.

Happy Hour (Free)
Cheers to a fantastic community! Join

us for Happy Hour from 5 to 8 p.m. Feel free to bring your own beverage and table snacks. \$5 guest fee applies. The entertainment schedule is as follows:

- Saturday, Jan. 3: Automatic Duo
- Saturday, Jan. 17: 4 For the Road

Girls Night Out (Free)
Come on, girls, let’s dance! Join us Thursday, Jan. 8, from 5 to 8 p.m. with Tim Hargis. Bring your own beverage and table snacks, and have some fun. \$5 guest fee applies.

Safety Training Class (Free)
The Colen Built Development safety team will conduct an “Active Shooter” class on Wednesday, Jan. 14, from 2 to 4 p.m. All residents are encouraged to attend. Registration is required.

Musical Game Night
Enjoy this musical fun night on Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 5 to 7 p.m. Come and enjoy the game “PRIZEO” along with trivia and “Name That Tune.” Tickets cost \$5 per resident and \$10 per guest.

Indigo East Community Center

Happy Hour (Free)

Gather with friends and neighbors on Fridays from 5 to 8 p.m. Bring your favorite cocktails and snacks. Dance, socialize, relax, and enjoy! \$5 guest fee applies. The entertainment schedule is as follows:

- Jan. 2: Debbie Owen & Tony T
- Jan. 9: Hwy 94
- Jan. 16: Welcome 2026 with Don Flok
- Jan. 23: Automatic

Trivia

Get in on some friendly and fun competition with your neighbors and friends at trivia on Monday, Jan. 5, from 5 to 7 p.m. Bring your favorite snacks and beverages to share with your team. The cost is \$5 per resident and \$10 per guest.

Karaoke (Free)

Do you sing? Choose your song and share your voice at karaoke on Thursday, Jan. 15, 5 to 7 p.m. Bring beverages and snacks. Feel free to sing solo or in a group. \$5 guest fee applies.

Wine and Cheese (Free)
Come sip, snack, and socialize with your neighbors and friends on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 5 to 7 p.m. We will offer fruit and cheese platters (while supplies last). Steve Lazarus will be our entertainment.



\$5 guest fee applies

Music Trivia

Challenge your mind by playing rounds of music trivia and “Name That Tune” on Thursday, Jan. 29, from 3 to 5 p.m. First, second, and third-place prizes will be awarded. The cost is \$5 per resident and \$10 per guest.

The Landing

Karaoke (Free)

Frosty weather got you frozen? Thaw out your pipes and unleash your inner superstar with Cheryl Jensen on Monday, Jan. 12, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Game On (Free)

Bored? Not on our watch! Grab your favorite board game, pack up your gaming spirit, and head to The Landing on Wednesday, Jan. 28, from 5 to 8 p.m. for a night of friendly competition. Bring your own drinks and snacks ... and maybe a victory dance.

World-Class Active Aging Fitness Classes (Free)

Our WCAA classes on Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. are virtual sessions. New for 2026, livestream instructor for Mondays at 9 a.m. Chair Pilates followed by Chair Yoga at 10 a.m. Visit the Recreation Department office at The Landing to pick up the wellness schedule and find out what to bring for each class.

New Year’s Resolutions I Intend to Keep

By Paul DiSclafani

What motivates residents to make resolutions they don’t really plan to keep? Didn’t we come to this community to escape having to do things we really don’t want to do anymore?

More than 30% of people who make resolutions have already broken them by the end of February, so why bother?

I have learned from past disappointments regarding my New Year’s resolutions. By now, I think I know my limitations, so this year, I am making resolutions that I know I will keep. Granted, some are things I promise not to do, but we are trying to be realistic, aren’t we?

I Am Not Going to Eat Healthier: I will try to make better choices, but I am not going to eat healthier. Did you know the word “diet” is French for “tasteless”? Just because vegetables are healthy doesn’t mean I’ll start eating Brussels sprouts or grilled asparagus. I like gluten (whatever it is) in my food. My mother always told me you can eat whatever you want in moderation. Unfortunately, if you’ve ever eaten at my mother’s house, you pass moderation in the first 15 minutes.

Spend My Children’s Inheritance: I vow to spend as much money as I want in 2026 on whatever I choose. No more saving for the future; the future is now. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not buying a

jet or a private island, but I am going to live for today. Yesterday is in the past, and tomorrow is not guaranteed. Besides, they haven’t come to visit me yet.

I Am Not Going to Learn a New Skill: How many additional skills does a retired man need that he hasn’t already mastered? Should I take up plumbing or car repair? I have enough home-improvement skills to replace outlets and light fixtures or to patch damaged walls. I follow written directions very well and am a master at putting together Ikea furniture. I’m not going back to school to be a doctor because, quite frankly, I can’t stand the sight of blood.

Procrastinate More: I pledge to elevate my procrastination to new heights of laziness in 2026. Other than getting to bingo at the Recreation Center on Wednesdays by 5 p.m., what’s the big rush?

No More Zippers or Buttons: I’m not going to buy any new clothing with buttons or zippers. This will help me better prepare for the casual life in Florida I’ve always dreamed of. I wore suits and ties to work way too long to pass up the comfort of an elastic waistband.

For me, I see these resolutions as like money in the bank. That reminds me, I probably won’t save any money this year either, now that I’m on a fixed income. I wish you all the best of luck in keeping your resolutions.

Anyone want to share a “bloomin” onion with me? That’s a vegetable, right?

BUS SCHEDULE

Monday - Thursday

MORNING ROUTE

PICK-UP LOCATIONS

TIME

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| The Lodge at Candler Hills | The Lodge Parking Lot • SW 87th Cir. | 8:35 a.m. |
| Providence | 91st Cir. East • 91st Cir. West • Post Office | 8:42 a.m. |
| Providence | 90th St. – 92nd Pl. Rd. – 96th Ct. Rd. – 97th Cir. | 8:47 a.m. |
| Avalon Post Office | Parking Lot | 8:51 a.m. |
| Windsor East | 94th Pl. – 94th Lp. | 8:55 a.m. |
| Windsor West | 95th St. – 95th Lp. | 8:58 a.m. |
| Crescent Ridge | 97th Lane – Post Office – 99th Ave. – 96th St. | 9:01 a.m. |
| Recreation Center | At Bus Stop Sign in Parking Lot | 9:04 a.m. |
| Americana Village | 89th Ct. Rd. – Post Office – 85th Ter. Rd. | 9:08 a.m. |
| Friendship Village | Post Office – 84th Ter. – 93rd St. | 9:12 a.m. |
| Friendship Colony | 83rd Ter. – 90th Pl. – 87th Ave. – 97th St. | 9:16 a.m. |
| Friendship Park | 97th St. – 94th Lane | 9:20 a.m. |
| Friendship Village | 89th Ct. Rd. – 92nd St. | 9:22 a.m. |
| Friendship Colony | 90th St. • Post Office | 9:26 a.m. |
| Candler Hills Community Center | At Bus Stop Sign in Parking Lot | 9:31 a.m. |
| Indigo East Community Center | Parking Lot | Call one day in advance for pick-up |
| Weybourne Landing | Parking Lot | Call one day in advance for pick-up |
| Longleaf Ridge Model Center | Parking Lot | Call one day in advance for pick-up |
| Exit Community | | 9:36 a.m. |

MORNING DESTINATIONS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Freedom Library (Tues/Thurs only) | Ollie's |
| Jasmine Square | Paddock Mall |
| VA Hospital | Walmart |
| Dillard's/Kohl's | Target |
| Sam's Club | Hobby Lobby/Shady Oaks Shopping Center |
| Home Depot | Gateway Plaza |

Arrival and pick-up times for morning destinations will vary according to the number of passengers. The bus driver will announce the pick-up time at each destination for that day.

