

Palm Aire
Communities Council

Newsletter

Spring, 2019



Whitfield Avenue Beautification Project Begins

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On one of the coldest mornings of the winter, Barbara Robinson and Susan Romine headed north on Whitfield from Timberlake Drive to Palm Aire Drive and back to mark trees on the east and west side.

Bundled up in coats and scarfs, they walked the right-of-way to check for dead trees, deciduous trees and the orchid trees to mark them with the red tape that you see from the road. Those are the trees that will be removed for the Whitfield Enhancement Project. You will be hearing more on that in months to come.

Approximately 50 trees were marked. The trees will be removed by Manatee County, therefore, the MSTU funds will not have to be used to pay for removal; however, we will have to be on their time frame.

Approximately 50 trees were marked. The trees will be removed by Manatee County who offered to pay for the removal of designated trees; therefore, the our communities Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) funds will not have to be used to pay for removal. However, this means that we will not know in advance when the trees will be removed.

Accordingly, they will do the work when there is a lull in their schedule and remove them as they have time.

All other costs for the project will be taken from MSTU surplus funds, including landscape architectural fees. At this time, there is no timeline as we are in the very beginning phase of the project.

The Palm Aire Communities Council's MSTU Committee will begin interviewing landscape architectural firms once the criteria is selected. Our look will be minimal, elegant, and low-maintenance, with palm trees as the focal point. After all, this is is "Palm Aire."



Barbara Robinson marking a tree for removal as we begin the beautification project on Whitfield.

Some Thoughts from the President's Desk

Spring, 2019
PACC: Palm Aire Communities Council

At the beginning of February each household within Palm-Aire received a letter from Manatee County advising of an issue related to the Palm-Aire Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) which would be presented at the February 26, 2019, meeting of the Manatee County Commission. The MSTU is the ordinance created to fund landscaping services within the Palm-Aire community.

The county is just updating the map for the MSTU to reflect Palm-Aire as it is today. The original map back in 1991 included property that was not yet developed. An example would be Woodlake, which did not exist when the MSTU was created. The land was included but had not been developed. Once developed, the prop-

erty owners were taxed but the map was not updated. There is NO INCREASE TO TAXES. This is just an administrative update. Because the MSTU is an ordinance, the change has to go before the county commission for approval.

The Palm-Aire Community Council's MSTU committee met again with Manatee County representatives to move forward on the enhancement project for Whitfield Avenue. The first step was to identify what trees needed to be removed. The county will do the removal, which will save monies for use toward replacement/enhancement. We have identified with red tape the trees to be removed between University Parkway and the blinker light at Country Club Way. Included are deciduous (Sycamores), Orchid and dead trees. Shortly, we will complete this step to include all of Whitfield Avenue.

It is that time of year to elect new officers for Palm-Aire Community Council, Inc. This organization has been a valued asset to the Palm-Aire community for a very long time. Its success is a direct result of the contributions made by all members over the years. The new year provides an opportunity for your Director to serve on the Board. We have two openings for the coming year. Susan Romine and I will continue, however, Art Smith and Frank Adler will not. Remember: if we all do a little, the jobs are not overwhelming. Please encourage your representative to consider participating at the Board level.

It is important that the Palm Aire Communities Council Continue to be active. It is vitally important to the Palm Aire Community.

Barbara Robinson
Barbara Robinson,
President

The Palm Aire Communities

Avista	Desoto Woods	Lakeside Woods
Broadmoor Pines	Eagle Creek	The Links
Club Villas I	Eagle Creek Villas	Misty Oaks
Club Villas II	Fox Pointe	Pine Trace
Clubside	Fairway Lakes	Rosewood
Condo B	Fairway Six	Timberlake Village
Condo C (Fairway Point)	Gardens	Woodlake Villas
Condo D	Golf Pointe	Woodland Green
Conservatory Estates	Highlands	

The Palm Aire Communities Council Newsletter

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From 7719 Broadmoor Pines

...simply persistent.

Neighborhood Spotlight

AVISTA

by Cathy Allen

Avista is an 84-unit community that consists of 10 buildings – 50 condos in 6 two-story buildings and 34 villas in 4 single-story buildings built around a circular drive. (Think of a giant cul-de-sac!) A plus for many homeowners, each unit has its own garage. Known for its park-like setting, Avista is home to both year-round and seasonal residents, owners and renters.

