



# THE VILLAGER

A Publication of the American Homesteading Foundation Inc.

## Don't Miss The Annual Meeting and Annual Dinner

By Christine Kretz

The AHF Annual Meeting will be held this year on **March 16th at 9:00 a.m.** The Annual Meeting is important for our community as new Board members are installed, committees add new members, and committees and the officers report highlights of the activities of our organization. It is the responsibility of all members to attend and vote at this meeting. A quorum is required, and we encourage all to attend in the AHF Hall, however a Zoom option is available if you are unable to attend in person. To encourage participation, a \$100 gift card will again be raffled off at the end of the meeting and donuts and coffee will be available beginning at 8:30am.

While the meeting brings us together to participate in the governance of our organization, the Annual Dinner, **March 17th at 6:00 p.m.**, is all about enjoying fellowship with the membership and celebrating the work of our many volunteers. This year the theme is "The 70's" and we hope you'll join the fun and wear your best 70's groovy gear. The Committee will provide ham, roasted chicken, and rolls. Please bring a main dish, side dish, or dessert to share. This is a BYOB event with lemonade available. You are welcome to bring one guest as your "plus one," but you and your guest **MUST** be registered to attend. To register, stop by or email the AHF Office at **office@ahfmv.com** by March 8th. We are not able to exceed capacity, so please register and plan to join us for a fun Sunday dinner.



We're looking for a volunteer photographer to help record the fun of the Annual Dinner. If you are a shutterbug and would like to capture our "Kodak moments," please contact **Christine Kretz** at **cmkretz@gmail.com**.



**ATTENTION COMMITTEES**

We're gathering great photos of our teams at work and play this past year to share at the Annual Dinner. Please contact **Christine Kretz** at **cmkretz@gmail.com** for instructions on sharing some photos for inclusion in the slideshow. See you there!



### 78th ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, March 16, 2024

Quorum Required

Registration at 8:30 a.m.

Call to Order at 9:00 a.m.

\$100 Gift Card Giveaway - you must register before 9:00 a.m.

Contact AHF Office for Zoom Link

### 78th ANNUAL DINNER

Sunday, March 17, 2024

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner served from 6:00 p.m

AHF members and one guest must RSVP

Bring a dish or dessert to share & BYOB

**GROOVY OUTFITS ENCOURAGED!**

## AHF Office Contact Info

**Phone: (321) 723-6042**

**Email: [office@ahfmv.com](mailto:office@ahfmv.com)**

**Website: [ahfmv.com](http://ahfmv.com)**

**Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

### UPCOMING EVENTS - SAVE THE DATE!

Cardinalbucks Afterdark – February 10, 6 – 10 p.m.  
 Annual Dinner - March 17, 6:00 p.m., doors open at 5:30  
 Easter Egg Hunt - March 30  
 Easter Service - March 31, 7:30 a.m. in Deerhead Hammock  
 Adult Education Class - April 13 at 10:00 a.m.  
 Movie Nights – February 24, April 20, and May 25

### NEW AHF MEMBERS:

**John and RaJean Morrison** - 767 Acacia Ave

### MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED:

**April Littenecker**, had been an AHF member since 1997 and lived on Savannah Drive.

### AHF BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023-2024:

President – **Mary Bean**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – **Dwight Davies**  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – **David Zeitz**  
 Treasurer – **Dennis Foster**  
 Secretary – **Paul Merry**  
 Assistant Secretary/Treasurer – **Carrie Cronkhite**  
**Mary Jane Moon**  
**Brenda Mathews**  
**Christine Kretz**

\*\*\*\*Please note that there will not be an election for Board Members this year as there were three candidates for the three open positions. **Christine Kretz** will remain on the Board and **Kevin Foster** and **Gary Ingram** will be joining the Board after the Annual Meeting. The Board will be electing officer positions prior to the March meeting.\*\*\*

## News From The AHF Office

### AHF OFFICE CLOSURES

President's Day - Monday, February 19th  
 Memorial Day - Monday, May 27th

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings are held in the AHF Hall and through Zoom. Zoom info is posted on the front door of both the AHF Hall and the AHF Office the Wednesday before the meeting. If you would like to receive the monthly meeting agenda by email and or the Zoom link, please call or email the AHF office. The BOT information packet will be available to view in the AHF Office the day of meeting from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. as well as at the meeting.

Thu, Feb 8, 7 p.m. Committee Reports due Mon, Feb 5  
 Thu, Mar 14, 7 p.m. Committee Reports due Mon, Mar 11  
 Sat, Mar 16, 9 a.m. ANNUAL MEETING  
 Thu, Apr 11, 7 p.m. Committee Reports due Mon, Apr 8  
 Thu, May 9, 7 p.m. Committee Reports due Mon, May 6

### REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETINGS/WORK PARTY

Budget and Finance, 4th Wed of every month, 7:30 p.m.  
 Building and Grounds, Meets as needed  
 Deerhead Hammock, 1st Sat of every month, 8 a.m.  
 Erna Nixon Hammock, 1st Sat of every month, 8 a.m.  
 Memory Garden, 2nd Tue of every month, 8:30 a.m.  
 Nutting Wood Green, 1st Thu of the month, 5 p.m. and workday is 4th Mon at 8:30 a.m., meet under the oak in NWG  
 Parks & Paths, Every Fri 8 a.m., see bulletin board for location  
 Recreation Committee, 4th Mon of every month, 5 p.m.  
 Swimming Pool, monthly assigned duties, meetings vary

