

Palm Aire  
Communities Council

# Newsletter

SPRING, 2021

## Waiting in Line

When 28 seconds is not enough.  
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# Some Thoughts from the President's Desk

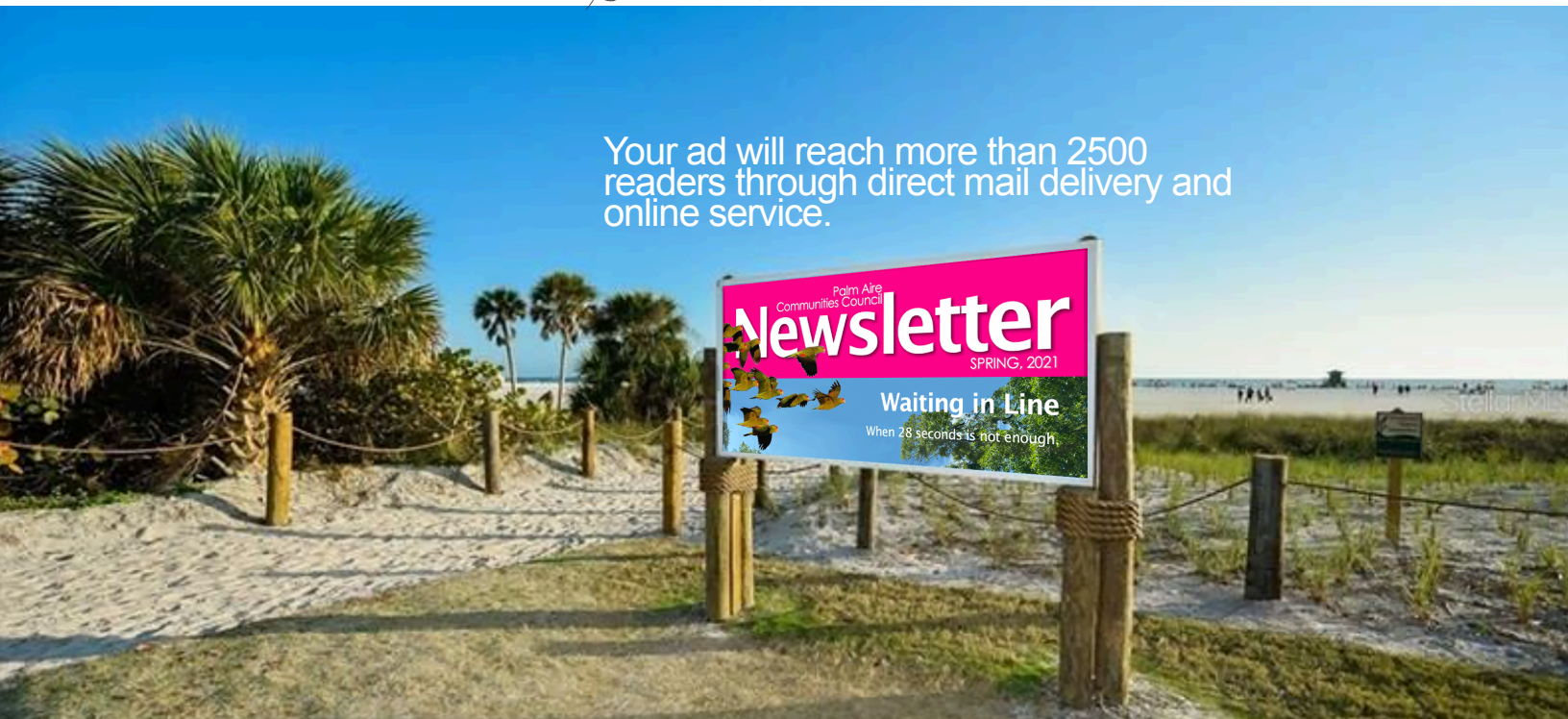
SPRING, 2021  
Palm Aire Communities Council

I hope this newsletter finds you all safe and well, and have either had your Covid vaccination or have scheduled an appointment to get the vaccine. Hopefully, by midyear, we'll begin to see some normalcy in our lives.

Susan Romaine's article, Palm Aire Communities Council Update, will bring you up to date on what the Council has been doing regarding traffic and speed issues on Whitfield Avenue, as well as where we are with the enhancement project on Whitfield Avenue. Also, I have, once again, contacted Manatee County requesting an extension of the right turn lane on Whitfield to University Parkway.