Like many Palm Aire communities, Avista was built by U.S. Homes. The company began building Avista around 1984, beginning with three of the condos, pool, spa and clubhouse. The other three condos and the villas were finished in 1987. Early owners were mainly snowbirds from the northern U.S. and Canada, who, like many snowbirds today, came to Sarasota for the weather and to play golf.



The area itself was still rural, populated by wild boar, snakes, deer and foxes. There were no shopping centers or restaurants in the area and many of the roads on which we travel today didn't exist then, so getting around wasn't as easy as it is now. University Parkway was a two-lane road and Whitfield itself ended where the Carlyle subdivision is now. Lockwood Ridge didn't exist north of Tallevast.

Avista was and is a friendly community and the Friday post-golf barbecues of the 1980s have been replaced by the Third Thursday Pot Luck Dinners. The clubhouse is also home to the community pool table, and is a great place to play cards or other games. Admittedly, the lending library sees less use since the advent of e-readers, but it's still a refuge for those who love the feel of a book in their hands. The clubhouse can be reserved by owners for private parties, as well. Other community activities include Saturday yoga classes and in the near future, water aerobics classes.

Avista is a wonderful place to live, whether full-time or part-time and because all units include lanais looking over the golf course, residents have the opportunity to enrich their vocabularies overhearing golfers after errant shots!

Cathy Allen is a resident of Avista.

Look up! It's a bird. It's a plane. It's the Blue Angels!

by Blake Jones

Spring, 2019

PACC: Palm Aire Communities Council

Since 1946, the Blue Angels have performed for nearly 500 million fans!



An estimated 11 million spectators view the squadron during air shows each year. Additionally, the Blue Angels visit more than 50,000 people a show season (Spring through November) during school and hospital visits.

If you have never seen them..... you MUST! If you have seen them, you probably want to see them again. Living here in Florida provides more opportunities (Seven in 2019) to see them than living in any other state.

More chances to see them means if you are the unfortunate victim

of a cloudy day, you will have other opportunities.

To be able to perform, the Blue Angels must have at least three nautical miles of visibility horizontally from center point, and a minimum cloud ceiling of 1,500 feet, which the FAA can waive to 1,000 feet. At these minimums, the Blue Angels can perform a limited number of maneuvers in what is called a "flat" show.

When the ceiling is at least 4,500 feet and visibility at least three nautical miles, a "low" show can be performed, which includes some rolling maneuvers. With a minimum ceiling of 8,000 feet and visibility of three nautical miles, the Blue Angels can perform their "high" show, which includes all the maneuvers.

On a clear day, their performance is a photographer's dream.

The mission of the United States Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron is to showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach.

At \$21 million a copy the F/A-18 A Hornet is one of the most exquisite aircraft in the air. The precision of



their flying capabilities is no better demonstrated than in their Diamond 360 maneuver where they will fly within 18 inches of each other.

Officers on the team generally serve two to three years, while the enlisted personnel serve three to four years. Each member, both officers and enlisted, return to the fleet after completing a tour with the Blue Angels.

If you want to experience a wonderful afternoon, find the time to check them out. You won't be disappointed.

Blake Jones is a resident of Broadmoor Pines and a frequent contributor to our newsletter.



2019 FLORIDA Schedule

Spring 30-31, NAS Key West, FL, Southernmost Air Spectacular

April 6-7, Lakeland, FL, Sun 'n Fun Air Show

May 4-5, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Ford Lauderdale Air Show

May 25-26, Miami Beach, FL, Miami Beach Air and Sea Show

July 13, Pensacola Beach, FL, Pensacola Beach Air Show

October 26-27, Jacksonville Beach, FL, Jacksonville Air Show *(This is a GREAT venue!)*

November 8-9, NAS Pensacola, FL, Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show

Here's Why Whitfield Avenue is Torn-Up.

by Dan Reeves

Local residents have wondered about the roadside construction on Whitfield Road. Manatee County Commissioners have authorized a capital improvement project known as Force Main 41-A Redirect to MLS Tara 20. According to the large public sign located on Whitfield Avenue, the Westra Construction Corporation was awarded the contract for \$2.8 million. Other county documents estimate a "100% cost estimate" of \$5.207 million, including a 20% contract contingency.

