

# The Canopy

## COVERING OUR COMMUNITY

### IN LOVING MEMORY OF ROB BRIDGER

*The Trails HOA Board of Directors and Management team*

The Trails Homeowners Association mourns the passing of Rob Bridger, a longtime resident, dedicated board member, and respected leader whose commitment to our community spanned decades.

Rob and his wife Maureen made The Trails their home in 1989, raising their daughter Erin here and later welcoming the joy of their granddaughter Andreyia into the family. For Rob, The Trails was more than a place to live — it was truly home, and his service to the community reflected that deep sense of belonging.

Rob brought a lifetime of experience and dedication to his role as a volunteer leader. A U.S. Navy veteran and Corpsman, he carried the values of service and integrity throughout his life. Professionally, Rob served the State of Florida for 35 years in supervisory, managerial, and administrative roles within health and human services programs. Among his many accomplishments, he served as a Regional Program Administrator for Children’s Medical Services, overseeing a \$17.9 million budget providing pediatric specialists for more than 10,000 children with special health care needs. Later, as Bureau Chief for statewide public assistance policy, he helped guide policy initiatives that reduced Florida’s welfare rolls by 54% while saving \$250 million in federal block grant funds.

Rob’s dedication to public service naturally extended to The Trails. Over the years he served the Association in many capacities, including Secretary, Board President, and



**ROB BRIDGER**

JUN 19, 1948 — MAR 9, 2026

a long-standing Board Member, giving more than a decade of his time and leadership to the community. During his tenure as President, Rob strengthened homeowner engagement by appointing committees focused on important aspects of the neighborhood, including budget, landscaping, amenities, facilities, governance, and community communications.

Rob was also deeply committed to keeping residents informed and connected. He chaired the Newspaper Committee and contributed to the community publication, helping ensure

that neighbors remained informed about the happenings and progress within The Trails.

Those who served alongside Rob will remember his thoughtfulness, steady leadership, and genuine care for the community. His work helped guide improvements, strengthen governance, and foster participation among residents — all with the goal of sustaining and enhancing the neighborhood he loved.

Rob’s legacy lives on in the many contributions he made to The Trails and in the relationships he built with neighbors and friends over the years.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Maureen, Erin, Andreyia, and the entire Bridger family during this difficult time. Rob will be deeply missed, and his service to The Trails will always be remembered with gratitude.

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## BRANCHES OF OUR CANOPY



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Kathleen Grabow, President*

As this message is being written, we're still feeling the effects of some unusually cold weather – and yes, there were even reports of snow flurries in Ormond Beach just days ago! That chill has many homeowners busy trimming back freeze-damaged plants and tidying up their landscapes. This is a good

time for an important reminder, especially for residents whose homes back up to the bike path. The City of Ormond Beach provides **citywide yard debris removal on Wednesdays**, so please plan your cleanup accordingly and use the City's collection service for yard waste.

We've recently seen an increase in landscape debris being placed **onto the bike paths or pushed over fences**. While this may seem convenient, it creates a challenge. Our detail crew operates on a very specific workflow schedule, and their contract includes blowing off the paths **once per week and after mowing**. Removal of dumped yard debris is not part of routine service.

When the crew is required to remove debris – outside of storm-related cleanup – it results in additional labor charges to the Association. If debris is linked to a specific property, the cost of

removal may be billed back to that homeowner per Association policy.

On behalf of the Board, we kindly ask all residents to **refrain from placing yard or foliage debris on pathways, common areas, or over fences**. Doing so helps keep maintenance costs down for everyone and ensures the paths remain safe and accessible. You'll also find helpful information in this edition on how to properly trim back landscape after a freeze to promote healthy regrowth. 🌱

A special thank you goes to our **onsite staff**, who, despite an unforeseen hiccup in January, successfully hosted the rescheduled Board Certification Class in February. We are also grateful to Alliance Smart Collections for generously providing a complimentary Panera box lunch for attendees. Board members are reminded that **continuing education is now required for all Directors**. If you are interested in upcoming CAMU classes offered at no cost to Board members, please contact the office at [TrailsHO@CiraMail.com](mailto:TrailsHO@CiraMail.com) for the monthly schedule.

Enjoy the spring season, and we look forward to seeing you at the next community event or monthly Board of Directors meeting.

**Be well neighbors,  
Kathy.**



### Management & Homeowner Portal Update: Reaching Us Just Got Easier

*Virginia Ochoa CMCA, AMS | Director, Community Association Management*

RealManage



At RealManage, we're always looking for ways to make it easier for residents to get the help they need. Earlier this year, we launched RealAssist, our new AI-powered chatbot, now available right on the Resident Portal login page.

With RealAssist, homeowners can get quick answers before even signing in. It can help with things like portal registration, login assistance, Gmail single sign-on, Quick Pay questions, and general HOA information. Residents can also leave feedback with a simple thumbs-up or thumbs-down to help us continue improving the experience.

We've also introduced several helpful updates to the Resident Portal:

- Enhanced Resident Dashboard with a property-specific balance tile and a convenient Make Payment button
- ACH reminder emails sent 10 days before scheduled assessment drafts
- Improved security with a 30-minute inactivity timeout
- A simplified "Add Property" process with clearer guidance for homeowners

If you haven't registered for the Resident Portal yet, we encourage you to sign up and take advantage of these convenient tools to stay connected with your community. Register or log in using this **URL path: <https://resident.ciragnet.com/user/login?returnUrl=%2Fhome>**



We're happy to continue bringing tools and updates that help make managing your community experience simpler and more convenient.