There is still time should one of our PACCI representatives be interested in taking the Vice President position.

*Barbara Robinson*



**BLAKE JONES**  
BROKER ASSOCIATE

*.....simply persistent.*

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# Waiting in Line

*When 28 seconds is not enough.*

*by Dan Reeves*

Stopping for a red traffic light is one thing, but sitting at the same red light through more than one cycle can be the height of frustration. It's not hard to do that when you get the red light where Whitfield Avenue intersects University Parkway.

If you stop at this light heading south when the light is green for University traffic, your red light wait will be at least 102 seconds—that's how long the light stays green for University Parkway traffic. When the light facing Whitfield does change, you've got 28 seconds of green to make a left turn. If you're making a right turn on red, it's not so bad; you've got nearly a ¼ mile of merge lane to get you up to speed on University.

I've heard Palm Aire residents complain long and hard about the intersection. "It's worse on the weekend," a neighbor said. Another said, "You can hardly get through unless you wait for two or three cycles of the light."

Light cycles are typically based on population, traffic flow, speed limit and crash history at an intersection. Local governments, through the public works or traffic engineering departments, determine the timing of light cycles, and Sarasota County says they've got it timed right.

Let's see.

I decided to conduct an informal survey on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to Noon each day. I took along a stopwatch and clipboard for notes. I was amazed by what I learned about the Whitfield traffic.

The traffic engineers say that the normal reaction time to a light turning green is 3.5 seconds. Not so on my watch. No matter which day of the week, it took the lead car at the red light 4 to 5 seconds to start moving on green. The subse-

quent cars each took at least 2 seconds to start moving in a cascading fashion.

On Saturday, the line-up at the red light ranged from 14 to 26 vehicles with an average vehicle count of 21.2. When the light turned green, no more than 7 vehicles ever made it through the light. The light stays green for 28 seconds, add to that 3.5 seconds of yellow and the drivers have a total of 31.5 seconds to make it. Then come the red-light runners. On Saturday, each click of the light induced one to three people to run the red light endangering not only themselves but other drivers. Now, when I note that only seven vehicles made it through the light, that includes the red light runners!

Now, given a line-up of 25 cars and 31.5 seconds of combined green and red lights, here is what I observed. Sixteen of the 31.5 seconds get used-up in reaction time, leaving only 15.5 seconds of driving time to get through the intersection. The reaction time was calculated by adding the time it took the lead car to start (4 sec.) to the time it took each of the subsequent vehicles to start moving (2 sec. each).

Whoever is sitting in the 25th car doesn't have a chance, nor does the car in position 8 or 16 or 20. In fact, car number 25 has to wait for the light to change four times before moving, a total of 390 seconds or 5.5 minutes of waiting in line. It is no wonder drivers are frustrated; it's no wonder why they run the lights.

The observations for Friday and Monday gave much of the same results, but not as severe. The number of cars waiting in line decreased to an average of 14 vehicles waiting in line and 7 to 10 drivers making it through the light.

Guess timing is everything.

## 4 facts

1. Gatorade Was named after the University of Florida's football team the Gators, where the drink was first developed.
2. Tampa's Bayshore Boulevard is the

world's longest continual sidewalk.

3. Area code 321 that has been in service since November 1, 1999, in Bevard County. The code refers to the countdown sequence 3-2-1 at Kennedy Space Center

that launched many spacecraft and is a nod to Brevard County's important role in space travel.

4. Florida is home to over 1,300 golf courses, more than any other state.

# Armchair Traveler by Elena Hannah

## Newfoundland and Labrador

the North Atlantic. With brand new degrees and a brand new marriage, my then-husband and I came to take our positions in the only university in this newest Canadian province. It was supposed to be for two years only, after which we would return to "civilization" to live out the rest of our lives. An adventure, if you will. It's been that, and much, much more. The history and geography of Newfoundland fills volumes,



it even has its own dictionary! For the English spoken in these parts is based on, mostly, Irish of 500 years ago. How can I summarize such rich history for a short article?

So here are some sketchy highlights:

As the name indicates, Newfoundland and Labrador is a Canadian province with two distinct geographical areas: the island of Newfoundland and a large part of mainland Labrador.

The latter is much larger than the former, with the island portion covering 43,000 square miles, and Labrador over 100,000 square miles for a total of 144,353 miles. Labrador's northernmost tip is at 60°

About fifty years ago, I arrived in a remote city on a remote island in

22°N latitude, whereas the southernmost part of the island is at 46° 36'N.