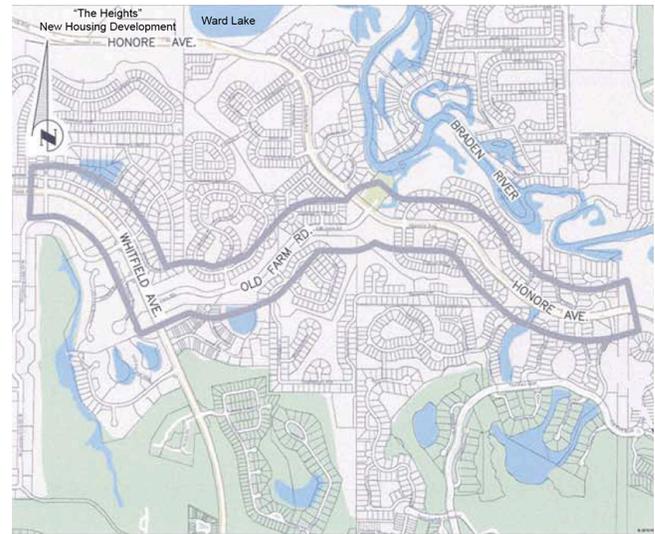


Manatee County Public Works project manager, Eric Shroyer, informed us that the purpose of the project was to increase wastewater capacity in the area. County records indicate a more complex arrangement.

The reason for the project is to redirect waste water flow from homes located in Palm Aire, Mote Ranch and communities along Honore Avenue so that a developer, Taylor Morrison of Florida, Inc., can connect sewer lines for 350 new homes that they will build around the 255 acre Ward Lake also known as the Evers Reservoir. The company plans to build a total of 600 new homes on the former Bradenton reservoir property purchased from the city for \$10.52 million.

Bradenton used the Honore property as a holding reservoir for municipal drinking water, but a shift in technology enabled the city to use injection wells so the land was no longer needed and the city listed the property as surplus land in 2014.

The county's plan is to redirect the flow of waste water in another direction by installing 11,000 linear feet of 12" new pipe south along Whitfield avenue then turning east into Mote Ranch on Old Farm Road where pipe will continue on the south side of the road to the intersection of Honore Avenue. The pipe will then make a right turn, cross Cedar Creek and



continue down Honore just passing University Park Lane where the construction will end.

The new community will be called the Heights and will feature two neighborhoods: Esplanade and Grandview. The plans call for a "California Tuscan inspired architecture" for the communities. There will be walking trails, sitting areas overlooking the lake, pool and cabana, basketball and tennis courts, to name a few.

To date, more than 1,200 feet of force main pipe has been installed along the south side of Whitfield and about 1,500 feet of pile along Honore. These two streets are nearing completion, and the connections through Old Farm Road are to begin shortly.



The developer has entered into an agreement to reimburse the county for all costs associated with this massive sewer redirection project. The construction is the direct result of the anticipated added volume when the new homes are occupied.

Once all the force main piping is completed, the contractor will return the landscape to its original condition and will mill and resurface the disturbed roadways.

The project is schedule for completion in December, 2019. So, we will have to endure the roadside mess until then.

Audiology

by Kristin DesErnia, Au.D.

While physicians regularly recommend their patients get their vision checked, they rarely recommend a hearing evaluation. Hearing loss is the most treatable medical condition that people experience and yet most people diagnosed with hearing loss wait an average of 5 years before pursuing hearing aids. There are several factors that prevent people from pursuing hearing aids, but first let's discuss other health conditions that may affect hearing loss.

Diabetes: Researchers are not totally sure why people with diabetes are more likely to experience hearing loss, but they do know that diabetes damages blood vessels throughout the body, including the ears. Diabetes complications can also cause nerve damage, which may affect the auditory nerve. **Cardiovascular Disease:** Researchers from Harvard University found that hearing loss occurs more than 54% more often in people with heart disease than people in the general population. Hypertension, heart disease, or any other restriction of blood vessels can cause a low frequency hearing loss. Injury

to blood vessels or impaired blood flow may be to blame for the hearing loss.

Ototoxicity: There are certain medications that can affect the cochlea or auditory nerve. These medications can be over-the-counter or prescribed. The result of these medications can be a decrease in hearing sensitivity, onset or increase in tinnitus, or balance problems. Sometimes these symptoms will reverse after drug therapy is ended.