### DOLLARS & SENSE

*Dan Gowen, Treasurer, Brandie Hayes & Alexandra Wood*

As of December 31, 2025 our community attained an average collection rate of 90 percent, ranging from a high of 94 percent to a low of 84 percent during the year. This average is 20 points higher than 2024, a very nice achievement. Also, in 2025, we reached the highest number of owners registered for ACH, 19% of the membership. Our onsite management team negotiated savings for several services by finding better vendors or payment options. Finally, we ended the year with a slight, very thin surplus.

In spite of our 2025 successes, at the end of January 2026 we still have a nagging number of delinquent accounts as collections reached a mere 83 percent. Thank you to the 822 residents who paid on time. Among these champions are 188 families enrolled in ACH and 168 who prepaid their assessment. These families are sustaining the HOA's operations. As we have mentioned many times before, the best ways to avoid delinquency and relying on your neighbors' largess is to sign up for ACH or to prepay.

The positive financial results for 2025 are due directly to the work of your onsite Licensed Community Account Managers (LCAMs) and your volunteer Board of Directors. Please thank them, especially your LCAMs who carry the load and make everything work. Visit the office sometime and meet your management team in person. Enjoy 2026.

### MANAGERS' CORNER

Brandie Hayes, LCAM/Notary  
Alexandra Wood, LCAM/Notary  
Email: TrailsHO@ciemail.com



As we move into the second quarter of 2026, I'd like to take a moment to thank our homeowners, volunteers, Board members, and committee participants for your continued engagement and support. The strength of our community truly comes from the people who care enough to stay involved.

This quarter brings a renewed focus on **planning, preparation, and proactive maintenance**—particularly as we continue recovery efforts following the recent freeze. You may notice targeted landscape restoration throughout the community as damaged plant material is evaluated, trimmed, or replaced where necessary. These efforts are part of a thoughtful approach to restoring the landscape while also strengthening long-term resilience. We anticipate the spring installation of fresh mulch, and continued improvement of the bike paths, The fall pavement project at the point this article is being penned is still incomplete. We do have a project manager who is working with the vendor to address the areas where the materials did not meet the expectations of the association. Your patience and understanding is appreciated, as we navigate this hiccup.

In this edition, we've included a **landscape article** that offers helpful tips for homeowners on recovering their own yards from freeze damage, as well as guidance on preparing plants for future inclement weather. These shared best practices help ensure continuity between common areas and private properties, supporting the overall health and appearance of our community.

Behind the scenes, we continue to review budgets and reserves, coordinate with vendors, and evaluate upcoming projects to ensure we are addressing immediate needs while planning responsibly for the future. Transparency and communication remain key priorities, and updates will be shared as projects move forward. The pool resurfacing was planned for early 2026 with completion anticipated by the Volusia County public schools spring break. The permit process created a significant enough delay that the Board met in February and determined to complete the project post storm season in November of this year, to minimize the amenities disruption as the vendor could not guarantee a start and completion date. The resurface is scheduled to begin November 2, 2026, and may go through as late as the 16th of December. Upon completion and final health dept inspection the pool will be opened. Monetary completion guarantees have been written into the contract to ensure timely completion, or the vendor will be obligated to pay the financial penalty to the Association.

I would also like to recognize the onsite staff and landscape detail crew for their continued dedication and hard work, particularly during the recovery process. Their efforts play an essential role in maintaining the community we all enjoy.

As always, residents are encouraged to stay informed, attend meetings when possible, and reach out with constructive questions or concerns. Working together makes a meaningful difference.



And as I/we close out this edition, with extreme pride and cuteness, lets all welcome Auroa-Kay Suzanne Wood to the Trails Onsite Family. She was born February 19, 2026 weighing 6 pounds 11 oz and 18-3/4 inches tall! We look forward to Alexandra returning from her maternity leave in early May.

Thank you everyone for being part of what makes our community a great place to live.



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## SUB HOA SUMMIT - Building Stronger Connections Across The Trails

Brandie Hayes

On **April 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.**, The Trails Homeowners Association will host its first **Sub HOA Summit** at the **Trails Clubhouse**, 201 Main Trail, Ormond Beach, FL 32174 – and all Sub HOA Board Members, volunteers, and interested residents are invited to attend.

The Trails is proud to be home to **17 Sub-Associations**, each with its own leadership, responsibilities, and unique character. While each Sub HOA operates independently, we all share one larger mission – protecting property values, enhancing neighborhood appearance, and serving our community effectively.

The purpose of this Summit is simple:

**Connection. Collaboration. Confidence.**

### What Is the Sub HOA Summit?

The Summit is designed to bring together board members and volunteers from across all Sub Associations to:

- Exchange ideas
- Share knowledge
- Strengthening leadership
- Improve operational efficiency
- Build relationships that support long-term stability

Rather than operating in silos, this evening is about working smarter – together.

### Primary Goals of the Summit

#### 1. Create a Collaborative Network

Provide a space where Sub HOA leaders can connect, share experiences, and build working relationships.

#### 2. Share Resources & Best Practices

Highlight vendors, procedures, policies, and tools that are working well and explore opportunities to share successful approaches.

#### 3. Improve Operational Efficiency

Discuss ways to streamline processes and reduce duplication in areas such as:

- Communications
- Landscaping cycles
- Vendor management
- Budget formats
- Reporting practices

#### 4. Strengthen Financial Stewardship

Encourage knowledge-sharing around budgeting, reserves, contract management, and cost-saving strategies.