### REGULARLY SCHEDULED EVENTS

Yoga with **Grayson Dix** - Every Wed, 6 - 7 p.m. Doors open 5:30 p.m. - AHF Hall  
 Art Club – Every Fri 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. - AHF Hall  
 Cardinalbucks Coffee – 4th Wed of each month - 8 – 10 a.m. - AHF Hall  
 Stretch and Stroll – Every Wednesday 9:30 a.m. bring a yoga mat and meet at the basketball court  
 “First Fridays” – Outdoor Recreation Subcommittee is hosting a different activity every first Friday of the month

## THE VILLAGER

The Villager is a quarterly newsletter published by and for the members of the American Homesteading Foundation by the Information Committee. News items, stories, and comments may be addressed to the AHF office.

Information Committee Members are  
**Mary Murphy**, Chairperson/Editor  
**Debbie Seiler**, Secretary/Layout/Graphics  
**Bridget Foster**, Contributor/Editor  
**Brian Dutra**, Editor  
**Joan Taddie**, Contributor  
**Carrie Cronkhite**, Contributor  
**Lynn Davies**, Community Bulletin Board

## Membership Committee

The Membership Committee hand-delivered a copy of the Winter Villager with a cover letter to all non-AHF residents. We wanted to show what the AHF is about and how much fun we have! This was a huge project, but our members stepped up and got the job done!

Please welcome our new members **John & RaJean Morrison** who bought 767 Acacia Rd. Be sure and say Hello to them when you see them out and about.

## A Note From Nutting-Wood Green Committee

In January, **Paul Merry** and Joel Timchin took down the old NWG bat house. It had numerous woodpecker holes, rusted out screws, and warped boards. Time for retirement! The steel pole that supported the old bat house is in good condition and can be re-used to hold a new house.

Does anyone have an unused bat house (or the materials to build a new one) they are willing to donate? If so, please contact **Mary Murphy** at [mmurph05@outlook.com](mailto:mmurph05@outlook.com) and we can arrange to pick it up.

## Gentle Yoga For AHF Members

Join **Grayson Dix** on Wednesday evenings from 6 - 7 p.m., the AHF sponsors an "Hour of Me-Time" for AHF members. The focus is on breathing, stretching, and balance. As we get older, it can become important to tend the things that keep us moving throughout the day and in this case, we work on those things...gently. Bring a mat, a bottle of water, blocks, or any other props you might use and join us. Doors open at about 5:30 p.m. in case you have any questions or would like to come early. We finish class promptly at 7:00 p.m.

## Outdoor Recreation Committee

We have been having a blast the last few months with our First Friday events and weekly Stretch & Stroll. Join us every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. on the basketball court to stretch before taking to the trails for a lovely nature walk. Do you enjoy games and exercise? We'd love to have more in our group. Text **Carrie Cronkhite** at 321-591-5832 or reach out to **Missa Kes**. Upcoming FIRST FRIDAY events include:

Mar 1 - Roll around MV: Bike, skates, skateboard \*level 1  
Apr 5 - Field Day: Variety of yard games \*levels 1-2  
May 3 - Dodgeball \*level 5  
Jun 7 - Water Volleyball or Pool 9-Square \*level 2

\*Note: Activity levels scale 1-5, with 1 being low impact, 3 at your pace with occasional impact, and 5 being running/impact sport.

## From the Desk of the President



A billboard along the roadside proclaimed, "Strong People Embrace Change." I began to reflect on the series of changes and challenges the AHF has navigated over the past year. It began with the unexpected decision of the membership to retire the President of the Board of Trustees after 27 years of service. Shortly after, our Office Manager of 6 years resigned, followed by the departure of our Bookkeeper three months later. Despite these shifts, we successfully added around 50 new members, integrating them into various committees as envisioned by our founding mothers. All this while the Village was emerging from a self-imposed quarantine to prevent the spread of Covid.

In response, we devised a plan to navigate this period of change. Organizing social activities proved instrumental in engaging members while fostering connections among both new and existing members. This influx of new member relationships has strengthened our committees, broadened skillset diversity, and increased opportunities for new leaders to emerge. The creation of several ad hoc committees has likewise been very effective in allowing innovative new leaders to creatively identify and solve old and new problems alike.

While we've made strides adapting to change, we still grapple with certain support systems. Our Office Manager, Rebecca Carter, despite her proficiency and energy, encountered challenges with IT-related tasks left behind by departing staff. Managing membership data across multiple platforms consumed her valuable time and introduced the risk of errors. However, with the assistance of three new residents possessing IT expertise, we're making strides toward modernizing our office operations and improving efficiency.

Through it all, the AHF has demonstrated resilience and growth. Our collective efforts to address challenges have made us stronger as both individuals and as an organization because we worked together effectively. We will have new energy and skills on a very strong Board of Trustees for 2024, demonstrating that our founding mothers' vision of a successful, thriving community fueled by volunteerism is not only possible, it's happening.