Return to On Top of the World to begin drop-off/pick-up for the afternoon run.

AFTERNOON ROUTE

PICK-UP LOCATIONS AND TIMES

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| The Lodge at Candler Hills | 1:15 p.m. | Candler Hills Community Center | 1:20 p.m. |
| Friendship Colony Post Office | 1:25 p.m. | Providence Post Office | 1:28 p.m. |
| Avalon Post Office | 1:33 p.m. | Crescent Ridge Post Office | 1:38 p.m. |
| Recreation Center | 1:43 p.m. | Americana Post Office | 1:48 p.m. |
| Friendship Post Office | 1:54 p.m. | | |

AFTERNOON DESTINATIONS

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Friendship Center | Bravo Supermarket |
| Publix | Big Lots |
| Walmart Neighborhood Market | Bealls & Dollar Tree |
| ALDI/Lowe's | Walmart |

Arrival and pick-up times for afternoon destinations will vary according to the number of passengers. The bus driver will announce the pick-up time at each destination for that day.

**Please arrive about 5-10 minutes earlier, as all times are approximate.*

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Paradise Players

Lyn Yanss



Happy 2026! Paradise Players is currently seeking additional actors and technical staff to join our team. We are in the process of writing our upcoming play, scheduled for performances on Saturday, April 18, and Sunday, April 19.

We look forward to another exciting year filled with creative opportunities and community engagement. If you are interested in behind-the-scenes work or other aspects of theater production, we invite you to visit us. Our meetings are held every Wednesday at 3 p.m. in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios III-IV. Join us to discover your joy, forge new friendships, build a sense of community, and explore various aspects of theater, including acting, set design, and more. Participating in our activities can also boost your self-esteem and help you develop new skills, making it a rewarding experience for all involved. Make this year your year to shine!

Writers Club

Paul DiSclafani



Announcing a new club for writers! All residents who still love the written word and want to share their stories, welcome to the Writers Club!

The Writers Club offers a welcoming platform to talk about your writing and help you avoid the pitfalls and uncertainty that may be preventing you from getting your stories from your head into a reader's hands.

Join Paul DiSclafani, author and humor columnist for the Marion Citizen, and Lori Szepek, author and instructor on writing at Master the Possibilities, for a monthly gathering that welcomes writers from any genre. Come together with us as we share our expertise and writing processes to help you start, continue, or finish your projects.

Our club will host resident published authors as guest speakers, along with industry professionals from self-publishing and marketing firms. We will help

Broadway Playhouse

Elaine Morrison



Stand by. Tickets for our spring production, "Oklahoma," junior edition, are being printed as you read this, and information about their sales will be in next month's edition.

The labor of love has been ongoing since rehearsals began in September. The dedication of the cast, the directors, and the stagehands has been remarkable, and an aura of excitement persists at every rehearsal session. As mentioned previously, all performances will be at 2:30 p.m. in the Recreation Center Ballroom on Saturday, Feb. 28, Sunday, March 1, Saturday, March 7, and Sunday, March 8.

Tickets are priced at \$10. Please contact otowbroadwayplayhouse@gmail.com with any questions.

After the holiday season, the board will meet to discuss an upcoming general meeting and potential future events.

Murder Mystery Dinner Theater

Liz Elliott Lieberman



After a very busy October and November 2025, the Murder Mystery Dinner Theater Club is on hiatus while the creative team dreams up some more original plays involving mystery, mayhem, and some madcap fun for your enjoyment.

The next murder mystery performances will be announced in January, so if you want to be entertained in a smaller and more intimate environment with dinner included, especially for your neighborhood, please contact me as soon as possible for 2026 bookings at the email or phone number below. Our shows at The Lodge at Candler

Hills for Ashford and at The Landing for the SPCA of Marion County were hugely successful last year.

If you want to be part of our talented acting, singing, and dancing company, please contact me at the information below. We are currently searching for a stage manager, prompter, and property manager (props). Guess what? Showbiz is full of people who don't necessarily want to perform on stage, but do want to be part of a really fun group of creative people who will become your close friends. If you have a computer, marketing skills, and are detail-oriented, we also need you!

The Murder Mystery Dinner Theater Club hopes you all had a very merry and happy holiday season. We are looking forward to a busy 2026.

For more information or to book, please contact Lizzylieberman@gmail.com or 702-378-6300.



Photo by Percy Millet

Some cast members during dress rehearsal for "The Haunting of Ashford High."

On Top of the World NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birthday, wedding or anniversary announcements may be emailed to otownews@otowfl.com by the 12th of the month. See page 2 for the publication schedule.

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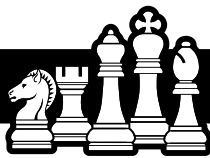
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CARDS & GAMES



Bingo

Nancy Grabowski



Happy 2026 and welcome back to bingo! Our hiatus is over, and we’re anxious to get the play started once again. We begin our journey on Wednesday, Jan. 7, in the Recreation Center Ballroom. Raffle tickets are sold from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Prices are three for \$1 or 10 for \$3. Each winning ticket receives \$20. Cards will be sold from 4:30 to 5:45 p.m. Prices remain at \$1 per card. Cards are equipped with sliders, so no dabbers or markers are needed. Cards for the visually impaired are available, too.

You must present a valid resident ID. Guests aged 18 or older are welcome when accompanied by a resident player. There will be 18 bingo pots, based on the number of cards sold. There is a cover-all minus one game for \$75 and a cover-all for a win between \$110 and \$250.

Per Florida regulations, no alcohol is allowed in the Recreation Center Ballroom. It can be purchased and consumed in The Pub or on the patio. You may save one seat in addition to your own. For safety, do not tip the chairs to save them. Please respect the volunteer signs while they work to make bingo happen.

We look forward to seeing each of you. If you have any questions, contact Carl Folkers or Nancy Grabowski at 352-209-4699.

Bridge



Monday Afternoon

By Carol Johnson

Nov. 3, 2025

1: Carolyn Higgins & V.J.; 2: Mar Valchin & Bruce Gillett; 3: Mike Meirick & Craig Ford; 4: Trudy Baumgartner & Carol Johnson.

Nov. 10, 2025

1: Jack Heller & Steve Sekac; 2: Dennis and C.J. Dust; 3: Pat and Debbie Quinn; 4: Judi Wallace & Rad D.

Nov. 17, 2025

1: Craig Ford & Betty Schaffer; 2: Steve Sekac & Jack Heller; 3: Phyllis Silverman & Judy Mackowiak; 4: Mary Bloch & Connie Feola.

Nov. 24, 2025

1: Judy Mackowick & Jack Heller; 2: Mar Valchin & Bruce Gillette; 3: Barb Heller & Barbie Trebilcock; 4: Darlene Clark & Linda Curtiss.

Dec. 1, 2025

1: Linda Curtiss & Linda Yuen; 2: Barb Heller & Barbie Trebilcock; 3: Judi and Dennis Wallace 4: Mar Valchin & Bruce Gillett.

Tuesday Night Duplicate

By Bob Kraus

We meet every Tuesday in the Arbor Activity Center Card Rooms I-II, and play begins at 6 p.m. Please arrive by 5:50 p.m. so we can set up the best game, Mitchell or Howell, appropriate for the number of players. We can accommodate up to nine tables. Bring your partner and \$0.50 per person.

