

Spring activities for families to enjoy together



the spring, meaning a garden will be in peak form. Visitors can meander through rows of rose bushes or tour the labyrinth of trimmed hedges. Beautiful, flowering cherry trees, with their delicate pink or white petals, also are sights to behold in spring.

Prepare a home garden
Visiting a garden is one thing, creating one at

home is another. In addition to planning a vegetable garden to enjoy tasty pickings throughout summer, you can devote some property to flowers that will attract wildlife. Check with a garden center about which flowers and plants attract butterflies and other beneficial insects. Many garden centers sell butterfly and hummingbird mixes to attract wildlife.

Go animal watching
Flowers are not the only thing on display come the spring. Many animals, including birds, are born this time of year. Baby animals are not only adorable, they can be entertaining to watch grow. Families can spend time viewing the animals that visit their yards or surrounding parks, being

careful to keep their distance. Adults may be quite protective of their young, so it's better to watch from the lens of a camera or with binoculars. Always resist the urge to help a baby animal who seems like it was abandoned. The parent may be a short distance away gathering food or trying to avoid drawing attention to the young to deter predators.

Get out on the water

A bright, warm day is an ideal time to enjoy the open water. Spring is a season when many marinas reopen and avid boaters put their vessels back into the water. You also can venture into streams or lakes aboard kayaks or canoes, getting exercise and seeing the scenery in the process. Bring a fishing pole along and cast it into the water for a few hours of recreation.

Make wind chimes

Enhance the garden or decor around the home by making wind chimes or other percussion items that can create beautiful music when spring breezes blow. Commercially available kits are sold, but wind chimes also can be made from items like bamboo or even strung shells.

These are just a few family-friendly activities to enjoy this spring.

Spring is one of the most popular seasons of the year. After several months of chilly temperatures in many regions, spring provides a welcome reprieve from the cold.

Moderate temperatures makes it much more comfortable and inviting to venture outdoors, particularly for families with children who might not adapt to the cold as well as adults. The following are some family-friendly activities that make the most of spring renewal.

Visit botanic gardens

If there's a botanical garden nearby, a visit in spring is a great time to soak in the beauty of nature. That's because an abundance of flowers bloom during



OPCCOA/LRIA Steering Committee Report

March 21, 2024/ by Randy Rutan

The March meeting was called to order at 6 pm by Chairman, Daniel Butler. There was a quorum. The February Minutes and Financials were approved.

There was no official report from the Landscape Committee, but we were advised that the committee is getting a quote to fix grass in a median on Loch Rane Blvd, that was run over by a vehicle.

There was also no official report from the Roads Committee but we were advised that there is an issue with the piping at Edinburgh under Loch Rane Blvd. The structure there is not currently functional and is allowing sediment to flow into the Loch Rane pond discharge, causing it to back up and not provide the storage capacity to prevent flooding. Engineered Lining Systems (ELS) will be camera surveying the area.

Plumbing Repairs at Gatehouse

Lance Maxwell Plumbing began work on Tuesday March 19, 2024 and it was completed on Wednesday March 20, 2024. The cracked sewer piping underground was replaced. Tile was removed in the bathroom and concrete installed. A spacer was added between the concrete floor and the new toilet so that new tile flooring can be added at a later time. The kitchen plumbing was updated. The total cost was \$2,945.00. A porta potty had to be provided for the two days at an additional charge.

Gatehouse Roof Replacement

Universal Roof & Contracting was selected to do the job for a cost of \$10,405.41 and the contract has been signed. A deposit of \$3,400 has been paid. Materials have been ordered and they have applied for the Building Permit. We should be contacted by the production department soon and provided the start date.

Procedures for Recouping Costs for Damages to Common Property

The committee approved a document outlining the procedures to be followed when damage is done to common property, like the entry gates, which will aid in the Associations' abilities to recoup the expenses from the responsible party.

Replacement of Battery Backup Systems for Gatehouse Computers

New backup systems for the computers at the Gatehouse have been installed. Some outdated wiring will also be fixed.

Reflectors Marking Fire Hydrants Along Loch Rane Blvd.

Some of the recently installed reflectors have popped off and will be fixed.

The next meeting will be April 18, 2024 at 6 p.m.