**AHF President**  
**Mary Bean**



## AHF Member Spotlight: Bob Davis

By Debbie Seiler

**Bob Davis** says jokingly that he “was born and raised in the metropolitan city of Okeechobee, Florida.” He laughs at the irony because what really stands out in his memory is how there were “lots of horses and a great population of Native Americans” - in fact he still has the Seminole trade beads he cut his teeth on as a baby. He remembers a third-grade class trip to Bok Singing Tower, and moving to the small town of Frostproof and then to Lake Wales. His lineage includes at least four generations of native Floridians.

Leaving home at seventeen, he joined the navy in 1951. After boot camp in San Diego he was sent to Machinist's Mate school in Great Lakes, IL where, he recalls with a grin and a twinkle in his eye, “I met my beautiful wife, Fran.” Bob is a Korea Veteran having served two tours on the battleships USS Missouri and the USS Wisconsin.



Bob and Fran started their family in the Chicago area where he ran a communications company. The company offered to move Bob back to Florida and he says they “jumped at the chance.” They lived in South Daytona and then Indian Harbour Beach. Bob eventually took over the company which by this time was a chain of two-way radio shops throughout central Florida. He spent some time in Melbourne Village because he serviced the police radios - “all ONE of them!” he jokes. And that's when he discovered and fell in love with Melbourne Village.

When asked what he likes best about Melbourne Village Bob replies, “quiet, peaceful, and nice people...I joined the wood turning club because I liked to work with my

hands and loved working with wood. I learned a lot from those great turners and became great friends with Bob Winburn - everyone called us Bob & Bob.” Bob and Fran were active AHF members for twenty-four years, rarely missing an event. They were familiar faces at every Flea Market and Holiday Bazaar selling Bob's beautiful wooden creations. Bob served on the Board of Trustees and Membership Committee. He also sat on the Town Review Board and Fran volunteered in the Town office. They both loved volunteering in so many ways but especially serving food each year at Founders' Day with Bob in the kitchen carving up the pig and Fran just outside serving up hot dogs, popcorn, and shaved ice.

Sadly, Fran passed away in 2019. Bob's daughter Cathy is staying with him for a while, and his constant companions are two Chihuahua mix rescue dogs that never leave his side. Bob will be celebrating his 90th birthday on February 15, 2024. Happy birthday Bob! Thank you for your service to our country and our Village.



Above, **Bob Davis** carves the pork and serves up lunch. Below, **Fran Davis** is the snack stand queen. Both at Founders' Day 2010.





The AHF extends our deep gratitude for your incredibly generous donation of a stove for the Hall kitchen. It has more functions, heats up more quickly, and cooks more evenly than the one we had! Your generosity is so greatly appreciated by all of us who will enjoy using it.

## Real Estate News



**FOR SALE: 5800 Live Oak Ave**, built 2018, 2094 SF, 3/3/1 on .37 acres for \$595,000 or \$284/SF.



**SOLD Jan 25: 760 Cajeput Cir**, built 1966, 2599 SF, 4/2.5/2 pool home on .62 acres for \$605,000 or \$233/SF.

## Seeking Nominations - Where Would You Like to Help?



By Mary Murphy

Many thanks to the 84 AHF members who volunteered on one or more committees this past year. You are the essence of this community. It wouldn't be the same unique place without your gift of service. Thank you!

Of the 138 committee seats, the Nominating Committee is looking to fill 18 vacancies. Joining one of the committees is a wonderful way to meet your neighbors, contribute to the community, teach your children, and fully experience Village life.

**Annual Meeting (2 vacancies)** Organizes the Annual Dinner in March and the refreshments for the Annual Meeting. Be as creative as you wish. Past themes include Picnic in the Park, 1940's, 1950's, 1960's, Mexican Fiesta, Florida Crackers, St Patrick's Day, Dancing Under the Stars.

**Building and Grounds (1 vacancy)** Responsible for the care, maintenance, and beautification of all structures and their immediate grounds and making recommendations for repairs and/or modifications. They meet on an as-needed basis.

**Deerhead Hammock (1 vacancy)** Responsible for the care and maintenance of Deerhead Hammock. They meet one Saturday per month.

**Education (2 vacancies)** Plans and hosts an annual week-long camp for children aged 6-12 and awards the Ruth B. Hayes Scholarship. If you enjoy working with kids and have difficulty committing throughout the year, consider volunteering here.

**Erna Nixon Hammock (3 vacancies)** Entrusted with the care and maintenance of this parkland. If you value the natural spaces in our community, come help! They meet once a month on Saturday morning.

**Information Committee (1 vacancy)** Produces and publishes the quarterly newsletter and maintains the bulletin board on Dayton Blvd. This would be a good place to lend a hand if you enjoy writing, photography, graphics, or desktop publishing.

**Nominating Committee (1 vacancy)** Fills committee vacancies and prepares the slate for the Board of Trustees elections. Looking for someone who knows or interacts frequently with other AHF members.

**Nutting-Wood Green (2 vacancies)** Meets monthly to maintain the meadow and to encourage the return of native flora and fauna. This unique ecosystem is an important pollinator habitat.

**Outdoor Recreation (2 vacancies)** Exists to engage AHF members and families in outdoor games and activities while building community.

**Recreation Committee (2 vacancies)** Works year-round to plan, promote, and host special events, entertainment, and a variety of activities. If you are creative, energetic, and like to organize events, this is the spot for you!