The boards are scored after the game, and the results are emailed to the group within a few days.

You also can play occasionally as a substitute. Contact us and we’ll put you on our list. For more information, contact Bob Kraus at 352-492-8525.

Nov. 11, 2025

North/South

1: Julian Wachs & Liz Wachs; 2: Brian Lomasky & Carrie Kanosky; 3: Jean Krueger & Sophie Redman.

East/West

1: Barbara Heller & Jack Heller; 2: Linda Ryan & Bill Ryan; 3: Bob Kraus & Arlene Loepp.

Nov. 18, 2025

North/South

1: Julian Wachs & Liz Wachs; 2: Dan Lack & Vera Mangold; 3: Linda Ryan & Bill Ryan.

East/West

1: Connie Campbell & Billie Andersen; 2: Barbara Heller & Jack Heller; 3: Bob Kraus & Arlene Loepp.

Nov. 25, 2025

1: Bob Kraus & Virginia Collins; Tie at 2: Jean Krueger & Sophie Redman; and Linda Ryan & Bill Ryan; 4: Julian Wachs & Liz Wachs.

Dec. 2, 2025

North/South

1: Julian Wachs and Liz Wachs; 2: Dan Hall & Cathie Apgar; 3: Jean Krueger & Sophie Redman.

East/West

1: Connie Campbell & Billie Andersen; 2: Bob Kraus & C.J. Dust; 3: Chris Wachter & Jeff Young.

Dec. 9, 2025

North/South

1: Bob Kraus & Virginia Collins; 2: Chris Wachter & Jeff Young; 3: Carolyn Higgins & V.J. Hentz.

East/West

1: Connie Campbell & Billie Andersen; 2: Bill Ryan & Linda Ryan; 3: Barbara Heller & Jack Heller.

Wednesday Afternoon

By Debbie Quinn

Nov. 5, 2025

1: Debbie Quinn; 2: Kurt Baumgartner; 3: Dianne Robinson; 4: Bruce Gillett; Cons: Joan Keinath.

Nov. 12, 2025

1: Bruce Gillett; 2: Mary Bloch; 3: Billie Andersen; Cons: Al Kremer.

Nov. 19, 2025

1: Carolyn Higgins; 2: Kurt Baumgartner; 3: Debbie Quinn; Cons: Marlene Floeckher.

Nov. 26, 2025

1: Linda Yuen; 2: Kurt Baumgartner; 3: Pat Quinn; Cons: Dianne Robinson.

Thursday Afternoon

By Trudy Baumgartner

Nov. 6, 2025

1: Dianne Robinson; 2: Marlene Floeckher; 3: Kurt Baumgartner.

Nov. 13, 2025

1: Kurt Baumgartner; 2: Bruce Gillet; 3: Craig Ford.

Nov. 20, 2025

1: Debbie Quinn; 2: Judy Mackowiak; 3: Kurt Baumgartner.

Thursday Night

By Penny Wagener

Join our friendly bridge group at 6 p.m. in the Arbor Activity Center Card Rooms I-II. All skill levels are welcome – whether you’re fresh from lessons, returning after years away, or an experienced player. No partner is needed; we pair and rotate throughout the night. Bring 25 cents, a smile, and a good attitude. We play three rounds of seven hands, finishing by 9 p.m. Join us for fun and friendship, and you might even win the “2 prize” – a prize awarded for

taking a trick with the two of trump that can be passed around throughout the evening.

Nov. 13, 2025

1: Betty Schaff; 2: Jeff Young; 3: Al Whitford; Cons: Linda Blankenhorn; 2 prize: Penny Wagener.

Nov. 20, 2025

1: Chris Wachter; 2: Dave Protsik; 3: Brent Powell; Cons: Vickie Lenz; 2 prize: Brent Powell.

Dec. 4, 2025

1: Jeff Young; 2: Dave Protsik; 3: Jean Krueger; Cons: Dianne Perry.

Dec. 11, 2025

1: Vera Mangold; 2: Chris Wachter; 3: Al Whitford; Cons: Betty Schaff; 2 prize: Chris Wachter.

Bunco Babes Social Group

Michelle Malsch



We meet in the Arbor Conference Center Dance Studios I-II on the fourth Tuesday of the month. The next scheduled game is Tuesday, Jan. 27.

Registration is at 6:45 p.m., and games begin at 7 p.m. You do not need to call to register; simply show up with your resident ID or Gateway of Services pass. The room is set up for 48 players. Please ensure you arrive on time to secure your spot. It will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Always check the World News for the latest updates on our group.

Although the name of our group is “Bunco Babes,” we also have a few husbands who attend. If you enjoy the game, don’t be afraid to be a “bunco dude.”

If you have never played, see what fun we have rolling the dice in this game of luck (no skill required)! The game is easy and only requires rolling three dice and moving to the next table at the end of gameplay. New players are always welcome. The rules are simple and will be explained before the start of play.

The cost is \$3 per person (please have exact change), and all collected funds will be returned to the category winners at the end of the game. There are also two door prize drawings for those who did not win any of the cash prizes. Please bring your beverage and a small snack if you wish. After the first three sets have been played, there will be a short intermission.

Join in the fun and make new friends! For more information, please call Micki Malsch at 352-615-2790. Stay healthy and be safe until we meet again!

Cribbage

Judy Parisi



We have been meeting at the Arbor Activity Center Card Room II on the first and third Thursdays of each month from 3 to 5 p.m. We are awaiting information on any changes to our room assignment for 2026, as well as an expansion of our dates for play.

We welcome new players to join us. We’re a non-competitive group of all experience levels.

If you have a cribbage board and deck of cards, please bring them; however, we have extras on hand.

If you would like more information or would like to learn to play, please email judith.parisi@gmail.com. An email will be sent to our players for any changes to room assignments.

CONSERVATION FUN FACT

Florida burrowing owls have 50 acres of designated conservation area, planned to ensure that their nesting areas are not disturbed during land development. On Top of the World builds artificial burrows to give them alternate nesting sites when new developments are started.

Euchre



Friday Night

By Mary Bloch

Happy 2026! Make euchre one of your new fun resolutions this year. Join us at 6 p.m. on Fridays at the Arbor Conference Center Large Card Room. For more information, please contact Mary at 614-806-6737 or mary.bloch@yahoo.com.

Nov. 7, 2025

1: Lou Pine; Tie at 2: Pete Jacob & Scott Bloch; 3: Lloyd Beitel

Nov. 14, 2025

Tied at 1: Jack Taylor & Pete Jacob; 2: John O'Brien; 3: Mary Ann Reiber

Nov. 21, 2025

Tie at 1: Judy Lynch & Pam Brown; 2: Lloyd Beitel; 3: Linda Brown

Nov. 28, 2025

1: Kurt Baumgartner; 2: Danny Dean; 3: Jack Taylor.

Mah Jongg



Angela Brady

This weekly game of American mah jongg is open to all eligible residents. All skill levels are welcome. While the game will not be taught during this time, players are willing to help beginners. The games begin at 1 p.m. every Thursday in Arbor Activity Center Card Room III. Please arrive a few minutes early as we will draw chips for table assignments. After three or four games, we will switch tables to make new friends and change the gameplay. Join us for a couple of hours of fun.

For more information, please contact Angela Brady at 407-403-0861 or agbrady@peoplepc.com. Jokers to ya!

