

ORANGE PARK COUNTRY CLUB/LOCH RANE

Behind the Gate

DECEMBER 2023 MERRY CHRISTMAS VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 12

Christian holiday season traditions

Many adjectives can be used to describe the holiday season, including festive, jolly and religious. Another word that may come to mind is tradition. Traditions factor heavily into holiday celebrations of faith and family.

According to The Public Religion Research Institute's "2020 Census of American Religion," 70 percent of Americans identify as Christian. Data from the Pew Research Center indicates that 55 percent of Canadians identified as Christians in 2018. Millions of Christians will be celebrating Christmas this year, and many of those celebrations will feature cherished traditions. Here are some popular Christian traditions during the holiday season.

Advent calendars and wreaths

The word "Advent" is derived from Latin and means "coming forward." Advent is the four-week period preceding the Christmas celebration. Advent wreaths and calendars typically are part of Christmas in Christian households. Advent calendars are sold in stores or can be made as craft projects. Most of them contain small prizes like chocolate treats or other trinkets behind each date on the calendar. Advent wreaths have four candles (three purple and one pink). One is lit each Sunday of Advent. The evergreen wreath signifies continuous life.

Nativity scene

Another popular religious tradition is setting

up a nativity scene. A nativity scene places the focus on Jesus Christ. One tradition involves moving nativity figurines closer to the manger leading up to Christmas, and placing the infant Jesus in the manger on Christmas Day.

Some churches and towns also put on living nativity scenes, in which adults and children dress up, and together with live animals, depict the manger scene.

Christmas caroling

Caroling has a long history and was originally tied to winter solstice celebrations. Christians started singing carols to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Many of the songs carolers sing are traditional religious hymns. During Advent, carols will herald the coming of Jesus. After Christmas, carols are even more joyous in nature.

The three masses

Midnight Mass is a special celebration that takes place in the late hours of the evening on Christmas Eve. It is the first liturgy of Christmas that begins at midnight. It



originated in 430 AD under Pope Sixtus III in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The popularity of Midnight Mass grew by the 12th century, when the celebration of three Masses on Christmas day was granted to all priests. Midnight Mass is treated as a solemn High Mass, which involves singing and praying by the light of candles. A Mass at dawn is the second Christmas mass, followed by Mass of the Day, which is the midmorning Mass of the Christmas celebration.

Christmas is steeped in tradition. While the secular traditions are well known, Christians also embrace various religious traditions at this time of year.



WELCOME

to the neighborhood

**Michael & Elaine Schmitz
2222 Glencoe Drive**

OPCCOA/LRIA Steering Committee Report

November 18, 2023 / By Randy Rutan

November's meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Kathy Marko, at 5:54 p.m. There was a quorum of committee members present. It was noted that the 2023 budget year to date is at 83% spent overall. Some line items were over budget and others were under budget. It appears that the committee will finish the year just under budget barring any unexpected costs in the final six weeks. Approval was given for the removal of the three damaged pine trees along Loch Rane Blvd. Sodding of some of the bare areas along Loch Rane Blvd. and re-mulching of the plant beds along the Boulevard was completed in November. That plus aaoO Services efforts to clean out dead debris in the plant beds has resulted in significant improvement in appearance of the common areas. A policy for handling damages to "common property" was presented and approved by all present. The next meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2023 at 6 p.m.

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OPCC Board of Directors Meeting

November 21, 2023 / By Bob McKinney

The threat of bad weather and the rush of the holidays reduced the number of attendees for this meeting. However, quality made up for the lack of quantity.

The ARC had another productive meeting. Approved were five paint jobs, one paver project, one roof replacement, one screen enclosure, and one tree removal. As a reminder, any exterior work must be approved by the ARC prior to commencement of work. Although maintenance does not require prior approval, notification to our property manager or the ARC is suggested to avoid confusion with an unapproved project.

Our roads projects are completed for this year, including the sealing and stripping of the parking area at the mailboxes.