**Swimming Pool (2 vacancies)** Responsible for the general operation, maintenance, and rules of the pool. Anyone who uses the pool with any frequency would be a good fit here.

*"What should people do with their lives today? Many things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured." ~ Kurt Vonnegut*



## Recreation Committee News

By Betty Jo Yorio

The Recreation Committee filled the AHF Hall with 80 Villagers bustling with excitement for the Annual Holiday Dinner themed “Gnome for the Holidays.” **Sally Frame** said, “It feels like a country club” as we transformed the room with beautiful decorations



including fresh cut greens, festive gnomes, and candles on every table all highlighted by the AHF Hall’s hanging icicle lights. Some guests played a little holiday trivia to win a door prize and some got to take home a gnome of their own! **Carol Mercer** complimented us on being one of the best Recreation Committees she has seen in 50 years! We would like to extend a huge thank you to Cathy Lawrence who provided the food and allowed the committee members a well-earned night off from the kitchen to relax a little and enjoy the evening with our friends and neighbors.

This year we are planning to continue showing movies in the early months, having some friendly competitive game nights, and hosting a new murder mystery. Of course, we will also celebrate the holidays with the annual Easter Egg Hunt in March, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade, Halloween Carnival, and our end-of-year Holiday Dinner. Please watch for announcements at the hanging sign posts, bulletin boards, and on the Nextdoor app/website. We also would like to invite any students looking to earn their community hours to sign up and help with the events.

If you haven’t been coming to the Recreation Committee’s events, here’s what you are missing: fun-filled events, unpredictable outcomes, celebration of the holidays, keeping up with our neighbors, dinners for members, entertainment nights, and all AHF members can be involved. We are actively seeking more committee members, so if you are interested in joining the Recreation Committee or becoming a friend of the committee, please let us know!



*Rec Committee Members **Mary Jane Moon, Betty Jo Yorio, Sandi Dix, and Lorrie Muzzone.***

## Memory Garden

By Dani Noell

The Memory Garden Committee meets in the morning of the second Tuesday of the month. Over the last months we have been busy trimming, weeding, picking up debris, updating structures, and planting new additions to the garden beds. In January, we planted a wild lime (*Zanthoxylum fagara*), donated by **Paula Bailey** in memory of her sister, Annie Egry. This native plant is known for aromatic flowers that attract bees and swallowtail butterflies. Additionally, when you walk through the garden, you may notice the new wooden lattice barrier wall behind the large sitting bench. This was built by **Mike Noell** to replace the previous aging plastic structure. The design matches the other lattice wall for flowering vines.

We invite you to visit the Memory Garden to take a moment to rest, enjoy a time of peaceful reflection, and maybe also to just take time to remember those no longer with us. We hope the plantings and the created spaces we have made will bring comfort and peace to your day.

***Paula Bailey & Celia Byrnes** with the wild lime they planted in memory of Paula’s sister.*



## Proposed Amendment to AHF By-laws Allowing Long-Term Tenant Membership

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Referendum is to amend the existing by-laws of the American Homesteading Foundation (AHF) to allow long-term tenants to join the AHF membership on a renewable basis, subject to specific conditions outlined herein.

Following are the proposed changes to the Membership section. Strikethrough is used to show what would be removed. Yellow highlight is used to show what would be added or changed. Other sections would have minor edits so that the language coincides with the changes, for example adding the phrase “Tenant Member” where applicable. To see what the entirety of the AHF by-laws would like with the additional minor but necessary edits, please stop into the AHF office M-F 9am-12pm to read their copy, or email [bridget4975@yahoo.com](mailto:bridget4975@yahoo.com) for an emailed copy.

Once the language is formally approved by the Board of Trustees, ballots will be sent by mail to all eligible voting members. By-law changes require that 30% of the voting membership return a completed ballot, and that 2/3 of those votes must be in favor in order for it to pass.

### AHF By-Laws: Section II MEMBERSHIP

#### I. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership in the AHF shall be open to all single-family residential property owners and members of their household (Regular Voting Membership), previous single-family residential property owners who no longer own residential property in the town of Melbourne Village (Non-Lot Non-Voting Membership), and Long-Term Tenants and members of their household in the town of Melbourne Village, as defined in section C. (2) b. below (Tenant Non-Voting Membership), who shall subscribe to its By-laws and purpose without discrimination against all protected classes.
- B. The total price of membership shall be the applicable fee at the time as determined by the Board of Trustees (BOT). Those desiring membership shall apply to the AHF on the prescribed form, and attend ~~(no proxy)~~ an **informational** meeting convened by the Membership Committee chairman. ~~The application for membership must be accompanied by \$100 which sum shall be applied as a payment on the said membership fee. The membership shall be effective upon full payment of all applicable fees. The \$100 will be refunded immediately if the process is terminated.~~