#### 5. Increase Board & Volunteer Confidence

Support newer board members who may have questions about procedures, legal responsibilities, or vendor oversight.

#### 6. Promote Consistency While Respecting Autonomy

Balance the independence of each Sub HOA with community-wide standards that protect our shared property values.

#### 7. Explore Group Purchasing Opportunities

Identify opportunities for bulk service agreements or coordinated contracts that may reduce costs.

#### 8. Enhance Communication Between Master & Sub HOAs

Clarify how information flows, where support is available, and how we can work more cohesively.

#### 9. Foster Long-Term Leadership Development

Encourage mentorship between experienced and new board members to build continuity and stability for years to come.

### Special Presentation: Association Risk Assessment

As part of the evening, a respected insurance professional will provide a presentation on HOA Risk Assessment, offering valuable insight into:

- Liability exposure in common areas
- Vendor oversight and contract considerations
- Preventative strategies that protect associations financially

This presentation is particularly beneficial for Sub HOAs responsible for common elements such as driveways, landscaping, lighting, and shared amenities.

### Event Details

**Date:** April 16, 2026     **Time:** 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Trails Clubhouse  
201 Main Trail, Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Light refreshments will be provided.

### Why This Matters

Strong leadership at the Sub HOA level strengthens The Trails as a whole. By sharing knowledge, improving communication, and supporting one another, we ensure that our entire community benefits from informed, confident, and proactive governance.

Whether you are a seasoned board member or newly serving your association, we encourage you to attend.

Let's work together to build a more connected, efficient, and resilient Trails community.

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## THE TRAILS HOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS Annual Board Certification Class

Brandie Hayes & Alexandra Wood



**2026 Board Certification Class took place on February 16, 2026.** 41 Participants attended the state required class and continued education update presented by **Alan Schwartzseid** with Kaye Bender Rembaum P.L. Attorneys At Law. Alan Schwartzseid, a Board Certified Specialist in Condominium and Planned Development Law, obtained a B.A. from the University of Florida in 2004, an M.S. in International Business from Florida Atlantic University in 2005, and a J.D. from Nova Southeastern University in 2008. Mr. Schwartzseid initially practiced mortgage foreclosure law, and in 2010, joined Kaye & Bender n/k/a Kaye Bender Rembaum to concentrate in the area of community association assessment collection.



In 2014, Mr. Schwartzseid left that employ to manage the collection department of Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman, and in 2018, moved to Central Florida where he spent several years as managing collection attorney and general community association counsel to over 500 communities, with Clayton & McCulloh, P.A.



In August 2022, Mr. Schwartzseid returned to Kaye Bender Rembaum as a Firm Member and managing attorney of the firm's Winter Springs / Orlando, Florida office, where he assists clients in all facets of community association law, with a transactional

focus. Mr. Schwartzseid is an active member of the Condominium Committee, who has served on numerous task forces of the Committee, authored several chapters of the Homeowners' Association and Condominium law books now pending publication, is a former chair and current member of the CLE Development Subcommittee, and serves as co-vice chair of the Condominium and Planned Development Board Certification CLE Subcommittee. Mr. Schwartzseid regularly lectures on Community Association law



issues (including at the Boyer Institute on Condominium and Cluster Development, and the Condominium and Planned Development Board Certification CLE) and is a Florida Supreme Court Certified County and Circuit Civil Mediator who focuses much of his mediation practice on community association-related disputes.

The Amenities committee with the Trails Board approval, provided a complimentary pastry and coffee breakfast. All attendees who preregistered were provided with a catered Panera boxed lunch courtesy of Alliance Smart Collection. This was the 5th year the Board Certification class was hosted at the Trails HOA.



## AMENITIES UPDATE - Clubhouse Rentals and Community Events Save the Dates

Brandie Hayes and Marra Mackenzie-Pranikoff

**NOW is the time to reserve the clubhouse for any Class of '26 Graduation Parties!** Congratulations to all of the class of 2026! If you use the RealManage resident portal, you can see the clubhouse calendar of available event dates. You can also call the office to see if your preferred event date is available 386-673-0855.

- **Monday-Thursday rentals:** \$250 deposit + \$250 rental fee (includes basic cleaning – because glitter never leaves on its own and will cost you a piece of your deposit).
- **Friday-Sunday Resident rentals:** \$319.50 for Homeowners (includes a basic cleaning fee and sales tax)
- **\$798.75 for non-homeowners** (includes a basic cleaning fee and sales tax)
- **The \$250.00 deposit is required** of both members and non-homeowners, with non-homeowners being required to pay by certified funds

**Upcoming 2026 Save the Dates** for the upcoming Food Trucks, Trade Show, Movie Nights... Oh My!

- **March 27-April 29, 2026** - Art Guild Showcase at the Casements
- **April 18, 2026** - Trails Annual Trade Show Trails Clubhouse Parking lot 10:00a.m.-4:00p.m. for registration information email TrailsHO@Ciramail.com Subject line: 2026Trade Show. (Limited if any Spaces Available) but also the **2026: SPRING COMMUNITY YARD SALE**