Once hearing has been tested and hearing loss has been found to be a concern, hearing aids may be recommended if the loss is significant enough to require a hearing aid recommendation. Whether or not a person pursues hearing aids is a personal decision, but there are so many reasons to consider a discussion with an audiologist. Hearing aids can improve interpersonal relationships, hearing in noisy environments, and self-confidence. The volume of the TV will come down and your family will be happy not to repeat themselves.

The key to success with hearing instruments is a hearing professional that will take the time to understand your hearing loss and help you to select the right technology. The appropriate hearing aid will provide clear and comfortable sound, will fit well, and will have convenience features that will make the aids easy to wear. The right professional will help to guide you to the right product, but an honest conversation about budget and lifestyle are important. Remember that part of the cost of hearing aids are the professional services necessary to ensure your success all the way from your fitting to the day you decide it's time for new aids. So, while cost can feel like an obstacle, low-cost amplifiers or online purchases can cost you more in the long run. Be sure to discuss your concerns with your audiologist, they will be more than willing to have this discussion with you.

Happy new "Ear" from your friends at Ascent Audiology & Hearing!

Dr. Kristin DesErnia is Clinic Director at Ascent Audiology & Hearing

4 facts

1. While exploring, in 1493 Christopher Columbus mistakenly thought he saw three mermaids. He noted in his journal that they're "not half as beautiful as they are painted." What he actually saw

were three manatees.

2. Surprisingly, when comparing land mass to water mass there is about 24% water within Sarasota County boundaries; the percentage for Manatee County is approximately 14%.

3. During the growing season, Tropicana receives more than 350 trailer loads of oranges every day.

4. Everyone who lives in Florida is familiar with the term "Snowbirds", but did you know that before that term

became used, seasonal Florida tourists who stayed in trailers were known as "Tin Can Tourists"? An organization known as Tin Can Tourists of the World was founded in Tampa in 1919.

Try Nice First

An essay by John G. Parks

A woman is walking her dog, on a leash, along the edges of her property and her neighbor's. She had the necessary doggie bags to pick up any dog droppings. A man comes charging out of his house shouting at the woman: "Hey, what are you doing on my property? Don't bring your dog on my property!" The woman was shocked and quite taken aback by that neighborly overture. The woman quickly moved back onto her property with her dog.

On another property, a family wishes to use the common path to walk to a friend's house who lives nearby. The path goes along the edges of a neighbor's property, and that neighbor does not like people walking along their property line. This "dispute" is unresolved.

On a street within Palm Aire some residents speed through the neighborhood. Some others play loud music as they drive through the area. Some others park their cars on the lawn. Some folks forget to put their trashcans back into the garage. Some people sneak into a community's pool for swimming and partying. That community has had to install gates that only open for residents.

Palm Aire has diverse communities with various kinds of homes: condos, villas, apartments, single-family



homes. There is a lovely golf course and club in the middle of it. The properties are maintained well so that the residents are proud to live here and to enjoy life in Florida. I suspect that most of us are from some place else, many coming from properties up north that had different rules for maintenance and neighborly conduct. Sometimes it is an adjustment beginning a new life in Florida.

One thing we all become aware of pretty quickly is the need to get along with our neighbors. Let me make a modest proposal: try nice first.

Instead of charging out and shouting, why not introduce yourself and be friendly? Why not work out a compromise plan? Why not be cordial and polite? Surely, we can issue a complaint in a kind and instructive way?

Surely we know how to be nice—at least at first. Hmm?

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Witch's Broom in Landscape Plants

by Peggy Dessaint

Spring, 2019

PACC: Palm Aire Communities Council

Fifteen years ago, when Hurricane Jeanne blew through Palm Aire, a lot of trees and pool cages tumbled down. Stiff winds blew leaves, twigs and branches off trees and shrubs, including hardy evergreens like my East Palatka and Burford hollies. In the following weeks, they recovered and their branches filled out again.

Most of them did, but, alas, some did not. By the following summer, I realized that something else was go-



East Palatka Holly with witch's broom. No fungicides or other products prevent or cure the disease. Once infected, a plant goes into a slow decline.

ing on. I noticed small branches with swellings and tiny galls. "Bad news!" I thought. I knew what this was- the beginning of Witch's Broom Disease or Sphaeropsis Knot (try saying *that* three times). More on my hollies later.

Cause and Susceptible Plants Witch's Broom is a fungal disease of twigs and branches caused by a fungus with a funny-sounding name, Sphaeropsis Knot. It's derived from the scientific *Sphaeropsis tumefaciens*. The disease has been around for many years, decimating oleanders and hollies in landscapes. All hollies get it, even our native Dahoon. Bottlebrush trees are also very susceptible.

