

# Newsletter



## Our Neighbor to the East

Lakewood Ranch: it just keeps on growing, growing, and growing. Sometimes it seems like it's about to burst at the seams! Practically every day there is a news story about a new community, restaurant, or charitable activity. And of course the traffic just grows and grows.

I was curious about the beginnings of this very planned community. When did development begin? What zoning changes were needed? What county enhancements were planned or are needed to keep up with all the growth? Writing this article meant deep dives into the online Bradenton and Sarasota Herald Tribune, the Manatee County Planning Commission's online zoning documents and commission meetings, and even the Wikipedia. Such a treasure trove of information, but also a lot to digest, and the search capabilities are not always very robust. I have included some links in case you want to pursue this on your own.

Since the early 1900s, the Uhlein family has run the Schroeder-Manatee Ranch (SMR) on 33,000 acres (this number ranges from 28–33,000 acres depending on the source), raising cattle, citrus trees, and mining shell. In the early 1990s, a plan was conceived to develop some of this land for residential and commercial uses. The family was very mindful of incorporating open space and committing to environmentally friendly development.

SMR used the Manatee County Development of Regional Impact Application (DRI)\* process to get approval for the initial development in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As early as 1987, they were requesting approval for zoning changes from general agriculture to planned residential development (PDR) for "6,160 dwelling units" and to planned commercial development (PDC) for a 300-room hotel and over 230,000 square feet of commercial space. This was for 1,790 acres south of SR 70 and 2 miles east of I-75 (Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of January 7, 1987, file:///C:/Users/smfin/Downloads/PC19870107DOC001.pdf).

There were and are many requests to the County Planning Commission for zoning change amendments to the original (DRI) as the phases proceeded through development. An October 17, 1997, article in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune stated, "With a potential population of more than 15,000 people and a land area of 5,000 acres, the Lakewood Ranch development straddling the Manatee-Sarasota County line is one of the largest in Southwest Florida." It goes on to say, "The Lakewood Ranch is part of 28,000 acres owned by Schroeder-Manatee Inc. east of Interstate 75 from University Parkway to State Road 70. Company Vice President Rex Jensen said the philosophy behind the development is key. "We're basically attempting to create a community," he said. "We've tried to adopt the approach: preserve as you go. We've tried to lay the groundwork for a legacy of stewardship." <sup>1</sup>

A February 23 Bradenton Herald article noted that "...after little discussion and no public comment, commissioners allowed Schroeder-Manatee Ranch Inc. to start

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# Our Neighbor to the East

by Susan Fingerman

Continued from front page.

the second phase of the southern half of Lakewood Ranch this year, which is five years earlier than the original schedule set in 1992.... All this has been about is accelerating what we've already said we're going to do," said Rex Jensen, Schroeder Manatee's vice president of real estate. The main thing today is speeding up the second phase. "The second phase plans include 802 homes, a retail center, a hospital, and various commercial and office sites to be built by 2009 on 2,421 acres northeast of University Parkway and Interstate 75."<sup>2</sup>



And a 2006 Sarasota Herald Tribune article discusses development north of SR 70 and states. "Most of Lakewood Ranch's existing 6,000 homes are to the south between S.R. 70 and University Parkway. Preliminary construction is expected to start sometime next year, but full build-out isn't expected until 2019. The two projects will be on more than 2,200 acres and bring more than 8,100 homes and 3.5 million square feet of office space to the sprawling Lakewood Ranch project." A slight underestimate for today's LWR.<sup>3</sup>

Today there are 63,000 residents, according to LWR marketing, on 50 square miles, and there are still six communities of the 20+ scheduled to open in 2023. It's not all residential or commercial development, either. According to the latest LWR brochure, 40% of the acreage is set aside for parks, trails, and open spaces, which are governed by the Lakewood Ranch Stewardship District. Lakewood High School opened in 1998, the Post Office opened in 2008, and a new county library is planned.

Housing types in LWR range from rental to ownership, age-restricted to gated, condos, townhomes, villas, and single-family homes, and therefore appeal to people of all ages. There are three main town centers: Waterside, Main Street, and The Green, as well as many, many strip mall-type commercial areas on Route 70 and throughout LWR. Over 60 clubs, coordinated by Lakewood Ranch Community Activities, keep the residents active and in touch with each other. The community has done a tremendous job of marketing to residential and commercial buyers and is the focus of study by planning organizations and other states as a successful example of a very vibrant and viable planned community.

My research uncovered several other intriguing avenues to pursue, including the Palm Aire development, an extension to Lockwood Ridge Road, and the following projections from an August 11, 1996 Sarasota Herald article titled "County's future: stay small or sprawl the potential for urban sprawl in manatee county is there, but some people say the growth trend won't encourage it". From the banks of Terra Ceia to rural farmland just west of Myakka City, if every vacant parcel zoned for residential use was developed, residences would more than double the current population. That's an increase from 234,418 people in 1995 to at least 550,000 people in 2020. Yet the county's population is expected to increase to only 344,000 by the year 2025, according to the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research. Though population predictions are somewhat guesswork, the state's Department of Community Affairs, or DCA, says Manatee County, like other counties, must mend the fabric of its future land-use map and refine the densities."<sup>3</sup> Mending the fabric, indeed! The Manatee County population as of 2022 was already 394,824. Lakewood Ranch is certainly a large part of that growth.