- **May 21, 2026** - Food Truck Event Trails Clubhouse Parking lot 5:15 - 8:15p.m. DJ Rob onsite.
- **June 12, 2026** - Farewell Open House for Mail Ma'am Laurie, 4 - 7p.m. Clubhouse. Drop by the Clubhouse to say goodbye to our mail carrier Laurie Fitzgerald, as she embarks on her retirement.
- **June 19, 2026** - Movie Night at the Pool Pizza and Snacks a Plenty! Movie begins at Dusk in the event of inclement weather the movie is shown in the clubhouse. Movie TBD Cost is free!
- **July 17, 2026** - Movie Night at the Pool Pizza and Snacks a Plenty! Movie begins at Dusk in the event of inclement weather the movie is shown in the clubhouse. Movie TBD Cost is free!
- **August 7, 2026** - Kona Ice Back to School Dance Party at the Pool 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. DJ Rob, Kona Ice, Pizza ...in the event of inclement weather we will hold the dance party in the clubhouse. Looking for Theme Suggestions...Because the Amenities committee loves a good theme!
- **October 22, 2026** - Food Truck Event Trails Clubhouse Parking lot 5:15 - 8:15p.m. DJ Rob onsite.
- **November 7, 2026** - FALL COMMUNITY YARD SALE



## LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE

### Weather Setbacks & Landscape Updates at The Trails

Marilyn Dorinson, Committee Member

Mother Nature delivered a tough start to the year for our community landscapes. The unusual cold snaps in January and February took a noticeable toll on many plants throughout The Trails. As a result, **there will be no Yard of the Quarter featured in this issue.** Instead, we are sharing a few photos of some of the plants that were most heavily affected by the freeze. While they may look a bit forlorn now, we remain hopeful that with the return of spring warmth and sunshine many of them will rebound beautifully in the coming weeks.

Even some of our hardier seasonal flowers struggled with the cold. **The snapdragons planted at both community entrances** managed to survive the first couple of freezes, with some deadheading attention they are bouncing back for some added vibrancy. These plantings will be refreshed as part of the upcoming spring rotation, bringing new color and fresh life back to the entrances.



Work has also resumed via improvements to the **bike paths throughout the community.** Repaving started earlier this season; however, it was discovered that the wrong sealant had been used, causing the surface to crumble. The contractor has acknowledged the issue and will **redo the work at their expense.** Once the resurfacing is complete, Carl will add **street name markings at the end of each path** to help residents better identify their locations. In addition, the scheduled **hard cutback along the bike paths** was postponed due to weather conditions and is now expected to take place later this spring.

Landscape maintenance and long-term improvements continue as part of our ongoing community beautification efforts. Recently, **twenty-one tallow trees along Timberline Trail were removed** and replaced with **fifteen crepe myrtles**, which will provide seasonal color and better long-term performance for the area. Additional plantings will be added as the budget allows. The community allocates **\$21,000 annually for plant replacement**, ensuring that aging or problematic plants can gradually be replaced with healthier and more appropriate varieties.

Planting in the **main landscape beds throughout The Trails has now been completed**, and if budget conditions permit, work may begin this year on updating beds along several of the side roads as well.

Looking ahead, the Landscape Committee is also working to incorporate more **Florida native plants** into the community. Members of the Florida Native Plant Society attended the February Landscape Committee meeting and have generously offered their expertise to help guide these efforts. Their recommendations will support the community's **Seven-Year Strategic Plan**, which encourages the gradual introduction of more native plant species that are well-suited to Florida's climate and beneficial to local wildlife. We look forward to their guest article in the next edition.

As we move into spring, we look forward to seeing our landscapes recover and flourish once again. Finally, we extend warm wishes to all of our residents observing the season. **May those celebrating enjoy a blessed Easter and Passover.**

## Lightning Safety at the Pool

### The Trails Board of Directors approved a 20-Mile Lightning Policy

Summer in Florida brings sunshine, swimming... and lightning. In fact, Florida is often called the **Lightning Capital of the United States**, with thousands of lightning strikes occurring every summer. Because lightning can travel long distances through the atmosphere—and even through water—**The Trails HOA follows a strict lightning safety policy** to protect residents and guests using the pool facilities.

#### How We Monitor Lightning

Our pool attendants actively monitor storm activity using the **Lightning Radar App**, which tracks lightning strikes in real time.

- When lightning is detected **within 20 miles**, the pool area is **cleared immediately**.
- The pool remains closed 1 hour post the most recent strike detected or until it is safe to reopen based on storm activity and the app’s monitoring system.

This policy in recent years has been updated from **25 miles to 20 miles** to align with modern monitoring technology while still maintaining a strong safety margin for residents, guests and employees.

#### Lightning Facts

- Lightning can reach temperatures of **50,000°F**, hotter than the surface of the sun.
- A lightning strike can travel **up to 10 miles away from the storm cloud that produced it**. In rare cases, lightning has been reported to travel distances **exceeding 20 miles**, including **two documented occurrences in our area in recent years**, which reinforces why monitoring storm activity is so important.

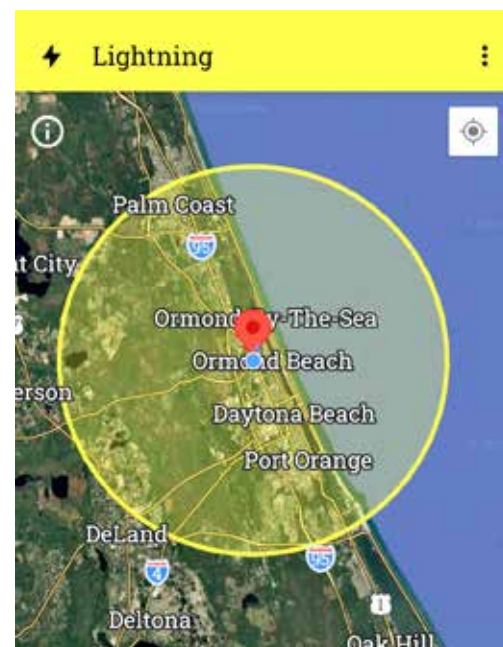
- Florida experiences **more lightning strikes than any other state**, especially during summer afternoons.
- Water, metal, and open areas increase the risk of lightning injury.