Day Trips from Orange Park

By Karen Kircher

April. What a perfect time for travel and sight-seeing in Florida! Are you in the mood to check out places South of Orange Park? For some great ideas on destinations, go to: <https://withinhours.com/day-trips-near-orange-park-fl>

Going South, how about:

- Winter Park, Florida
- Orlando
- Universal Studios
- Epcot
- Walt Disney World Resort
- Ybor City
- Tampa
- Ocala

I recognize most of these points of interest. Many of these destinations may be very familiar to you. However, I think there is more to these locations than what we know. How about **Winter Park, FL**? Take the Winter Park chain of lakes boat tour, have lunch on Park Avenue at an outdoor café, do some shopping in quaint stores, and then visit the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art to see their extensive Tiffany window and glass pieces.

Have you been to Ybor City near Tampa? **Ybor City** is the original Miami, or, better put, the original Cuban community here in the United States. There's music, great food, and the home of the historic cigar factory brought here from Cuba. You'll learn more from a lunch menu than you did taking American History. See the wild chickens. Visit museums. Tour a casita (small immigrant home from the early 1900s).

What about a trip to **Ocala**? Silver Springs is nearby. Take a tour on a Glass Bottom Boat or Kayak. Have you been to the Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing? Have you wanted to tour a horse farm? How about a "Get Behind the Gates" tour for an insider look at Ocala's magnificent farms?

Travel is a great way to find something new. I know I'm looking forward to a trip to South very soon.



OPCC Board of Directors Meeting

March 19, 2024 / By Bob McKinney

Attendance was a bit light this month, but business went as listed on the agenda. Should you wish to have a topic/concern placed on the agenda, please notify Tom Mackin so that it can be considered. Agendas are posted online several days before the meeting.

The ARC approved 2 paint projects, 2 tree removals, 1 roof project, 1 paver project, and 1 exterior modification (front door change). Getting approval prior to commencement of work (as required) saves the homeowner unnecessary expense and stress.

The Roads Committee will be investigating a possible drain collapse and looking at additional possible drainage concerns. When you talk about drains collapsing or similar drainage problems, know we are generally talking big dollars. This is why we ask every homeowner to keep drains in front of their property or even on your block or two clear of leaves that are falling like crazy now. Clogged drains result in expenses to clear them and may result in water backup into our yards. If we each do our part, future problems can be largely avoided.

Many of our landscape plants are reaching the end of their life and replacements will be needed (\$\$\$).

Our gatehouse has several major issues that must be addressed and corrected. Complete new plumbing including a faulty main drain, new roof and electrical problems again reveal big ticket repairs. This is what happens when a 30-year-old building is not maintained earlier rather than later. The Steering Committee is discussing the financial

requirements and whether all the work can be completed this year, or some pushed to next year. Everyone entering or leaving has seen the porta potty at the gate and work has been authorized to make the necessary repairs to get rid of that eyesore.

No update was provided about The Grove, but we can all see work underway. The old cart barn (future fitness center) and the pickleball courts are being constructed now as well as work on the clubhouse.

The work required at the pool was more extensive than planned, but we still believe the pools will be ready by the time the water gets warm enough to enjoy.

Article V of our covenants was reviewed but just prior to the meeting we received a new update from our attorney which will require Board review. Passage of the updated covenants has high priority this year. Any questions/suggestions should be directed to Tom Mackin who will coordinate our response. Your input is not limited to whatever Article we are currently reviewing. Your comments can cover any of the individual Articles. We want a thorough review with residents' input. I would hope that by the time we have a community meeting after the individual Articles have been reviewed and updated that we have addressed everyone's concerns and pave the way for a positive approval.

The next monthly meeting will be held at 6 pm April 9 at the Community Building.

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 May 2024 Deadline for content: Sunday, April 21, 2024.

About this Newsletter
Publishing/Advertising:
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2024 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

By Brian Rogers

The March 2024 meeting of the LRIA Board of Directors was held on March 26 and was sparsely attended by residents.

Gatehouse Roof Repair:

The roof on the gatehouse building is tentatively scheduled to be replaced in early April! While this work is being performed the visitor lane will need to be blocked for the workers safety and all residents and guests will be entering the community via the resident lane. Please be mindful of the traffic and provide an extra bit of patience while the work is being completed! Thank you!

Special Assessment 2024:

The meeting for this year's special assessment discussion/vote will be held on April 2nd 2024 at 7 p.m. in the Community Building. A mailer was sent out to all residents to announce this meeting so if you have questions or feedback on our long-term infrastructure repair projects for our roads and underground stormwater drains, please make a point to attend. Every homeowner will be given time to speak and or ask questions!