*Susan Fingerman is a Golf Point Resident*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Victor Hull, Regional Reporter, Sarasota Herald Tribune, 17 Oct 1997 Planners Examine Developing Wisdom Participants in the Bradenton Conference Are Looking at Ways to Temper Growth.

<sup>2</sup> Nick Mason, Herald Senior Writer, 'east Manatee Projects Get Go-ahead', Bradenton Herald, the (Online), 23 Feb 2000 (<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=awnb&docref=news/0eae7df1aebc0616>)

<sup>3</sup> Frank Gluck [frank.gluck@heraldtribune.com](mailto:frank.gluck@heraldtribune.com), 'Ranch Plans to Add 8,000 Homes - Despite a Soft Real Estate Market, Lakewood Ranch Pitches Two Huge Developments North of S.R. 70.', Sarasota Herald-tribune (Online), 4 Oct 2006 A1 (<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=awnb&docref=news/11492618efe4b630>)

<sup>4</sup> Tom Spalding, Staff Writer, Sarasota Herald Tribune, 11 Aug 1996. County's Future: Stay Small or Sprawl the Potential for Urban Sprawl in Manatee County is There, but Some People Say the Growth Trend Won't Encourage It.

/// *Sunday*

10:30 AM - 1:30 PM

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# Palm Aire Communities Council Board Update

by Susan Romine

## NOVEMBER

Barbara Robinson, president, reported that, at last, the documents for three landscape projects will be coming up for bidding: the landscaped median at Whitfield Avenue and University Parkway, the front island at The Gardens, and irrigation from Timberlake Drive to Country Club Way (the blinking light). The landscape architect will supply cost figures.

The homeless camp is back. The people moved out but left debris. Deputies moved items to the side of the road for pickup.

Susan Romine, vice president and treasurer, is preparing a spreadsheet of the times that associations were without power (and those that were lucky enough to have power) during and after Hurricane Ian. She hopes to bring in a representative from FPL to talk about these matters.

Barbara called Manatee County about several downed street signs due to the hurricane. She found out that over 3,000 people had called about the same subject.

We discussed trimming the ditches and the methods that could be used.

Barbara contacted Timberlake Apartments about cleaning the debris and painting the walls around the property.

## JANUARY

Susan brought a draft of the 2021 tax return for representatives to review.

Dan Reeves, newsletter editor and publisher, reported that the cost of paper had skyrocketed, so the cost to produce and mail the fall edition was much higher than usual. The newsletter committee will meet to discuss options, and Lesa Hartigan will research other printers. The newsletter is on the website, and several associations send the digital link to their residents.

Cathy Allen asked that communities "spruce up" their pages to make them more appealing. Members agreed to write more general content.

Susan was appointed chair of the nominating committee. Elections are at the March Annual Meeting.

Mike Grubbs of Country Lakes expressed a concern at the intersection of Whitfield Avenue and Lockwood Ridge Road. There is no left-turn traffic signal for traffic traveling east or west on Whitfield, turning north or south. He was also concerned that the new sidewalk on the north side of Whitfield did not leave room for a right-turn-only lane. Barbara will discuss this with our Manatee County liaison.

## FEBRUARY

Susan presented a draft FY 2023–24 budget, which will be voted on at the March meeting.

Barbara received a report from Manatee County showing monthly MSTU balances, income, expenses, and net balance (since October 1st). She noted that the MSTU committee met with our new county commissioner, Mike Rahn, to introduce our group and discuss our concerns.

Some of the bollards on University Parkway that delineate the turn lane were knocked down again. Public Works was notified, and they were fixed in two days. The county would like to wait some time before proposing any long-term remedial action, giving people time to get used to merging lanes.

A very basic question was raised by county staff: once the irrigation system is installed, is Manatee County responsible for it? Or, since the MSTU is responsible for maintenance of the landscaping along the "right of way," would maintenance be the MSTU's responsibility?

Susan reported that Florida Power and Light refused to send a speaker to discuss any information relating to the recovery from Hurricane Ian or plans for the future.

Discussion about associations that do not have a representative who attends or even a named representative led to a push to ask those associations to send or name representatives.

Distribution of the newsletter will be monitored to see that it is getting where it needs to go.

