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Community Resource*

# The Woodlands Word

May 2026

## A Word From Your Board

*Antrice Muther, Director -Secretary*



When we first began searching for a home in Sarasota County, we hadn't yet found a place that felt like home. Our real estate agent spent countless hours driving us around and showing us different neighborhoods and communities, but nothing felt quite right.

Then she found a listing in Rivendell. She warned us the house needed some work, but we flew down to see it anyway. From the moment we drove into the community, we were drawn in by the mature trees, scenic ponds, and expansive preserve spaces. When we stepped into what would become our home and looked through the back windows at the pond and preserve beyond, watching wildlife along the shoreline, we knew we were home.

I moved in several months ahead of my family to prepare the house for their arrival, and during that time I discovered yet another remarkable aspect of Rivendell: the people. Knowing no one in Florida, I was welcomed with kindness. Neighbors rang the doorbell to introduce themselves, shared contact information, brought plants and a rum cake, and even invited me into their homes for dinner. Those early gestures reinforced just how special Rivendell is, and the longer I live here, the more grateful I am to be part of this community.

After joining the Board, I quickly gained a new appreciation for what it takes to maintain the beauty and functionality of our neighborhood. At my first meeting with the Maintenance Committee, I met

an extraordinary group of volunteers dedicated to caring for what we all enjoy about Rivendell. These men and women generously give their time to obtain bids, manage contractors, oversee repairs, and often do the work themselves. Their responsibilities include our lighting, irrigation, trees, landscaping, pools, parks, playground, paths, and much more. For many years, Mark Giordano has led this group with dedication and professionalism, bringing his private sector expertise to the benefit of our entire community. As Mark steps down from his role as Chair, we extend our sincere thanks for his countless hours of service, leadership, and commitment to Rivendell. We are also pleased to welcome Chuck Pertile as the new Chair of the Maintenance Committee. Chuck has previously served on the Board and has chaired the Maintenance Committee in the past. His experience, knowledge, and long-standing commitment to Rivendell make him an excellent fit, and we appreciate his willingness to once again step forward and serve.

Rivendell's true strength lies in residents who are willing to share their time and talents. I encourage anyone interested to explore the many committees that support our community. Whether your skills are technical, organizational, creative, or social, there is a place where you can make a meaningful contribution. Together, we ensure that Rivendell remains not only a beautiful place to live, but the welcoming community we are all proud to call home.





Join 665 of your fellow  
Rivendell Residents on the NEXTDOOR  
social network [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com)

Are you seeking a service  
provider recommendation?

Do you have an item to sell?

Do you have any questions about Rivendell  
or other topics residents can help with?

Nextdoor is the world's largest social  
network for the neighborhood.

Nextdoor enables truly local conversations  
that empower neighbors to build  
stronger and safer communities.

## The Pond Stewards Are Here!

*Ponds and Preserves Committee, Bob Frank*

The recent effort of the Ponds and Preserves Committee to recruit pond stewards was a great success. We now have stewards for all but four of our stormwater detention ponds. **Pond stewards** help Rivendell identify pond problems so that appropriate action can be taken quickly, thereby ensuring the ability of the ponds to manage stormwater, improve water quality, provide wildlife habitat and enhance the appearance of our community. Each of our pond stewards received a pond steward vest, a written Pond Steward Guide and an orientation walk around their pond. They will be monitoring erosion, algae, invasive plants, the state of pond no mower zones and the health of native plants we have installed along shorelines. We are still looking for pond stewards for Rivendell Lake East, Gator Creek, Millpond Lake and Otter Lake. It is not necessary to be a full time Rivendell resident to participate. Please contact Bob Frank ([frank@ohio.edu](mailto:frank@ohio.edu)) for more information.



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## Social Committee Activities for May 2026



Offered WEEKLY: Ladies Walk 'n Talk. Meet at the Rivendell Pool. Contact Lesley Glick at [Lesleymg8@gmail.com](mailto:Lesleymg8@gmail.com) or (973) 219-5839 for more information and if you'd like to be added to the Facebook Walk 'n Talk. Walks are currently on Thursday mornings at 9:00 am, but times will change depending on the season.

