



Your

Community Resource

The Woodlands Word

November 2023

Letter from the President

We are coming to the time of elections; we are going to have 3 two-year terms and 1 one-year term. We are looking to form a nomination committee to find eligible candidates. Please send your contact information to: BLorieRivendell@gmail.com

The ARC is also looking for new candidates going forward. Eligible candidates need to be versed in Goggle Books. You can contact ARC Chair Janet Lorie: ARCRIVENDELL@GMAIL.COM for information regarding these positions.

I would like to thank Mr. Greg Volack for his relentless efforts to keep Rivendell's maintenance costs to a minimum. Without this hands-on labor, we would be experiencing much higher costs to maintain Rivendell presently. Greg and I spend at least 4 hours a day or more of our time keeping Rivendell as beautiful and maintained as possible.

We have had many years of homeowners volunteering doing the jobs normally taken care of by contractors, as all of us are getting older, these responsibilities will have to be taken care of by the management company sooner than later. Rivendell is one of the least expensive communities to live in. This has created a false sense of complacency. We will be paying much higher costs as people retire from the physical

work needed to maintain Rivendell. Living in the past is no longer an option.

The Board is still finalizing the budget. Rising costs have had a huge impact on our decisions. Insurance rates have skyrocketed, Electric and Water costs have increased. These rates reflect the fact that we are a commercial customer and the rates do not compare to what homeowners pay.

Just a reminder that there is no Board Meeting or ARC Meeting in the Month of December. Please get all ARC Requests in by November 15th at 3:00 PM.



Letter from the Editor



These final days of October have been especially beautiful. Don't we all wish the weather would be like this year-round! As I reviewed Bruce's letter about the Board of Directors election, I thought, "Oh no, that time of year again!" But that's the wrong attitude. I encourage everyone to consider

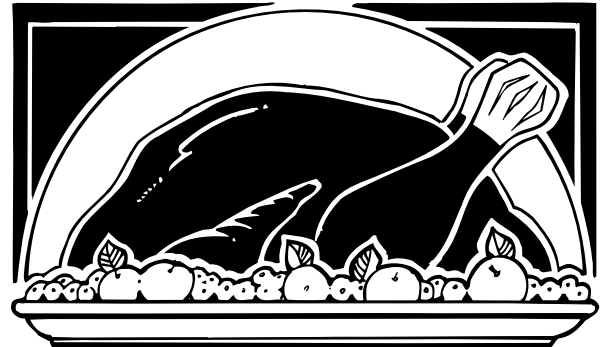
the four Board seats available beginning in February. I had a mentor in college who liked to say, when asking someone to do something out of the ordinary: "If not you, then who?" We live in a very special place and its governance is critically important. Give it some thought.

That said, I'd like to thank another Rivendell resident who has given her time and considerable talents to the Woodlands Word, Nancy Giordano who is retiring her Neighbors column. Nancy is also very involved in the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) and is serving in a very time-consuming position in the Hudson River Valley where she and Mark have their second home. Thank you Nancy for your clever and informative introductions to so many of our neighbors.

Mentioning the Revolution: we are not going to be able to

have our Veterans Day celebration as tentatively planned this year. It's a loss; however, we will be thinking about 2024 and invite anyone who is interested in working on that event to contact me or Jane Stevens. To all veterans, please know that you are very much appreciated.

Happy Thanksgiving to all – we have much for which to be grateful.



Happy Thanksgiving!

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WILDLIFE: Gulf Fritillary & White Peacock Butterflies How to Attract and Keep Beautiful Butterflies Visiting.

By the Ponds & Preserves Committee

Rivendell is home to many pretty butterflies and their mere presence makes us smile and feel happy. Along with the popular Monarch, pretty Gulf Fritillary and White Peacock butterflies are often seen flitting around our gardens, ponds and preserves. More than just beautiful, butterflies contribute to the health of our planet. While feeding on nectar, butterflies pollinate many types of flowers. They are also an important food source for birds, small animals, and other insects. Let's learn more about these two common butterfly visitors.



Gulf Fritillary Butterfly (*Agraulis vanilla*)

Description: The Gulf fritillary is known as a “longwing butterfly” for its long, narrow wings, compared to other butterflies. Medium-sized, its wings are bright orange with black markings.

Females are generally larger than males with somewhat darker markings. The forewings contains three black-rimmed white spots. Undersides of their wings are brown with elongated silvery-white spots.