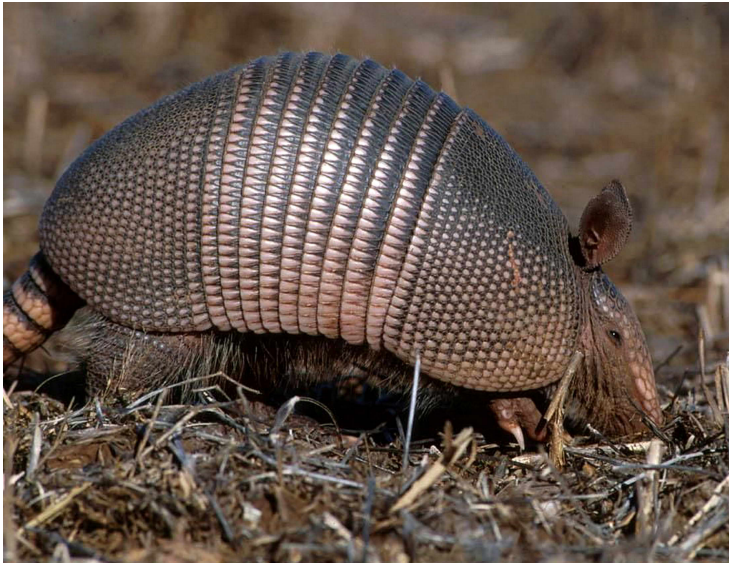
A social for representatives will be planned.

A crime prevention seminar will be held for all residents of Palm Aire.

# Little Armored Ones

by Marguerite Puca

SPRING, 2023  
Palm Aire Communities Council



There's a prehistoric beast that stalks our neighborhoods at night. Luckily, it's more interested in devouring insects than ourselves.

This is, of course, the armadillo ("little armored one" in Spanish). There are 21 species of this animal, all native to the Americas, although only one species, the nine-banded, occurs in the United States. The Order originated in South America, where they were confined until the Isthmus of Panama formed about 3 million years ago. Their closest living relatives are sloths and anteaters.

In the United States, their range is from Texas, in the north, to southern Nebraska and Illinois, and in the east, through South Carolina. Their range is expanding as the climate warms and their food supply marches north.

Armadillos are mammals that bear live young in the spring. In almost all cases, the female has identical quadruplets, with the fertilized egg dividing twice after fertilization.

An average 9-banded adult is about 2 1/2 feet long (nose to tail) and weighs 12 pounds. Their entire body and tail, except for their underside, is covered in bony plates. A different species, the 3-banded, can roll these plates into a ball when they are threatened. In the wild, they live an average of 8 to 12 years. In their habitat, they prefer dense, shaded cover and loose, sandy soil in which they can dig burrows. These burrows can be as much as 7 feet deep and 20 feet long.

Like many creatures, armadillos have learned to co-exist with humans in our environment. Since they are generally nocturnal, they are unlikely to be spotted during the day (except when the weather is cool

and they surface to enjoy the warmth of the sun). The main way to become aware of their presence is to notice the holes that they dig while searching for insects, their favorite prey. In addition to insects, they will consume fruit, seeds, tubers, and the eggs and young of other ground-nesting animals.

They have poor eyesight, using their strong sense of smell to find their prey and strong claws to dig at the soil.

One caution to be aware of in regard to this species that they are an alternate host for leprosy. While the CDC says that the chance of catching the disease from an armadillo is extremely slight, washing hands after any contact is recommended.

Given that the armadillo lives in our neighborhoods and digs holes in our yards (and potentially under our foundations) in search of insect prey, they sound like pests. What is the strategy to deal with them?

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission allows that if an armadillo is a nuisance, it can be captured or killed "using legal and humane methods." These include live traps, snares, or firearms during daylight hours. All traps must be checked at least once every 24 hours. Other wildlife captured must be released on site. All live-captured nuisance armadillos must be euthanized, released on site, or released on a property within the same county of 40 acres or more with written landowner permission.

One evolutionary trait that armadillos exhibit that has not served them well in today's world is their "startle reflex." When surprised, armadillos jump straight up in the air four to five feet. This often unnerves potential predators. However, when confronted with moving vehicles, it puts them in contact with radiator grills. Anyone who has traveled the interstates in the south has seen the results: armadillo carcasses are a relatively common sight along roadway shoulders

*Marguerite Puca, resides in Club Villas II*







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# Praising an Adirondack and Florida Author

## by Richard Frost

For this column, I've decided to broaden my concept of linking my home in the Adirondacks of northern New York to my life in Florida by paying tribute to an author who made both areas not only his residence but also his primary literary settings.



Russell Banks, considered by many critics to be among America's best contemporary writers, died this year, on January 7, 2023, at age 82. I encountered him not only through reading his books but also by attending workshops he led and showing up at a few book signings. Though my personal interactions were limited, they were sufficient to show me he was not only a skilled novelist but also an easily approachable person, ready and eager to engage with his readers. Other writers have long considered him a source of support and insight.

Many will know him best for the books that became screenplays for movies. Perhaps the most successful was "Affliction," which starred Nick Nolte, Willem Dafoe, and Sissy Spacek. Another widely read novel was "Continental Drift," the story of a striving but often hapless individual who learned with difficulty that relocation from what he considered a boring life in New Hampshire to a new start in Florida didn't come without unexpected risk and personal peril.

I'm especially enamored of the novels Banks sets in the Adirondacks. "The Sweet Hereafter" dealt with the consequences of a school bus accident in a small mountain hamlet. The story is told through a variety of viewpoints, capturing the

different perspectives of both locals and some people from outside. This, too, became a movie, though this was not the type of drama that became a blockbuster.