- Monday, May 4th, from 2 to 4 pm. Mah Jongg. To attend, contact Maria Ilioff at (607) 427-4192 (texts only).
- Thursday, May 7th, from 1 to 4 pm. Bridge Club. To join, contact Barb Loe at (651) 398-2256.
- Monday, May 11th, from 2 to 4 pm. Mah Jongg. To attend, contact Maria Ilioff at (607) 427-4192 (texts only).
- Monday, May 11th, 7:00 pm. Rivendell Book Group. The Group will be discussing The Art Thief by Michael Finkel. For more information, contact Adele Kellman at (908) 464-7003 or Lesley Glick at (973) 219-5839.
- Monday, May 18th, from 2 to 4 pm. Mah Jongg. To attend, contact Maria Ilioff at (607) 427-4192 (texts only).
- Thursday, May 21st, from 1 to 4 pm. Bridge Club. To join, contact Barb Loe at (651) 398-2256.

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## Best of Venice 2025



### Only in a Restaurant

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I recently had a consultation with a guy who was frustrated that he couldn't hear well in restaurants. He shared that he had bought cheap hearing aids specifically for use when going out. He explained that he didn't feel the need to invest in higher-quality devices since he only wanted to use them while dining out.

I understood his thinking. He believed hearing aids could simply filter out background noise, allowing him to focus solely on speech. Hearing aids, however, don't work quite that way. They amplify specific frequencies. Premium hearing aids use artificial intelligence (AI) to recognize and reduce background noise, making speech brighter.

His reasoning wasn't entirely off. He understood that hearing aids could help improve speech clarity in noisy environments. However, what he overlooked was how the brain processes new sounds.

It's the introduction of new sounds that thwarts his intention. When we hear an unidentified sound our brain goes on alert, part of our flight, fight or freeze survival mechanism. New sounds are initially perceived as potential threats, and the brain reacts to each one. I often explain this by saying the brain is "showing off" all the sounds it can hear.

The best way to train your brain to hear well in a restaurant is by wearing your hearing aids consistently. Wear your hearing aids in a quiet house, running into the grocery store or even stopping by the library. Regular use of your hearing aids helps your brain adapt to different sounds. Over time, your brain will learn to tune out unwanted noise and focus on what's important like conversations.

By wearing quality hearing aids which brighten speech in noise and training your brain, you are able to be more engaged while dining out with friends.

If you're struggling to hear well when out with friends, call for a free hearing test.



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## Ladies' Lunch at Longet

Longet Restaurant has reopened in a new downtown Venice location, and the Rivendell ladies luncheon group was there in April to try the cuisine. Twelve Rivendell women enjoyed a delicious and nicely served meal at this French restaurant. They reported that there is an excellent lunch menu (different from what is served at dinner) which is very reasonable. Parking downtown can be difficult, but otherwise, Longet is a wonderful new choice for us all.

Ladies' Luncheon will not be held in May, but may resume in June, depending upon interest. If you would like to join the group, please contact Helen McClure at [mccclurenash@gmail.com](mailto:mccclurenash@gmail.com).



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## Nokomis Beach Challenge Awaits

By Nancy Dobias

Living on the Gulf coast of Florida gives us many options for beach outings but it also presents some challenges. Finding a parking spot at a time that works best for you and your guests is the biggest challenge, but right up there is another contender...the NOKOMIS BEACH CHALLENGE!

This challenge doesn't affect everyone but for those who are impacted, what a worry it can be, especially since sometimes you don't even know it's there until you're committed and IT IS TOO LATE....



With that in mind, a few years ago I posted some Nokomis Beach pictures on Nextdoor and made the comment about how tough it was to get out of the water there.

Immediately a suggestion was given. Although I have never tried it, I always wondered if this really did work.

Should you want to try it out, here's the 4-step process to perhaps conquer the NOKOMIS BEACH CHALLENGE:

1. Go carefully to the very edge of the bottom of the ledge. 2. Steady yourself. 3. Reach out with your dominant leg and foot and dig into the middle of the ledge to create a "step." 4. When your foot feels good and solid in the "step," step up and be sure to use your momentum to then step up to the top with your other foot. (Yes, a favorable wave at the right time helps!)