Devonshire Repairs:

It has been challenging to get quotes to both excavate and repair the Devonshire depression as well as repave the road itself with many companies not wanting to bid for both jobs vs having a separate contractor repair the depression, and then coming later to repave it. Thankfully the initial quote from Duval Asphalt came in well under expectations but still over 6 figures at \$111,000. We are awaiting two additional quotes before we will choose a vendor to complete the work. This will take up a significant chunk of the 2024 special assessment funds!

Cameron Retention Pond:

Unfortunately, the contractor who was able to enact an inexpensive repair on the Arran Ct pond was not able to come up with a similar solution for the Cameron pond. Thankfully new BOD member, Charles Honaker, has been in contact with another contractor who has provided a number of possible solutions to address that pond's current high-water level. We hope to have bids on these solutions soon as they will also likely take up a hefty portion of the 2024 special assessment funds. We have planned for a very expensive long-term cost involved with the repair of this pond, so hopefully these solutions provide some immediate relief while we continue to work with civil engineering firm, Connelly and Wicker, to design (and get approved) a long-term solution.

Mailbox/Street sign pressure washing:

The BOD has agreed to reach out and get quotes from vendors to pressure wash the mailboxes and mailbox areas as well as the street signs along the boulevard.

Country Club Property Update:

We have had no official update from the new owners of the club property, but work is clearly being done on the property as you can see repairs to the exterior of the clubhouse, the tennis courts and frisbee golf "goals" have begun to pop up on some of the holes on the course. As always, we will pass along any pertinent information to all residents when it is provided to us!

The next BOD meeting is on April 2nd at 7 p.m. in the Community Building to discuss the 2024 special assessment. The next regular monthly meeting of the BOD will be held on April 23 at 6:30 p.m. All residents are invited to attend.

2024 Loch Rane Board of Directors

Brian Rogers, President
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2024 Steering Committee

Daniel Butler, Chairman

Randy Rutan, Secretary

Jerry Deans, Member

Kathy Marko, Member

Gary McMahonill, 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.



GREAT LOCAL PLACES TO DONATE YOUR "EXTRA" ITEMS *By Norma Layton*

Spring cleaning? Downsizing? Post-Garage Sale? Here is a list of many organizations in the Clay County community that will appreciate your donations:

Miriam's Basket, Inc.: An all-volunteer nonprofit that provides clothing to children in crisis via referral process with social service agencies. In need of NEW or PRISTINE USED clothing for the current season, new tennis shoes, as **outlined on their website** – www.MiriamsBasket.org Call 904-477-1975 OR 904-891-2050 to arrange drop off of donations at the Blanding Blvd. "Basket".

The Clothes Closet and Food Pantry of Orange Park: An all-volunteer nonprofit that provides emergency assistance to families including food, clothing, and household goods. Pick up of large furniture can be arranged by calling (904) 264-5239. Details at website www.ccfpop.org

OP Outfitters at Orange Park High School: This service provides free clothing and basic essentials such as toiletries and food items to students in need. Supervised by social workers and staff, this is a great place to share new or gently used clothing items suitable for male and female teens in great need. School supplies are also needed throughout the year. Donations can be made during school hours at 2300 Kingsley Avenue. Call 904-336-8675 for more information.

BASCA Bargain Boutique: A one-of-a-kind thrift store to benefit the programs

and services of BASCA, Inc. ~ *Building Abilities for Special Children and Adults*. Unique treasures, art work, clothing, books, furniture, knickknacks, toys and more are accepted. More info at www.bascainc.org/boutique or call 904-541-1742

Orange Park Attic Resale Store – Haven Hospice: Located at 821 Blanding Blvd. OP. Sales support patients and families as well as community members served by their programs. Call to arrange for pick-up: 904-215-7130. The FB page and website offers details on acceptable donations. <https://www.facebook.com/HavenAtticOP/>

Teen Challenge SuperThrift: Located at 868 Blanding Blvd. Ste.101B OP (next to Ollies Bargain Center) Call 904-375-9023 for information and to arrange pick up of large items. More details at www.teenchallengesuperthrift.cc

Clay County Habitat for Humanity ReStore: Specializes in new and gently used furniture and appliances as well as other household items. If you are remodeling and have good usable fixtures, etc. to share – this is the place! Donate those items by calling (904) 282-7590 ext. 205 Pick-up is available. Website: www.clayhabitat.org.