Let's get one thing out of the way before I start telling you about the extraordinary beauty of this province: we are not famous for our good weather! In the capital, St. John's, the average high temperature for July is 68F, and the average low is 30F for

January. However, we do get days of 85° F now and again, in July and August. Advantages: no snakes or other venomous creatures.

Air pollution is near zero, so when the sun does shine it's absolutely brilliant with clear blue skies. Alas, we can have weeks of overcast skies, rain, drizzle and fog and high winds. The best months to visit this beautiful province are July, August and September.

Europeans arrived in the early 16th century, during the great exploration voyages era. The first Europeans to land in NL, however, were the Vikings, in about 1,000 CE. There is a Norse settlement in a place called L'Anse aux Meadows that is a UNESCO World Heritage site, in the Northwest part of the island. Archeologists found tools and other daily usage evidence of their presence. However, they left for reasons still unknown but suspected to be increasingly unfavorable weather.

Spanish and Portuguese explorers, as well as English pirates, began to ply the waters around the island. The Basque whale fishermen from Spain had a whaling station in Red Bay, Labrador, which is now a museum.

As usual, the powers in Europe, always warring, divided North America amongst themselves, and Newfoundland ended up as a colony. At first the British were not interested in permanent settlements, the attraction was the abundant cod that one could

*Continued on Page 8.*

## The Palm Aire Communities

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

## The Palm Aire Communities Council Newsletter

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Susan Romine, Vice President  
Susan Romine, Treasurer

# Bobcats in Palm Aire

by Marguerite Puca

SPRING, 2021  
Palm Aire Communities Council



**Have you seen one of these in your driveway? One of our neighbors in Mote Ranch took this picture last fall.**

The bobcat is one of two wild cat species in Florida, although occurring in vastly greater numbers than the other cat, the Florida panther. In North America, there may be as many as a million bobcats sharing space with us in environments as varied as swamps, woodlands and suburban “edge” niches. The northern edge of their range is southern Canada, bumping up against their larger cousins the Lynx. The southern edge of their range is southern Mexico. Our particular sub-species, *Floridanus* (one of 12 sub-species) has been seen in all 67 Florida counties.

How do you know if you've seen one?

- About twice as large as a domestic cat
- Stubby, “bobbed” tail
- Tan color with darker brown or black stripes or spots
- Small black “tufts” on the tops of the ears and a fur ruff around the face
- Moves by bounding along, more like a dog than a cat

Like other cats, the bobcat is a territorial and a solitary creature, individuals coming together only at breeding season, generally late winter to early spring. One to five kittens are born about two months later in a den (pile of rocks, a hollow log, a fallen tree, etc.). The kittens stay with their mother, learning to hunt, until the next mating season a year later. The life span of a bobcat is about 14 years in the wild, although they have lived more than twice that in captivity.

In diet, bobcats are similar to other cats—opportunistic carnivores. A typical diet consists of small game animals such as mice, birds, rabbits, squirrels, opossums and raccoons. They prefer to hunt

at night but can do so in daylight if warranted. In pursuit of prey, they can climb trees and swim, which expands their foraging territory. (The author once saw a bobcat pursue a rabbit to the banks of a pond; the rabbit dove in and swam across the pond while the bobcat watched in frustration from the shore.) The hunting style is to stalk, followed by an ambush of a rush or a pounce. The bobcat and Florida panther can exist in the same ecosystem because they pursue different prey species.

What might prey on bobcats? Coyotes, foxes, large dogs, alligators, Burmese pythons in the animal kingdom. Hawks and owls can take bobcat kittens. In Florida, bobcats can be hunted for their pelts in certain seasons, and of course, bobcat collisions with cars are always a threat. In terms of species survival, the bobcat population is stable and the cat is not on any list of endangered animals.

Are bobcats a danger? Certainly not to people, but small pets can seem an enticing morsel to a passing feline. In order to keep bobcats out of a yard, a tall fence is a deterrent, as is removing pet food or water left outside. Be aware that any birdseed spilled on the ground will attract mice, which in turn will attract bobcats. Walk small dogs on a leash and don't let cats roam free.

Native American tribes featured bobcats in their stories and social lives. To the Hopi, a man with a bad temper or who acted like a jerk was called “a bobcat.” But to other tribes, such as the Zuni and Mohave, the bobcat was thought to positively affect the hunting effort. Pawnee parents used to try to secure celestial blessings for their newborns in bobcat furs. Several tribes had bobcats as clan symbols.