**The Nextdoor person went on to say...**

*I swear this works. I used to get thrown around and sometimes ended up crawling out. No more! This has worked every time and makes me feel like I've accomplished something.*

So, if you're up for the challenge, get thee to the beach!!!



This challenge is not in play at Siesta Beach, and whether it's in play at the Venice, Caspersen or other local beaches, I can't say but it does exist at Nokomis Beach.

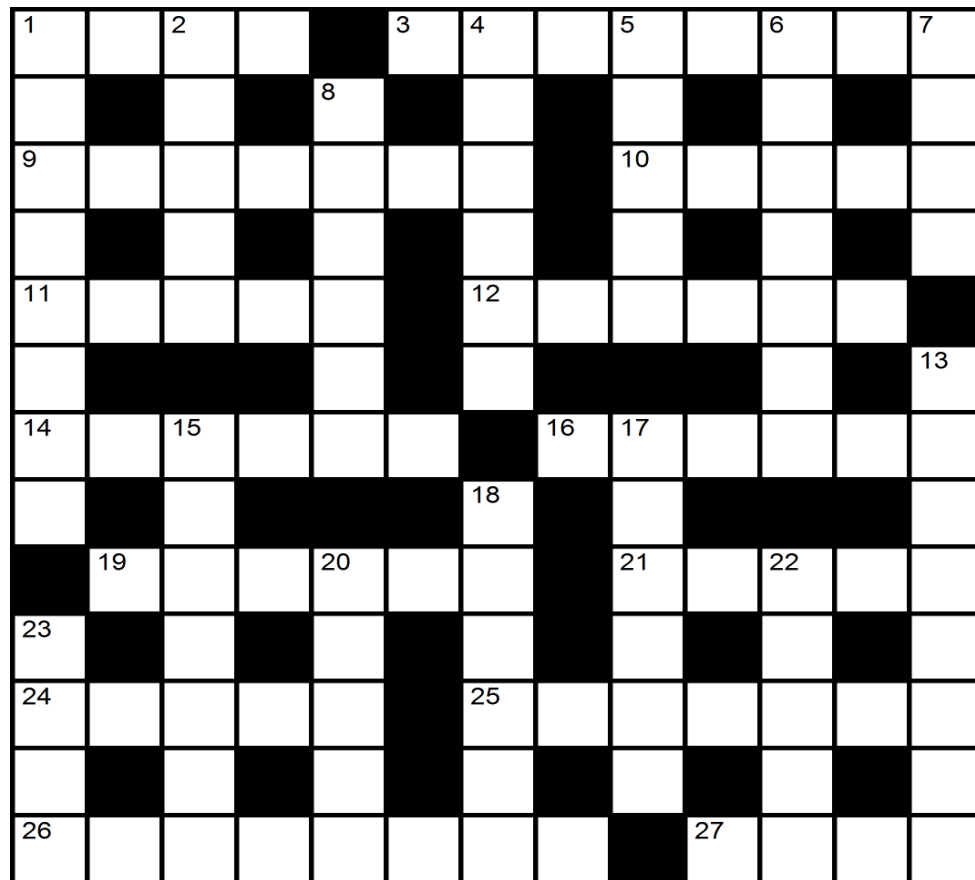


So what is this challenge???

IT'S THAT BIG LEDGE THAT YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO STEP UP TO SHOULD YOU WANT TO MAKE A **DIGNIFIED** EXIT FROM THE WATER TO AVOID BECOMING THE NEXT STAR OF A YOU TUBE VIDEO.

A former colleague once described to me how she failed the "dignified" exit from the water. Although she did not become an overnight sensation on YouTube, she did provide quite the entertainment for those who saw her belly-crawling up that ledge...wondering what on earth this senior citizen was doing as she attempted to "manage" her exit from the water. Had she gone to the beach with someone, this might never have happened, but unfortunately she went alone and THE NOKOMIS CHALLENGE won out.