The name derives from the characteristic proliferation of vertical shoots at one spot along a branch, resem-

bling a witch's broom. Woody galls form at this one spot. They can grow quite large, almost two inches in diameter. Leaves on infected branches turn yellow and fall off; eventually the entire plant dies back to the ground.

Disease Spread The main way Sphaeropsis Knot spreads is through pruning equipment. Whenever a pruning cut is made through infected twigs and branches, even asymptomatic ones, the fungus is passed on to healthy wood. Injuries from pounding rain and wind storms are also major points of entry.

Fast forward fifteen years. Damage from Hurricane Jeanne created a big toehold where the fungus just moved in and set up housekeeping. Other big storms, like Hurricane Irma in 2018, haven't helped.

Amazingly, the East Palatka and Burford hollies in my yard are still alive, even though this has taken some babying. I've followed a basic "disease containment" strategy that plant pathologists recommend.

Avoid power pruners and minimize the overall amount of annual pruning. I usually prune once in the spring, aiming mainly for wayward branches and cowlicks.

Make pruning cuts several inches away from diseased areas, cutting into healthy wood.

Maintain an overall more informal shape as opposed to an angular or round-ball topiary

shape. These more formal looks require frequent pruning, thus making bazillions of entry points which only hasten disease spread and plant decline.

Sanitize pruning equipment. I've sanitized hand pruners and saws with household bleach before and after making pruning cuts. This reduces the disease's spread within and between susceptible plants.

Over the years, their canopies have remained green but have thinned out with an increasing number of galls and dead twigs scattered throughout. I know that, eventually, I'll have to cut them down. After all this time, though, they're still hanging on and, from afar, look sort of normal. Just like me!



Oleander with witch's broom, a major cause of oleander decline in landscapes. Sometimes they're pruned down to the ground in hopes of renewing them, but the disease comes

Realtor Corner

by Julie Jacques

Wrap-up of 2018 sales in Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

After a strong year of sales, Sarasota and Manatee housing market falls short in December.

Compared to December 2017, this month showed a decrease in overall closed sales, pending sales, and median prices. However, inventory increased across the two-county area. Year-to-date, 2018 shows an increase in sales when compared to 2017 year-to-date numbers.

Combined, closed sales in the two-county area decreased by 14.4 percent. Single-family homes in Manatee County decreased by 1.6 percent, while Sarasota decreased by 17.5 percent in closed sales. Condo sales in Manatee County decreased by 17.2 percent, while Sarasota County decreased by 26.6 percent.

Combined inventory in the two counties increased again in December. Single-family home inventory in Manatee County increased by 4.6 percent from last year, while Sarasota increased by 16.9 percent. Condo invento-

ry experienced a 10.8 percent increase in Sarasota, while Manatee decreased by 0.9 percent.

Manatee County single-family homes fall to a median price of \$309,000, a 2.7 percent decrease from the highest recorded median price in 2017; \$317,500. Sarasota single-family home prices increased by 3.6 percent to \$285,000. Sarasota condo prices decreased by 12 percent to \$220,000, while Manatee condos decreased by 2.6 percent to \$190,000.

New listings, or the number of properties put onto the market, typically decline in December as many buyers will wait to list their property in the new year.

The median time to contract is up across the two counties. Sarasota condos increased to 48 days on the market up 33.3%. Manatee condos up 4.3% days on market. Single-family homes spent about the same amount of time on the market as they did last December, with no change in Manatee County and

a 2.5 percent increase in Sarasota County.

Sarasota condos represent a balanced market with a 5.5-month supply, while Manatee condos are at a 4.0-month supply, down by 11.1 percent from last year. Manatee County single-family homes are at a 4.1-month supply, a 2.4 percent decrease from last year, and Sarasota single-family homes are at a 4.8-month supply, an increase of 17.1 percent.

Over the last 3 months in Palm Aire there were 22 condos and villas sold and single family homes sold were 34.