- C. (1) VOTING MEMBERSHIPS: Any person(s) or entity who is a fee simple owner of a single-family residential Property in the town of Melbourne Village ("Property"), including the beneficial owners of a trust which holds title to said Property, who has paid the applicable membership fee in full, and who is not more than three (3) months in arrears of annual membership dues, shall be a Regular (Voting) Member and shall be entitled to all rights, benefits, and privileges of AHF membership including one vote per membership. Voting rights shall be restored three (3) business days after bringing said payments up to date. No membership shall be entitled to more than one vote, regardless of the number of properties owned.
- (2) NON-VOTING MEMBERSHIPS: ~~This class, also known as~~
- a. NON-LOT Membership, shall consist of those who at one time were Regular Members, but who no longer own residential Property in the town of Melbourne Village. These memberships ~~are to pay~~ require annual membership dues as established by the BOT. If payments are more than one year in arrears, this type of membership is automatically cancelled. Non-Lot Members in good standing shall enjoy the privileges of AHF membership excluding voting rights, holding office including BOT and chairperson of a committee, attending the Annual Meeting & Annual Dinner. This type of membership is non-transferable.
- b. Tenant Membership shall consist of those who hold a current written lease agreement with a term of 12 or more months for a residential unit within the boundaries of the Town of Melbourne Village. These members are to pay annual membership dues as established by the BOT. If the member ceases to hold the required lease agreement, this type of membership is automatically cancelled. Tenant Members in good standing and their household shall enjoy the privileges of AHF membership excluding voting rights or holding a position on the BOT.
- D. When a member wishes to terminate their membership in the AHF, they shall present their written resignation to the BOT at which time all privileges of membership shall be relinquished. Membership fee ~~& annual dues are~~ is non-refundable. Annual dues are non-refundable for Regular and Non-Lot Memberships, but may be refunded to Tenant Members on a pro-rated basis if applicable as determined by BOT.
- E. Any member ~~having owned Property for three years, and having disposed of it without having resigned their membership may purchase another Property~~ may relocate within the bounds of the town of Melbourne Village without payment of an additional membership fee. A Tenant Member in good standing who purchases property in the Town of Melbourne Village will be upgraded to a Regular Membership without paying an additional membership fee.



- F. A one-time transfer of Regular Membership within families may be authorized by the BOT, without additional membership fee, provided that the proposed transferee is a legal owner and formally applies for membership. With the second transfer, an additional membership fee shall be assessed. Non-Lot and Tenant Memberships may not be transferred.
- G. Each Regular Membership shall be entitled to one vote at any Annual or Special Meetings of the AHF Membership or in any authorized mail vote. The membership may express its diverse opinion by splitting the vote. Only Regular Members shall be eligible to hold office a position on the BOT.
- H. (1) A Members of the AHF assumes responsibility for the understanding and promotion of its purposes and policies. For Regular Memberships, this will entail attendance at Annual and Special Meetings of the AHF Membership, voting on such matters as shall be presented from time to time by the BOT, and serving on the BOT and Committees as needed, to the extent consistent with their capabilities.
- (2) AHF members current on their annual dues and their guests, as authorized by the BOT, are entitled to participate in the AHF educational and recreational activities and to use the AHF buildings subject to established rules and regulations. Delinquent members and non-members may participate in educational and recreational activities of the AHF as specified by the BOT.
- (3) Parklands are for the exclusive use of all residents of the Town of Melbourne Village (April 20, 1962 dedication).
- I. ~~AHF members in good standing may extend the same privileges of the AHF member to not more than one renter EXCLUDING voting rights, holding office including BOT and chairperson of a committee, attending the Annual Meeting and Annual Dinner, and any Special Meeting where voting will take place.~~
- J. Termination of Membership: Consequences for frequent or repeated violation or non-compliance with AHF rules and policies may be grounds for suspension of benefits up to and including non-renewal of AHF membership. The member will have a fair hearing before the BOT, who will make a final determination.

## Meet Your New Trustees



### **KEVIN FOSTER, Senior Cyber Engineer & Quality Assurance Team Supervisor**

**AHF Goals:** Contribute to the development of the AHF's long-term goals and plans, Ensure alignment of the AHF's mission, vision, and future goals, Monitor financial performance and encourage fiscally sound decisions, Identify and mitigate legal risks and ramifications, Prioritize ethical behavior and integrity, Encourage and support innovation, Remain open and transparent in all communication within the Board and to our membership, Keep members informed about the AHF's activities and performance, Respect each board member's diverse skills and perspectives.

**Community Service:** Chair of Building & Grounds Committee, Member of Swimming Pool Committee, Erna Nixon Hammock Committee, Memory Garden Committee, Past member of Recreation Committee, Volunteer Crowd Control Manager, Sound Room Technician for Town and AHF events, Town website and IT support, Contributor to The Villager and The Cardinal, Volunteered at the SPCA for 2 years.

**Background:** I relocated to Florida's Space Coast 25 years ago after serving 8 years in the U.S. Air Force. I spent most of those years in Titusville before moving to Melbourne Village 3 years ago, when we bought the McIntyre's house on Sabal Rd. My wife Bridget and I have been married for 22 years and have four adult daughters and three grandchildren. When we aren't spending time with them or working on our house, I enjoy walking my dog Penny, reading science fiction novels and specialized technical books, and playing strategy-based video games.



### **GARY INGRAM, Retired Finance, Contracts, & Business Area Manager of 43 years with L3Harris and Northrup Grumman**

**AHF Goals:** Maintain, support, and help guide the American Homesteading Foundation and the Town of Melbourne Village.

**Community Service:** Town Commissioner for 3 Years, Town Finance Committee for 20+ years, active member of my church, Youth Basketball Coach, Youth Soccer Coach.

**Background:** I've been a resident of Melbourne Village since 1998, after moving to Florida in 1971. My wife René and I have been married for 47 years. Together, we raised our two sons, Jason and Tyler, in Melbourne Village.



