



*Your
Community Resource*

The Woodlands Word

September 2023

Notes from the Editor



In this edition of Woodlands Word, we take you back – a veritable blast from the past – to those days when most of us looked forward or even dreaded that day following Labor Day when we boarded the bus for the first day of school. Of course, in this decade and earlier school now begins in August. How I would have detested that in my childhood. The last week of August was one in which I always anticipated. It was during that week that we went to the STATE FAIR. Now, if you have been watching the news during the past weeks you have seen a parade of presidential candidates participating in the Iowa State Fair. That even today is a snapshot of what the Michigan State Fair looked like in the 60s and probably still does today. We would dutifully follow one or both of my parents to the exhibits or barns where they wanted to point out something of more local interest. And then at some point, we were free to hit the midway and all the rides. To this day I still can feel the free-falling sensation of the DOUBLE Ferris Wheel. When you were on the top wheel and it made its revolution around, it was like nothing else. The abandonment of screaming in terror backed-up with joy is one that I rarely have experienced since.

Back-to-Back-to-School

In our Neighbors column, Nancy Giordano gives us a glimpse into what those words mean to several residents of Rivendell whose careers were in the noble profession of teaching. Their comments offer a delightful view from the other side of the desk.

Our location adjacent to Pine View School provides daily interactions with a variety of students biking, hiking or scootering to school. Please be on the look-out, especially if you're on the streets behind the wheel of a vehicle. Students in the Laurel School district have their primary bus stop at the Woodland community pool. A similar word of look outs for these children and also the parental pick-ups, and speaking of parental pick-ups: the Board continues to search for solutions to the sometimes overwhelming amount of cars on our streets waiting for Pine View students. There are no great solutions for this problem. And, it is a problem for our residents who may have their driveways compromised and the hassle it creates in general for those of us driving in and out of our neighborhood.

Sue Remy reports on two different subjects this month, both equally valuable. We share our community with beautiful Sandhill Cranes. They are a fascinating bird and we are so fortunate to have them in our midst. Like children, they require vigilance on our part. Nothing saddens me more that seeing a Sandhill lying on the side the road and then watching its mate for days after in mourning caused by a careless driver.

In her second story, Sue reminds us of the importance of our ponds and preserves not only for Rivendell but the larger community



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Watch for It

The data collection email requests will be hitting your inbox in September. This is the project formerly known as "Spring Cleaning" that was put on pause during the changeover between management companies.



This is an attempt to clean up data such as your cell number, home number, email address, etc. for Rivendell's records. It will also allow for an up-to-date directory to be published for the community.

Please watch for the email. Our data guru Christopher Smith has made the process very easy for all to follow.

Thanks Chris. Watch for the request and return the form. Easy Peasy!



The Rivendell Community Web Site
is available at

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Back-to-School

By Nancy Giordano

Do we ever really lose those *Back-to-School* feelings? The feelings of excitement, anxiety, and the new challenges before us; the anticipation of being with those September to June friends once again. It seems fair to say many of our neighbors can relate to those youthful, school day emotions that still often pop up this time of year.

But what about teachers...How did they feel as summer "vacation" came to a close and it was time to get *Back-to-School*? Since I didn't have an answer to that question, I reached out to some of Rivendell's retired teachers for their thoughts on this topic, which quickly and easily evolved from getting *Back-to-School* to the joys of simply being there!

Who had the hardest time adjusting to the new school year? A high school teacher said adjusting to the new year is difficult for teachers - many new names, faces, and personalities and often new subjects to teach. At the same time, some elementary teachers say parents had the biggest adjustment; dropping off that kindergartner - letting go, turning, and walking away - that's tough. Or is it hardest on the little ones themselves...like my younger brother (later a 6'1" Marine) who hid behind my Mom's dress (using it to wipe the tears and stifle the sobs) every day for a few weeks! Okay, so no clear-cut answer to that question.

Let's move on to what age student is the most willing to learn and try new things? There's the older highschooler with "maturity and looming college applications" as motivating factors, or the younger set as they developed reading skills, and the "light comes on." I do remember that enthusiasm in my children's eyes and their desire to go back for more, including my child with learning disabilities. The need to be taught and to learn differently nevertheless nurtured the "I can do it" spirit and determination!