There are also stories of bobcats interacting with other animals, and suggestions as to how the bobcat lost its tail.

*Marguerite Puca is a transplant from New Jersey, flourishing in Florida. Avid bird watcher and long-time admirer of Florida Wildlife*



# Palm Aire Communities Council Board Update

## Susan Romine, Secretary/Treasurer

At the November meeting we were advised that the Landscape Architect for the Whitfield Enhancement Project has submitted a proposed Work Assignment with Manatee County for the MSTU (Municipal Service Taxing Unit) Committee to review. Our comments were included.

A hit-and-run accident on Palm Aire Drive left a palm tree worse for the wear. We will contact our liaison with Manatee County to get the information to the landscape contractor.

At the January meeting Barbara Robinson, President, reported that she continues to talk to the Sarasota County Traffic Division about the timing of the signal on University Parkway at Whitfield Avenue on the weekends. The Sarasota County personnel indicates that the timing is correct to keep the traffic moving on University, but when only three to five cars can move at a time on Whitfield, something is wrong!

We are checking to see if University Park Country Club has the same issue. If you are in line to go east, please stay vigilant, and MOVE! Traffic backs up to Timberlake Drive on Saturday and Sunday anytime from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The loss of WWSB-TV from the Frontier Cable line-up has upset many of us. If you want to call to express your displeasure, here are the numbers:

Frontier Headquarters in Connecticut: 203.614.5600

Southern Regional Manager: Melonie Williams,  
813.221.8790

Individual Accounts: 800.921.8101

HOA Accounts: 844.660.0648

The February meeting brought a report from Barbara that the MSTU Committee and the Landscape Architect walked Whitfield from University almost to Country Club Way to talk about proposed enhancements and deterrents.

Barbara again asked for anyone to help sell ads and write articles for the Newsletter.

Cathy Allen, who is our webmaster, announced that the site is now secure. Some members had problems signing on, and this enhancement should solve that. I know it solved the problem for me.

The Nominating Committee is still asking someone to serve as Vice-President.

Susan Romine, Treasurer, presented the proposed budget for the Council. Julie Jacques asked for \$1,000 for the Holiday Lighting line item. Most of the lights we have been using have blown out because they are not LED. She presented three quotes for people to do the decorating (including new lights) instead of the four people who have been there each year we have decorated.

Barbara asked to continue this request until after the implementation of the Whitfield Enhancement Project, as the landscaped median at University and Whitfield will most likely be the first area to be landscaped. The proposed budget will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on March 17th.



Scenic view of our neighborhood Conservatory Park

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# Newfoundland and Labrador, continued



scoop simply by dipping a basket overboard. There are accounts of ships getting stuck because of the masses of cod. Cod was great news for starving Europe.

From a colony, NL became a Dominion, meaning it had its own government, although still answerable to the King of England. Various towns were built with varying success. In 1933, due to the hardships of the Depression, it reverted to being a colony, as the treasure was empty. During the First World War, many Newfoundlanders fought and died in Europe, the male population was decimated, which further contributed to a dire economic situation. Newfoundlanders also spilled lots of blood in Europe during the Second World War, still as British subjects. Americans had large military bases on The Rock, and a small island off the main island, called Bell Island, had iron ore mines that supplied essential material to England to build weapons. German submarines were seen in our waters, trying to torpedo the supply ships on their way to Europe. There are remnants of cannons and other materiel that can be explored today; the soldiers' rooms built into the rock can also be seen.

At their peak, the various bases had 100,000 American troops. There was a construction boom that helped Newfoundlanders. Many Americans married local women, some leaving with their wives after the war to return to the United States, and some settling in as adopted

Newfoundlanders. Consider the social and cultural impact of 100,000 Americans on a population of about 300,000. The Americans also built a children's hospital which only recently was abandoned and a new one built elsewhere in St. John's. The last base to be dismantled was Argentia in 1994. Not everything was perfect, as there was a lot of pollution left on the bases but, overall, the presence of the Americans was a boon to the islanders.

Gander Airport was one of the airports used on 9/11 when many American and European aircraft were ordered to land in the nearest airport. Gander hosted about 6,600 people from 38 airplanes. The population of Gander, about 10,000, stepped up to the plate, as well as neighboring communities, who took the pas-

sengers in their own homes. This event was memorialized in the now-famous musical *Come From Away*.