It is a brightly colored butterfly common across extreme southern portions of the United States. At home in open, sunny habitats, it is a regular in most butterfly gardens, including those in urban settings. Adults have a quick, erratic flight but are easily drawn to nearby flowers.

[Photos: Bob Frank]

Description: If you see a white butterfly fluttering by, take a closer look at the white wings. The White Peacock's upper side of the wing is white with a round black spot with a light-to-dark brown crescent-shaped trim on forewing. The hind wing has two spots similar to those on the forewing and is trimmed with the same crescent trim in brown to orange. Their wingspan measures 2 to 2 3/4 inches.

White peacock butterflies are commonly found in warm, open, weedy areas such as fields or parks where water is abundant – usually a pond or stream. It flies swiftly and erratically near to the ground.



White Peacock Butterfly (*Anartia jatrophae*)

Butterfly Habitats are Threatened – Butterfly populations have been declining in recent decades. Loss of habitat and breeding grounds are likely due to increased use of pesticides, over development, clear-cutting, and deforestation. Our pond LMZs and native shoreline plantings create a vital habitat to support the life and health of all of our special butterflies. We must continue to maintain these wildlife habitats by working with our HOA Board to secure budget and take action to support these critical areas.

Click here to visit the Ponds & Preserves website at <https://www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds>.



Year In Review: Ponds & Preserves Management Actions Thank You For Your Continued Commitment & Support! By the Ponds and Preserves Committee.

We are going through another unusual year weatherwise. Sarasota County is experiencing a severe drought without its usual Summer rainy season which has negatively affected water levels in our ponds. Bare spots on pond banks and stressed plants are visible. Until rain becomes more frequent, any planting is postponed. While positive actions continue in our ponds and preserves, there is still much work to be done. Keeping our community's natural assets healthy and property values strong takes everyone's commitment and support. Your actions do make a difference and we thank you. We encourage you to keep updated on all P&P activities with articles in the *Woodlands Word* and on our P&P website.

OUR PRESERVES: Leave Them Alone. Forestry Mowing Needed.

Rivendell has a preserve management plan for all five units of the community. The developers agreed to the plan that is strongly supported by the County. It states that the preserves are to be managed by forestry mowing or roller chopping every four years to control invasives and the understory. Some areas were mowed in 2021 and 2022. However, there are Preserve and common ground areas that have never been forestry mowed. The P&P Committee will work with the Board to budget for and take action on these critical issues.

Ecological mowing is an alternate to prescribed burning that maintains healthy habitat and reduces the chance of catastrophic fire. It provides access to preserve areas for both invasive plant treatments and firefighters in the event there is a wildfire in a preserve. It also keeps our wetlands healthy by preventing encroachment of vegetation into these areas. In addition, cattails are still overgrown in areas which block outflow structures and can cause flooding. Cattail growth is regularly monitored and treated as needed.

Regular maintenance continues, including removing invasive plants, clearing perimeter pathways, and unblocking grates and weirs from debris. Plus, incursions in preserve areas by some residents is costing the HOA valuable budget dollars for remediation. Wetland and upland preserve areas must be left in their natural state. Let our wildlife friends thrive in these habitats.

OUR PONDS & LAKES: Control Erosion. Reduce Flooding. Improve Wildlife Habitats.

We thank our homeowners help in reaching a milestone in February when our community codified pond LMZs (Low-Maintenance Zones) into our Covenants. Our pond LMZs are well established and with shoreline plantings, work effectively to control erosion and flooding. We also transitioned to a new pond management contractor, with a goal to use more biologic and less-toxic treatments. Also, P&P Committee members personally inspected each pond this Spring to identify areas of concern. You may have seen us walking the ponds in our new branded vests.

We have also continued to engage the community to help us track sightings of wildlife during our **Rivendell Wildlife Week**. Results indicate a diverse variety of wildlife enjoy our ponds and preserves. They use our habitats to feed, nest, raise their young, and for shelter. We hope you are participating! Let's continue to create healthy habitats to attract even more wildlife friends.

Your actions do make a difference! When you drive, bike, or walk around the community, take pride in our ponds and preserves. Leave preserve and buffer areas alone. Appreciate our ponds. By keeping them healthy and vibrant, we enjoy our wildlife friends, improve our water quality, reduce flooding risk, and keep property values strong. Here's to another great year for residents and wildlife to thrive in Rivendell.