Greatest teaching joy? Deciding to ignore those index card "descriptions" of a child who had been labelled as non-cooperative and not responsible, one teacher chose him as her helper. He was sent on errands, acted as her guide in her new school, and overall was an eager, go-to aide. A successful start to the year turned it into a productive one for this young man. It also confirmed this teacher's belief "kids will usually respond correspondingly if adults expect their best." Yes! to that.

How about a "best" recollection: Imagine the pleasure of having your own child as a student...in an AP calculus class no less. The pleasure was yearlong, but not without a few day-by-day challenges! One day in particular, as this teacher/Mom was writing a lengthy solution to a derivative problem, her son said loudly enough for all to hear, "You made a mistake Mom." He was right. The "Mom" look she gave him did not deter, however. Within a minute she heard, "You made another mistake, Mom." His classmates shared some colorful thoughts that class; his teacher/Mom tried to make the best of a then hopeless one! (Mom - We all have bad days.)

Teachers are a passionate group. Regardless of the age of their students, the grade or subject matter they taught, they believe they had it best. From first and second grade through middle and high school, public or private (throw in a little home-schooling of a grandchild by ZOOM school!) and even tutoring in retirement, these teachers loved what they did, and some still do it in one form or another.

And they not only taught, but they also learned. They learned patience. They learned "you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." They learned keeping it simple can often be best! They learned listening to a child goes a long way toward solving problems. *Back-to-School* was always a good day.

Hmm...that *Back to School* feeling...let's hum a few bars.

Did you know?...

Labor Day is an American holiday observed the first Monday in September. The state of Oregon was the first state to make Labor Day a holiday in 1887. Thirty states celebrated Labor Day before it became a federal holiday in 1894.



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Rivendell: 100+ Acres of Magnificent Wetland Preserves. Why are Wetlands Important? What Role Do They Play?

Sue Remy, Ponds & Preserves Committee.

As you may know, Rivendell has about 115 acres of 14 Wetland and Upland Preserves. Along with our ponds, our preserves play a key role as part of our stormwater management system. Wetlands collect, store, and release water from rainfall, absorb excess nutrients, and provide vital habitats for flora and fauna. Plus, we homeowners benefit from their natural beauty and aesthetics. We love our wildlife!

What Is A Wetland? To be classified as a wetland, an area of land must have water on the ground's surface or in the root zone for at least a portion of the growing season. This seasonal fluctuation of the water period (known as a hydroperiod), is continually affected by the weather, the season, water feeding into and draining from nearby streams, the surrounding watershed and other nearby bodies of water. An area can still be a wetland, even if it doesn't appear to be 'wet,' due to changing hydroperiods. [Source: UF/IFAS]

Why Are Wetlands So Important? In addition to their essential role to absorb water and excess nutrients, wetlands create a critical environment for a variety of wildlife. Wetlands offer an extensive, complex food chain that supports numerous species, including man. They provide vegetative cover for shelter and food, as well as nesting, spawning and nursery habitats. Migratory birds use wetlands as a stop-over. Although wetlands are most often associated with waterfowl and bird species, they also provide essential habitat for a wide variety of species: birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects - up to 45% of which are rare and endangered.

How Can We Protect Our Wetlands? The high rate of wetland loss has contributed to the endangered status of many species. Human activities affect all functions of a wetland. All residents can help conserve and improve the quality of water to promote a healthy environment. Our HOA contracts with professional teams to help keep inflow/outflow structures clear and remove excess and nuisance vegetation.

You Can Help Too! Reduce chemical use on your lawn. Follow County fertilizer and irrigation rules. Keep sprinkler systems working properly. Install Florida-friendly plantings. Pick up after pets. Dispose properly of lawn clippings and yard debris. Do not plant, build, cut, or remove any vegetation, or deposit yard waste in protected areas. Be aware that any activity beyond your property line is considered an incursion. Incursions are monitored regularly and violations enforced. We are all responsible for keeping Rivendell's ponds and preserves healthy and vibrant for ourselves and our wildlife, as well as strong property values.