As you can see, Americans have special bonds with Newfoundland. Today, the population of NL is about 500,000. St. John's, the capital, has just over 100,000, but with neighboring communities, it adds up to 200,000. The old part of St. John's, "the oldest city in North America" is quaint and unique. There is a vibrant artistic community and famous George Street, which has more bars per capita than any other city. The seascapes are breathtaking.

In recent times, many American and European tourists bought houses in some of those outports, as they were very inexpensive, many right on the beach with beautiful views. Houses don't have air conditioning—not needed. matter how warm it gets during the day, houses don't need air conditioning.

Newfoundlanders are very authentic and hospitable. They will give a hand to anyone who needs it, with no thoughts of getting anything in return. Last year, a couple "from away" was visiting for the first time, when their car broke down. A woman saw them trying to get help and ended up lending them her car for the duration of their stay, as their car was going to take several days to be repaired. The couple was in shock—what? no deposit? No leaving their passport? Nah, the woman said, I trust you. This is by no means a unique anecdote in these parts.

So, if you would like to visit a beautiful, unique place, with lots of views, lots of arts and crafts, lots of music and dancing and great, fresh fish, you could do worse than make the effort to come to Newfoundland. Although the beauty is everywhere, in addition to St. John's and vicinity I highly recommend the Great Northern Peninsula on the west coast of the island. If you have time, a ferry can take you across to Labrador, a place of more breathtaking beauty and unspoiled nature. Lots of icebergs and lots of whales to regale your eyes. If I sound like a tourist agent it's simply because I fell in love with this truly unique place, and, if you come, you will too.

*Elena Hannah is a retired psychology professor from Memorial University of Newfoundland and splits her time between Newfoundland and Pam Aire*





## Hot Hot Hot... Sizzling Hot!

Sarasota and Manatee stay HOT in January according to data from Florida REALTORS® Association of Sarasota and Manatee (RASMA). The housing market in January showed more closed, and pending sales and higher median prices compared to one year ago. Closed sales increased year over year by 23.6% across the two-county market. Single-family homes from both counties were up 21.1% year over year. Condos up 27.8% from January 2020. Single-family home sales increased 17.9% in Sarasota County and 25.6% in Manatee County. Condo sales increased year over year in Sarasota County by 32.6% and in Manatee County at 20.5%.

Property inventory is at an all-time low. The combined inventory of active listings (total of both property types in both counties) decreased year over year by 59.9% in January. As of the end of January single-family homes supply is at 1.1 months in Manatee and 1.2 months in Sarasota County. Condos 1.6 months in Manatee County and 2.1 month supply in Sarasota County.

You may ask why this happening is. Supply and demand. Also could be due to the pandemic. Sellers don't want buyers walking through their homes. What we are seeing is really unprecedented. We have far more buyers than sellers. This reinforces the trend of rising prices and competition in the market. This includes new construction as well. Builders are also faced

with a lack of inventory. There are waiting lists for new homes. Buyers are facing stiff competition. The upside is the record low mortgage rates which are expected to increase this year.

Waiting to purchase could be a mistake right now. Home prices are rising at an incredible pace if you can find a property that's right for you. Buyers are having to rethink what they want. The wish list may have to change in order to find a home. However, it's a great time for sellers to sell at a great price with great terms. Do you want to list your property?!

In Palm Aire as of March 9, 2021, we have three active listings for condos and two active listings for single-family homes. A total of five properties for sale in all of Palm Aire at the time this article was written. In the past six months 48 single-family homes sold and 70 condo's sold. We have five pending single-family homes and 23 pending condos.

Below is a sampling of what has sold in the last six months in Palm Aire.



Julie Jacques, Realtor, GRI  
Coldwell Banker Realty  
Downtown Sarasota  
100 North Tamiami Trail  
Sarasota, FL 34236  
941.323.1800 c

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

A sampling of recent sales:  
**Single-Family Homes**

7780 Pine Trace Dr.	277,000
5739 Timber Lake Ln.	360,000
6900 Country Lakes Circle	415,000
7924 Broadmoor Pines Blvd.	460,000
8130 Misty Oaks Blvd.	850,000

**Condominiums**

8402 Gardens Circle	160,000
5767 Vista Dr.	185,000
5598 Golf Pointe Dr.	215,000
7156 Fairway Bend	305,000
7706 Palm Aire Ln.	338,000

*Information provided by Steller MLS System and sold by various Realtors.*

Our masthead in this edition features green parrots.