# CROSSWORD



Puzzle from <https://www.printable-puzzles.com/>

Puzzle compiled by Bianca Morèl

## Clues:

### Across

- 1 Wren or hen
- 3 Safeguards
- 9 Rain
- 10 Displayed
- 11 Lies in the sun
- 12 European kingdom
- 14 Gloss
- 16 Loud speaker
- 19 Little rock
- 21 Antelope
- 24 Elegance
- 25 More transparent
- 26 Fiasco
- 27 Endure

### Down

- 1 American sport
- 2 Underground network
- 4 Fight against
- 5 Flavour
- 6 Most relaxed
- 7 Compos mentis
- 8 Water heater
- 13 Maintain
- 15 Goes up and down
- 17 Dog disease
- 18 Save
- 20 Wrecks
- 22 Freight
- 23 Passed with flying colors

(Solution on page 13)

## Love is in the Air - for Alligators

*Ponds and Preserves Committee, Bob Frank*

Each spring, as temperatures rise across Florida, one of the state's most iconic residents begins its annual mating season. The American alligator becomes more active from **April through June**, and understanding this seasonal behavior can help residents safely coexist with these remarkable reptiles.

During mating season, male alligators establish and defend territories, often in freshwater ponds, lakes, marshes, and even neighborhood stormwater systems. One of the most striking signs of this period is the **deep, resonant "bellow"** males produce. This low-frequency sound travels across water and can even cause the surface to ripple—a phenomenon sometimes called "water dancing." The bellow serves to attract females and warn rival males to keep their distance.

Females respond by approaching dominant males, and courtship may include gentle touching, circling, and synchronized swimming. While this behavior may appear calm, it reflects a highly competitive time. Males can become more aggressive toward other alligators—and occasionally toward perceived intruders—especially if territories overlap in smaller bodies of water common in residential areas.

After mating, females build **nest mounds** made of vegetation, mud, and debris, typically in June or July. These nests are often

located along shorelines with dense plant cover. The decomposing material helps incubate the eggs, which usually number between 30 and 50. Female alligators are attentive mothers; they guard their nests closely and remain nearby throughout the roughly 65-day incubation period.

For residents, this is when awareness is especially important. A nesting female may be more defensive than usual if she feels her eggs are threatened. It's best to **keep a respectful distance from shorelines** and avoid letting pets or children wander near the water's edge.

The good news is that conflicts between people and alligators are very rare and preventable. Residents can reduce risks by following a few simple guidelines: never feed alligators (it's illegal and dangerous), keep pets leashed and away from water, and remain alert near shorelines—especially at dawn and dusk when alligators are most active.

Florida's alligators are a vital part of the Florida ecosystem, helping maintain balanced wetlands and providing habitat for other species. Mating season is simply a time when their natural behaviors become more visible. By staying informed and respectful, we can continue to enjoy Florida's unique wildlife while keeping both people and alligators safe.



## Rivendell Ice Cream Social Draws Record Crowd for an Afternoon of Community Fun

The Rivendell community came together in a big way on Saturday, March 28th for its largest Ice Cream Social to date—an afternoon filled with laughter, sunshine, and plenty of sweet treats.

More than 100 residents attended the event, with families and children making up much of the lively crowd. A highlight of the day was the ice cream truck from Sunny Daze, which offered a wide variety of frozen favorites that delighted guests of all ages. The truck was generously sponsored by Rivendell resident Amir Mahmoud, a principal with Pino Air, whose support helped make the day extra special.

Children enjoyed a full lineup of activities, from splashing in the pool to playing games and creating colorful sidewalk chalk drawings. Their energy and excitement added to the festive atmosphere that defined the afternoon.

Raffles, organized and run by Cindy Petti and Patti Bunce, continued throughout the event and added an extra element of fun and

anticipation. Attendees also appreciated the presence of Board President Paul Zak, along with Board members Antrice Muther, Dick Bunce and Will Barton, who joined in the festivities.

This year's Ice Cream Social marked a new milestone for the community, standing out as the best-attended event of its kind so far. Its success was made possible by the dedication and hard work of many volunteers. Special thanks go to Lesley Glick, Jane Stevens, Lisa Borgess, Cindy Petti, Patti and Dick Bunce, Antrice Muther, Carol and Ken Heckert, and event organizer Adele Kellman, whose efforts ensured a memorable day for all.