In *Cloudsplitter*, Banks fictionalized the life of abolitionist John Brown. Brown is best remembered for his raid just before the Civil War on an armory at Harpers Ferry, in what's now West Virginia. A very controversial figure in his own day, he remains so a century and a half later. What's not often appreciated, even by upstate New Yorkers, is that Brown and his family lived on a farm near Lake Placid. It was from there that he left for his fateful raid, and it was there that his body returned after his capture by federal forces and subsequent hanging.

*Rule of the Bone*, on the other hand, tells the story of a much more anonymous individual, a young man trying to break free of the restrictions of small town life in the Adirondacks. As the plot develops, the story moves to Jamaica for crucial events. Banks told me when we last met that a movie is being made from the book, but I know nothing of the project's current status.

Banks, who spent his winters in Miami, set some of his most recent work in the Sunshine State. In *Lost Memory of Skin*, he focused on a sex offender, a young man who probably made one bad mistake in what was otherwise an unremarkable if unexciting life. This sympathetic portrayal challenged us to consider how (and if) someone can make amends.

Nathalie Thill, executive director of the highly regarded Adirondack Center for Writing (Banks long served on its advisory board), wrote this comment on the book:

Russell did have a rare talent for making otherwise reprehensible characters likable, or if not likable, at least deserving of respect. One of the many times I introduced him over the years, this time for when *Lost Memory of Skin*, a novel about a sex offender, came out, I said that one of the gifts of reading his work is that he makes us more empathetic, compassionate people; he introduces us to despicable people but also gives us a path to loving them.



She added this note about a gathering of readers with Banks:

Everyone together guessed at what some of his characters would be doing today. He admitted that most of his own characters have different politics than he does, but because he has so much love for them, it makes him more empathetic. He too was affected by compassion for his own characters, just as his readers are. It was extraordinary.

I've not yet read the final of Banks' fourteen novels, "The Magic Kingdom," published only weeks before his death. If any title conjures up Florida, this one does. My writing colleague Jerry McGovern wrote this in a recent review:

Banks informs the reader that he found audio tapes in a Florida public library, tapes on which Harley Mann recorded his life story. Sandwiched between the foreword and afterword is the edited transcription of the memoir Mann recorded on the fifteen tapes Banks removed, surreptitiously, from the library.

There are three Harley Mann storylines on the tapes. It begins with his family's migration from Illinois to the American South in the early 1900s. Looking for work and community, they join a group of Shakers in New Bethany, Florida.

The second thread in the audio tapes arrives in the person of Sadie Pratt, a young woman

dying of tuberculosis. Harley falls in love, and fifty years later, he records his memory of her.

But the Shakers did not survive, and Sadie passed away. Harley Mann eventually becomes a real estate salesperson. He does very well, finally owning the 7,000 acres that were the Shakers' New Bethany community. A man named Walt Disney buys the property to build his "Magic Kingdom."

"Magic Kingdom" is a wonderfully creative narration.... There is history, philosophy, sadness, and love. Harley Mann's is a voice you will not forget.

This last book by Russell Banks is like his others: full of history, compelling characters, and layered stories. Is the "Magic Kingdom" part of the Shaker perspective or Disneyworld?"

Banks was fully invested in both the Adirondacks and in his later home in Florida. He memorialized both with novels that featured vivid characters, well-described landscapes, and challenging situations. Admittedly, I still need to read "The Magic Kingdom," and I should reread some of his earlier work. His death leaves a vacuum in the literary world, but his words will long survive him. Those who have never read his work will enjoy the exposure.

Richard Frost resides both in Sarasota and the Anirondacks.

# 4 facts

1. "Spook Hill" is a gravity hill, an optical illusion where cars appear to roll up the spooky hill in Lake Wales, Florida.
2. Treasure Island got its name after several property owners in the area tried to boost property sales by first burying and then "discovering" wooden chests on the beach that they claimed were filled with treasure.
3. The world's largest miniature circus is located at the Ringling Museum. Philanthropist and artist Howard Tibbals spent more than 60 years making an exact ¾-inch-to-the-foot replica of the Ringling Bros., Barnum & Baily Circus as it might have looked from 1919–1938. Due to copyright restrictions, he had to change the name of his circus to the *Howard Bros. Circus*.
4. Towering at a massive 208 feet tall "The Great Cross" erected in 1966 in St. Augustine's Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche was built with 70 tons of stainless steel and packed with concrete in its lower third to prevent topping by hurricanes. It was designed so that anyone near the city could see it. On old postcards, it was promoted as the "World's Tallest Cross."

I'm a Canadian "snowbird", owner of a condo in Avista at Palm Aire since 2013. I've enjoyed your newsletters and even did some proofreading as well as contributed an article. It was so nice to receive the last issue (Fall 2022) shortly after arriving back in early December. And what a great issue it was! All articles were interesting, informative and well-written.

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Thank you to the editor who put out such a quality newsletter!  
—Elena

PACC members (Sept. 2022)

I just returned to Palm Aire after 3 months. The way the county set up the merge lane at the university is really disappointing.

I see cars bypass the turn lane and turn directly into the traffic lane. The dozens of cones lining the merge lane are a confusing distraction to drivers driving west on University, and if you use the merge lane, you cannot see cars in your rearview mirror as the cones block your view until you are past them.