It seems we have a lot of parrots and parakeets living in our area. None are native. All are birds that have somehow escaped their owners or have been let loose by their owners. They love to flock together and travel in unison and make quite a racket. They do so as a protective measure by appearing as a large noisy mass in the sky to ward off predators.

The ones in our masthead were photographed flying over the Champions Course at the Palm Aire Country Club. They come by every day. They roost is at the airport, and somewhere around early to mid-morning when they can no longer tolerate the noise of jet engines, they fly east toward the Country club and forage along the way.

They oftentimes settle in the trees behind the clubhouse near the signature 18th hole island green. After they gather there and rest for a while they usually fly north on Champions and settle in the trees above to the well and pump house. After they've all gathered again, they continue their flight north. To where I haven't a clue. But, late in the afternoon, they return by reversing their route to the airport and making the same stops.

# Message from Palm Aire Country Club

Palm Aire Country Club recently announced that it will embark on a multi-million dollar renovation of its cherished Champions course. Renovation is expected to begin in late April with a targeted opening date in the middle of November 2021. This is great news and a great time for the Country Club, as it will be restoring the Champions course within its original Dick Wilson design and footprint to fit into today's modern game. This tee to green renovation encompasses the tee-tops, fairways, rough, approaches, collars, bunkers and greens. This member investment also benefits our communities by protecting our community home values. Research has shown that communities that border well-maintained golf courses retain higher home values than those that are on struggling or poorly maintained golf courses, which has been reported as much as 25%.

Typically, at this time of year, we are a mad-house with gatherings, events, banquets, tournaments and casual get-together dining but the unusualness continues. We are praying for a quicker than not turn around in our social lives but until we reach that level of being comfort-

able with our surroundings it is important we continue to remind all community residents; use face coverings in public, use hand sanitizers, wash hands frequently and if you are not feeling well, please take necessary precautions and stay at home. Outdoor activities are flourishing right now and will be continuing into the future. Whether your interests are golf, tennis, pickleball, water aerobics or outdoor dining, we have it all! Our outdoor dining area includes multiple fire tables for extra ambiance.

If safety is important to you, now might be the time to check out our "Club" life, we have an incredible membership and club. Now might be your perfect time to come, discuss the many options of membership, take a tour and see what we have done in order of safety. You can schedule a tour and discuss your future involvement with Palm Aire Country Club by contacting our Membership Director, Suzanne Gile at 941-355-9733.

Joe Rasset  
General Manager/COO  
Palm Aire Country Club

## Sarasota-Manatee Bicycle Club Cleans-UP

A local bicycle club is helping to keep Palm Aire beautiful by picking up litter alongside Whitfield Avenue, from University parkway to Lockwood Ridge Road. Volunteers from the Sarasota-Manatee Bicycle Club (SMBC) do this as a community service through the Adopt-A-Road program, which is coordinated to Keep Manatee Beautiful, Inc., in partnership with Manatee County.

You might have noticed the permanent Adopt-A-Road signs posted at either end of Whitfield Avenue. Four times each year, approximately two dozen SMBC members assemble in the Palm Air Country Club parking lot to get their equipment and assignments, grabbers and plastic bags.

They pick-up fifty to one hundred pounds of paper, plastic, glass and other inorganic debris which is then collected by county workers. In 2017, SMBC received a "Manatee Beautiful Service Award" for its volunteer efforts, which it is continuing.

Their next clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, April 24, 2021.



# Embracing Our Differences Billboard Art Exhibit

by Kathie Kaplan



The Spring 2021 Embracing Our Differences Billboard Exhibit on view from January 20 through April 1 in Sarasota's Bayfront Park is truly exceptional! This year we received 15,912 submissions from 48 states, 128 countries and 412 schools. The quotes and artwork were received from kindergarten children to graduate students as well as teachers and professional artists and writers. The Outdoor Exhibit shares statements of love, caring, respect and understanding through the Visual Artwork on the 50 Billboards presented at the park.

## Visiting the Exhibit through Docent Programs:

Under the guidance of our Embracing Our Differences (EOD) high school faculty advisors, student docents serve as guides for the area elementary, middle and high school students to experience life-changing truths through Art and Quotations. The goal for younger students is to realize that knowledge, diversity and acceptance can still bring us together.