#### How to Stay Safe

- **Leave the pool immediately** when attendants announce a closure.
- Avoid **open areas, water, and metal structures**.
- Seek shelter **inside a building or vehicle**.
- Wait until staff announces the pool is safe to reopen before returning.

**A Florida Summer Reminder**—Those quick afternoon storms that roll through the area may only last a short time, but lightning safety is serious. Our pool attendants use monitoring technology and follow strict safety protocols so everyone can **return to enjoying the pool as soon as conditions are safe**.

Thank you for helping to keep **The Trails community safe this summer**.



## Bloomers That Bounce Back Stronger,

*Brandie Hayes and Alexandra Wood w/ assist from Mike Pluskota and AI.*



These are familiar faces in our Medians and Culdesac’s as required by the Landscape Strategic Plan the Trails maintains Florida Friendly beds throughout the community. While frost may knock them down on occasion, their roots stay strong underground.



#### Society Garlic

Its strappy leaves often burn and fall over after a cold snap. A trim to a few inches above the ground encourages fresh green growth and those beloved lavender blooms will return in spring.



#### Firebush

A pollinator favorite with bright orange-red blooms, Firebush may lose its top growth in colder weather. Cutting it back helps it regrow fuller and more compact when warm weather returns.

#### Blue Daze (Evolvulus)

This cheerful blue groundcover can turn silvery and limp after frost. Don’t worry – trim it low and it will spread again into a thick carpet of color.

#### Mexican Petunia

Often flattened by cold, but incredibly resilient. A hard cutback gives way to sturdy upright stems and waves of purple blooms.

#### Lantana

One of Florida’s toughest flowering plants. Frost may cause dieback, but cutting away the damaged growth sets the stage for explosive spring color.

#### Why a Winter Cutback Helps

After frost, damaged foliage can trap moisture and invite pests or disease. Removing that material:

- Signals the plant to push new growth
- Improves airflow and plant health
- Keeps beds looking neat
- Encourages fuller flowering in spring

Most perennials can be trimmed back to **4-8 inches** once the risk of a hard freeze has passed. It may look dramatic at first – but within weeks, fresh green shoots begin emerging.

- **What to Expect Next.** As temperatures warm:
- Roots send up vigorous new growth
- Bloom cycles restart
- Plants return thicker and more vibrant
- Landscape beds regain their color and fullness

So, if you see our landscape team giving plants a serious haircut this winter, know it’s all part of keeping our community beautiful year-round.

**Nature may press pause, but these recent frostbitten Florida plants know how to make a comeback.**

## AROUND THE COMMUNITY

### A Fond Farewell to Our Mail Ma'am"

#### Laurie Fitzgerald

*Brandie Hayes, Marra Makenzie, and Alexandra Wood*



For the past 13 years, if you've checked your mailbox in The Trails, chances are you've crossed paths with someone who knows the community almost as well as the residents, the landscape detail crew and the onsite managers themselves—Laurie Fitzgerald, affectionately known as "The Mail Ma'am."

As Laurie prepares for her well-earned retirement, we wanted to take a moment to share a few stories and reflections from her time on the route that so many of us have come to appreciate.

Laurie may not remember every detail of her very first day delivering mail here, but she certainly remembers what makes this route special. After working through everything from everyday Florida heat to a full-blown blizzard back in New Jersey—the kind that shut roads down entirely says it's the people of The Trails who truly stand out. In her words, "The residents here—everyone is warm and friendly."

Over the years, Laurie has seen and delivered just about everything. A potato with postage affixed among the most strange and memorable deliveries. One of the sweetest surprises came when a Trails resident and elementary school teacher had her entire second-grade class, make her handmade cards, a small but heartfelt gesture that left a lasting impression. Other days that have stayed with her are the many and often seemingly simple random act of kindness that so many of the Trails Homeowners and Residents offer to her and the other postal carriers of the Trails—reminders that even brief moments on a daily route can carry meaning far beyond the mailbox.

Of course, mail delivery isn't always routine. Laurie, an avid animal lover, once helped care for a dog that had been abandoned, keeping it safe and delivering it to the Trails office until Animal Control arrived. Just another example of her quiet compassion and sense of responsibility extending beyond the job description.

When asked what people might not realize about mail delivery, Laurie didn't hesitate: it's physical work, often times including heavy lifting. Rain, heat, and early on in her career was the miles on foot, and constant motion—day after day. And yet, she met it all with consistency, care, and a smile.

As retirement approaches, Laurie is looking forward to some well-deserved changes—no more fighting traffic, more time sitting on the beach with a book, and a cross-country road trip with a friend to visit family and explore our national parks. While she's excited for what's ahead, she admits she'll miss the people—and the laughs she shared along the way.

To the residents of The Trails, Laurie simply says thank you—and from all of us, Ms. Laurie, the feeling is absolutely mutual.

Laurie, your dedication, kindness, and steady presence have been part of the fabric of this community for more than a decade. We wish you sunny skies, open roads, and a retirement filled with everything you're looking forward to—including a little less heavy lifting.

On Friday June 12, 2026, from 4p.m.-6pm in the Trails HOA Clubhouse the onsite staff will be hosting a Farewell Mixer for our friend Mail Ma'am Laurie Fitzgerald. Please make sure you save the date and come by the clubhouse to wish Laurie a fond Farewell. Light Hors d'oeuvres, a few sweets, and beverages will be served.

**UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THE TRAILS RESIDENTS!**

- March 26... Food Truck Rally**
- April 18.. The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Trade & Craft Show**  
/ The "SPRING" Community Yard Sale
- May 21... Food Truck**
- June 19.. Movie Night (movie TBA)**
- July 17.. Movie Night (movie TBA)**
- August 7... (movie TBA) 6 p.m - 9 p.m.**  
Back to School - Pizza and Pool - Dance Party  
with special treat by Kona Ice!
- October 22.. Food Truck Rally**
- Nov 7... "Fall" Community Yard Sale**

**SAVE THE DATES & JOIN IN THE FUN!**

# LONG-TERM CRUISING - What, Again?! Preparing for Circling the World

Dan Gowen

*"Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in."*

*Michael Corleone, The Godfather: Part III.*

One of our neighbors asked me to write about preparing for such a long journey, in this case, a sixteen-week trip – planes, ships, and automobiles. From DAB, I'll fly to San Diego then sail to Southampton, UK. Our ship will visit 51 ports and enjoy 38 sea days while sailing through Polynesia, Melanesia, Australia, Southeast and South Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, Suez Canal, Eastern Mediterranean, Iberian Peninsula, and Western France. I will visit friends in East Anglia briefly then fly home.

My friend wondered if some information on social media might assist with my musings and ruminations on the prep. "Interesting idea," I responded. So, in the name of research, I reluctantly sucked myself down a YouTube rabbit hole. Wow. Now I understand how one can lose a several hours in a social media "Tardis."



In my first *Long-Term Cruising* article in *The Canopy* 1st quarter 2025 issue, I discussed my preparation for a mere 60-day voyage. I conclude the following:

*"Lesson - When it comes to consumables and infrequently used or "just-in-case" items, travel with only the minimum, essential items for the duration of the outbound trip. There will be stores in the port*

*city carrying the quantity of things you'll want on the ship. It is so much nicer to travel with less weight and fewer bags. Next trip will be carry-on only."*

My foray into the YouTube world showed that there many, more experienced cruisers than I, with lessons to share. I centered on one, Lynnelle, because she was and is traveling full time on a strict, modest budget. Also, I liked her channel title, Poverty to Paradise. According to her YouTube page, Lynnelle joined YouTube in Spring 2024, has posted 460 videos, and accumulated 117K subscribers. Lynnelle's videos cover many aspects about living full-time on cruise ships. Among her topics, I focused on her videos about preparations and packing for the long haul.

After viewing these segments, I noticed that Lynnelle's philosophy about packing evolved as her cruising experience grew. Specifically, she started traveling with two checked bag, a carry-on, and personal item -- a typical packing approach from my observations. Now, in a recent video, she is teaching how to pack for back-to-back voyages with only two bags - carry-on and personal.

Since my first long cruise in November 2024, all of my trips and cruises have been with carry-on bags only. Not this time. After researching my departure port, I cannot guarantee that the consumables I need will be available. I considered sending boxes containing prohibited carry-on items to my pre-cruise hotel, but, in the end, I decided to check a bag. "OMG, say it's not so."

Serendipitously, I found a four-wheel Samsonite in good condition at a local thrift shop. I will do my normal long-trip pack -- five to seven-days of changes - into my normal carry-on backpack, then I'll place the backpack into the Samsonite. Lastly, I'll pack my large liquids like insect repellent and moisturizers and toiletries to fill the bag.



My carry-on for the outbound trip will be my normal personal item packed with over-night essentials and vitamins in case my checked bag misses my connection. My plan is to return with carry-on bags only, leaving my new-used checked bag with someone who needs it or a charity shop. I know that no war plan survives first contact, so we'll see how this one goes. Bon Voyage.

## Please join us on Nextdoor The Trails - Ormond Beach

Babysitter needed

I see kids bike!

Garage sale this Saturday

Car break-in! See anything?

Anyone missing a dog?

Nextdoor The Trails - Ormond Beach is the neighborhood hub for trusted connections and the exchange of helpful information, goods, and services. On Nextdoor, neighbors share crime and safety concerns, local events, recommendations, items for sale/free, ideas about how to make our neighborhood better, and more.

Our neighborhood is using an online platform called Nextdoor. Please join us to build a better neighborhood!

- Brandie H. Main Trl

Please join us!

Don't miss out :)

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## Spring Cleaning for the Soul: How Self-Care Gets a Seasonal Reset (and Why Sound Baths Help)

Nancy Deluca

When we hear “spring cleaning”, most of us picture open windows, donation piles, and that satisfying moment when a room finally feels lighter. But the real magic of spring cleaning isn’t just a sparkling kitchen - it’s the feeling of space. And that same reset can apply to self-care, too.

Just like closets collect clutter, our nervous system collects “noise”. Busy schedules, constant notifications, emotional stress, poor sleep and the mental load of everyday life can build up quietly over time. You might not notice it at first, but eventually it shows up as irritability, brain fog, tension in your body, or that sense of being “on edge” even when nothing is technically wrong.

### What does spring cleaning look like for self-care?

Self-care spring cleaning isn’t about adding more to your to-do list. It’s about clearing what’s weighing you down and making room for what restores you. Think of it as a seasonal audit:



- What habits are draining you?
- What commitments no longer fit?
- What thoughts keep looping in the background?
- What does your body keep asking for (rest, movement, quiet, connection)?

Sometimes the most powerful “cleaning” is simply giving your system a chance to downshift - so you can hear yourself again.


