



ACORN NEWS

Oak Park Village Cooperative, Inc
February, 2015



Board of Directors

Message from the President

Beth Ford, President

This will be my last message; as I am finishing my sixth year as a BOD member. I have served as Treasurer, Vice-President, acting Secretary and President. I've worked with 16 different Board personalities and several staff. I am very proud of the projects and improvements that have happened over those six years. And I must say, it is amazing what a Board member must learn in order to make a decision for the Park. Some of the "crash courses" required of me over the past six years include:

1. Try to memorize the Oak Park By-Laws and Rules & Regulations.
2. Learn which Florida State Statutes pertain to Cooperatives, and understand what they say.
3. Understand Water Plant terminology; such as gross alphas, acceptable sodium levels, rebedding, flushing, and proper backwash actions.
4. Be able to read and speak fluent bulk cable television---such as headends; coax vs. digital; QUAM systems; right-of-entry, liability and worker's comp.
5. Although serving on our BOD is unpaid, know that you will be paid---with criticism, second-guessing, or Monday morning quarterbacking!!!!
6. Understand, and work with government agencies such as: SunBiz; Lee County permitting, zoning, and environmental, etc.; the (DBPR) Department of Business & Professional Regulations; the Army Corp of Engineers; Fraud Investigators; and specialty lawyers (Corporate, labor, animal, criminal/civil---just to name a few).
7. Represent Oak Park within the professional community. A brief OP history: Records are unclear prior to 2006, but around that time, Oak Park became a member of LEEROC (Lee County Resident Owned Communities). A few years later, LEEROC became SWFROC (encompassing several counties in the SW Florida area). Two years ago, SWFROC became SWC-FLAROC---the SouthWest Chapter of the Florida Association for Resident Owned Communities. SWC-FLAROC is affiliated with, and a chapter of the state organization (FLAROC) that represents Cooperatives in Tallahassee. (None of this should be confused with a recently established renegade organization, founded by a few turncoats, of whom one is an Oak Park resident. (This local organization called OURROC has no regional or state affiliations.)
8. Work cooperatively with the Army Corp of Engineers and try to understand federal waterway regulations vs. state/county regulations, permitting regulations, right-of-easement on our river front & marina.
9. Understand seawall construction & repair terms, such as Rip-rap vs. sheet piling vs. Gabion baskets; grading regulations; damage caused by boat speed vs. water displacement; or Articulating Block Mats.
10. Have the ability to deal with legal contracts & cases which could include everything from retainer contracts, to potential criminal charges.
11. Double & triple check information before declaring its veracity. Many times, information received from a "reliable source", isn't entirely factual. (A classic example is that 25 mobile homes are zoned for the 7 acres; when in actuality, the Master Concept Plan states 25 single-family dwellings. Yes, there is a HUGE difference!)
12. Be fluent in Worker's Comp verbiage, and required documentation and procedures.
13. Discuss needs and issues intelligently with prospective vendors/contractors, Insurance Agent, CPA, marina repair, bulk cable, general contractors, etc.

14. Know how to research when asked to fill in, last minute---such as conducting the Annual Election with only ten days notice, no trained help, and critics at every turn.
15. Surround yourself, if possible, with professionals that know more about a topic than you do. Then listen and learn.
16. Contribute to the interview process & selection of employees.
17. Understand budgeting; the 3-bid process and the liabilities of ignoring this process; financing/ re-financing of a mortgage; and the difference between operating budgets & reserves and their purposes.
18. Understand when & if spending is warranted and affordable. (FYI: As of December 31, 2014 (9 months through this fiscal year), Oak Park has approximately \$484,000.00 in the Operating & Reserves. For the last several years and including the projected 2015-2016 fiscal year, your assessments have contributed approximately \$80,000+ per year to the Reserves.)
19. Understand the procedure to obtain County permits for such things as: building and renovation, cement work, electrical work, plumbing, etc.
20. Have the ability and a support system to stay focused when you are deceived; or your moral character, work ethic, education & intelligence are publicly slandered.
21. And the hardest of all, try not to make a judgment until you have done your homework!!!!

Don't misunderstand this. I was part of six teams, and with the efforts of some members within those six teams, a great deal was accomplished in the last six years. I'd like to thank those that gave their time, energy, dollars, fuel, and sleepless nights for the betterment of Oak Park. I won't name names, but you know who you are! I would guess the whole Park knows who you are! Often, serving on our BOD requires postponement or cancellation of personal/social activities; and a commitment from your spouse to pick up some of your responsibilities around the house. I quickly learned which BOD members and residents I could count on when things got complicated or intense.