EOD Committee Members select quotations to be considered for the Billboards. Therefore, each committee member received a portfolio of quotes. This year there were over 9,000 quotations received from students and adults for the 2021 Billboards. Therefore, dividing up

the quotes, each committee member received close to 4,000 quotations. Approximately 2,500 quotes were received for the first round and then returned to the committee chair with their selection of Quotes that they believed the best choice for the Exhibit. Our committee then met in late fall to narrow down the selections for the 50 quotes to be matched to the 50 pieces of art to be displayed on our billboards. For the committee members, it was a very interesting experience—unique, interesting and heartfelt.

Quotes were often returned to our chair with a personal note expressing their surprise and appreciation of the children's sensitivity to others, respect, and a stronger commitment to being a friend to someone different.

Committee members also volunteer at the Bayfront Park to evaluate the visitors' experiences. Many are interested in hearing about the selection of quotes and the "World Wide" participation of the artists and the students. From the visitors, we learn their choice of "Favorite" artwork, and at the end of the exhibit, a Cash Prize is presented to the People's Choice Award Winner. In 2020, **El Sueño Americano** by Clifford McDonald was selected as the People's Choice Award Winner.

*Continued on page 13*

# A Northern Connection

Rich Frost

I grew up and later had my professional career in the foothills of New York's Adirondack Mountains. Our time when not at Clubside still gets spent there. When I find links between that region and Sarasota, I'm excited to do some research.

Several years ago I began writing about Katherine McClellan, a pioneer woman photographer in the Lake Placid and Saranac Lake region in the center of the Adirondacks. In time I found out she also had significant Florida connections—she and her sister developed the McClellan Park neighborhood in downtown Sarasota.

Katherine (1859-1934) enjoyed an upper-class childhood in the industrial city of Paterson, New Jersey. She attended Smith College, then a relatively new girls' school in Northampton, Massachusetts. After graduation, she returned to Paterson to teach, then later worked at a school in New York City.

In 1890, her younger sister Daisietta was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Saranac Lake, New York, had gained a reputation as a treatment center for the disease. Thus, it was no surprise to learn that their father, a physician, sought to relocate there. He landed a position as the public health officer for Saranac Lake.

Katherine, boasting a liberal arts education and already exposed to travel in Europe, sought a pastime to help fill her time in the small mountain village. After dabbling in painting, she settled on photography. It's unclear exactly how she learned the necessary skills, though an early interview suggests a photographer in town helped teach her.

In time she earned success selling Adirondack photos and camera accessories from a studio her father built just outside the village. In addition, she published two guidebooks. One focused on the home of abolitionist John Brown, who lived in nearby North Elba before leaving for his fateful raid on Harper's Ferry, and whose body was brought back there for burial. The other described the offerings of another nearby resort area, Keene Valley.

By 1897, she had gained enough notice that she was invited to open a second studio at



Self Portrait, Katherine McClellan., Courtesy of Smith College Special Collections.

Hotel Champlain, a resort on Lake Champlain. President William McKinley used the hotel as his Summer White House, so she had the opportunity to photograph him. Her dream had always been to establish herself back in Northampton, where she enjoyed her college experience. She purchased a down-

town studio, hired assistants, and became a fixture in the community. Along with the usual wedding and school photos that formed the lifeblood of her trade, she became the Official Photographer of Smith College. Her pictures well documented considerable expansion of the school early during the twentieth century.

Calvin Coolidge served as Northampton's mayor early in his political career. She managed to shoot photos of him during various local events, once capturing him in Native American garb. When celebrities visited the area, she often had the opportunity to have them visit her studio. Thus, she shot portraits of people like Helen Keller and Julia Ward Howe. Her portfolio of Henry James became one of her best-known achievements.

The death of her mother and subsequently increased responsibility for her sister may have pushed Katherine's decision on a move to Florida. Her mother had long spent winters in a cottage on Siesta Key. By 1914, Katherine had purchased farmland and a former grapefruit grove on Sarasota Bay with the idea of building an upscale residential development. In doing so, she was following the lead of her father, whose Highland Park had been Saranac Lake's first "suburban" neighborhood.

Subdividing the land, she boasted the presence of water views from every lot. Instead of

water views from every lot. Instead of a grid pattern, she devised gently curving roads so as to add variety to the landscape. A clubhouse (still standing), tennis courts, and a wharf were part of the plan. House plans from the likes of Stickley Company were offered at no cost to patrons.