The lakes are in much better shape than this time last year. Considerable attention has been paid by our new company.

By the time this issue arrives, we will see if the changes to our gate entry policy for Thanksgiving worked to reduce the large backup experienced in the past. The same plan is in place for Christmas, and we will fine tune as necessary.

Three of the five candidates running for the 2024 Board of Directors made short presentations concerning their run for office. One candidate was under the weather and unable to attend and another was out of town. All the candidates' written application information is

available on our website. Please take time to review the information so you can make an informed decision about the vote at the annual meeting.

There was some initial discussion about the Covenants rewrite that will be undertaken next year. I plan for this to be on the agenda at every Board meeting in 2024. In addition, we plan to hold open meetings that will be devoted to this topic. The first draft will be posted on our website and comments are encouraged. If you don't attend the monthly or special meetings, please contact me for your suggestions or comments. We want the entire process to be transparent with all possible input.

The Grove has expressed a desire to use our pool facilities as part of their amenities offering. There is no action on this, but we wanted to get it in the open, so the rumor mill doesn't get going. There are many questions that must be answered and possibilities that must be considered before we see if this is even a possibility. We have worked hard and expended considerable funds to make the great facility we have a reality, and we won't be giving the ranch away without insuring benefits to OPCC.

Please plan to attend the annual meeting Dec 19 at 6pm at the Advent Lutheran Church just outside our gates. Our new Board members will be announced at the meeting.

Submit Your Stories

Help contribute to your community newsletter!

This newsletter is produced for Loch Rane and Orange Park Country Club. If you'd like to offer content for publication, here's how to get started:

Stories/Photography: Send your articles and/or high-resolution JPEGs to Randy Rutan at randy@randyrutan.com. Articles should be sent as Microsoft Word attachments that are saved

as ".doc" files. Photos should also be sent as attachments not embedded in an email.

The January 2024 Deadline for content: Sunday, December 17, 2023.

About this Newsletter
Publishing/Advertising:
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2023 OPCC Board of Directors

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Publication Policy

The function of the community newsletter, "Behind the Gate" is to serve the entire gated community of Loch Rane and Orange Park Country Club and is a product of Clay Today.

Priority will be given to reporting news and activities of the community and other news and events that directly affect the residents. Second priority will be given to articles of general interest as space permits. Articles and photos must be sent to Randy Rutan at randy@randyrutan.com by the deadline date below. Due to space limitation, all articles are subject to editing.

Letters of opinion must be signed, as well as brief and in good taste. Views expressed are those of the writer and do not express the viewpoint of the publisher, OPCCOA or LRIA.

Acceptance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement or approval of any product or services by the publisher, OPCCOA or LRIA. The publisher reserves the right to refuse advertising that does not meet the standards of the publication.

The publisher of "Behind the Gate" agrees to indemnify and hold harmless OPCCOA and LRIA for any claims asserted against or financial liabilities incurred by them arising from commercial content of this publication or anything contained in any advertising copy, including without limitation any claims of whatever nature asserted by advertisers or potential advertisers.

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Loch Rane Board of Directors Meeting

November 28, 2023 / By Brian Rogers

The November meeting for the Loch Rane Board of Directors was held on the 28th in the Community Building and was sparsely attended by residents in person and on zoom.

Arran Court Empty Lot:

If anyone has a lawn service they recommend that might be interested in maintaining the empty lot on Arran court on a monthly basis, please forward their contact details to the CAM Team or the BOD for us to be able to get additional quotes.

2024 BOD Elections:

All 3 existing BOD members have indicated they will run for the 3 seats up for election in January of 2024 along with two additional residents who have also put their names in the hat to step up and help run the community! Please be on the lookout for the bios of these 5 residents which will be included on the ballot and packet sent to all owners via mail for the election at the Annual Meeting in January!