With such an enthusiastic turnout and strong sense of community spirit, the Rivendell Ice Cream Social continues to be a cherished tradition—one that residents look forward to year after year.

*Below are photos capturing highlights from this wonderful event.*






*(Continued on Pg. 9)*




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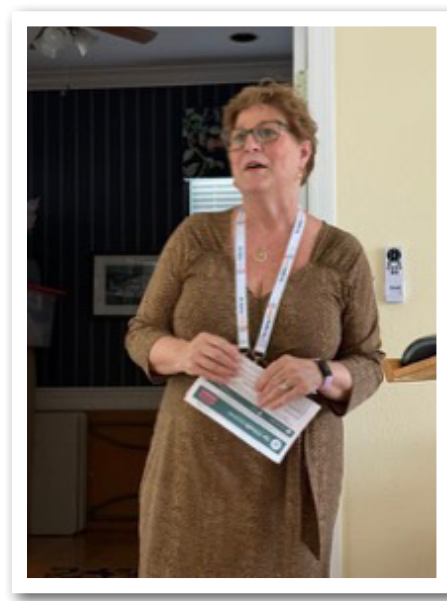
# Sarasota is Age-Friendly in Many Ways!

By Jim & Marilyn May

We all know that the Sarasota area is a desirable place to spend one's "golden years." But where can you find information on the services and resources available to us? A roomful of Cottages residents learned what's available at **Age-Friendly Sarasota** from Sarasota County's Aging System Coordinator, Sue Berger. Did you know that providing services to Sarasota County seniors has been a long-standing tradition? In fact, Sarasota was Florida's first community to join the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Now this county initiative connects older adults to services across housing, transportation,

social participation and health. Berger covered topics such as services and programs available to older adults, health & wellness resources, and navigating the Aging Services website to find what you need. The website provides information on transportation, social and volunteer opportunities, and how to stay informed and connected through Age-Friendly Sarasota. You can learn more by checking out [www.scgov.net/home](http://www.scgov.net/home) and typing AGING in the search, then clicking on AGING SYSTEM COORDINATION. You'll find the answers to your questions...and more!

The screenshot shows the Sarasota County website's "Aging System Coordination" page. The header includes the Sarasota County logo, navigation tabs for "A-Z", "Government", and "Community", and buttons for "ADDRESS FINDER" and "SEARCH". The left sidebar lists "HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES" with sub-items like "FL Dept. of Health in Sarasota County", "Human Services", "Contracted Human Services", "Systems Coordination", "Aging System" (highlighted), "Behavioral Health System Coordination", "Child & Family Well-being System Coordinator", "Criminal Justice", "Homeless Services", "Veterans Services", and "State Mandated Human Services Programs". The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: "Government > Health and Human Services > Human Services > Systems Coordination >". The title "Aging System Coordination" is prominently displayed, followed by "Print", "Share & Bookmark", and "Font Size" options. The text describes the role of the Aging System Coordinator in supporting community-based programs and strengthening partnerships. It mentions that in 2015, Sarasota County became Florida's first member of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. In 2019, Sarasota County, in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, assumed leadership of the initiative. The Sarasota County Seniors Advisory Council, established in 2000, serves as the reviewing body and contributed to the 2022-2025 Action Plan. A "CONTACT US" sidebar provides contact information for Susan Berger, Aging System Coordinator, including her email ([sberger@scgov.net](mailto:sberger@scgov.net)) and phone number (941-861-2558). A vertical blue bar on the right side of the page contains the text "I Want To..." and a gear icon.





