

ORANGE PARK COUNTRY CLUB/LOCH RANE

Behind the Gate

MARCH 2024 HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 3

THE ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB

By Norma Layton

Today's Quiz.....

- #1 What was the first local civic organization to be registered in Orange Park?
- #2 What local organization established and ran the town library for 50 years?
- #3 What local organization volunteered with the Red Cross in both World Wars?

The answer to all three questions is **THE ORANGE PARK WOMAN'S CLUB!** Yes, these are just a few of the significant facts about the amazing and very active organization of dynamic, determined, and delightful ladies that has served the Orange Park community for over 113 years. Beginning in 1910 with eight like-minded ladies, Mary C. Berry founded the Orange Park Woman's Club (OPWC) as a means for the winter residents to aid the community they had come to love. The founding members began by helping a local school: cleaning the schoolyard, erecting fencing, presenting a flag, and providing an individual drinking cup to each child. Next, the club established a library for the community, which they ran for 50 years, until the state of Florida



Lucy & Jerry Pellegrini

centralized the library system. The women continued helping the community by picking up litter, placing waste baskets around town, and planting flowering trees.

The Orange Park Woman's Club joined the **General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC)** and **GFWC Florida** in 1911. As part of the GFWC, Orange Park Woman's Club joined forces with women throughout the country, sharing ideas and gaining strength to benefit local towns and those in need. And so began the legacy of the volunteer spirit exhibited by hundreds of women throughout the last century – all as an expression of love and support for our community of Orange Park.

Meeting in the historic "Blue Lady on Kingsley" at 130 Kingsley Avenue, the current membership of over 100 continues to provide support to greater Orange Park. OPWC follows the guidelines of GFWC by focusing on five specific areas of "Community Service Programs": *Arts & Culture, Civic Engagement & Outreach, Education & Libraries, Environment, and Health & Wellness*. The programs and activities of the club center on these topic areas providing everything from new friends to exciting social events and personal development opportunities. Members are committed to enhancing the Orange Park community through the various community service programs and events.

Club members recently held their 2nd Annual Charity Gala hosted at The Club Continental. With a "Roarin' 20's" theme, the ladies orchestrated a night to remember with entertainment by The Clay County Community Jazz Band, food stations for sampling signature dishes of six different local restaurants, and an amazing array of silent auction items. The success of the evening will be shared with other local nonprofit organizations expressing needs within our community.



Lynn & John Johnson

A springtime activity is planned for Mother's Day weekend, Saturday, May 11. An old-fashioned *Mother-Daughter Tea* will be held from 2-4 PM in the OPWC clubhouse with tickets

available at \$10 each. Mothers, daughters, granddaughters, sisters and friends are encouraged to don a hat, dress-up and forget your cares for an afternoon of tea, scones, finger sandwiches and sweet treats. Tickets are available online at: <https://www.orangeparkwomansclub.com/events/mother-daughter-tea>

More information about this group of "dynamic, determined and delightful" ladies is available at the website noted above. Membership is open year-round and easy to join online or just drop in for a visit. In addition, the historic clubhouse is a popular venue for weddings, receptions, parties, and other special events. There is always something happening at the Orange Park Woman's Club!



Helena Karnani & Norma Layton



OPCCOA/LRIA Steering Committee Report

February 22, 2024 / by Randy Rutan

February's meeting was called to order at 6 pm by Daniel Butler. All of the committee members were present and there was a quorum.

The Joint Landscape Committee has received compliments on the winter flowers. The Crepe Myrtles have been trimmed. AaoO Landscape Services will pull out the puny Dwarf Bottlebrush bushes in the center island outside the Gate. There was a bad leak in a 4" pipe at the well which has been repaired. The cost was \$625. AaoO will mow the 2 islands outside the Gate that are on County property. In the next 2 weeks, the Fakahatchee grass toward the back end of the Boulevard will be trimmed back and the dead ones removed. Disturbingly, it has been noted that unsupervised young children have been seen in the pond area, going through the culvert into the gabion which is the caged, rock area of the run-off stream.