Slowing the merge traffic down, which is the opposite purpose of the merge lane,

All in all, I think it's worse than before. In my opinion, I can deal with it, but I suspect others may be uncomfortable with the design.

On a recent Sunday night, there was a major accident at this intersection.  
—Sam

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PAAC (February 2023)

I am depending on PAAC to report the danger created by this right turn lane. Recently, an 18-wheel tractor trailer coming from the east through the Whitfield/University intersection merged to the right going into the right turn or 4th lane from the third lane on westbound University Pkwy.

I was first in line on Whitfield and about to enter the right turn lane (west bound) when I realized I was going to be broadsided by an 18-wheeler.

This can't be the first time drivers on campus don't understand that a lane should not be for through traffic. There has to be a way to alert drivers to that.

The cones are actually part of the problem because they disguise the fact that this is a dead end lane and not for use when entering from the east.

In the meantime, don't assume the lane is for your exclusive use. Westbound traffic can accidentally drift one lane south and enter the divided section to pull off the road or as a result of confusion caused by the sudden appearance of the line of dividers in the road.

Those barriers have been damaged and destroyed numerous times, which, in my opinion, is evidence of the danger that exists there.  
—Sam

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The separators on the turn lane have been very effective in getting people to use the lane. I am not sure why any

through traffic on University would move into that lane; it should be obvious that that is not its intention. However, maybe a sign east of Whitfield warning that the separated lane is not for through traffic would help any confused drivers.  
—Nick

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I totally disagree with this overreaction to an isolated incident. Those barriers have greatly improved the right-turn situation there. They should actually decrease the danger of through traffic trying to use that lane.  
—Paul

I think we are beating a dead horse. First, the intersection is in Sarasota County, and the traffic priority must be University Parkway.

A 2010 court case involving a Manatee deputy DUI arrest with a driver in the right, westbound lane at Whitfield intersection established that Manatee County has no jurisdiction on University Parkway. North and south lanes belong to Sarasota.

If the Whitfield right turn light gives another 30 seconds to Whitfield, the university will back up and create more hazards. The old 5-minute trip to Home Depot is now 15 minutes. The white pickets are half of a good idea. Unfortunately, tractor trailers have a turning radius over 50 feet, and landscape trucks with long trailers cannot make the turn into the merge lane, which is less than 25 feet. The result is that they run over the white pickets. They have been replaced once and will require replacement periodically. The merge lane, at about 12.5 feet with a 3-foot bike lane, is too narrow for larger vehicles at the corner turn. So, we will continue to watch.

Speed on University is biggest issue. With a speed limit of 50 mph and traffic moving at 60 mph, drivers must blindly accelerate in the 200-foot lane and quickly find clearance to merge, with tall pickets obscuring the view.

The turn lane on Whitfield is not a California stop area or roll-through. Traffic must stop behind the stop line to determine if there are pedestrians or bicyclists crossing. Then move forward into the merge lane. This is tricky when many cars in the left turn lane roll past the stop line and obstruct the eastern traffic view. A bicycle rider would have to be insane to ride in the narrow space in the picketed merge lane. In military terms, it is a kill box.

When we moved here, Honore, Lockwood Ridge, and Tallavast were two-lane roads. Honore Ave. through The Meadows is programmed for 4 lanes. Whitfield, a major east-west corridor, will some day it probably will be four lanes.

The new apartment complex at Lockwood Ridge and Whitfield is now open and will add hundreds of vehicles to Whitfield traffic. The southern units have only one gate onto Whitfield. The western units will have only Lockwood Ridge access. There is no designated left turn signal, and there is no right turn lane on Whitfield to Lockwood Ridge.

The only solution is patience. It will become much worse, so just be prepared to wait another traffic light cycle.  
—Tom





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# Neighborhood Spotlight

SPRING, 2023  
Palm Aire Communities Council



The Links at Palm-Aire is a smaller private home neighborhood community in Palm-Aire consisting of 49 luxury custom homes with beautiful treed lots and an abundance of wooded preserves and recreation areas. The community was developed in the late 1980s by Crossland Development Corporation. Many of the original residents are still living in the community.

The community is accessed through a single court cul-de-sac off of Country Club Way, sitting with the Palm-Aire Lakes Golf Course on the east and west sides and two lakes on the east brimming with trout and baby alligators. The entrance is framed with a large canopy of oak trees.

We have forty full-time residents, eight seasonal residents from across the US and Canada, and one rental. Each of our homes is beautifully landscaped, with custom pools and views of beautiful lakes and wooded preserves. The architecture of the community is Mediterranean, with tile roofs and stucco exteriors.

I've lived in The Links since October 2014 and have served on the board in different capacities from 2015–2022. I currently represent the community on the Palm-Aire Community Council, Inc.

We have a side entrance to the community off of Whitfield Avenue through Fairway Lakes, our adjacent community. We have a welcoming group of neighbors and enjoy this quaint, hidden gem in Palm Aire.