Pinochle



Tuesday Night

By Herb Katz

Nov. 4, 2025

1: Woody Clay; 2: Andy Nuccio; 3: Karon Clay.

Nov. 11, 2025

1: James Tomaszek; 2: Bud Alderman; 3: Bruce Gillett.

Nov. 18, 2025

1: Marlene Floeckher; 2: Herb Katz; 3: Ray Kallai.

Nov. 25, 2025

1: Ilene Casper; 2: Bruce Gillett; 3: James Tomaszek.

Friday Morning

By Mary Hannon

Nov. 14, 2025

1: Andy Nuccio; 2: Walter Hickenlooper; 3: Cheryl Adams.

Nov. 21, 2025

1: Oscar Friedman; 2: Marilyn Whitford; 3: Marlene Floeckher.

Nov. 28, 2025

1: Ilene Casper; 2: Al Whitford; 3: Oscar Friedman.

Dec. 5, 2025

1: Ilene Casper; 2: Stephen Mintz; 3: Walter Hickenlooper.

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Poetry



Sense of Well-Being

By Jim Kimes

The sense of well-being: What does it mean? When we feel euphoric and don't know why? When all of our havens are flashing green, All systems go, not a cloud in the sky. But then comes tomorrow, when the skies are grey. A dream, perhaps, we can't identify? Or skulking fears that we can't keep at bay? Something made our buoyancy go awry. That's when we focus on our cognition, By summoning that which makes up our core. Spine and spirit form the coalition That soon fast tracks a "well-being" encore!

All You Need

By Janice M. Puta

Begin ... even when unsure what it is calling you. Learn to endure every route it takes you.

Begin ... trust the unknown territory, discern every fork in the road, remember your own mystery, greatness and goodness yet untold.

Begin ... all you need to thrive comes to meet you from deep inside ... wise, loving and true.

Begin ... day and night, wet and dry, out and in, here and there, fun and fright, lows and highs, sometimes win, always care.

New Year's Resolutions

By Linda Toner

This is the time of year when we make a few resolutions, we want to be born anew, a better, improved person is in the cards but breaking old habits can be very hard. Pick one or two habits, don't try for too many changes all at once, you want to be friendly to yourself, and to make it attainable. Changing only one or two habits is sustainable. Keep your eyes on your goal and never waiver, the art of persistence will be your savior. So take it from me, you can become the person you want to be, and when all is said and done, there's always next year for you to add a few more changes and you'll find it easy to become a new you.

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Author's Support Group

Paul DiSclafani



The members of the Author's Support Group hope you had a happy and healthy holiday season! 2026 is shaping up to be an excellent year for our talented group of published writers. We will be planning our second "Meet the Authors" session for February or March. We really enjoyed talking with residents who stopped by the meet-and-greet in November 2025, so we're doing it again. It's a great opportunity to ask us questions about writing and publishing. Look for this column in February for more details. The Author's Support Group is hosting a table at the Tuesday Craft Fair in the Recreation Center Ballroom from 9 a.m. to noon. Our member authors will

Poetry Club

Bill Burton



I remember awaiting the question I knew would someday come from my youngest: "Where do babies come from?" Awkwardness aside, it was an intriguing question. As a member of the Poetry Club, I recently applied the "where do" question to poetry and found it equally intriguing. Where do poems come from? Some questions beget questions. How do we date poetry? How do we define poetry apart from other writing? I remembered "The Song of Moses" in the Old Testament book of Exodus as the earliest example of a full verse form I'd read. Biblical scholars date it around the 14th century BCE, or about 3,500 years ago. Imagine my surprise when I dug up the facts and found I was off by thousands of years. For example, "The Love Song of Shu-Sin," a Sumerian poem, the longest known love poem, dates back to 3000 BCE. Of course, dating ancient anything, let alone poetry, is not easy. Forget computers, notebooks, and the Cloud. We're talking tablets of clay at best, along with

take turns at the table each week, so stop by often to buy books in your favorite genre. Lori Szepeleak is conducting four classes at Master the Possibilities on various subjects, including her popular, "So ... You Want to Be an Author?" (Feb. 2). She is also offering "A 'Photograph' of Love and Open Up One's Heart Space" (Jan. 13), "A 'Note' to Self" (March 2), and "Spirituality in the 21st Century" (April 6). Secure your seats now as her classes fill up quickly. Filomena Abys-Smith is working on a sequel to her 2023 novel, "At the Lord's Table," which takes place during the Great Irish Famine. Her new book will continue to follow these characters as they live through the antebellum period, becoming abolitionists and suffragists. Barbara Scales shared her many e-books and distributed documentation to the group on how to make their work available on multiple platforms. Mark Holmes unveiled new cover art

for his novel, "Herb Lundy and the Magic Milk Truck - A Trip Through Time and Faith." Check it out. Paul DiSclafani continues his popular weekly humor column in the Marion Citizen, "Apples and Oranges," along with a monthly humor column in the World News. He is also starting a series of interviews with our resident centenarians (people aged 100 and older). This month, he spoke with Gerry Mills, a Candler Hills resident. Although the Author's Support Group meets on the first Thursday of every month, we will skip our January meeting because it's New Year's Day. We will regroup on Thursday, Feb. 5, at 11 a.m. in the Arbor Activity Center Event Room. If you are a resident and a published author, come and join us. As a member of the group, you are eligible to participate in our "Meet the Author" gatherings and join the rotation for the Tuesday morning Craft Fair at the Recreation Center, where you can sell your books.

cave walls and eggshells, capturing fragments and symbols. We have to thank the field of archeology for digging decade after decade to give us a peek into the evolution of communication. The oldest narrative, considered an epic poem, "The Epic of Gilgamesh," dates back to 2100 BCE and comes from Mesopotamia, or modern-day Iraq. However, evidence of human communication art dates back over 30,000 years to cave paintings and over 60,000 years to shell etchings and fossilized shell beads. It appears our ancient forerunners presented ideas in dramatic, entertaining, and memorable ways. We know the ancients used mnemonic devices and rhythmic, repetitive oration to transmit and preserve cultural information. Simply put, speaking with tempo and rhythm made things easy to remember long before we could write them down. From that perspective, one could argue that language evolved from poetry in-

stead of the other way around. Rhyme in poetry is pretty much a Johnny-come-lately concept. There is surviving evidence of rhyming from the 10th century BCE in China, but rhyme in verse form really became popular in the late medieval period, mainly in Western civilizations. I enjoy the challenge of rhyming, but for those who think poetry has to rhyme, all I can say is it did not for most of human history. Archaeologists have found hearths dating back 400,000 years. One can't help but wonder what they might have come up with around those old campfires, but knowing they were motivated to make it memorable, I believe sonnets rather than football scores were likely in the mix. For the present, I can't wait for our next poetry meeting to see what we come up with. So, if you have some stone tablets to share or orate, call me at 352-492-8626. We'd love to hear them.

On Top of the World

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Dulcimer Club

Sharon Bruno



Our club enjoys performing for others and seeing people singing and clapping along to our music. Whether it's at an assisted living facility, a club meeting, or playing at the Ocala Ritz Veterans Village, we love to see people happy and enjoying themselves.

We also enjoy having people just drop in to hear what a dulcimer sounds like and listen to the club play. There truly is something wonderful about music and people getting together just to have fun. Our club enjoys learning new tunes and genres for seasonal and holiday events,

such as private and community parties and club events.