We would also like to thank Marie Bryan for her service as a member of the BOD for the past few years. Marie is stepping down in January to enjoy retirement with her husband Bobby! This means a vacant seat will be available for one of the 2 runners up in the January regular BOD election to serve out the remainder of Marie's term in 2024.

2024 Budget:

The BOD approved the 2024 budget that includes a 5% increase in dues bringing the annual dues for 2024 to

\$1,394. We apologize for this increase, but it is necessary to keep up with the ever rising costs of just about everything from landscaping to insurance as well as the Giddens Security contract which takes up the largest single portion of our annual budget (and the 5% increase last year didn't even cover that increased cost alone).

A copy of the 2024 annual budget is available on the lochraneonline.com website for all residents to review.

2023 Paving:

The repaving of Glenlyon and Cameron Drive is still scheduled for December 7th & 8th. **PLEASE be sure to avoid parking on the street for any reason during these days.**

The BOD also approved the expenditure of \$1,557 for VIA consulting to visually inspect the paving before, during and after the project is completed! This is to ensure the milling and paving is done as expected and any issues are addressed by the contractor on site!

December BOD meeting:

The December meeting of the BOD will take place on December 28th at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Building. All residents are encouraged to attend!

2023 Loch Rane Board of Directors

Brian Rogers, President
rogersbw@gmail.com

Chuck Bryner, Vice-President
bryner@comcast.net

James Hudgins, Secretary
james.hudgins@hotmail.com

Gary McMahill, Treasurer
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marieandbobby@yahoo.com

John Burke, Member at Large
jrburke81@gmail.com

2023 Steering Committee

Kathy Marko, Chairman

Gary McMahill, Member

Chuck Bryner, Member

Randy Rutan, Member

Daniel Butler, Member

The Steering Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the community building. The purpose of the committee is to oversee issues of joint interest in the common areas of Loch Rane and OPCC. Homeowners of both communities are invited to attend.



SAVE THE DATES!

COOKIES WITH SANTA

Saturday, December 9 from 3 – 5 p.m. at the Cabana

Santa is looking forward to meeting the boys and girls in Loch Rane and OPCC. Bring the kids and enjoy a visit with Santa. It will be an ideal photo opportunity. We'll have cookies and music. Feel free to bring your own food and beverages (no glass containers) and make an afternoon of it. Ho! Ho! Ho!

LOCH RANE/OPCC LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

Wednesday, December 20 at 11:30 a.m. at the Club Continental

The December luncheon is a holiday "Giving" event. The recipient of this generosity is Kids 1st, an organization which helps young people who have aged out of foster care. The Ladies are asked to donate gift cards from McDonald's, Dairy Queen, Burger King or Dollar Tree. These cards help assist these young people to get something to eat or buy needed personal items. The Ladies are also to bring a "White Elephant", an unused regifted item that will be raffled off after lunch. The item can be placed in a gift bag or wrapped and will be chosen by the raffle winner. Last year we had over 70 items, thanks to hostess, Barbara Mancini, shopping all year for these unique gifts. This luncheon is our most popular. So please join us for this fun event! Contact Frances Smith at 904-579-3008 or email fksmith@comcast.net for more information.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

RECYCLE RIGHT


Residents are required to have 2 separate bins for recycles: one is only for cardboard and paper and the other is only for plastic, metal or glass containers. Do not put recyclables in plastic bags. You can visit this site for more information about curbside recycling and to request bins if you need them.

claycountygov.com/community/garbage-and-recycling

USE GATE KEY PLUS

Gate Key Plus is an internet-based resident and guest management system for gated communities. It provides you with the ability to update your household's information, manage your guests and

create guest arrival notifications and reports. Once entered your information is immediately available to the Gate House. You can access your account by visiting: www.GateKeyPlusResident.com. You will need to enter your username and password which was created by the Gate staff. If you do not know your login and password please contact the Gate House. The user manual for Gate Key Plus is available on the OPCC website. Go to www.opcc.info and then select the Neighborhood page. Using Gate Key makes the operations at the gate work much more efficiently.



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