*Lesa Hartigan  
The Links at Palm Aire, PACCI Representative*





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# Tin Can Tourists

by Dan Reeves

SPRING, 2023  
Palm Aire Communities Council

It was the convergence of occurrences that led to the Tin Can Tourists (TCT):

- The automobile
- The need for highways
- the need for auto parts
- The craving to profit from land development

Early in the twentieth century, 1908 to be exact, Henry Ford produced the first affordable automobile, the Model T. Initially priced at \$85 but, due to mass production, the price dropped to less than \$300 by the early 1920s. Car dealers promoted the car by creating publicity stunts. One such stunt was a race held at Pikes Peak, Colorado. Noel Bullock entered the contest with his Model T, called "Old Liz." It needed a paint job and didn't have a hood. With its dents and bumps, spectators compared Old Liz to a tin can. Surprisingly as it turned out, Bullock and Old Liz won the race, beating more expensive cars, and the newspapers nicknamed the car Tin Lizzy. Soon thereafter, the Model T became known as the tin Lizzie.

At this time, the only decent roads were in cities and towns. Highways didn't exist. So, despite the popularity of the Model T, there were few places to go with an automobile. Carl Fisher, an Indianapolis millionaire entrepreneur who made a fortune selling auto parts and owned the patent for headlights, had his sights set on making even more money. He decided to invest in developing the new resort city of Miami Beach and make that city a driving destination. But how do you get there?

Fisher led the drive to construct the Dixie Highway system in 1914, which was intended to connect the Midwest to Miami. It wasn't a single road, but rather a patchwork of new and existing routes connecting to one another. Fisher held meetings with the governors of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida to gain approval, financing, and road construction. It was a phenomenal success. There were three major routes of the highway: the Eastern, Central, and Western routes, each ending in Miami Beach, where Fisher was building houses, businesses, hotels, and beachfronts. Visitors were literally coming in droves. There was even a magazine dedicated to the Dixie Highway, which in 1915 started publishing news and pictures of what could be seen

along the way, where to stay, and where to eat on a drive from Chicago to Miami. All of Fisher's pieces are now in place. We've got the vehicle, we've got the roads, and we have the destinations.

The Eastern Route started in Michigan's upper peninsula at Sault Ste. Marie, connecting to Detroit, then Toledo, Cincinnati, onto Lexington, then southeast to Savannah, Jacksonville, and ending in Miami Beach.

The Central route departed from Chicago onto Indianapolis, then traveled to Louisville and Chattanooga through Atlanta, then to Jacksonville, before ending in Miami.



The Western route followed much the same path as the Central route but departed Atlanta for Tallahassee and Ocala, then Orlando to Arcadia, on to Ft. Myers, and onto Miami. The western route had branches that led to Tampa, Bradenton, and Sarasota, then south to Ft. Myers.

Since the roads were so rough, tourists often traveled in groups so that they could help each other get through the mud and sand. They often camped together, gathering around campfires and telling stories, singing, and playing musical instruments. Their behavior was often an irritant to the locals.

In our area, the winter of 1919–20 marked the arrival of a large group of out-of-towners. They were camping in Desoto Park in Tampa. These visitors were driving homemade mobile trailers, eating out of tin cans, and driving Tin Lizzies. Cars from all over the North headed to Florida, piled high with bedding, tents, and boxes of canned food.

Realizing the local attitudes against them, they decided to organize and unite as a fraternity of campers who named themselves the Tin Can Tourists, which ironically is what the locals called them! They adopted a set of bylaws that required clean and wholesome entertainment at all meetings, spreading the gospel, cleanliness in all camps, and enforcement of the rules governing public campgrounds. They gave their leader the title of Royal Tin Can Opener. They had a secret handshake, secret sign, secret password, and an official song, "The More We Get Together." Some people soldered tin cans to their automobile radiators.

*Continued on page 16.*



Sarasota's mayor, E.A. Smith, and local businessmen were quick to notice the economics of the situation and decided to lure the TCT from their new home. In 1931, a caravan of about 250 cars left our fair city destined for Arcadia, carrying banners and flags and free copies of the Sarasota Herald. Speeches were given about changing the venue to Sarasota. Sarasota Bay Post 30 of the American Legion was there with their band. It was a hotly contested affair, and



many canners were loyal to the city that welcomed them after they were ejected from Tampa. After a secret ballot was taken, and when the vote was counted; Sarasota won.

When the TCT arrived in Sarasota in January with the mayor and his entire entourage, the headlines proclaimed, "SARASOTA WELCOMES TCT FOLK." Their annual gatherings were at Payne Park; their community morphed into Sarasota Mobile Home Park. Several thousand canners poured into our city. Each year there was a TCT festival along Main Street with floats, bands, trailers, clowns, marchers, and jugglers.