Did you know we are not only dulcimers? We have other string instruments such as guitars, fiddles, and psaltery. New players are usually amazed that this is an easy instrument to play. You don't even have to know how to read music to play a dulcimer.

To schedule the Dulcimer Club to play at one of your meetings or events, or if you are interested in joining us, contact Rich Furlong at 352-237-8734 or email richieretired@gmail.com.

Have a listen, the Dulcimer Club meets Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Arbor Activity Center Music Room. And beginners meet for additional help immediately after, from 3 to 4 p.m., in the same room with Karie Dawkins.

From all of us at the Dulcimer Club, we wish you a blessed and happy 2026!

Ukelele Club

Carol Himes



The Ukulele Club celebrated a Christmas party in December 2025. All had good food and joyous fellowship. Many members enjoyed our annual party where we honored our leader by presenting several gift cards to local restaurants. Many thanks to those who donate their time and talents to enhance our ukulele playing.

The Ukulele Club enjoys several "gigs", where we play upon invitation, throughout the year, as well as "pop-up" concerts on the fifth Wednesday of the month (when they occur). We enjoy going to different locations around the community to "pop up" and play music

for all to enjoy.

The Ukulele Club is open to residents with a valid resident ID or Gateway of Services pass. We meet every Wednesday in the Arbor Activity Center Music Room.

There are various sessions, including our beginners Uke 101 at 2:30 p.m. This is followed by the Strum and Sing Song Circle at 3 p.m., and at 4 p.m., you can enhance your advanced playing skills with our Intermediuke session.

There is something for any level of playing or skill, and one needn't be a note-reading musician to participate. All that's needed is a ukulele and the desire to learn, make, and share ukulele music with others. We will help you get started on this musical journey, giving plenty of opportunities to grow your skills.

For more information, contact Janet Voyles at 812-319-7761 or artemisclari-net@gmail.com.



Dulcimer Club performs for veterans. Photo by Mari Persaud

Concert Chorus

Joanne Houston



What an incredible season we've had with the 92-member Concert Chorus. The two holiday concerts in December 2025 were well attended, and the audience was enthusiastic and generous. They brought food donations to help our neighbors in need at Interfaith Emergency Services, resulting in an overwhelming amount of food for Marion County families during the holiday season.

The concerts featured many live musicians accompanying the chorus with their instruments, along with a great variety of music, laughter, and joy. It has been an awesome season of singing and

fun in our rehearsals each week.

We will begin preparing for our spring concerts on Tuesday, Jan. 6, from 9 to 11 a.m., in the Arbor Conference Center Music Room. The concert will coordinate with the 250th birthday celebration of the USA, and we will be part of the Master the Possibilities celebration at the end of our season.

The music will be a mixture of popular, patriotic, and a trip down memory lane. Our spring concerts will be on Sunday, April 12, at 3 p.m. and Monday, April 13, at 6 p.m. You won't want to miss out on the fun if you love to sing. All are welcome to join us for a wonderful time of making music together.

If you'd like further information, please email joanne.houston57@gmail.com or deboraasmith@gmail.com. Thanks for attending our holiday concerts! We can't wait to see you in the spring!



The Ukulele Club. Photo by Carol Himes

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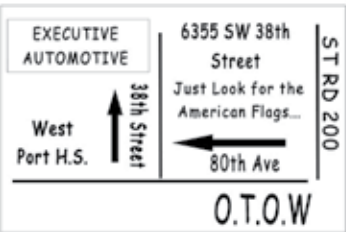
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Must present coupon at time of write up. Not valid with any other coupons or discounts see facility for details. Most cars and light trucks.

Karaoke Friends

Kathy & Charlie Petrosky



We wish all a happy and healthy 2026. One of the things I enjoy at holiday time is the variety of Christmas songs. On our first Monday, we had 44 different holiday songs. Laura started us off with “All I Want for Christmas Is You.” “Toto” followed that up with “All I Want for Christmas Is a Good Tan.” Ken continued our fun with “Grownup Christmas List.” Charlie told us, “Santa Is Coming in a Pickup Truck.” Nancy asked whether our family gathering was like the one in “Merry Christmas from the Family.” They are an odd bunch. Phil reminded us of all the “Christmas Cookies.” Lorraine sang a parody of “Winter Wonderland.” Of course, we had songs about the spirit of the holidays. Steve told us about “Christmas in Dixie.” Rocco sang the “Christmas Song.” Diane sang the Carpenters version of that song, and we could almost smell the chestnuts roasting. Peyton reminded us of all the “Caroling, Caroling” that is done this time of year. Ed recalled a street vendor from the past in “Pretty Paper.” I sold pencils and wrapping paper for gifts.



Photo by Steve Warren

Karaoke Christmas 2025.

For some, the holidays are a hard time. Vince sang “Blue Christmas.” Donnie wished that we could “Make It Through December.” Doug sang a prayerful song asking to “Build My Mansion Next Door to Jesus.” Fran sang “Mary, Did You Know.” Did Mary know all that the fu-

ture would hold for her? Some songs teach the reason for the season. I sang Reba’s “On This Day” and “Christmas Alphabet.” We had four chances to sing Christmas songs in December. This is just a peek at some of the songs.

We meet on the first and third Mondays in the Arbor Activity Center Music Room. Some singers are in the Recreation Center Ballroom on the second Thursday of the month. Others sing at The Lodge at Candler Hills on the first Thursday. Singing takes place from 5 to 8 p.m. Come join the fun.

Toppers Banjo

David Wesenberg



Toppers Banjo Band meets every Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon in the Arbor Activity Center Music Room. An instrumental practice subgroup meets at 12:15 p.m. on Mondays. This provides plenty of opportunities to join us and explore the banjo as a means of entertainment. I would like to introduce Paul Sullivan, one of the founding members of Toppers Banjo Band. His first instrument was the bass drum in junior high school. He added guitar, bass, and banjo in high school and college. He fondly remembers playing on the shore of Hampton Beach on Labor Day. When Paul retired to On Top of the World, he played ukelele, guitar, and banjo with various musical groups. He became acquainted with Barry Ripple and Eddie Martin, who formed the Toppers Banjo Band. Paul currently strums his banjo and occasionally sings. Some of our banjo players have been playing for a long time and can advise you on banjos and accessories. They would be delighted to show you how to hold your banjo, how to tune your banjo, and ultimately how to play your banjo. Your part in all this is to start.

This is a great time to join us if you have an interest in banjos and banjo music. We welcome new active or aspiring banjo, acoustic guitar, and other musicians to join us in playing and singing banjo music. If you like to play, come and join us. If you have any ideas to improve performance values and presentation, we’d love to hear them. If you like to listen, join us and enjoy the music and conversation. Everyone is welcome. For more information, contact Eddie Martin at udeddie2@gmail.com or David Wesenberg at dpw@mastersoftware-inc.com.



Photo by Herbert Young

Paul Sullivan playing banjo.

Tesla Owners & Enthusiasts Club

Dan Lack



Did you know that you can order your Tesla at the Paddock Mall? I didn’t know that either until our December 2025 meeting, when Bill, one of our club members, announced that he had ordered his new Model Y there. Several Tesla models are on display inside the mall, and there are also a few vehicles parked outside of Macy’s. Bill’s model Y, also known as the Juniper, was in stock in Orlando, where he picked it up

a few days later. Bill’s car drove him home via its full self-driving feature. He never had to touch the steering wheel because the car’s interior camera made sure that he was alert and looking down the road most of the time. Otherwise, the car’s computer would disable the full self-driving feature. The Tesla Owners and Enthusiasts Club meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m. in the Arbor Activity Center Card Room II. You do not have to be a Tesla owner to attend. There are no dues. There are speakers at some meetings. Most meetings are spent discussing our vehicles. Come and join us. We are happy to answer any questions you have about these amazing vehicles.