We thank our residents for your commitment and support to keep our community's natural assets healthy and property values strong. Wildlife, such as this majestic Bald Eagle, frequently enjoy our ponds and preserves. (B. Frank) (Continued on Pg. 5)

(Our Watershed continued)



Thank you, homeowners, for helping to codify LMZs into our Covenants. Installing native aquatic plants for their deep roots help stabilize the soil. Along with the LMZ, plants absorb excess nutrients, reduces flooding, plus improve water quality and wildlife habitats. (B. Frank)



Invasive cattails and debris are removed from the outflow structure area to improve flood control. Ongoing maintenance will help control regrowth. (N. Dobias)



Keeping our ponds and preserves healthy and vibrant provides food, shelter and nesting sites that benefit and attract wildlife, such as this magnificent Bobcat. (B. Frank)

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Technology Levels

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I'm going to share a story about "Joe". Yes, his name has been changed to protect him.

Joe came in for his regular cleaning. He mentioned that while his kids were in town, he had felt like he was always on alert. He explained that while out to dinner he had to look at who was speaking to make sure he heard clearly. While at home he was always listening for someone to speak to him.

He really liked when it was just him and his wife so he could just hang out. If she said something she knew to get his attention or speak louder so he would look at her.

Joe bought mid-level technology four years ago when he lived up north. Now that they are full time residents and more active with people coming to visit, he has noticed that his hearing aids aren't keeping up.

I offered him a chance to try premium level hearing aids for a few days so he could hear the difference. Premium technology offers better clarity in noisy situations and I recommend my socially active clients try them.

He came in beaming. He came alone.

Joe shared that he and his wife went to Sand Trap and golf was on one of the channels. His wife was talking about one of the kids while he was watching the golf. He responded to her question and in mid-sentence yelled about the amazing golf shot that just happened.

He went on to explain how it was that moment in which he realized he was just hanging out. He wasn't intensely focused on his wife while out to eat. He was just being casual.

With his new hearing aids, he has enjoyed being relaxed and at ease while listening to his family and friends when they get together.

As I shared with him, the higher the technology the more heavy lifting they will provide so you can feel at ease.

If you would like to try hearing aids that can help you relax while being with your friends and family, call me to demo premium technology hearing aids.



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News from the Social Committee

In early October, the Social Committee sent out a brief survey to all Rivendell owners to seek guidance about how best to serve our community in the upcoming year. Community responses were overwhelmingly positive, and we'd like to thank everyone (about 17% of households) who took the time to respond.

Here are what your responses revealed:

- Over 70% of respondents said they look to Rivendell as a source for social connections.
- There was interest in socializing over meals: Dining Out, "potluck" suppers and international dinners.
- Women especially like to get together.
- A majority of respondents were supportive of artistic and cultural activities.
- A quarter of respondents expressed interest in pickleball, kayaking and games and cards.
- A good number of people are interested in learning to play Bridge (enough for at least 2 tables). This means we need to have someone willing to teach our beginners.
- Over 60% like community-wide events such as our Ice Cream Social and picnics.
- Many homeowners volunteered to host a Block Party, a great way to meet neighbors.
- Over 50% of respondents would volunteer to be "helpers" at future social events.
- Several people are interested in coordinating youth activities.
- Most of you learn about the social activities here in Rivendell through the Woodland Word, the sandwich boards at the entrances to the development and direct emails, with the Nextdoor software much less used.

We are still in the process of incorporating your suggestions into future activities as well as welcoming new committee members who can help get these activities off the ground. Look out for new activities being announced soon,

The Social Committee meets as needed, usually once a month, with scheduling depending on when most members are available. Our focus is to provide a welcoming environment where neighbors can make friends in Rivendell. Our activities are open to ALL who live in Rivendell, including the Cottages.

If you offered your help for activities, we will be reaching out to you. And If you have questions or suggestions for us, please contact Maria Ilioff, chairperson of the Committee at 607-427-4192.



November 11



Book Nook

Upcoming Book Discussions in Rivendell Book Group I

Rivendell Book Group I meets every month, except July and August, on the second Monday of the month. Books are selected after two members have read and recommended them. There is active participation, and we often have lively, thought-provoking discussions. Our members are expected to volunteer to lead discussions, and/or host a group meeting. The group starts at 7:30 pm with an hourlong book discussion mostly guided by questions that the leader provides. This is followed by time for camaraderie and light refreshments supplied by the host. Our books are varied in topic and type from best sellers to historical fiction, beloved classics, and nonfiction on timely subjects.