Members of the **Roads Committee** will be installing blue reflectors at each of the fire hydrant locations throughout Loch Rane. Loch Rane is paying for the reflectors.

The Gate staff have asked that residents of both communities be encouraged to review and update their permanent guest lists.

The Steering Committee is currently reviewing some **maintenance issues at the gatehouse** due to its age. The plumbing repairs that need to be done will require some concrete and tile be torn out. The committee received 5 bids to replace the gatehouse roof ranging in price from \$7,900 - \$13,500. Some bids were less detailed than others. The committee is trying to get more information before making a decision. Both of these projects are not included in the 2024 budget.

Cintas completed its **annual inspection of the fire extinguisher** and everything was fine.

The next meeting will be March 21, 2024 at 6 p.m. at the Community Building.

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OPCC Board of Directors Meeting

February 20, 2024 / By Bob McKinney

Attendance was down this month, but business went on as required.

Prior to the Board meeting, the ARC held their monthly meeting. It was very busy for them. They approved 4 roofs, 1 trim paint, 1 exterior paint, 1 fence, 1 paver installation, 1 front door replacement, and 1 tree removal. As the weather will continue to improve over the next weeks, the requests for home improvement projects will increase. While any exterior work requires prior approval, some projects are considered maintenance. It is always wise to contact the ARC or our property manager to make sure the work is approved/noted.

Work on the repair to the spillway on the hole 2 area continues to move forward. It will not be a minor project, but we are hopeful this will solve the drainage problem.

Considerable work at the community building was approved. Duct work has been completed. Carpet and window cleaning will be done soon.

Details about necessary work at the gatehouse were discussed. The work will be extensive and expensive. Major plumbing, tile work and roof replacement are on the list. Some of the work may be moved to next year.

There will be a separate article in this issue concerning the Grove facilities. Work on the pickleball courts will soon be underway.

The pool repairs are underway, and we are attempting to address Health Dept concerns about several issues. A defective pump is being replaced under warranty. The opening of the pool should be on schedule.

There was considerable discussion about the updates to the new covenants. Please email/ phone Tom Mackin about any questions/ concerns you may have. The old and proposed new covenants are on our website. We are tackling this project in small pieces to make corrections as quickly as possible. We will hold a community meeting to discuss the proposed covenants prior to the official vote but hope to have addressed concerns prior to that meeting.

CCSO continues to perform a nightly patrol of the entire community and issuing warnings to vehicles parked on the street overnight.

We announced a need for residents to update their GateKey entries to insure they are correct and do not include individuals/businesses no longer needed.

The next meeting, which will include review and discussion of Article V of the new covenants, will be held March 19, 2024.

2024 OPCC Board of Directors

Tom Mackin, President
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Mark Blakewood, Vice-President
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Fred Scott, Treasurer
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Bob McKinney, Member at Large
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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.

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 April 2024 Deadline for content: Sunday, March 17, 2024.

About this Newsletter
Publishing/Advertising:
Brittany@claytodayonline.com

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Riverside | Mandarin | Middleburg**



Loch Rane Board of Directors Meeting

By Brian Rogers

The February meeting of the Loch Rane BOD was held on 2/26/24 and was sparsely attended by residents. Unfortunately starting the year off on a poor note is the report that more than 50 owners have yet to pay any annual dues for 2024. Please note that at least half of the annual dues were due in January. The Association paid over \$1,500 dollars this month alone to mail out late fee and collection notices. Please reach out to the CAM Team to work out a payment plan, if necessary, to avoid further penalties and or being turned over to the Association attorney.

2024 Road Projects:

The Devonshire depression still remains the focus for road related infrastructure repairs as the board seeks out bids to excavate, repair, and repave that section of the road. We anticipate this cost to be well into the 6 figure range given previous quotes for JUST repaving/resurfacing and this will require significant digging/equipment on top of all that.