Below are some of the properties sold in Palm Aire in the past 3 months. Taken from the Multiple Listing Service and sold by various Realtors.¹

Julie Jacques, Realtor, GRI
 Michael Saunders and Company
 61 S. Blvd. of Presidents
 Sarasota, FL 34236
 941.323-.800
juliejacques@michaelsaunders.com

Condos, Villas		Single Family Homes	
7822 Eagle Creek	\$145,000	7326 Fairlinks Ct.	\$250,000
7461 W. Country Club Dr. N.	\$149,000	5771 Timber Lake Dr.	\$279,000
5757 Gardens Dr.	\$150,000	8440 Palm Lakes Ct.	\$320,000
5721 Avista Dr. #4120	\$160,000	4857 Palm Aire Dr.	\$377,000
6271 Timber Lake Dr.	\$188,000	8009 Desoto Woods Dr.	\$390,000
5906 Doral Dr.	\$199,900	8146 Misty Oaks Blvd.	\$405,000
5574 Golf Point Dr.	\$199,900	5383 Creekside Trail	\$420,000
7833 Pine Trace Dr.	\$215,000	5629 Country Lakes Dr.	\$448,000
6103 Clubside Dr.	\$219,900	7404 Links Ct.	\$450,000
7746 Palm Aire Lane	\$220,000	7824 Broadmoor Pines	\$615,000

¹Monthly reports are provided by Florida REALTORS® with data compiled from My Florida Regional Multiple Listing Service. For comprehensive statistics dating back to 2005, visit www.MyRASM.com/statistics.

Dear Editor:

We should let the new residents know that the right turn lane at Whitfield Avenue and University Parkway is a merge lane. It is intended for the driver to get into the lane and get some speed to merge into the traffic on University. The County Sign department has not been able to design language for a proper sign to indicate that, so here is the "public service announcement."

Thank you,--Frustrated Driver

Dear Editor:

The Manatee – Sarasota governments are doing whatever they can to reduce taxes, while supporting and encouraging the growth of our local building industry. There is minimal investment in our area infrastructure to support that growth, resulting in overcrowded roadways. The resulting traffic delays cause driver impatience and reckless driving, which in turn lead to more accidents and loss of life.

The officials need to do a better job of planning for the future. It would appear they are looking as far ahead as their nose. They choose to let someone else deal with any resulting problems.

That same thinking/attitude is the primary cause of our current climate change ongoing crisis.

We definitely need a change of leadership!

–Art Smith, Palm Aire Condo 'C'

Dear Editor:

What, if anything, can be done to limit traffic, especially truck traffic, over Whitfield Avenue?

–Anonymous

Dear Anonymous:

This issue has been addressed with Manatee County several times over the last number of years. Unfortunately, Whitfield is designated by Manatee County as an urban collector road which does not provide the option to limit traffic.

The country does not seem amenable to changing the designation at this time. We will continue to address the increasing traffic, especially truck traffic, along Whitfield in the future.

FEBRUARY PACC MEETING

At the February PACC meeting the representatives were presented a draft FY 201920 Budget, which will be presented for a vote at the Spring Annual Meeting.

President Barbara Robinson outlined amendments which will be requested in a new contract for a landscape maintenance. She also outlined the beginnings of the Whitfield Enhancement

Project which is under development being developed by PACC's MSTU Committee.

The Nominating Committee is seeking interested parties to serve as officers. The position of Secretary is open and perhaps Vice-President. The more people who serve, the lighter the work load.

Dan Reeves outlined what is needed for the spring edition of the newsletter. Advertisers are

critical to our success, as are more articles. The newsletter is linked to the website for those who do not get it delivered due to mail not being forwarded.

As condo and HOAs hold annual meetings, new representatives may be appointed to PACC, so we welcome our new representatives.

Susan Romine, Secretary

CORRECTION:

In the "Some Thoughts from the President's Desk" article for the December 2018 issue of our Newsletter stated that the construction site across University Parkway near the Whitfield intersection would be an addition to the Tabernacle church school. When completed the facility will be an assisted living/memory care facility developed by Watercrest.





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Anhinga: The Water-Logged Bird

by Dan Reeves

Spring, 2019
PACC: Palm Aire Communities Council

The masthead of our newsletter features the water bird anhinga. Some call it a snake bird, others know it as water turkey and many just call it a darter. The species is characterized by a long snake like neck and tail feathers similar to turkeys. Anhinga actually means snake bird from the native Brazilian Tupi language.

These water birds live up to about 12 years and are found from the Georgia coast, all over Florida, the entire Gulf of Mexico coast, and throughout both Central American coasts. They are about three feet tall and have a wing-span of nearly 117 inches. The male is all black with glossy white and green spots and streaks on its

shoulders and wings. The female is similar to the male but with a buff brown neck and breast.