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



Rivendell has 115 acres of 14 Wetland/Upland Preserves to help absorb water runoff and excess nutrients. (Video still: G. Mruz.)

(Continued on Pg. 5)

(Rivendell:100 acres continued)



The sight of a Swallow-tailed Kite overhead is unforgettable: a black-and-white raptor (bird of prey) with a deeply forked tail soaring through the summer sky. These graceful fliers have been recently spotted in our Rivendell wetlands. (AllAboutBirds.org)

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



Wetlands offer an extensive, complex food chain that supports numerous species, including man, and provide essential habitat for birds (such as this Roseate Spoonbill), mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects. (Photo: Bob Frank)



Labor Day September 4

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Wildlife Window: The Sandhill Crane

Great News! Sandhill Cranes Still Enjoy Rivendell!

Sue Remy, Ponds and Preserves Committee.

Great news! A Sandhill Crane couple were spotted on Crane Pond in June. (How appropriate.) Many long-time Rivendell residents have remarked in recent years, they have missed seeing Sandhill Cranes around our community as often. Yet our Wildlife Weeks have indicated sightings of these magnificent birds are still fairly common in and around our ponds and preserves. In fact, Sandhill Cranes are so beloved in Rivendell, one is featured on the Ponds & Preserves logo.

Let's learn more about these wonderful Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*). These large birds are long-legged, long-necked, gray, heron-like birds and have a distinctive patch of bald, red skin on top of their head. Males and females look identical. They can reach a height of 47 inches with a wing-span of 6-7 feet. Cranes fly with necks outstretched like geese (whereas herons fly with necks tucked in on their backs).

A distinguishing feature of the Florida Sandhill Crane is its call, described as the "call of the wild", with a bugling or trumpeting sound. You have probably heard this unique call, which can be heard several miles away. They are omnivorous, feeding on seeds, grain, berries, insects, earthworms, mice, small birds, snakes, lizards, frogs, crayfish, but do not "fish" like herons.

Sandhill Cranes breed with only one mate. Experiencing their courtship "dance," which features jumping, running, and wing flapping is a wildlife treat. They are a non-migratory species that are often seen in very small groups or pairs. They nest in freshwater ponds and marshes and inhabit freshwater marshes, prairies, and pastures. Females lay two eggs that incubate for 32 days. The offspring, called "Colts," will begin traveling from the nest with their parents just 24-hours after hatching. At ten months old, juveniles are able to leave their parents. While a Crane family is beautiful to see strolling together, they are very protective of their young Colts and each

other – so do not get too close as they can be aggressive. Enjoy and take photographs from a distance.

Protect their Habitats. Sandhill Crane populations are being threatened by degradation, habitat loss, and over-hunting. Watch out for these big birds when driving around town – because they enjoy walking and their gray color can be hard to see in the shadows and under trees by the road. Let's keep our ponds and preserves healthy and attractive for these wonderful Sandhill Cranes and our other wildlife friends. We can enjoy their beauty and enhance our quality of life, plus keep our property values strong.

Click here to visit the Ponds & Preserves website:

www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds.



Spotted on Crane Pond in June, Sandhill Cranes enjoy the LMZ and shorelines plantings. These large gray birds have a distinctive patch of bald, red skin on top of their head. Males and females look identical. (Thanks Shirley Fair for your great photos!)



Sandhill Cranes breed with only one mate. Experiencing their courtship "dance" with jumping, running, and wing flapping, is a wildlife treat. They nest in freshwater ponds wetlands, and marshes. Females lay two eggs that incubate for 32 days. Their adorable offspring are called "Colts." (Photo: Nancy Dobias)

(Continued on Pg.7)

(Great News! continued)



A distinguishing feature of the Sandhill Crane is its call, described as the "call of the wild" with a bugling or trumpeting sound. (Photo: Shirley Fair)

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Submit articles and information to Kristine Nickel
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Updates to the Contacts Page:

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