A grand opening was celebrated on March 7, 1916. Marketing efforts brought advertising to major southern cities and also through the northeastern United States. The timing wasn't optimal! McClellan Park opened just before the Florida land boom collapse of the 1920's. Despite management changes and special auctions, Katherine and Daisietta never realized the profits they had hoped for. Unsold plots in the development were sold to outside investors in 1923.

The two sisters remained in Sarasota for the rest of their lives. An article in the December 3, 1933, *Sarasota Herald* described Katherine and Daisietta as "two of Sarasota's most interesting personalities." They were depicted as residing in a "shambling-frame structure located at 120 Sixth Street." This home, built-in

1913 and dubbed "The Shelter," was described as a "quaint little homestead.... A comfortable little cottage filled with a wealth of curios and antiques that would strike deep envy to the heart of the most acquisitive collector.... Mystery, atmosphere, color—you find them all in this quaint little homestead inhabited for so many years by the two McClellan sisters, well-known throughout Sarasota and its environs."

Both stayed active in the community, with Katherine gaining a reputation as a sought-after civic group speaker. She never lost her attachment to the north, either. Visits back to the Adirondacks remained routine. Until the year before her death in 1934, she still regularly attended reunions at Smith.

A stroll through McClellan Park reveals changes over a century, but the neighborhood remains pleasant and attractive. Katherine McClellan would be proud of her legacy.

*Richard Frost, splits his time between Sarasota and the Adirondacks, has long written on travel and history of northern New York and the Champlain Valley.*

## Embracing Our Differences Billboard Art Exhibit, *Continued from page 11*

The Embracing Our Differences program continues *Year-Round* in several ways:

**Free Field Trips:** Students can experience the art exhibit and other arts and cultural venues, all virtual experiences this year.

**In the Classroom:** Thousands of students in Sarasota and Manatee County spend time creating art and quotations for submission to the Annual exhibit.

**Embracing Our Differences Reading Day:** EOD Volunteers read mission-aligned books to students in Manatee and Sarasota counties. The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and an anonymous family foundation has helped fund the donation of more than 8,000 books annually for classrooms and students for class reading and then for student's home library.

**Bucket Filler Reading Day:** Volunteers read to students in both Manatee and Sarasota Counties. More than 6,500 books are distributed to children. They learn how easy and rewarding it is to express kindness, appreciation and love by "Filling Buckets".

**Make A-Day-Of-It:** Embracing Our Differences collaborates with area cultural organizations through 'Make A Day Of It'. EOD provides buses to students and teachers to visit any of our partner organizations, e.g., Mote Marine Laboratory, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, the Ringling, Van Wezel, Florida Studio Theatre, West Coast Black Theatre Troupe and more. This school year, field trips are being conducted using the online Zoom app.



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# Elephant Ears

Nancy Porter, Master Gardener Volunteer

Elephant ears" (or variously called "elephant's ears") are tropical-looking plants in varying sizes and shapes. Many turn into towering giants and provide beautiful focal points in a garden. Others can cover large areas and provide a jungle ambiance to the surroundings. However, BEFORE you plant, do your research.

True wild taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) is an invasive plant and should under no circumstances be put in the landscape. It is a very aggressive weed, will displace native plants and cause disruption in the lifecycle of native wildlife. Another commonly named "elephant ear"—the arrowleaf (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*)—is also considered an invasive or problem plant. As always, if you are unsure whether the plant you have is invasive, take a photo or a sample to the Master Gardener Volunteers at your local UF/IFAS Extension office.

On the other hand, giant taro (*Alocasia macrorrhizos*) is one of the many *Alocasias* that are safe to plant. Another good choice is a cultivar called "Hilo Beauty". It has a pattern like camouflage with light yellow and green markings supported by bluish-black stems. It does well in warm and moist conditions. A decorative patio pot is a great place for it to thrive. It will also do well outside in your garden and will grow to a relatively large size.

Given the wide choice of *Alocasias*, you can select for full sun to full shade. They will die back in colder weather but will re-sprout when the weather warms up. Avoid planting *Alocasias* in or near natural waterways where they can become problems.

All "elephant ears" described are in the *caladium* family, so shop for *Alocasias* where you buy *caladiums*.

For more information:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp033>

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/elephant-ears.html> or

<https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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Palm Aire  
Communities Council

# Newsletter

SPRING, 2021

Palm Aire Communities  
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