### Why Sound Baths are a perfect spring reset

A Sound Bath is one of the most gentle, effective ways to support this kind of inner clearing. In a Sound Bath, you’re immersed in soothing tones and vibrations - from crystal singing bowls, chimes, and other therapeutic instruments - while you rest comfortably. No experience is required. You don’t have to “do” anything. You simply show up and receive.

1. A Sound Bath helps calm the nervous system  
When life feels loud, your body can get stuck in stress mode. Sound Baths are designed to support deep relaxation, helping your nervous system shift out of “fight or flight” and into “rest and repair”.
2. A Sound Bath creates mental “white space”  
If your mind is cluttered, silence can sometimes feel intimidating. Sound gives your brain something soft to focus on, which can make it easier to release racing thoughts and drop into stillness.
3. A Sound Bath supports emotional release  
Spring cleaning often bring up old stuff - literally and emotionally. Many people find that Sound Baths help them process feelings they’ve been carrying, without needing to talk everything through.

7th Heaven Sound Baths™



## Experience Deep Relaxation with a Sound Bath

Let soothing sound wash over you as crystal singing bowls, chimes, and nature-inspired instruments guide you into deep calm. Release stress, restore harmony, and reconnect with your peaceful self. *Join us for a transformative Sound Bath at Ormond Beach's only year-round dedicated Sound Bath studio.*

---

725 W. Granada Blvd. Suite 11 Ormond Beach, FL

**BOOK AN APPOINTMENT!**

[7thheavensoundbaths.com](http://7thheavensoundbaths.com)

4. A Sound Bath is a ritual you can return to  
Just like cleaning isn’t a one-time event, self-care isn’t either. Regular Sound Baths can become a simple, consistent way to “clear the dust” before stress piles up.

This spring, consider cleaning more than your home. Clear your calendar a little. Clear your mind a little. Clear the tension your body has been holding. Then fill that space with something that truly restores you.

A Sound Bath is a beautiful place to start: restful, science-forward, and deeply supportive - like spring cleaning for your whole system.

*Find out more about 7th Heaven Sound Baths, Ormond Beach's only full-time dedicated Sound Bath studio, at: [www.7thheavensoundbaths.com](http://www.7thheavensoundbaths.com) or [www.7hsb.com](http://www.7hsb.com)*

## CLASSIC SOUTHERN DEVILED EGGS

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 large eggs, hard-boiled
- 3 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 tsp yellow mustard
- 1 tsp sweet pickle relish
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Paprika for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

1. Slice eggs in half, remove yolks.
2. Mash yolks with mayo, mustard, relish, salt, and pepper until smooth.
3. Spoon or pipe into whites.
4. Sprinkle with paprika

#### Spring Add-Ins:

- Chopped fresh chives
- Chopped dill or parsley
- A squeeze of lemon

#### Perfect Hard-Boiled Eggs Tip

Place eggs in pot, cover with water. Bring to boil, cover, remove from heat, and let sit **12 minutes**. Cool in ice water before peeling.



## ORMOND BEACH ART GUILD

### Tuesdays at the Clubhouse

Marilyn Dorinson



As many of you know, the Ormond Beach Art Guild meets every Tuesday in our clubhouse, bringing together a talented and enthusiastic group of local artists. Among the members are five Trails residents, but this month we're shining the spotlight on two gifted non-resident sisters whose artistic journeys are as inspiring as their work.

Sisters Karen Matz and Cheryl Piatkiewicz originally hail from Lyle, Illinois, near Chicago, and have called Ormond Beach home for the past twenty-one years, residing in Bear Creek. Before embracing their creative paths, both women enjoyed successful professional careers. Karen pursued her studies at Southern Illinois University, while Cheryl attended Western Illinois University. Karen dedicated her career to teaching, and Cheryl combined her background in education with work in food brokering and at the Ormond Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Interestingly, neither sister majored in art in college—though Cheryl was an art student in high school. It wasn't until retirement that they fully embraced their artistic talents. Today, both are accomplished watercolorists, favoring this medium for its vibrancy

and expressive possibilities.

Cheryl's favorite subjects include the ocean, beach scenes, people, and flowers, while Karen is especially drawn to landscapes and coastal settings. Their work can be seen locally at Mimi's Original Art on US-1 in Ormond Beach. Additionally, Cheryl currently has paintings available for purchase at Haynes Furniture.

Both sisters value their membership in the Ormond Beach Art Guild, citing the camaraderie, collaboration, and opportunities to learn from fellow artists as highlights of their experience. They also enjoy exhibiting their work twice a year at The Casements, one of the area's most cherished historic venues.

At home, Karen and Cheryl share their lives with Blue, their beloved beagle-proclaimed boss of the household—who delights in meeting people and going on long walks.

Be sure to mark your calendars: the Ormond Beach Art Guild will open its Spring Show with a reception at The Casements, 25 Riverside Drive, on March 27 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. The exhibit will remain on display through April 29. Don't miss this opportunity to support our local artists and celebrate the vibrant creative community right here in Ormond Beach!



(L to R) Cheryl Piatkiewicz & Karen Matz

## SOUTHERN-STYLE POKE CAKE

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 box white or yellow cake mix (plus ingredients needed per box)
- 1 box (3 oz) Jello gelatin (strawberry, cherry, etc.)
- 1 cup boiling water
- ½ cup cold water
- 1 tub (8 oz) whipped topping
- Colorful sprinkles for garnish



### DIRECTIONS

1. Bake cake as directed in a 9x13 pan. Let cool completely.
2. Poke holes all over cake with a fork. (About 1 inch apart)
3. Mix Jello powder with boiling water until dissolved. Add cold water and stir. Pour over cake filling the holes.
4. Chill 3 hours, frost with whipped topping. Add sprinkles.