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| Feb. 15 | Daytona 500 (incl. admission) | \$260 |
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Fun with Golf Carts

Susan Pulling Robinson



Once again, our club members went all out to decorate their carts for the holidays. Delighted spectators of all ages clapped, cheered, and shouted greetings as the mini floats went by. Designated charities in December 2025 included Operation Shoebox, Chuck’s Piggy Bank, Dunnellon Elementary School, Interfaith Emergency Services, and Veterans Helping Veterans. Thank you to the many folks who turn out to make generous donations to these causes.

Don’t miss a parade; mark your calendar for the following Saturdays:

- Feb. 14: Valentine’s Day
- Mar. 14: Mardi Gras and St. Patrick’s Day
- April 4: Easter
- May 30: Memorial Day
- June 13: Flag Day

- July 4: Independence Day
 - Aug. 8: Summer Fun
 - Sept. 5: Labor Day
 - Oct. 31: Halloween
 - Nov. 7: Veterans Day
 - Dec. 5: Holiday Golf Cart Parade
 - Dec. 19: Holiday Parade
 - Dec. 26: Evening Lights
- Membership in our Facebook group (OTOW Fun with Golf Carts) has now surpassed 600 members! If you have a golf cart, please consider jazzing it up (or not) and joining in as we “parade for a cause.” Each parade benefits one or more local charities. For more information and to receive emails about this club, please email otowfunwithgolfcarts@gmail.com. We all have a lot of fun cruising around in our “mini-floats.”
- All club parades start at the Recreation Center, with lineup and charitable donations at 9:45 a.m. and pullout at 10 a.m. The route for a given parade is posted on Facebook (OTOW Fun with Golf Carts and OTOW Chatroom). If the parade is not coming to your house, please meet us at the Recreation Center as we leave.



Photo by Amy Kuzo

Karen Lynn and Melanie Richardi.

Model Railroaders

Jim Lynam



The members of the Model Railroaders Club sincerely hope that everyone who viewed the three-rail layout at Master the Possibilities over the holidays enjoyed the experience. We trust that viewing the trains and accessories brought back many fond memories from Christmases past.

The club also hopes that you were able to view our various scale layouts in the Hobby Building Model Train Room. The variety of steam engines and diesel locomotives hauling passengers and freight was absolutely amazing! The scale miniaturization of the layouts is spectacular. As we tell the visitors, “The more you look, the more detail you will see!”

The members of the club would like to express our sincere appreciation to Jon Grady, Larry Luke, Al Lohr, Jim Lynam, Lee Robertshaw, and Bernie Bossert for their service as club officers for 2025. Through their leadership and with the support of many club members, improvements were made to the club’s layouts. Scenery improvements were made to the various holiday dioramas, while new animations of spike drivers, the operating out-house, the station clock, the

fire hose, and the “thunderstorm” were added to the HO layout.

The three-rail layout used the newer MTH WiFi system to control the locomotives with our smartphones. Winter festive buildings and scenes were added to enhance the holiday spirit. The traveling Lionel layout for Master the Possibilities was totally renovated to depict Christmas in Florida, complete with decorated palm trees!

A new N-scale layout was designed and constructed to serve our members who prefer modeling the smaller-scale railroad. It also allows expansion through the installation of additional modules.

To continue the progress into the new year, the club wishes to congratulate the elected officers for 2026: Jim Lynam, president; Al Lohr, vice-president; Pete Kiziu, secretary; Lee Robertshaw, treasurer; and Larry Luke, board member.

The club also invites you to visit the Hobby Building Model Train Room on any Friday from 2 to 4 p.m. Come on in and run some trains with us! The Model Railroaders Club is always looking for new members, and you are welcome to join us. Our next club meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 7, in the Hobby Building Event Room. If you have any questions, please text Jim Lynam at 352-861-2822.

Wishing everyone the very best for 2026!

View from the Library

Mary Lamp



Fannie Flagg’s novel “A Redbird Christmas” is a short but heartwarming work that leaves you happy to have read it. It has “Christmas” in the title, and yes, there is a Christmas “miracle” that occurs at the end, but the focus is on human interaction and the caring for one another in the community where the book’s action takes place.

Oswald T. Campbell had started life out in Chicago, left on the steps of a church as an infant, to be raised in an orphanage. He never felt like he quite fit in, no matter where he found himself. He was now a 52-year-old man who had just received a dire diagnosis from his doctor, with advice to move out of Chicago to the sunny South to help improve his health.

He finds an ad in a pamphlet and shortly thereafter, finds himself in Lost River, Alabama, a small riverside community with one grocery store and a

post office. One by one, he meets the citizens, as we do as readers. Ms. Flagg has formed them well into a very interesting group.

When Roy, the grocery store owner, found a young red bird badly injured and nursed it back to health, little did he know that the bird, which he named Jack, would bring so much joy to all who came into his store, especially another abandoned person, Patsy. Over the next few months, the small town grew to love the newcomers: Oswald, Jack, and Patsy. Roy had trained Jack to run around a wheel and to respond with tweets when asked.

Patsy was about eight years old and had been left behind with strangers in a camp her father had passed through about a year earlier. She wandered into town one day, shy around the townspeople, but Jack got her engaged and talking with a smile on her face. The townsfolk unofficially adopted her.

The remainder of the novel deals with Patsy’s health scare, with the town’s reaction to it, and with a red bird that ensures all will have a merry Christmas. If reading a feel-good story appeals to you, I most certainly can recommend this book.

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Shutterbugs
Photography

Mark Holmes



Happy New Year! May you have a truly fulfilling 2026. Last year was invigorating, with multiple fun field trips, much learning about photography, and, we are sure, growth in the skills and enjoyment of our members.

We rolled out a new website at otowspc.org, a rich source of information on the club, on photography, and on places to visit throughout Central Florida. We delivered a new Facebook page (Shutterbugs OTOW Photography Club) open to anyone who wishes to visit and participate. Our annual photo contest produced some truly stunning images, with multiple ribbons awarded based on the independent judging panel’s scoring.

As we move into 2026, there is more excitement on the horizon, including carefully curated field trips to some hugely picturesque venues, new Facebook-based online digital photo contests, expanded learning opportunities in our weekly meeting schedule, a new focus on using smartphone technology for photography, insight into post-processing using affordable and user-friendly software, and much more.

Our leadership team includes club president Harry Boyajian, Garry Voith leading marketing and communications, Ron Rydell managing our financials and web design, and Mark Holmes tracking membership and authoring columns as reporting secretary. Our team also in-

cludes John Rossignol as our field trips leader and Gordon Daniels in charge of our photo display efforts.

Come join us! We are an active club with weekly meetings on Tuesdays. The first Tuesday of the month is an off-site morning field trip where members can shoot images at a special location or venue in Central Florida, featuring wildlife, landscapes, architecture, and other areas of interest. The second Tuesday is for “show and tell,” where member photos are shown and discussed. The third Tuesday includes help, problem-solving, and/or technical education, and the fourth Tuesday is for interactive instructional presentations on a variety of subjects.