### **CHRISTINE KRETZ, Business Development: Founder, Karman Line Consulting LLC**

**AHF Goals:** Support the traditions and continued activities of the AHF, Provide clear communication and easy access to information to the membership, Ensure the long-term fiscal health of our organization.

**Community Service:** Member of the AHF Board of Trustees 2023, Chair of Annual Meeting & Dinner Committee, Member of Budget & Finance Committee, Cardinal Bucks and Cardinal Bucks After Dark host, Board of Directors for Girls Scouts Citrus Council, Girl Scout leader and community leadership team for 14 years, Collaborator on The Cardinal, Town Board of Adjustments, Coordinator of IBM Family Science Saturday for 12 years, Volunteer paramedic and Volunteer emergency response team for many years.

**Background:** I moved to Florida in 2018 to take a position at the International Space Station National Laboratory. We purchased the barracks house on Sheridan Road and renovated it, restoring it with respect for its historic value in the community. Before coming to Florida, I worked for IBM for 20 years in sales and as a manager in the Research Division. I am active in Girl Scouts and continue to work with STEM education organizations to introduce young people to science and technology. In my free time, I like to sew and make quilts for patients undergoing cancer treatment. I have been married for 31 years to Paul and we have two daughters: Elizabeth is a civil engineer in Albuquerque and Anne is a law student in Virginia.

## Parks & Paths: An Opportunity to Serve

By Leslie Fay

The work never stops for this group! We meet nearly every Friday morning from September through June to tackle the maintenance of many AHF parklands. There is always plenty to do on the trails and this ambitious group works hard to keep them clear. Beyond regular maintenance, there is the constant of invasive plants trying to take over in some sections: non-native ardesia, snake plant, Brazilian pepper, golden pothos, and red passion vine, among others.

Eight years ago in 2016, we started clearing Griffith Park between South Drive and Tippie Lake of the beautiful but deadly red passion vine. Hard as we try, this invasive, strangling plant that has toppled pines, live oaks, and other growth in the area we dubbed "Passion Meadow" continues to return. We spend several weeks there annually and just can't get completely on top of it. I've seen patches of it cropping up in Martin Woods, Azalea Park, and on Live Oak, climbing trees, utility poles, and wires. When choosing plants for your yard, please try to "go native" or at the very least avoid plants on the Invasive or nuisance lists. They can easily escape a yard and work their way into our beautiful parklands.

Anyone is welcome to join us, Fridays, 8-10 am for a good workout, friendship, and sometimes donuts and bad jokes. No experience necessary! Check the Dayton Bulletin Board for weekly meeting locations.



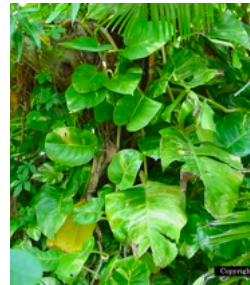
*non-native ardesia*



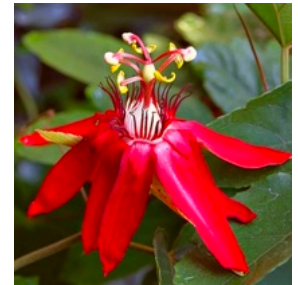
*snake plant*



*Brazilian pepper*



*golden pothos*



*red passion vine*

## Erna Nixon Hammock

By Sandi Dix

Wow! What a rainy season we have had! Our committee hasn't been able to do as much work in the parkland as we would have liked, but when able we continue to remove invasive and non-native plants in the park, keep the paths open for residents to enjoy, and plan for the next phase of our restoration of the parkland.

We have planted three myrsines, one white stopper, and one Simpson's stopper behind **Chuck & Laura Parkel's** house on Live Oak Ave. These plants are normally found in the hammock and are native. The Parkels will be taking care of these plants until they are established. A big 'Thank You' to them!

Looks like the old H-post at the entrance of the hammock on N. Wildwood finally rotted out at the bottom and fell down. We will have to build a new H-post, so if we have any builders who might like to lend a hand please contact me! In the meantime, the sign will be stored at my house until we are ready to rehang.

Our goal for the 2024 season was to install a short boardwalk on parts of the Main Loop path and S. Wildwood path. This has been delayed for this year but will stay on our wish list for next year. There are some exciting new products out there that we are researching for the boardwalk that are low maintenance.

Please remember: NO SMOKING or littering in any of our parkland and please pick up after your dog. There is nothing worse than enjoying a nice stroll in our parks and stepping in someone's dog poop. Let's be considerate of others that use the parks! If you see a fallen tree on the path or anything else out of place, please contact either the AHF office, or call or text me @ 321-272-8973 or email me at mntlcrpl@yahoo.com.

Our work parties are the first Saturday of the month starting at 9 am. We are a small committee, doing a major job removing invasive plants and maintaining all our paths and can use extra help. If you have a couple of hours, be a good neighbor & help us out! Happy Trails!



## Community Garden Here we Grow Again!!

By Brenda Mathews

The Community Garden is one of the many Committees of the American Homesteading Foundation. Have you ever thought about what it means to be a part of a Homesteading Foundation? What the founders of Melbourne Village had in mind when they created it, and what modern homesteading is all about?