### Spring Flavors:

- Strawberry
- Pineapple
- Lemon Lime

### Southern Sweets Tip:

Shade your cake! Use a combo of Jello colors for ombré or rainbow layers.

## SOUTHERN-STYLE CHICKEN SALAD

### with Sweet Spring Add-Ins

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups cooked chicken, shredded or diced
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1-2 tbsp sweet pickle relish
- 1 tsp yellow mustard
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery
- 2 tbsp finely chopped red onion
- Salt & pepper to taste

### Optional Spring Add-Ins (choose one or mix!):

- ¼ cup halved red grapes
- ¼ cup diced apple
- ¼ cup diced pear
- ¼-½ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup chopped pecans



### DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, mix mayo, relish, mustard, salt, and pepper.
2. Stir in celery and red onion.
3. Fold in chicken until coated.
4. Gently mix in fruit or cranberries (and pecans if using).
5. Chill at least 1 hour before serving.

### SERVE

Croissants • Sandwich bread • Lettuce cups • Crackers  
Stuffed in tomatoes or avocados

### Spring Tip:

Make it ahead — it tastes even better the next day!

**The Trails  
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**IMPORTANT DATES & UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CLUBHOUSE (CH)**

**MONDAYS:** 11:30 am - 3:30 pm Every other week Bridge Club, also Girls Scouts and Brownies evening meetings

**THURSDAYS:** 11:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. is available for Card club (each week). Note: Watch Next-door for club dates to resume

**TUESDAYS:** 8:30 am - 12:00 p.m. the Senior Art Guild meets in the Clubhouse.





The Trails Pool is open daily from 10a.m.- 6p.m 7 days a week until May 1, where it will be open until 9 p.m. Mon-Sat. The pool will be closed during the pool resurface project scheduled to begin

 When you see this flag on the calendar - display your flag at your mailbox.

**April 2026**

- 04/01 - 2nd qtr. assessment due \$274.00 *No Fooling!*  
*Passover begins at Sundown!*
- 04/02 - Landscape Committee meeting 3:00 p.m. (CH)
- 04/05 - Easter 
- 04/08 - ACC Meeting 9:00 a.m. 1st floor conf. room (CH)
- 04/09 - **Board of Directors Meeting (CH 6:00 p.m.)**  
*Passover ends at Sundown!*
- 04/15 - TAX DAY!
- 04/16 - **SUB HOA SUMMIT 2nd Floor (CH) 6 p.m.**  
Speaker Justin Webb Brown & Brown
- 04/18 - **Trails 10th Annual Trade Show** 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.  
and **Spring Community Yard Sale** 8:00 a.m.-?
- 04/22 - ACC Meeting 9:00 a.m. 1st floor conference room (CH)  
and Earth Day.
- 04/30 - 2nd qtr. Assessments are delinquent late fees  
applied today

**May 2026**

- 05/01 - 2nd qtr. assessment of \$274.00 **Officially past due**  
Pool hours until 9 p.m.
- 05/07 - Landscape Committee meeting 3:00 p.m.  
1st floor conf. room (CH)
- 05/10 - Mother's Day 
- 05/13 - ACC Meeting 9:00 a.m. 1st floor conf. room (CH)
- 05/14 - **Board of Directors Meeting (CH 6:00 p.m.)**
- 05/16 - Armed Forces Day 
- 05/21 - **2nd Food Truck Rally** 5:15 - 8:15 p.m. CH Parking lot 
- 05/25 - Memorial Day Office is Closed 
- 05/27 - ACC Meeting 9:00 a.m. 1st floor conf. room (CH)
- 05/28 - **SUMMER BREAK VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS**  
**SUMMER BREAK- YAY!**
- 05/31 - **RV Storage Renewal DUE: \$702.96**  
Trails HOA 201 Main Trail Ormond FL 32174

**June 2026**

- 06/01 - **2ND qtr. Assessments are past due \$274.00**
- 06/04 - Landscape Committee meeting 3:00 p.m.  
1st floor conf. room (CH)
- 06/10 - ACC Meeting 9:00 a.m. 1st floor conf. room (CH)
- 06/11 - **Board of Directors Meeting (CH 6:00 p.m.)**
- 06/12 - **Farewell Mail Ma'am Mixer** 4 -7p.m. 2nd floor CH
- 06/14 - Flag Day 
- 06/19 - Juneteenth   
**Movie Night at the Pool** - Movie begins at dusk.
- 06/21 - Fathers Day 
- 06/24 - ACC Meeting 9:00 a.m. 1st floor conf. room (CH)
- 06/29 - 07/19 - FIFA WORLD CUP 

**Fun Facts about Lightning**

- Lightning can appear **white, yellow, blue, purple, or even red**, depending on temperature and what particles are in the air.
- Lightning actually helps plants by **turning nitrogen in the air into a form that plants can use in the soil.**
- If you **count the seconds between the flash and the thunder**, divide by five to estimate the distance in miles.
- **Lightning Can Strike the Same Place More Than Once**  
Tall structures like towers, trees, and buildings can be **struck repeatedly during the same storm**

**POOL HOURS**

**April 1 - 30**  
7 days a week 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**May 1 - September 30**  
Mon-Sat 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**October 1 - 31**

7 days a week 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
**November 1 - March 31**

10a.m. - 4p.m

Pool will be closed during resurfacing project.