Come to a future meeting at 3 p.m. on Tuesdays in the Hobby Building Event Room. Field trip hours vary. Monthly meeting schedules are posted at otowspc.org. Our modest annual membership fee helps cover the cost of contest judging, website hosting and upkeep, materials for monthly displays at Master the Possibilities, and our annual print photo contest display. The club is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

You do not need to be a member to join our Facebook group, where you can view the latest member photos and get useful information to help you grow your skills. You can also post your favorite images there. Learn more and get our membership form online. The address once again is www.otowspc.org.

The Shutterbugs motto: “Those who don’t know should ask, those who do know should show and tell.”

For more information, contact Harry Boyajian at 239-336-4804.



Photo by Shutterbug Mark Holmes

Jekyll Island – Driftwood Beach.

Happy Hookers

Jan Spielvogel



Happy 2026 from the Happy Hookers! We hope this new year is kind to all of you.

2025 was quite a year for Happy Hookers. We are still counting, as every Monday, members come to our meeting with more completed items. Our final numbers will be in the February column, but as of this publication, our group has distributed 1,330 hats, 342 scarves, and 497 afghans.

The agencies that received all of these beautifully handmade items were Veterans Helping Veterans, Dunnellon schools, Brother’s Keeper, Marion County Children’s Alliance, Marion County Homeless School Division, Shands Pediatric ICU, Bay Pines VA Healthcare, Empath Hospice of Marion County, and Bears & Blankets.

Our heartfelt thanks go out not only to the members of our group who have

Rubber Stamp
Greeting Cards

Linda Lohr



Our presenter for Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, was Ruth Epling, who offered many ideas for using old Christmas cards. We thank Ruth for her creative ideas. Many Christmas cards are so beautiful, it’s nice to give them a second life!

Our group is open to all crafters, whether you’re a beginner or more experienced. Each month, one or two people will present. The group meets on the first and third Thursdays at 1 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room.

Anyone can be a presenter; the cards do not have to be fancy or complicated. Our group is built on friendship, socializing, and mutual support.

Contact Connie Press using the email below for any class or general information. Basic supplies, such as a trimmer, glue, scissors, and cardstock, are required. Everyone in the group shares their supplies, and everyone brings new ideas to the table. You are only limited

created these beautiful items, but also to those of you in this community who have donated funds and yarn to help us complete these projects. Your generosity has been incredible.

Happy Hookers is open to all residents. We meet on Mondays from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Hobby Building Art Room. There are no dues, agendas, or penalties for missing a meeting, arriving late, or leaving early. Life can and does sometimes interfere, and we don’t want that to hold you back.

We have a talented group of ladies busy with crocheting, knitting, needlepointing, card crafting, embroidering, and various other handicrafts. They are never too busy to help someone with a complicated pattern or stitch. We welcome newcomers with open arms. Attendees should bring their current projects or work.

If you have questions about our club, call Jan Spielvogel at 919-274-6191 or Ann Gallo at 917-597-2178. We always appreciate donations of yarn, pattern books, knitting needles, crochet hooks, or other crafting tools. Please bring them to our Monday meetings, or contact Ann Gallo at 917-597-2178 to arrange pickup.

by your imagination!

If you feel this might be a class you would enjoy, or if you have any questions, please contact Connie Press at connie.rubberstampclub@gmail.com. You can also find the information for each class on our Facebook page.

Our next class is on Thursday, Jan. 15. Until our next meeting, keep on stampin’!



Photo by Cathy Lewandowski

Cards by Ruth Epling.



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Photo by Linda Toner

Wood-carved Christmas trees.

Sewing Bees

Ann Gallo



Happy New Year. Is it really 2026? 2025 has been an incredible year of growth for the Sewing Bees. We are thrilled to announce that we set a new record by making and distributing 1,193 quilts to over 20 agencies in Marion County that serve the homeless, foster care, domestic violence, children of teen homeless moms, Head Start, children of the Ocala National Forest, Shands Pediatric ICU, and children living in shelters. The need this year was great. In addition to these quilts, we also made and/or distributed 75 totes, 30 cradles, 195 pillow friends, 78 baby blankets, nine cartons of toys, 256 pieces of children's clothing, 370 burping cloths, 100 Christmas quilts, and filled 132 stockings. We are truly grateful for the support of our residents, whether via monetary, fabric, or sewing supply donations. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the dedicated women and men who gave of their time, talents, and love. We are truly

thankful to live in such a caring and giving community. We look forward to 2026, hoping that many more wonderful things will happen. Wishing you a year filled with health, happiness, and endless blessings. Would you like to be a part of this group? There are lots of things to do. We especially need people who can sew and tie a quilt. If you do sew, you don't have to complete every phase in the quilt-making process. If you do not sew, you can tie a quilt. This can be done sitting down. You can learn to sandwich a quilt and cut fabric. Many hands are a part of the final quilt. We have sewing machines available for your use. Dues are \$15 for the year. We are always in need of children's-themed cotton, solid-color cotton, or flannel fabric. Financial donations and gift cards, especially from Hobby Lobby and Michaels, are always welcome. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Join our page on Facebook (Sewing Bees Club Inc.) and see what magic takes place at the hive. Stay up to date on what we are working on and our current needs. Questions? Call or text Ann Gallo at 917-597-2178 or Susie Clauson at 904-422-5135.



Photo by Susie Clauson

Stuffing 132 stockings for the children of Marion County.

PRIMAL MOVEMENT

January 7, 2026 | 1 PM

Recreation Center

Primal Movement is a functional fitness method that emphasizes natural, basic movement patterns like crawling, squatting, bending, and twisting, which are designed to move. These exercises improve the strength, mobility, and coordination needed for daily activities. Participants should be able to get up and down from the floor.

Woodcarving Club

Linda Toner

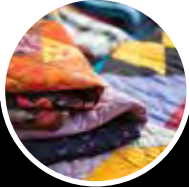


In December 2025, each club member was given a five-inch-tall by three-and-a-half-inch-wide triangular piece of basswood. Everyone was supposed to carve their own Christmas tree. The results were terrific. Each carver had a different vision of a Christmas tree. Dee made a tree with many ornaments and a lit star on top. Tom's tree had a carved Santa in the center. Muriel made the top of her tree whimsically tilted, while Gary carved a tree with a face on the front. David's tree had three candy canes and blue ornaments; Jim's tree had garland, a star, and a train circling the base. Vicky had Santa's face on the front of her tree, while Rich had

an express tree with gold berries on the leaves. Henry carved layered branches on his tree. Bev carved lights scattered across hers. Dave's tree had a face carved in the front. June had a garland, red, green, and white ornaments with a lighted star on top, and two Christmas carolers at the base. Carol modestly said hers was a basic tree. We all had a lot of fun with this project, and the results show the range and diversity of a woodcarver's mind. We meet every Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Hobby Building Art Room. If you think you might like to learn how to carve wood or are already a whittler or woodcarver, come join us. We have tools to lend, wood to use, and a wonderful instructor to teach you the craft. Our club members range from beginners to advanced carvers, and everything in between. For more information, you can call Tom at 352-586-1171 or Rich at 404-558-3855, or just stop by and see what we do.

Sunshine Quilters

Linda Holst



The Sunshine Quilters Guild is dedicated to fostering fellowship among its members and to promoting and advancing quilting through classes, tutorials, and retreats. Quilters of all skill levels are welcome. The guild also supports local organizations in Marion County with charity quilts. The guild meets every Tuesday in the

Hobby Building Art Room from 9:30 a.m. to noon and every Wednesday from 4 to 6 p.m. Our business meeting is held on the first Tuesday of the month, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Members have the opportunity to share their completed projects during each meeting's show-and-tell. Quarterly in-house retreats are held on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Field trips are taken to various quilt shops, with lunch at a chosen restaurant. Membership is open to all residents. For more information about the Sunshine Quilters Guild, contact Joyce Utley at Barnieo48@gmail.com.