2024 Storm Drains:

For the past few years our focus has been on relining storm drains that run directly under roads. The focus will now shift to the remaining pipes that were previously inspected and labeled as "critical" or "C rated" indicating significant damage to either the pipes themselves or the seals that connect the joints together but run either alongside roads in residents yards or within easements and drainage swales. While these have no traffic driving on top of them due to their locations, their condition/rating based on the visual inspections now puts them at the top of the list in our priority queue. We will begin seeking quotes on 2024 relining prices to determine how much we are able to accomplish in 2024 based on these quotes as well as the quote for the Devonshire road repair project mentioned above.

Cameron Retention Pond:

Multiple board members met with the gentleman who performed the repairs on the Arran Court pond to see if he could work his magic again on another of our significant drainage is-

ssues as we appear to be in for a VERY long struggle to redesign/repair the pond through proper channels (civil engineers and SJWMD). Based on previous surveys the ditch that carries all the water from this pond is well above the intended resting level of the pond itself, and at the bare minimum will require excavation of a significant distance to even allow for a proper inspection of the weir itself to determine its condition (it is completely covered by water/silt). We have anticipated that this project will likely be a very large expense for the community, but are hoping as with the other pond a manageable but temporary solution can be arranged until the final and permanent solution can be designed, approved, and carried out on a future date.

Fire Hydrant Reflectors:

Huge thanks to LRIA VP Chuck Bryner as well as OPCC President Tom Mackin for their manual efforts to place blue fire hydrant reflectors on all Loch Rane side streets. It is appreciated!

Special Assessment 2024:

As we begin to get estimates for road repaving and storm drain relining for 2024, our overall project todo list may be getting smaller, but costs seem to be outpacing our efforts due to inflation across the board. The BOD plans to hold a meeting on April 2nd in the Community Building to discuss and vote on another Special Assessment for this year just like we have had to do the past few years.

Please be on the lookout for the mailer announcing this meeting and make a point to attend if you wish to both share your opinion and input on these projects and or assessments, or have your questions answered as to why we are proposing it again in 2024.

The next monthly meeting of the BOD will take place on 3/26/24 at 6:30 pm in the Community Building. All residents are invited to attend.

2024 Loch Rane Board of Directors

Brian Rogers, President
rogersbw@gmail.com

Chuck Bryner, Vice-President
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James Hudgins, Secretary
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Kathryn Marko, Member at Large
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Sonya Kirk, Member at Large
addedrevenue12@gmail.com

Charles Honaker, Member at Large
wade247@yahoo.com

2024 Steering Committee

Daniel Butler, Chairman

Randy Rutan, Secretary

Jerry Deans, Member

Kathy Marko, Member

Gary McMahill, 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.



DAY TRIPS FROM ORANGE PARK

By Karen Kircher

Are you looking for things to do as the weather warms up in our part of the Park? How about taking a great day trip to see something you may have missed in the past? One website has a list of destinations. Try out: <https://withinhours.com/day-trips-near-orange-park-fl>

You can pick the general direction you want to travel. How about going North. The website lists the following locations:

Brunswick, GA
Mrs. Wilkes Dining Room
Forsyth Park
Savannah, GA
Hilton Head Island
Tybee Island

I recognized most of these points of interest, except for "Mrs. Wilkes Dining Room."

This is located at 107 W. Jones St, Savannah, GA. From reviews, this is a popular restaurant that offers Southern style food at a reasonable price. Who was Mrs. Wilkes? In 1943, a young Sema Wilkes took over a boardinghouse in historic downtown Savannah. Her goal was modest: to make a living by offering comfortable lodging and home-style Southern cooking served family style in the downstairs dining room. Mrs. Wilkes picked up where the previous proprietor left off, cultivating relationships with nearby farmers who dug sweet potatoes for her in the fall and shelled whippoorwill peas in the summer. For more information: <http://mrswilkes.com/>

This is a great way to find something new. I know I'm looking forward to a trip to Savannah soon.

Senior Discounts in Florida

There are many, many restaurants in Florida that offer discounts to Seniors, varying in ages from 50+. Some restaurants you probably already know about. What about others? It is always good to ask, but if you know that there is a discount, it is easier to ask for the discount.