In November and December, the group will be reading The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict and Born a Crime by Trevor Noah. Selections for 2024 are not yet complete, but selected titles include When We Were Young & Brave by Hazel Gaynor, Honor by Thrity Umniga, and The Dutch House by Ann Patchett, and Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt.

For more information, contact: Lesley Glick
lesleymg8@gmail.com.

Book Group II -- Looking for New Members

Like to read? Like to talk about what you've read? Then Rivendell Book Group II welcomes you!

Rivendell Book Group II is a group of people who meet to socialize and discuss books. Currently, we have 5 members and are open to more. We meet in volunteers' homes on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in October through May. Books are suggested by members and voted on by everyone, with volunteers hosting and/or leading discussions. Generally, time is focused on an hour or so of discussion, with the host's option to provide refreshments or not. Our book choices have ranged from bestsellers to fiction, and nonfiction selections of various topics and genres.

Rivendell Book Group II's schedule for the remainder of 2023 is:

November 14, 2023, The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See, and

December 12, 2023, Eternal by Lisa Scottoline.

The 2024 schedule is to be decided in an upcoming meeting. Stay tuned or come join us and lend a voice!

For more information, contact Karen Morgan
k@gatortrax.net.



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 neighbors to build stronger and safer communities.

Kayak Group Meeting and November Paddle



If you are interested in joining the Kayak Group to plan activities for 2023-24, come to the Cottages Clubhouse on Saturday, Nov. 11 from 10-11am. The group will discuss future paddles, rentals, and possible paddling locations. All levels of experience are welcome! Please RSVP your attendance to Jane Stevens at Janie0441@gmail.com. If you're unable to attend, please send Jane your suggestions.

The first activity of the Fall will be on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. The meeting point is at the kayak launch at Blackburn Point Park, 801 Blackburne Pt Rd. Osprey. The parking lot is on the left just before the bridge to get onto Casey Key. The group will meet (for a 1 ½ to 2-hour paddle) at 9:00 am with paddles in the water at 9:30 am. Don't forget your life jacket, sunscreen, hat, and water.

Rentals are available next to the Casey Key Fish House. To reserve a kayak and paddles go to: Islandjetskiandwatersports.com. The group will paddle and meet you there a little after 9:30am.

Please RSVP to Jane Stevens at Janie0441@gmail.com. if you have any questions, are planning to paddle, or if you must cancel at the last minute. We look forward to seeing you on the water.

The Rivendell Community Web Site
is available at
WWW.RIVENDELLCOMMUNITY.COM

REAL ESTATE CORNER

by Barbara Gahry

WHAT IS A CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION FEE AND WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES

Many Homeowner Associations in Florida charge a Capital Contribution fee to new owners. This is a ONE-TIME, non-refundable charge to a BUYER at the time of a closing. These fees are generally earmarked for a reserve account, or a special account used to fund capital improvements and repairs in the community. When Rivendell was being built, the builder charged new owners a onetime capital contribution fee to get the reserve fund started. The documents provided for this at the time of development but did not include it as an ongoing fee for new buyers as homes began to turn over. These funds CANNOT be used for day-to-day operating expenses.... that money comes from our regular dues. Capital funds help pay for future maintenance of buildings, shared common areas, amenities, and other costly improvements. The primary purpose of a capital contribution fee is to supplement the reserve fund and to OFFSET assessments to owners that may become necessary with a shortfall. All owners subsequently benefit from the HOAs reserves because it allows for repairs and/or replacement of such things as pool structure and equipment, and playground equipment, including the gazebo. In other words, it takes care of our community's assets. The reserve fund can also be useful in times of emergencies or disasters. Many communities in our area are charging this fee, range anywhere from \$500-\$5000, depending on the overall capital needs, for example, number of common structures, amenities, etc. to be maintained over time.

As mentioned, Rivendell's governing documents do not currently allow for this fee as part of the sale of a home. Given the ageing of our community and the increasing costs of maintaining our infrastructure and assets, it may be of benefit to amend our documents to include this. We ALL benefit.

FALL BACK!!

Daylight Saving Time
ends November 5th.

Change clocks back one hour.

And...Don't forget to
change the battery in
your smoke detector.