Photo by Linda Holst

President Joyce Utley, Vice President Darlene Hickman, Secretary Karon Clay, Treasurer Cheryl Burke.

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Artistic Crafts & Gifts

Chris Kilbride



The weekly Artistic Crafts & Gifts Tuesday craft show at the Recreation Center Ballroom is from 9 a.m. to noon and will continue through May.

ArtisticCrafts.org offers a glimpse of our exceptionally talented crafters and artisans. The group started back in the early 1990s, and the show has grown to over 50 tables on Tuesdays. Over 100 crafters are online, offering unique, custom designs. All resident crafters are welcome to sell virtually on our website and inquire about a table at our Tuesday show.

This month, we are featuring Tammy Cope, a retired registered nurse with a background in obstetrics, oncology, transplant, and NICU, as well as management of case managers.

Now in retirement, making her own soap, lip gloss, and pure vanilla became a project to assure her family and close friends that they were using healthier, organic products. The soaps and lip gloss are made on demand to preserve the fragrance. The soap bars are made with goat’s milk, organic color, and pure essential oils. The pure vanilla takes six to 12 months to stew, so again, this is also made on demand and comes in a four-ounce size.

Tammy is also an author of two pub-

lications, a memoir and a companion journal. The first is titled “What is Love ... A Memoir” and conveys her journey of the many types of love she has experienced throughout her lifetime as a woman. The companion journal allows readers to answer questions about each chapter of the book related to their own love journey. She wrote the book as a labor of love to be passed down through the generations.

These books can be a great gift for teenagers, daughters, siblings, wives, mothers, grandmothers, nurses, and might also be enjoyed by males who would like to better understand a woman’s heart. She is presently working on her third book, outlining her nursing journey. Please visit Tammy’s listing on our website’s Gifts page.

She and her husband, Rick, grew up and raised their family near Steubenville, Ohio. They moved to our active community five years ago to escape the bitter cold and snow. Their love of travel has taken them to all but one of the 50 states as well as Canada, Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic. They have been on several cruises to the Bahamas, Bermuda, San Juan, and the Caribbean. In 2026, they will visit South America and Africa, and are set to cruise to Antarctica, China, Thailand, and Dubai.

If you have an artistic endeavor you wish to sell, please contact us through our website ArtisticCrafts.org, where our coordinator, Marion, can answer all your questions.



Photo by Tammy Cope

Books published and specialty beauty products designed by Tammy Cope.

Art Group

M.A. Baylis



Norman Rockwell’s iconic illustrations – those often idyllic, warm, and sentimental snapshots of 20th-century American life – are instantly recognizable, typically rendered in his signature, subtly-toned realism. Now, one resident contemporary artist, Edwin Mathena, is taking these classic images and completely turning them on their head, breathing new, vibrant life into them with a stunning use of watercolor and a riot of unexpected, vivid color.

In a captivating series of works, Ed has chosen Rockwell’s most beloved scenes as his muse. In his version of the charming Boy and Girl Gazing at the Moon, the citrus orange of the moon and the greens and blues of the couple come to life. Whereas Rockwell employed a palette of subtle earth tones and soft, controlled highlights, Ed’s vision is energetic, almost neon in saturation.

This infusion of brilliant, often non-representational hues is the hallmark of Ed’s practice. The artist leverages the unique properties of watercolor – its transparency, its ability to bleed, and the luminous quality it lends to paper – to create a visual pop that is both startling and deeply engaging.

The work is more than just a color swap; it’s a bold conversation across time. By maintaining the composition and core narrative of the original illustration, Mathena grounds the piece in nostalgia. But the shocking color shift acts as a powerful disruption, challenging the viewer to look beyond the familiar sentimentality. The lively pigments – pinks that hum, blues that glow, and oranges that blaze – infuse the often quiet, historical scenes with a modern-day urgency and joy, reinterpreting the American narrative through a contemporary lens.

While some might see it as artistic sacrilege, most find the pieces a delightful fusion of old and new. Ed’s watercolors are less about replacing Rockwell’s work and more about paying homage to his masterful storytelling while infusing it with a personal, electric energy. It transforms a familiar piece of Americana into a psychedelic, lively dreamscape, proving that great art can always

be reinvented and seen in a brilliant new light.

Beyond Rockwell, Ed Mathena revels in creating a wide range of vibrant animals, a dream jungle filled with amusing and distinctive beasts that bring out the child in all of us.

I asked Ed about his artistic process. “I am admittedly a perfectionist; it takes time to draw the precise dimensions in various sizes. Sometimes I will choose my colors, paint them, then determine they don’t feel right and redo the entire process over until I am satisfied.”

Ed’s commitment to his art shows in the finished product. You can see him on Saturdays at the Hobby Building Art Room. The Art Group meets on Wednesdays, Thursdays (noon to 4 p.m.), and Saturdays (9 a.m. to noon). For more information, contact Director Freda Klump at 615-336-6863 or fredaklump@gmail.com.



Photo by M.A. Baylis

Ed Mathena and his art.

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The publisher reserves the right to reject any ad which, in his judgment, would not be in the best interest of the residents of On Top of the World Communities.

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Electronics: Amazon Fire TV Cube, 4K – HDR, \$55. 215-688-7865.

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Misc. Items: Char-Broil barbecue with 4 burners, a side burner, and a half-full tank of propane, \$65/obo. ConAir Body Benefits Foot Spa with toe touch control, deep reservoir, vibration massage, \$45/obo. Text/call 631-948-7952.

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Saturday, Jan. 3: 7832 SW 86th Loop (Indigo East), 8 a.m. to noon.

Friday, Jan. 9: 8437-B SW 90th Street (Friendship Colony), 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 9 & Saturday, Jan. 10: 8966-B SW 8966 94th Lane (Friendship Park), 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 15 & Friday, Jan. 16: 9117 SW 93rd Circle (Providence), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 16 & Saturday, Jan. 17: 9394-A SW 97th Lane (Crescent Ridge), 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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Wanted

Donations: Dog or cat food [Friends of SPCA 352-362-0985] · Electric golf carts in full working condition for use by volunteers for local park. [Barbara btsprigg@gmail.com] · Men’s and women’s bicycles for local church homeless ministry [Carol 419-601-1322]. · Non-perishable food for food bank, and cards for veterans [Anne 843-504-0032] · Personal hygiene, & school/craft supplies for homeless; pet food/supplies for animal shelters; musical instruments for troops/veterans; socks, underwear & men’s clothing [Donna 352-237-3062] · Yarn for VA hospitals, children, and newborns [352-843-6519].

Ham Radio Operators: Support the Community Emergency Response Team in the event of a disaster. Please email brucetwiss@yahoo.com.

Men's Talk Group: Looking for open-hearted, open-minded men who would like to have an on-going in-house men’s group to confidentially discuss all things safely and respectfully, via “Great Tools for Talk.” Call/text Ashi at 707-280-3823.

Pet Foster Parents: Temporarily open your home to a pet in need. Call Friends of SPCA at 352-362-0985.

LOST OR FOUND A PET?

Call the SPCA of Marion County
hotline at 352-362-0985.

Dog Grooming and Boutique

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