The Articles of Incorporation of the American Homesteading Foundation state, "The purposes of the corporation shall be to establish homesteading groups and to provide opportunities to study the principles, practices, and further possibilities of modern homesteading." What might "modern homesteading" look like in 2024?

Modern homesteaders don't necessarily live on large farms, they might live in cities or in a small town. They look for a simple way of life, greater self-sufficiency, generous ways to connect with nature, and renewable energy sources.

Gardening is at the heart of modern homesteading. Gaining the knowledge to grow your own food increases sustainability. Employing organic methods ensures soil health and provides your family with clean, healthy foods that are loaded with vitamins. You can save money and know exactly what you're eating.

Reducing household waste by composting organic waste such as food scraps, leaves, and grass clippings keeps these items out of landfills and reduces greenhouse gas emissions created by the breakdown of organic wastes in landfills.

Homesteaders create and sell their merchandise in local markets. From aprons to tea towels, screen printing to art, home-grown crafts are the reflection of creative people making goods for themselves to use at home and to increase their income.

It seems that modern homesteading is alive and well in the Community Garden. Our group meets on Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the garden regardless of the weather. If you are interested in serving on the Community Garden Committee, please contact the AHF office or [prunella.stubbs@outlook.com](mailto:prunella.stubbs@outlook.com). See you in the garden!



## Herb Blurb

By Ondine Constable

Weeding. Ugh! Well, some of us find it a relaxing task, but we're more excited about harvesting the beautiful vegetables. There's a persistent weed we usually pull without giving it much thought. I'm referring to the humble purslane, which is actually a respectable superfood more nutritious than the veggies we fuss over.

Purslane is packed with nutrients for cardiovascular health, skin, bone and vision health. It has more omega-3s than some types of fish. It is high in vitamin A, beta carotene and many minerals and antioxidants. According to an NIH article, purslane's gelatinous sap is beneficial for its "wound healing and antimicrobial effects as well as its traditional use in the topical treatment of inflammatory conditions."



So, next time we're tending to the garden and enjoying each others' company, leave a bit of purslane in the bins. Or nibble as you weed. The seeds, leaves, flowers, and stems of purslane are all edible, and it has a mild and slightly tart flavor. Purslane can be eaten raw or steamed, sprinkled on salads, soups, or added to egg salad or tuna salad. (However, it does contain oxalic acid which can be a problem if you have kidney stones.)



A recent Saturday morning at the garden, from L-R: **Dani Noell, Brenda Mathews, Carol Gent, Hilda Brockman, Ondine Constable, Ray Cooper.**

WELL, WELL, WELL...IF THIS AIN'T A GEM  
FROM THE AHF HISTORY ROOM



February 51, 1953 A.D.

Plea for Your Proxy Vote

You have received numerous letters lately from Villagers requesting your proxy, thus enabling them to vote for you at the forthcoming Annual Meeting of the AHF.

The whole atmosphere seems to be charged with baffling crosscurrents. The undersigned feel that this is so stupid, that you should appoint stupid people to represent you. An intelligent person has difficulty understanding all this confusion.

You should take an interest in and protect your property rights. At stake is the control of the natural resources of the Village. These include 320 acres of scrub land, 1722 cabbage palms, 8216 pine trees, 2 maples, 2,000,006 palmettos, 4,000,000,000 weeds (actual count), 22 domesticated quail, 1 artificial lake containing one bass and one bluegill, and 5 miles of corrugated roads.

If you will honor us with your Proxy, we will endeavor to promote the following platform:

1. Ideals - completely remove them. We believe in living dangerously and don't care much about the future.
2. Trustees - abolish all government within the Village as it causes too much trouble and takes up too much of our time. Furnish each Villager with 1 shotgun, 1 machete, and 1 sling-shot.
3. Membership Committee - abolish. We have too many members now. The ideal planned community should consist of only one human being on a completely isolated island near the North Pole.
4. Finance Committee - abolish. This will keep us from spending any money at all.
5. Building and Grounds Committee - abolish. Halt all further construction. We're supposed to stay outdoors most of the time in Florida.
6. Village Hall - tear it down. This automatically eliminates all of the stupid meetings that detract from the full-time enjoyment of life.

So, friends, if you are stupid enough to agree with us, simply sign the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed postcard appointing either of us as your Proxy.

Signed

*David Stry*  
David Stry

*Tom Sweeting*  
Tom Sweeting

P.S. It seems stupid to waste good money to enclose the post card above mentioned, so we decided to abolish that idea. Also, we are not sure that we'll be able to attend the Annual Meeting - so let's forget the whole thing. We're mostly all friends anyway.

## Salute to Norton Muzzone

By Marty McAlwee

**Norton Muzzone**, a Swimming Pool Committee member for many years, is leaving the committee this coming year to devote more time to his Town Commissioner and other AHF committee duties. His service on the Pool Committee has left a legacy of enthusiastic and unselfish dedication to the work we do. Thank you, Norton, for all your years of faithful service and best of luck as you continue to serve the community. With Norton's departure, the Pool Committee is seeking a few new members to carry on the work of the committee. Please give your name and contact information to the AHF office to sign up for the coming year.