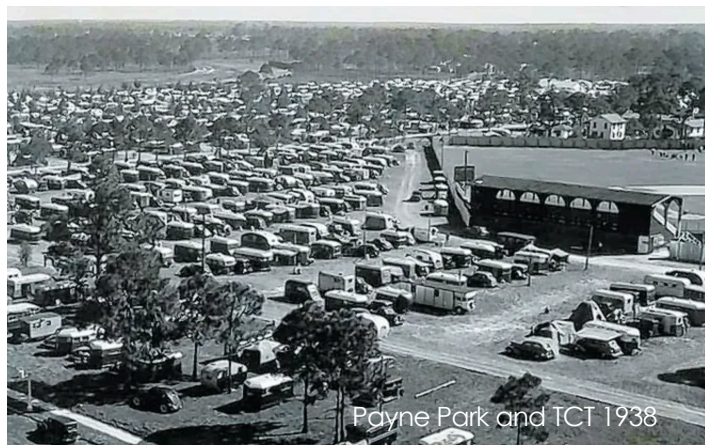


Historic Dixie Highway today in Flagler County today

While business meetings were scheduled several times during the week, more time was devoted to having fun for the canners. There were horseshoe and shuffleboard contests, baseball, boxing, wrestling and field sports. For those who preferred to sit, there were competitions in bridge, 500 and pinochle.

Although the tin can name had been considered a joke by both the members and the public in the organization's early days, by the time the Tin Canners met in Sarasota, the name was taken seriously. Not only did it stand for tourists who cared for their camps, it also represented people who contributed much to the local economy. Businesses placed large display ads in the *Sarasota Herald* during the TCT convention, and the Sarasota Merchants Association offered free bus shuttle service between the TCT grounds and Five Points.

Mayor Smith, who once was an avid supporter of TCT, was concerned by 1938 that the nation perceived Sarasota only as a Tin Can Tourist Town and that the TCT was actually harming our community. So, in 1938, he refused to renew the winter convention contract.



Payne Park and TCT 1938

At this point, Tampa's mayor, learning of this wanted them back, and in 1939 he welcomed them with a five-year contract, and the convention was held in a specially built municipal tourist camp at 2300 N. Oregon Avenue.

The mayor published a brochure that boasted, "Tampa's newest and finest trailer park offers you spacious lots with 24 hour electric and water service. There are modern and complete restrooms with steam heat, hot and cold showers, and a large laundry." The park was featured in *Life Magazine*.

The TCT is still active, holding gatherings throughout the country. Its last meeting in Florida was at Titusville, where they held their 3rd Annual Vintage Liffoff Rally in November 2022. The next one will be held in November 2023.



# Why People Move to Florida

by Julie Jacques

SPRING, 2023  
Palm Aire Communities Council

There are many reasons why people are moving to Florida, and here are some of the whys.

**Great weather:** Florida has warm weather almost all year round, making it an attractive destination for people who want to escape the colder climates and enjoy outdoor activities.

**Beautiful beaches:** Florida has some of the best beaches in the world, with miles of white sand beaches, clear blue water, and breathtaking sunsets. Siesta Key is often ranked number one in the country with its quartz crystal sand that never gets hot.

**Outdoor activities:** With its year-round sunshine, Florida offers a wide range of outdoor activities, including boating, fishing, hiking, golfing, tennis, pickleball, and more.

**Affordable living:** Florida has a relatively low cost of living compared to other states, making it an attractive destination for people who want to live comfortably without breaking the bank

**Growing job market:** Florida's economy is growing rapidly, with a robust job market that offers opportunities in various industries, including healthcare, hospitality, finance, and technology.

**High quality of life:** Florida is known for its laid-back lifestyle, friendly people, and diverse cultural offerings, making it an attractive place to live for people of all ages and backgrounds.

**Retirement destination:** Many retire in Florida, drawn by its warm weather, low cost of living, and access to healthcare services.

**No state income tax:** Florida is one of a handful of states that do not have a state income tax. This means that people who move to Florida can save money on state income tax, which can be a significant advantage for many individuals and families.

**Affordable real estate:** Florida has a wide range of affordable housing options, from single-family homes to condominiums and townhomes. This can make it easier for people to buy a home or invest in real estate without having to pay high prices. The current market has leveled off. Interest rates have gone up but are still low compared to the days of double-digit interest rates.

**Retirement benefits:** Florida is a popular retirement destination, with many communities and services geared towards seniors. This can provide financial benefits for retirees such as lower healthcare costs, affordable housing options, and access to various retirement benefits and services.

Overall, Florida can offer many financial advantages for people who are looking to improve their financial situation, whether they are seeking affordable housing options, a lower cost of living, or better job opportunities.

The bottom line is that Florida is a great combination of sunny weather, natural beauty, and a high quality of life that attracts people from all over the country and the world. **That's why people move to Florida!**

A sampling of recent sales in the past month in Palm Aire:

#### Condominiums Sold

8418 Gardens Circle	\$225,000
6041 Clubside Dr.	\$375,000
7318 Golf Pointe Circle	\$490,000

#### Single-Family Homes Sold

8015 Conservatory dr.	\$595,000
6832 Country Lakes Cir.	\$625,000
7522 Fairlinks Ct.	\$475,000

Data from [Stellar MLS System](#) and various Realtors



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Coldwell Banker Realty,  
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Sarasota, FL 34236  
941.323.1800 cell

Julie.Jacques@cbrealty.com  
Juliejacques.cbintouch.com



The Little Blue Heron is the bird featured in our masthead for this issue. This bird is currently endangered because of habitat loss in Florida as well as shifting land use.