**ARC Meeting - Tuesday, March 31, 2026**

Time/Place: 4:30pm Conference Call 605-313-5721 code 655 3857

Members Present: John Greco, John Fitzgibbon, Don Roser, Joe Casale, John Barron,

Others Present: Paul Zac, Will Barton, Kitty and Jinbo Wang, Bonnie Teschendorf, Marilee Casale

**Please see the Notes at the end of this schedule which contain important information, not just "boilerplate"**

No.	Address	Name	Description	Comments & Specific Conditions of Approval (See Notes below)	Approved as submitted (See General Conditions)	Approved with Specific Conditions	Denied (See Notes)
	739 Fordingbridge Way	Jinbo (Kitty) Wang	Replace all windows and doors with impact glass; clear without grids.		X		
1	792 Placid Lake Dr	Heidi and David Cook	Window Replacement - all windows are being replaced with consistent slight tint and grids on all front facing windows		X		
2	812 Golden Pond	Tracey Winters	Roof Replacement - Flat Slate, chestnut burnt 900 slate.		X		
3	1012 Oak Meadow Lane	Greg Walsh	Install new walkway using 24" square unstained concrete pavers to match driveway, placed from driveway along south side of property approx. 5' inside property line for approximately 70'.		X		
4	1020 Scherer Way	Karen Campbell	RE-roof with concrete tile. color Hillsborough Blend		X		
5	820 Placid Lake Dr	Kimberly Schulze and Robert Zusman	REstucco rear wall, repair cracks and painted to match existing color		X		
6	975 Scherer Way	Nancy and Ed Lihan	Paint: Body: Valspar Halogen 8007-11A; Trim Soft Spoken 8007 11E; Front door and garage door - SW Down Home		X		
7	1363 New Forest Lane	Sonya Gray	reroof Tile - Westlake Cafe Sand Blend 900 Slate Saxony		X		
9	792 Placid Lake	Heidi and David Cook	Re-roofing with High Profile tile by Eagle - Color Adobe Blend		X		
10	1012 Oak Meadow Ln.	Greg and Sue Walsh	Paint home exterior and trim: House body SW Alabaster (HGSW7008); trim and garage door - High Reflective White (HGSW7757)		X		
11	790 Placid Lake Drive	Helena and Per Nordstrom	Paint house: Body BM CO30 - Gray mist; (changed to SW equivalent White Duck. front door and garage door and accents - SW7020 Black Fox; trim white as-is. Re-roof Tobacco Range Slate. gutters to be replaced to match roof color (SW Urban Bronze)		X		
13	770 Shadow Bay Way	Beth Richter and Mike Meese	Install 46" high three panels white vinyl outdoor privacy screen to shield trash cans and A/C units		X		

(Continued on Pg 12)

(July ARC Meeting continued from Pg.11)



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14	1363 New Forest Lane	Sonya Gray	Install heavy duty aluminum 48" black/bronze picket fence in rear yard, to be set back 12" from property lines. Both neighbors have approved. Future landscaping will need to be approved.		X		
15	790 Placid Lake Drive	Helena and Per Nordstrom	Instalaltion of roll-down screens on the lanai to be lowered only the event of a storm. The screens are see though and not visibe from the street. The home backs up to a preserve.		X		
	726 Shadow Bay Way	Antriece and Paul Muther	REmove existing shrubs that are screening pool equipment and replace with three 2 1/2 gallon Clarisa to match neighbor's		X		
	726 Shadow Bay Way	Antriece and Paul Muther	Install raised planter bed under back of house picture window, will not be visible to neighbors. Color will match gray tile roof. No plants will need to be removed.		X		
	726 Shadow Bay Way	Antriece and Paul Muther	Remove cabbage palm and overgrown bouganvilla along front walkway and replace with 25 gallon triple Pygmy Date Palm. Add two 3 gallon arborcola in front of AC as a screen.		X		
	934 Eagle Isle Ct.	Barry McClure	Repaint with Sherwin Williams: Body and garage door: Natural Linen (SW9109); Trim and front door OTTER (SW6041). Trim and front door to match roof color		X		
	956 Scherer Way	Ebenichler/Casanova, Leslie and Wolfgang	Repaint with Sherwin Williams: Body - Agreeable Gray (SW7029); Trim - Extra White (SW7006); Front and garage door - Leisure Blue (SW6515)		X		
	1096 Mallard Marsh Drive	Christina Crocker	Replace rusted light on front of house		X		
	1096 Mallard Marsh Drive	Christina Crocker	Repaint house: Body -Shitake (SW 9173); Trim and garag door - Dover White (SW 6385); front door Dried Thyme(SW 6186)		X		