Here is a website that may assist: <https://www.seniorcitizendiscountlist.org> After you click on this website, scroll down to click on Florida or any state you wish. It will come up with a list of possible discounts. Most entries will state you need to check with the local restaurant. Just ask. It is worth the question.

In addition to restaurants, the list may also include retail stores.

Pot of Gold? It's your house. Let's talk.

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NEWS FROM
THE GROVE

The Grove Team has selected an architect for the clubhouse remodel and is just waiting on final plans before construction begins inside of the clubhouse. Work on the exterior of the clubhouse has already begun. They have hired a landscape architect to design the new grounds. They have already broken ground on the pickleball area. The fitness center will begin construction in March with a goal of completion in 120 days once work starts. They will be utilizing the back 9 of the golf course to construct a championship disc golf course that will ultimately be an extra activity for being a member of the Grove. It's frisbee golf. This sport has a huge following locally. It doesn't need irrigation and has a low impact on the land. They want to get some activity on the property as soon as possible and this will be one way they can do that. They will let residents play for free until they are officially open for business. The front 9 will remain in play to potentially return to a golf course at some point in the future depending on multiple factors.



**A NOTICE FROM THE OPCC
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

There is going to be a lot of construction going on at the club house and on the golf course. There is work being done on the exterior and the interior of the clubhouse. The pickle ball courts will be constructed and existing fencing removed. There will be work done on one of the out buildings to turn it into a fitness center. Repairs will be made to some of the bridges and more. There will be lots of vehicles and equipment and workers onsite. The area will not be safe for visitors. **The Grove will be putting NO TRESPASSING signs on the property.** For your safety we ask that you stay off the property until further notice. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

**A NOTICE FROM THE OPCC
PROPERTY MANAGER,
KAREN GOWEN**

For any residents with palms in your yards, this is the time of year to see if they need pruning. In regard to yard waste, remember that it is not to be put out until the Monday evening before the Tuesday pickup. This includes yard waste from landscapers and yard maintenance crews.



THINGS TO DO IN CLAY COUNTY THIS MONTH

www.exploreclay.com

- Mar 2 - 3** 8th Annual Strawberry Fest at Clay County Fairgrounds
www.claycountyfest.com
- Mar 3 & 17** Orange Park's Farmers Market at City Hall
(NOTE: March dates may be preempted by other events)
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Mar 8 – 17** "Pride and Prejudice" at The Island Theater, 7:30 pm
www.theislandtheater.com
- Mar 9** Starship Featuring Mickey Thomas at Thrasher-Horne Center, 7:30 pm
<https://thcenter.org>
- Mar 11 – 16** Spotlight Kids: "Seussical the Musical TYA" (Childrens' Show) at Spotlight Center, 1809 East West Pkwy, Fleming Island, Times vary.
www.spotlighteventscenter.com
- Mar 15** Almost ABBA - #1 Tribute to ABBA at Thrasher-Horne Center, 7:30 pm
<https://thcenter.org>
- Mar 15** Scottish Highlands Painting Class (adults) in Green Cove Springs, 408 Walnut Street, 6:00 pm
www.welcometotheartroom.com
- Mar 16** 3rd Saturday Market in the Park, in front of City Hall, Green Cove Springs, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.
www.greencovesprings.com
- Mar 16** Cute as a Bunny Hop: special dance off, egg hunts and more! JC Penney, Easter Bunny's Garden, OP Mall, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Mar 16** The Rat Pack – an entertaining night, Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Drive, Orange Park, 7:30 p.m. <https://thcenter.org>
- Mar 23** Old Fashioned Farm Day, Town of Penney Farms, Kohler Park, 4210 Clark Avenue, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Mar 29** World Ballet Series: Swan Lake, Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Drive, Orange Park, 7:00 p.m.
<https://thcenter.org>
- Mar 30** Florida Gravel Grinder Cycling Event, Jennings State Forest, 24 Live Oak Lane, Middleburg, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. <https://goneriding.com/fgg-d/>



MASTER GARDENER SERIES

HOW TO ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES, BIRDS AND BEES TO YOUR GARDEN

at the Orange Park Library

March 26 at 6 p.m.