As we look forward to warmer weather and getting back to the pool deck and in the water, we need to remember that following the pool rules and etiquette will keep the pool facility and deck a welcome place to visit. Members need to be mindful that pool deck equipment is expensive and must not be abused. The pool chairs and lounges are placed on the pool deck to allow the deck to be safely used and avoid a cluttered look. If members wish to move pool chairs or loungers to the side of the pool, for example, it is expected that the members will return the item to where it was originally located. If moved, pool lounges and chairs must be carried in order to prevent the equipment and deck from getting scarred and damaged. Thank you members, for helping out your pool committee volunteers to give you the best pool experience. See you at the pool!



*Lorrie & Norton Muzzone working the grill at an AHF pool party.*

## Catch The Buzz!

By Bridget Foster



The Adult Education Committee invites you to join us on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the AHF Hall for an enlightening presentation by **Suzan Bryant** on the crucial role of bees as pollinators in our ecosystem. Discover the fascinating world of these tiny yet mighty creatures that play a vital role in the pollination of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Suzan will delve into the intricacies of bee behavior and their symbiotic relationship with plants, the environment, and even each other! Learn about their unique characteristics and the challenges they face as you gain insight into the importance of preserving bee populations and promoting sustainable practices to ensure the health of our planet.

Whether you're a nature enthusiast, gardener, or simply curious about the interconnected web of life, this presentation promises to be both informative and engaging. Be part of an interactive session where you can ask questions, share your experiences, and leave with a deeper appreciation for the vital role that bees play in sustaining life on Earth. Mark your calendars for April 13<sup>th</sup> and join us for an inspiring journey into the world of bees!

**COFFEE SOCIAL**



**Each 4th Wed 8-10 at the AHF Hall**

**POT LUCK DINNER**



**SATURDAY  
FEB 10  
6-10 PM**

**BYOB \* BRING A NEIGHBOR**



# Gopher Tortoises: A Florida Keystone Species

By Bridget Foster

Florida harbors an extraordinary resident crucial to its ecological harmony– the Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). As a "keystone species," these ancient reptiles have roamed the sandy soils of Louisiana to South Carolina and southward through Florida where their population is largest, at a top speed of less than five miles per hour. For millions of years they have played a crucial role in maintaining the ecological balance of their habitats.

Despite their unhurried pace, Gopher Tortoises play the long game, with lifespans ranging from 40 – 80 years. It takes 10-15 years for them to reproductively mature, when the carapace (top shell) length is about nine inches long. Males are distinguished by their concave plastron (bottom shell) and their "gular horn," a protrusion of the plastron below the chin used to push and flip other males over when fighting over females, territory, or burrows.

Characterized by a sturdy, brownish-gray shell and strong, shovel-like and heavily scaled front legs adept at burrowing, these gentle herbivores sculpt their surroundings as ecosystem engineers. Their burrows, averaging 25 feet long and 7 feet deep, are found in dry places such as sandhills, flatwoods, prairies, and coastal dunes or in human-made environments such as pastures, grassy roadsides, and in Melbourne Village often under a home, garage, shed, or driveway. Serving as sanctuaries for over 350 vertebrate and invertebrate species, these burrows exemplify the Gopher Tortoise's pivotal role in sustaining biodiversity.

Known to eat more than 300 species of plants, Gopher Tortoises are primarily herbivorous, though they will eat bones from dead animals, presumably to get calcium. Their primary foods are low-growing grasses, herbs, and seeds within about 150 feet of their burrows, avoiding the heat of the day and foraging in the morning and late afternoon.

Once per year, females lay an average of six eggs per clutch in the soft sand of their burrow apron, usually between May and July. The shells are soft, leaving them extremely vulnerable to predation by raccoons. If the

eggs survive, the hatchlings will emerge between August and November after about 100 days of incubation.



When the **Fosters** purchased their home it came with two resident tortoises who still live there: Leaf (female, front) and Twig (male, back).

Despite their importance, Gopher Tortoises face numerous threats to their survival. Habitat loss due to urban development, agriculture, and road construction, compounded by predation by domestic animals and vehicles accidents has significantly reduced their numbers. Florida's protective measures, including habitat restoration projects and public awareness campaigns underscore the significance of these tortoises and promote responsible land use practices to ensure their survival. Here in Melbourne Village, we aim to increase education in order to safeguard Gopher Tortoises and reinforce the intricate balance they sustain. Preserving their population is about more than safeguarding a single species; it's about protecting an entire diverse ecological balance that depends on their presence. By working together to address the threats they face, we can help ensure that these ancient reptiles thrive, preserving a unique and iconic Florida species for generations to come.

**Next issue "Tortoise Burrows And Your Foundation"**



**THE VILLAGER NEWSLETTER IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE AHF AND MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS**



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MELBOURNE VILLAGE, FL 32904

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# COMPOST with



**50% Browns/Carbon:** Ashes, wood, bark, cardboard/newspaper (shredded), corn stalks, fruit waste, leaves, peanut shells, sawdust, stems, twigs, straw

**50% Greens/Nitrogen:** Alfafa, algae, coffee grounds, egg shells, food waste\*, grass clippings, hedge clippings, used hops, manures, seaweed, vegetable scraps

\* Avoid diseased plants, meat bones, fish, fats, dairy, pet droppings (except chickens), colored or glossy paper, plastic, and weeds that have gone to seed.



Use the receptacle located in the AHF parking lot or deposit directly in the covered compost bins in the NW corner of the garden. Thank you!