RIVENDELL STANDING COMMITTEES

BLOCK CAPTAIN COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Rachel North Zipay (mobilerach@verizon.net)

BOARD LIAISON: Cathy Dignault

MEMBERS: Cindy Borland, Rachel North Zipay, Barbara Loe, Barbara Valdahl, Mirinda Roy, Fred Rhines, Judy Sokal, Paul Englert, Janet & Jerry Hall, Mitzi Bruck, Janet Romig, Silke Schinnen, Jackie Axsom, Edith Norby, Douglas Burkard, Diane Tomer, Jonas Meyer, Mirinda Roy, Regina Bloom, Deborah Yohn, Dave Swanson, Mary Kennedy, Sheree & Chuck Pertile, Mary Kennedy, Cathy Daignault, David Gill, Margarete & Don Roser

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BOARD LIAISON: Bruce Lorie

MEMBERS: Marilyn May, Jim May, Barbara Gahry, Nancy Giordano, Chris Smith, Dana Schroeder **Adjunct Members & Woodlands Word Reporters:** Adele Kellman, Sue Remy

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC)

CHAIR: Janet Lorie ()

BOARD LIAISON: Bruce Lorie

QUESTIONS & SUBMISSIONS: ARCRivendell@gmail.com

MEMBERS: Joseph Casale, Maureen Emmons, James Duncan, Janet Lorie

COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Bob Thierfelder (rcthierfelder@gmail.com)

BOARD LIAISON: Mary Angell

MEMBERS: Bill Bloom, Mary Kennedy, Ken Alarie, Gary Glick

MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

CHAIR: TBA

BOARD LIAISON: Greg Volack

MEMBERS: Chuck Pertile, Carole Miles, Terry Siemsen, Keven Humbert, Alexis Spaulding, Peter Daignault

PONDS & PRESERVES COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Bob Frank (frank@ohio.edu)

BOARD LIAISON: Keven Boggess

MEMBERS: Larry Dobias, Sue Remy, Tom Hurban, Dave Gill, Ken Heckert, Allie Sandow

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Maria Ilioff ()

BOARD LIAISON: Mary Angell

MEMBERS: Lisa Boggess, Adele Kellman, Kathy Lysak, Allie Sandow, Jane Stevens, Alexis Spaulding. Book Club I – Lesley Glick, Book Club II – Karen Morgan

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The Cottages Board Utilizes New Technologies to Better Reach Residents

What do clouds, Zooms, TVs and pushbutton locks have in common? The Cottages Board can tell you. (Spoiler alert: all of them benefit the Cottages community!)

If you look in the office/storage room in the Meadow Sweet Circle clubhouse you will find, near the stacked chairs and tables, a locked file cabinet. This cabinet contains rows of hanging file folders, storing budget records, paid invoices, meeting minutes and other papers. While the files are neatly arranged, one must physically BE in the clubhouse to access them. To make future documents more accessible to Board members, the Board has started to transition to an electronic file system. We now store copies of new meeting minutes, insurance policies and Architectural Review Committee submissions in electronic files stored “in the cloud.” Such storage has the added advantage of keeping the documents secure in the hopefully unlikely event of fire, flood or misplaced documents. In addition to this effort, the Board utilizes T&H Comptrollers CPA for all their budgeting, accounting, and bill-paying services. This allows Board members to view current and past monthly financials, vendor invoices, and bank statements all online and in real time. Authorized members can initiate payment requests, approve vendor-submitted invoices and manage month-to-month financials for both

operating and reserve accounts. This makes financial and budget management tasks easier for Board members since everything can be done online.

In the same vein, for the past two years the Board has been utilizing Zoom technology as part of their monthly meetings. As a result, all residents can observe and participate in every Board meeting regardless of where in the world they are. Board meetings are viewed in the clubhouse on a 65” wall-mounted monitor obtained and installed last year. This system allows the Board to utilize PowerPoint slides and other graphic tools during meetings. Internet service to the clubhouse has been upgraded so that the monitor can be used for a variety of news, sports and social events in addition to Board meetings.

Another use of newer technology at The Cottages’ Clubhouse has been the replacement of keyed locks on external doors with pushbutton electronic door locks. No more lost or forgotten clubhouse or restroom keys to worry about. Plus, the safety and security of The Cottages’ residents is enhanced.

These are just some of the ways the Cottages HOA Board has been hard at work using technology to solve old problems and to increase communication within the community.



New clubhouse TV in use for an educational safety meeting.

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