Penney Retirement Community Resale Shop: Sales from this thrift shop benefit the Resident Aide Fund of Penney Retirement Community

Spring into action and Call Today!

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providing financial assistance in times of need as well as support for other programs within the community. Donations of household goods, clothing, furniture, etc. are accepted at the shop at 3511 Caroline Blvd., Penney Farms on Wednesday mornings between 9-11 AM. Pickups of large items can be arranged by calling 904-529-9554.

Mobility Worldwide (Formerly known as P.E.T.): This program builds wheelchair carts that are sent throughout the world to aide persons who have lost their lower limb mobility. The carts are provided free of charge to the recipients and sent along with a "toolbox" for assembly and repairs. SHOEBOXES are needed to be utilized as the toolbox. Located on the campus of Penney Retirement Community in Penney Farms, information is online at www.mobilityworldwide.org. Call Loch Rane resident Norma Layton @ 904-891-2050 to donate shoeboxes.

Sensible Recycling: This veteran-owned business offers FREE recycling of all things electronic! Highly rated and very thorough, responsible recycling to prevent electronics being dumped in our landfills causing contamination. Located in Jacksonville at 7018 A.C.Skinner Parkway Suite 200; 32256. For complete details visit the website: www.sensiblerecycling.com or call 904-253-3482.

ALSO note:

Many churches in the area have ministries that create quilts, shawls, lap robes, walker totes and other usable items for nursing homes, hospitals or other facilities. Cotton fabrics and yarn are often welcome donations.

Goodwill accepts clean, torn clothing that can be recycled or sold as rags. (In addition to ALL the things they accept)

Ronald McDonald House in Jacksonville accepts donations of aluminum pop-tops (from sodas, soup cans, veggie cans, etc.) to help fund their needs. They also need donations of wrapped plastic-ware and paper goods. Website: www.rmhcjacksonville.org

DON'T THROW IT AWAY - GIVE IT AWAY

REDUCE - REUSE - REPURPOSE

A NOTICE FROM THE OPCC PROPERTY MANAGER, KAREN GOWEN

Residents are reminded that all contractors need to stop work for the day at 7 p.m. Also, now is the time to look at getting palm trees trimmed before the storm season starts. Management will be looking at the trees during her drive-throughs of the neighborhood this month.

KUDOS go to....

Kintesh Patel for installing new backup drives at the gatehouse.

Jerry Deans for emptying the overflowing garbage cans at the playground.

Bill Englebrecht, John Chandler, Corey Scott and Brian Hague, the Pool Team, for checking pool chemicals 4 days a week.

Chuck Bryner and Tom Mackin for installing reflectors at the fire hydrants in Loch Rane.