(Continued on Pg 13)

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	807 Placid Lake Drive	Barbara and Leon Brown	See through/bronze Hurracan escreen across front door, only used during storms		X		
	1080 Mallard Marsh Drive	Elaine and Jeff Densmore	Remove oak tree on side of front driveway causing damage to driveway and utilities		x		



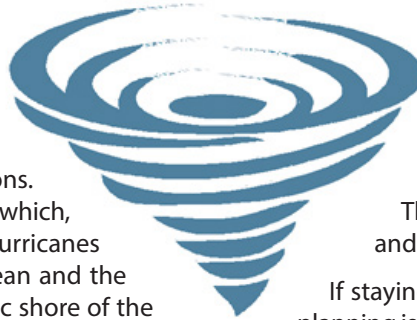
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# May is the Beginning of Hurricane Preparations!

*Terry Siemsen, CERT*

First, a bit about expectations for the upcoming hurricane season. There's been a lot of discussion in news and social media of the likelihood of a strong El Nino for summer 2026 and that may well lead to a lower than normal number of hurricanes. For the entire Atlantic Basin, this may be a reasonable very early forecast of expectations. A strong El Nino can influence global trade winds which, in turn, can influence (diminish) the ability of hurricanes to form and persist in the tropical Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. That bodes well for the Atlantic shore of the United States and for island countries and interests far south of us. More locally, this possible El Nino event may result in less storms originating from deep in the Caribbean but may not have much influence on storms that are spawned in the Gulf of Mexico. It's important to remember that Hurricane Milton – our most recent event – spent its entire life in the Gulf of Mexico. These early forecasts are often revised as more and better data are available in coming months, but my suggestion today is preparations for hurricane season be exactly what you would do every year.



Readiness – preparation is often the key to successful survival of a disaster. Hurricanes are slow moving storms so it's easier to prepare than for a tornado or a flood. That said, don't leave preparation to the very last minute. Assess if you have vegetation that may be a danger to your home or pool cage due to age of health of the plants. Determine what items outside your home are capable of being airborne with high winds and either secure them or plan to bring them indoors if necessary. This is extremely important for anyone who is a seasonal resident – move any loose items inside your home before departing to other states. Review or create a notional plan for evacuation (where you'd go) if it becomes necessary and share your plan with immediate family members and close friends. Do not wait until a storm is imminent to create a plan. I know several of my neighbors have a "reciprocal plan" with east Florida coast friends – "we come to your home or you come to our home" depending on the storm threat. Have a communication plan developed ahead of time – consider a plan that uses text messaging as cell towers are often overloaded with

voice calls that do not connect. Establish with family and friends simple messaging ideas like "R U OK?" or "AM OK" to reassure individuals and connect more easily. Another idea is to determine a "prime contact" outside a disaster area that would be your single point of contact that would, in turn, notify anyone else you'd like contacted. That way the number of messages being sent from and entering a disaster area are minimized.

If staying during a hurricane is your preference, advance planning is critical. Advanced protection hurricane resistant windows and doors are a great idea, but storm shutters and/or strong fabric panels are often used. Nonperishable food and consumable liquids should start being accumulated now with each regular shopping trip. Water and other drinks that help replace body electrolytes are prime items to purchase this month. Canned goods and foods that can be "opened and eaten" are also key items. Please do not forget you need a manual can opener! Batteries for flashlights are necessary supplies, and May is a great time to double check any flashlights to be sure they operate or need to be replaced. Check propane supplies for your grill and consider having a spare filled fuel tank. If you own a generator, May is the time to test run the generator and make any maintenance or repairs that are needed.

What not to stock up on? Frozen foods are susceptible to loss during power outages and would need to be quickly consumed if electric service is lost and one has no backup generator. Candles should always be avoided as they present a fire danger that can compound hazards during a disaster. Gasoline for generators should be a late purchase before a storm as fuel storage presents its own inherent dangers. Ice will be in short supply – both before and after a disaster – but if you have freezer space, it's an easy purchase and will help keep your freezer run more efficiently as it takes up empty space.

More ideas to come on the next few months! Take stock on your home and supplies and start your preparations!!



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