When people see the bird in the water, usually only its long snake-like neck and head popping out of the water is seen wiggling back and forth like a snake; hence, its name. The bird has a straight bill for underwater spear fishing. You've probably seen it on land, standing alone, holding its wings outstretched for extended periods of time.

When I first came to Florida, I was surprised to see this curious wing behavior as I watched these birds daily in the lake behind my house. Typically, they land on the water and look around, right, left, up down, and then—in a flash—they're gone. They dive quickly into the water and stay submerged for quite a while for as much as two minutes. When they surface, they either have a fish speared with their beaks or nothing at all. When it's nothing at all they seem to look surprised to



Female anhinga drying her wings at the Palm Aire Country Club along the 15th fairway.

me as they begin to look around again bobbing the heads up and down, right and left. And, then they're gone again, diving deep into the water, only to be seen again when they

pop-up for air with or without a speared fish. Dinner is served: Their spearfishing technique is rather unique. When they are about to strike a fish, they retract their neck into an "S" shape and thrust it forward like a spear. Their long, sharp bill can easily pierce fish. Once the fish is speared, the anhinga sur-



faces and works the fish off its bill by slapping it around and finally tosses the fish into the air swallowing it head first.

Anhingas are deep diving birds with strong legs and webbed feet enabling them to propel quickly underwater at speeds faster than most fish can swim. The anatomy of these birds is somewhat different than most birds. Birds typically have light bones with hollow spaces to keep weight low for flight. Anhingas have developed more dense bones with strong leg muscles so that they can dive deep and swim fast underwater. Their feathers are unlike the water repellent feathers of other water fowl such as ducks. Unlike ducks, anhinga feathers are without oil and are not water proof enabling the anhinga to dive to great depths. Water proof feathers make ducks buoyant—a trait a deep diver can't use.

As you can see, water proofed wings are a disadvantage to this bird while water-logged ones are not. In the water, it doesn't take long for the anhinga's wings to become heavy, and the birds eventually drag themselves out of the water using beak and feet, haul themselves up onto dry land or a log where they stretch out their wings to dry them in the sun and breeze. This characteristic puts them at risk because of the difficulty they have flying with heavy, soaked wings. Often they can't get enough altitude to climb to the safety of a tree.

In the water, I've watched them actually outrun alligators while trying to take off. It's a comical sight watching them attempting flight from the water with their heavy, wet feathers providing so little lift. As soon as they are nearly air borne just, a few inches from the water, their webbed feet start dancing across the water like an unpracticed ballerina scampering atop the water with exaggerated flapping and flailing of wings.

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The Best Shrimp You Just Might Ever Eat

by Chef Warren Catterson

Spring, 2019

PACC: Palm Aire Communities Council



Yucatan Shrimp

Six ingredients, prepared three different ways.

Now that spring is well on its way in the Sunshine State, I've put away my dour novel collection and have brought out my Floridian writer collection. Of course that means Carl Hiassen, Tim Dorsey, James Hall, John D. MacDonald, Stuart Woods, and Randy Wayne White. Why? 'Cuz nothing beats wandering out to the pool or beach with a fluffy towel, a pair of Ray Bans, a Shock Top in the koozie and a novel from any of the above. Right now, I'm on a Randy Wayne White binge. I highly recommend any of his Doc Ford novels if you long for a great tale.

I also recommend dining at any of the Doc Ford's Rum Bar and Grills that can be found in the Ft. Myers/Sanibel area. Now, I must be honest. I'm not a real big fan of 'celebrity' dining establishments. They are usually overbearing, noisy, and the food is mediocre at best. But Doc Ford's place rocks. (*Rumor has it that Doc Ford's is in the running to open a place on the new St. Pete pier. Here's hoping!*)

If you make it out to one of Doc's you have to try the Yucatan Shrimp—it's their signature dish. Oh, you can't make it down there? Well, I've got a recipe for you right here. There are a couple different versions on the internet, but I think this is the most authentic. Plus, I've added two more versions: one where you prepare the shrimp on the grill and one where you sauté shelled shrimp in a skillet for a less messy version. You can whip up any of these quick and delicious meals in well under ten minutes. Wanna make it a full meal? Just add a salad and warm, crusty bread to soak up the incredible sauce.