It has a grayish-blue body and a purplish head and neck. However, during breeding season, it sprouts a dark red head. Its lifespan is around 7 years, but some live to be 14 years old.

A row of "teeth" along the middle toes provides them with a grooming comb that they use to comb their feathers and scratch their heads, neck, and throat. They are wading birds that mainly eat small fish, small snakes, and crustaceans.

# Neighbors in Our Midst

by Dan Reeves, *An interview with Terry Romine*

DAN: Terry, some of the things that fascinate me about you are your career accomplishments as a lobbyist, your current activities with philanthropy, and how you contribute back to society. For example, you are chair of the Crosley Foundation, you are a director of the Sarasota Cuban Ballet Board, you have been a member of the Sarasota Ballet Board of Directors, and you are a delegate to the Manatee County Republican Party's Executive Committee.

And when your wife, Susan, told me that not only did you know five United States presidents, you also played cards with one of them, I thought to myself, I've got to interview this guy for our Palm Aire Community Association newsletter.

So, tell me about the presidents you knew.



TERRY: The first one I met was Jerry Ford before he was President, when he was a Michigan congressman. I was a lobbyist primarily in Michigan, and he was a congressman from Michigan itching to be Speaker of the House after turning down offers to run

for senator and governor. And then, of course, he became the vice president under Nixon and then the president by default.

I met with Ford numerous times. To me, the irony of it all is the 1976 election for President. That was the first time he got trapped, and Jimmy Carter defeated him. Here's the irony: I think he could have won if he would have picked a woman rather than Bob Dole for his vice presidential running mate.

Henry Kissinger told me a very interesting thing that history still doesn't know about. Ford's first selection for V.P. was a woman, Anne Armstrong, who was the Ambassador to the United Kingdom. I think that naming her vice president would have been a brilliant move, and he would have won the election over Carter. He would have been the first to bring a woman on as vice president, and she was very, very talented. That I think would have turned the election around, but he didn't, and history goes on, and he pretty much did the next right thing by appointing Nelson Rockefeller as vice president.

Jerry got the reputation of being clumsy because he took a tumble on the ski slopes and then slipped one rainy day and fell down the steps of Air Force One, but he was anything but clumsy. Ford was an agile first-team All-American college football player who

helped the Wolverines earn two undefeated seasons and two national titles.

DAN: Of the presidents, which one stands out the most for you?

TERRY: Well, Ford. I loved Jerry. But, I just happen to like Ronnie Reagan more. And of course, four years later, when Reagan won, my telephone was ringing off the hook with people who wanted me to hook them up with a job in Washington.

I was almost a political appointee. Of course, I guess I looked at the offer for a while to see what it was about. And I could have been Under Secretary of Labor, but I was a young guy at the time, in my early thirties, with a family—a wife and a kid—and I couldn't seem to figure out how I could afford a home in Detroit and a home in Washington at the same time. Those jobs don't pay very much, and I was so young and had not made my fortune yet! So I did manage to turn it down.

In 1976, I was one of a small group of Reagan campaign workers in President Ford's home state of Michigan. When I first met Mr. Reagan, I asked him, "How, inasmuch as he was the oldest candidate in history to run for the presidency, he thought his age would factor in the election?"

Reagan said to me, "You know, Terry, I just returned from China, and the leaders in Beijing wondered if I was old enough."

I liked that Reagan could speak to any issue with dignity, directness, and authority. With the tone of his voice, he could turn anything around in his favor. What a great politician!

DAN: What about Bill Clinton?

TERRY: I mean, goodness gracious. There were even rumors of affairs back in Arkansas before he got to be president. And, then, while in office, he started an 18-month affair with Monica Lewinsky, a White House intern. There were at least five claims that I'm aware of about sexual misconduct while in office. Then there was the impeachment over it all. But he did have accomplishments that contributed to our country.

DAN: We've got four; we've got Reagan; we've got Clinton. Okay, what about George H.W. Bush?

TERRY: Wonderful man, probably the most qualified man for president. His resume was packed with accomplishments before he became president. I mean, he had done more important things that were directly



the result of his position as head of the CIA than you can imagine. He was a well-liked administrator there.

He was a decorated navy pilot, Congressman, National Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Ambassador to the UN, and Special Envoy to China. George H.W. Bush had established a reputation as a strong leader with an impressive resume.

He was a remarkable man, and the year before he lost his re-election to Bill Clinton, he had the highest positive rating of any president in history. He had over 91%, and that's amazing.

And those were the presidents that I knew.

Dan: Did you know any of them socially?

Terry: No, no, no. Maybe somewhat with Jerry Ford because I got to play cards with him. So, I guess that's about as social as I get. We played right across the street from the state capitol in Lansing in an old hotel, and we also played at the City Club, which was a private club where most of us lobby for members and have politicians over there for lunch. After lunch, we'd play cards.

*Terry Romine is a resident of Woodland Green*

Why do some street names printed on a blue background and others are printed on Green?



Answer: Green signs are county or public Roads. Blue ones are private roads

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# Newsletter



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