Learn how to attract pollinators to your outdoor space.

PRESENTED BY A MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER, IN COOPERATION WITH THE IFAS/UF CLAY COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE.

UF IFAS Extension
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FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

Library.ClayCountyGov.com 904-278-3654

CLAY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



SAVE THESE DATES

Tuesdays & Thursdays **EXERCISE CLASS**
at the cabana from 9 – 10

3/15 **FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY**
from 5 – 7:30 at the pool parking lot

3/20 **LOCH RANE/OPCC LADIES LUNCH BUNCH**
11:30 at The Club Continental

The March luncheon will be a High Tea event. There will be a speaker who will tell us all about High Tea. Ladies are encouraged to wear hats, carry gloves, a purse or pocketbook and dress up for this special occasion. For more information email or call Frances Smith, fksmith63@comcast.net or 904-579-3008

Photos attached are from the February luncheon.

3/23 **NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL**

7 – 9 at the cabana

BYOB (no glass containers) and snacks to share. Enjoy music and conversation with neighbors.

3/29 **FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY**

5 – 7:30 AT THE POOL PARKING LOT

Plan ahead for the **Community Garage Sale**
Saturday, May 4. More details to come.





From: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/florida-friendly-landscaping/>

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™

HELPING FLORIDA ONE YARD AT A TIME

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program was designed to help residents and business owners create and maintain beautiful yards using research-based, environmentally-sustainable landscaping practices. This program provides training opportunities and educational services that teach homeowners, landscaping professionals, and green industries how to water efficiently, fertilize appropriately, manage yard pests responsibly, and more.

For more information, contact your county Extension office at <http://clay.ifas.ufl.edu/> or visit the Florida-Friendly Landscaping website at <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/florida-friendly-landscaping/>

PRINCIPLES

Proper implementation of the nine FFL principles in your yard will protect the natural environment around us for future generations to enjoy.

1. Right plant, right place
2. Water efficiently
3. Fertilize appropriately
4. Mulch
5. Attract wildlife responsibly
6. Manage yard pests responsibly
7. Recycle yard waste
8. Reduce stormwater runoff
9. Protect the waterfront

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you are interested in volunteering and your passion is gardening, you might be interested in the Master Gardener Program. It is offered every year. Last year applications were due by April 15. Although information has not yet been posted for this year, keep an eye on this website for additional information. <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/clayco/>

Check out the Clay Extension office at Clay@ifas.ufl.edu for additional information about training opportunities and information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN ORANGE PARK

Want to make a difference and volunteer your time for a worthwhile cause?

Here is a website that you can check out to see if they have some ideas that may interest you. <https://www.volunteermatch.org/search/index.jsp?l=Orange+Park%2C+FL+32073%2C+USA&v=true> This website is set for Orange Park and Fleming Island, but you can change the location to suit your needs.

A quick look showed some very interesting opportunities:

1. Florida Cancer Specialist Foundation – Patient Support Volunteer, Fleming Island
2. Challenge Enterprises of North Florida, Inc. - Photographer Volunteer, Orange Park
3. Once a Month Home Cleaning for a Foster/Adoptive Family – Jacksonville, FL
4. Waste Not Want Not, Inc. – Volunteer Sort Center Helpers, Orange Park
5. Haven Hospice – Administrative Support Volunteers – Jacksonville, FL

These are just a few of the many opportunities to volunteer in our local area.



WELCOME
to the neighborhood

<p>Ted & Rosemarie Angelo 2706 Country Club Blvd.</p> <p>Bonnie Holliday 517 Berkshire Court</p> <p>Nick Koster 600 Aberdeen Court</p>	<p>Bruno & Virginia Alonso Tokarz 2592 Country Club Blvd.</p> <p>Tatjana Vargas 2624 Country Club Blvd.</p>
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