And, hey, if you ever get down to Southwest Florida, be sure to drop by Doc Ford's for the real deal. Heck, you just might spy Mr. White in the corner, nursing a brew and writing his next Doc Ford novel.

TRADITIONAL YUCATAN SHRIMP

INGREDIENTS

- One pound large or extra-large, shell-on shrimp—for a special treat, look for Argentinian Reds from Detwiler's.
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- Garlic clove, minced or pressed
- Juice of two large limes
- One tablespoon Sambal Oelek (This is a ground fresh chili paste made by Hu Fong Foods, the company that wowed the culinary world with their Sriracha Sauce. It can be found in just about any grocery store in the Oriental food aisle. Just look for the red rooster on the label).
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro

DIRECTIONS

1. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring until fragrant, about 1 or 2 minutes (do not brown). Add the remaining 3 tablespoons butter to let the sauce rest to allow the flavors to meld.
2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Add the shrimp and cook for 2 minutes or until they're just firm and pink. Please don't overcook - no one likes to eat little pink hockey pucks! Drain the shrimp in a colander and shake over the sink to remove excess moisture.
3. Toss the shrimp with the sauce in a large bowl. Sprinkle with cilantro and toss again. Serve in shallow bowls with an ice cold brew, plenty of napkins, crusty bread and a salad.

Continued from previous page

YUCATAN SHRIMP ON THE GRILL

Use the same ingredients and follow step one. Keep sauce warm while you grill the shrimp. Prepare an outdoor grill for medium-high heat. Place the shrimp on skewers (I alternate them - like the Chinese symbol) so they are very close together. They'll be less likely to dry out that way. Oil grate and grill shrimp, turning once or twice until they just turn pink. Toss with the sauce and cilantro in a large bowl.

PAN-SEARED YUCATAN SHRIMP

A more civilized version because there's no shell to peel. Still delicious, but not as much fun! Use the same ingredients except use peeled and deveined shrimp. You may also want to decrease the chili sauce to 1/2 or 3/4 tablespoons because the shrimp will absorb more of the sauce without the shells.

1. Heat a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the butter and swirl to coat the pan. Add the garlic and sauté for about 1 minute.
2. Add the shrimp and sauté until just turning pink, about 2-3 minutes. Stir in the remaining butter, lime juice, chili paste, salt and pepper and continue to sauté until shrimp are just barely firm. Pour the shrimp and sauce into a large bowl. Sprinkle with cilantro and toss again. Serve in shallow bowls.

Chef Warren Caterson the award-winning author of three cookbooks: *Table for Two—The Cookbook for Couples*, *Table for Two—Back for Seconds* and *Cooking Outside the Lines—Musings of an Extemporaneous Chef* (Winfield & Scott Press).

In addition to writing, Chef Warren travels extensively presenting his informative and entertaining cooking demonstrations at Food & Wine Festivals, Home and Garden Shows, Conventions and other events across the country.

Chef Warren resides in Palm Aire, Sarasota.

chefwarrencaterson.com

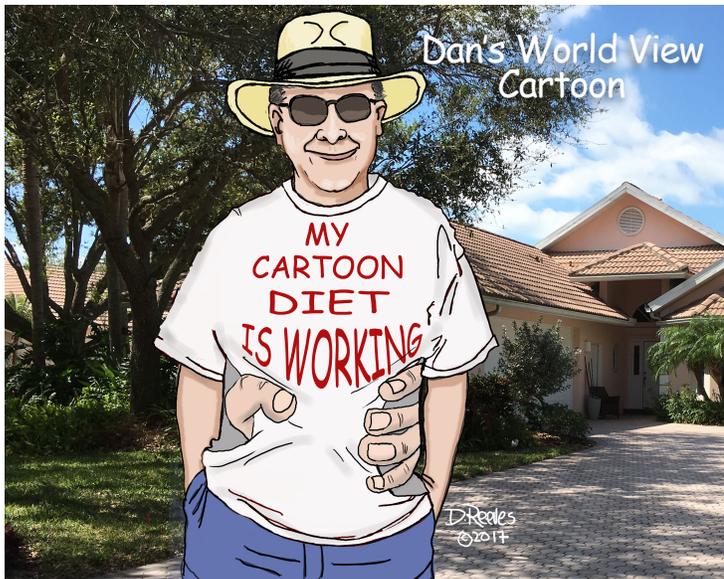
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