THINGS TO DO IN CLAY COUNTY THIS MONTH

www.exploreclay.com

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| Apr 1 - 2 | Moccasin Slough Nature Hike, Moccasin Slough Park, 4393 Raggedy Point Rd, Fleming Island, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Click on link to register for this event.
www.claycountygov.com/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/18846/1613 | Apr 20 | 3 rd Saturday Market in the Park, in front of City Hall, Green Cove Springs, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.
www.greencovesprings.com |
| Apr 4 - 14 | Clay County Agricultural Fair, Clay County Fairgrounds, 2463 FL-16, Green Cove Springs, For more information:
www.claycountyfair.org/ | Apr 20-21 | Kids Fest – Town of Orange Park, 2042 Park Avenue,
www.opkidsfest.com/ |
| Apr 4 – 20 | “Clue on Stage” – Spotlight Center, 1809 East-West Pkwy, Fleming Island
Times vary: www.spotlighteventscenter.com/spotlight-events-center-events/live-performances | Apr 20 | Middleburg Spring Festival 2024, Middleburg Civic Association, 2102 Palmetto St, Middleburg. Time: 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. |
| Apr 5 | Green Cove Springs Food Truck Friday, Spring Park, 106 St. Johns Ave, GCS, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
www.facebook.com/greencovespringsfoodtruckfriday/ | Apr 21 | Whitey’s Rib + Sides Cook Off 2024, Whitey’s Fish Camp, 2032 County Rd 220, Fleming Island.
Come out and enjoy! Judging at 4:00 p.m. and Tasting Plates available for purchase at 4:30 p.m. |
| Apr 6 | Fleming Island Saturday Market, Village Square Shopping Center, 2245 Plantation Center Dr, Fleming Island, 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Apr 22-27 | Calavida 2024, Green Cove Springs, Celebrating local artists and musicians. Locations vary, see link for information: exploreclay.com/event/calavida-2024-2/ |
| Apr 7 | Orange Park’s Farmers Market at City Hall, 2042 Park Ave. (only one Sunday in May) 10:00 am – 3:00 pm | Apr 25 - | “Gilligan’s Island: The Musical” at the Spotlight Center, 1809 East-West Pkwy, Fleming |
| Apr 12 – 21 | “Spamalot” at The Island Theater, 7:30 pm
www.theislandtheater.com | May 12 | Island, Times vary: www.spotlighteventscenter.com/spotlight-events-center-events/live-performances |
| Apr 13 | Operation Outdoor Freedom Pioneer Trail Runs; 1335 Long Horn Rd, Middleburg, Two trail runs: 14K and 7 K. For information:
runsignup.com/Race/FL/Middleburg/OperationOutdoorFreedom | Apr 26 | College Drive Food Truck Night, Asbury United Methodist Church, 16 College Drive, Orange Park, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. |
| Apr 13 | Seamark Ranch 11 th Annual Mudrun, Seamark Ranch, 3631 Seamark Ranch Rd, FL-16, Green Cove Springs: 6:30 – 11:30 a.m. | Apr 26 -27 | Hope Ignited Mom Comm 2024, The Springs Church, 900 Park Ave, Orange Park
www.ablemoms.org/event-details/mom-comm-2024 |
| Apr 14 | Andrew Ratliff Magic Show – at the Island Theater, 1860 Town Hall Circle, Suite 54, Fleming Island, Time: 7:30 p.m. www.theislandtheater.com/special-events | Apr 30 | “Rain – A Tribute to the Beatles,” Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Drive, Orange Park
thcenter.org/jacksonville-upcoming-events/family-and-variety/rain-a-tribute-to-the-beatles/ |
| Apr 14 | Clarke House Historic House Tours, 1039 Kingsley Ave, Orange Park Time: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. | | |
| Apr 19 -May 5 | “God of Carnage” at the Orange Park Community Theatre, 2900 Moody Ave Times vary: https://www.opct.info/boxoffice | | |



SAVE THESE DATES

4/12 **FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY** from 5 – 7:30 at the pool parking lot

4/17 **LOCH RANE/OPCC LADIES LUNCH BUNCH** 11:30 at The Club Continental

The April luncheon will be hosted by Lorie Krenek and Alice Toovey and is all about Fun and Games. For more information email or call Frances Smith, fksmith63@comcast.net or 904-579-3008

Photos attached are from the March High Tea luncheon where hats were the thing!

4/26 **FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY** from 5 – 7:30 at the pool parking lot

4/27 **NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL** from 7 – 9 at the cabana

BYOB (no glass containers) and snacks to share. Enjoy music and conversation with neighbors. Have some fun without leaving the neighborhood!

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





IT'S A GREAT TIME TO GET OUTDOORS

Do you enjoy walking? April is the perfect month to get out your walking shoes and walk around the community. Use your pedometer or your Smart Watch to track your steps/miles. Remember to keep hydrated with water as you walk. Stay safe by walking on sidewalks or against traffic if there isn't a convenient sidewalk available. At dawn, dusk or during nighttime, wear reflective clothing and carry or wear a light to make yourself visible to others.

As the weather continues to warm up, it is better to walk earlier in the day or later in the afternoon, avoiding the mid-day sun between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Wear sunscreen and be mindful of the presence of insects at certain times of the day. You may need to put on insect repellent in certain seasons. Enjoy your walk!



GARDENING ADVICE FOR FLORIDA IN APRIL

From: www.thespruce.com

Florida generally sees April temperatures rise to the low 80s and fall to the 60s – and even the 50s in some areas. The state averages four to eight rainy days in April.

- Prune flowering shrubs after they are done blooming.
- Practice grasshopper and mosquito control.
- Mulch around plants as needed, especially around trees and shrubs.
- Water your plants during dry spell.
- Transplant container-grown fruit trees and nut trees.
- Inspect citrus trees for citrus-leaf miner, aphids, scale and other pests. Spray with neem oil as needed.



WELCOME

to the neighborhood

Timothy & Lisa Bennett
717 Balmoral Lane

Bill & Amie Bonham
831 Westminster Drive