In conclusion, I would like to point out some things I feel are the foundation for any well-functioning Park:

- Compared to many Lee County Cooperatives, Oak Park has a comprehensive set of By-Laws and Rules & Regulations.
- It is the shareholders' responsibility to keep those By-Laws and Rules & Regulations current and representative of our membership.
- It is the BOD's responsibility to enforce ALL of those By-Laws and Rules & Regulations--- as written--- whether they agree with them, or not.
- **For any BOD to ignore certain OP By-Laws/R&R, or choose to selectively enforce them; that BOD is, in effect, re-writing our By-Laws and/or Rules and Regulations without a vote of the membership.**

Thank you to those who have been responsible for building my resolve and commitment!

IT'S BEEN QUITE THE RIDE!!!!!!!





THE PEOPLE OF OAK PARK

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 1 Mike Hodson
- 2 Sue Kozma
- 3 Al Vine
- 4 Peggy Burnham
- 6 Richard Graves
- 12 Ann Manion
Dan Perone
- 13 Mary Ann Chodorowski
Frank Roest
John Forrester
- 14 Don Manly
Jack Anderson
- 16 Marion Stevens
- 17 Jim Murphey
- 19 Barb Fisher
- 20 Richard Stafford
- 22 Ken Bowman
Mary Lou Linert
Nancy Benham
Cal Parent
- 24 Jim Hutchinson
- 25 Lil Suter
- 26 Ben Murphey
- 28 Pat Manion
Bonnie Collins



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- 1 Trish & Bill Pouliot
- 5 Connie & Alan Krebs
- 8 Mary Lou & Joe Linert
- 11 Dar & Bill White
- 12 Brenda & Dennis Geffre
- 14 Kathy & Don Fornell
Emmy & Mel Spackey
- 15 JoAnn & Bob Miller
- 27 Kathy & John Kelly
- 28 Janet & Rusty Powers



NEW RESIDENTS

- Philip Schwartz
- 6 Grape



IN MEMORIAM

- Gene Thornburg





RAC

Liz Ingram, President

Our Oak Park Snowbirds have returned to their winter retreat among the palms, and the season is in full swing! January was filled with lots of fun activities like the Welcome Back Welcome New pool party, the Yacht Club's Dog and Brats and RAC's Golf Cart Poker Run. Many residents enjoyed the music and antics of the Carol and Johnnie Show; the Canadians tested us with trivia questions at the potluck they hosted, and dancers dazzled in white at the Sno-Flake Dance. Next on the January agenda is our annual Auction and Flea Market on Saturday the 31st. Thanks to the many volunteers that step up to help, we hope for another smooth and profitable sale. All proceeds go to RAC for operating expenses throughout the year.

January is the month for the installment of new RAC directors for two-year terms (2015-2017). This year we welcome Tina Baldino and Vicky Vauter and welcome back Mary Lou Linert. Directors fulfilling the remainder of their two year terms (2014-2016) are myself (Liz Ingram) and Janet McCaskill.

February promises to be another busy month, starting with the Superbowl party in the Annex on February 1st. Jerry Blakely is running this event and taking donations for a keg of beer. No matter who you're rooting for, it's sure to be a fun and spirited time!

This is quickly followed by the Italian Night dinner on the 7th, the Sweetheart Dance on the 14th and a RAC meeting on the 21st. On the 23rd we'll be treated to a demonstration by departments of the Lee County Sheriff's Office at 1 pm and the Yacht Club Steak Fry at 4 pm. The annual Firemen's and Oak Park Employees Appreciation Potluck is on the 26th, social at 5 pm and dinner at 6 pm to allow the honored guests time to go home and bring their families back for dinner. Sprinkled in amidst all these dates are several other events of special interest. Always stay tuned to the Oak Park Daily news, Channel 30 and the RAC bulletin board for details.

Here is a call-out for any retired firemen in the park: Wouldn't it be great to help host the February potluck along with Bob and Carol Langer? Plenty of help is needed for set-up, decorating, meet and greet and, of course, clean-up and tear down for the event. Please contact Bob or Carol Langer or Liz Ingram if you can help with this potluck. ***Block Captains or other designated individuals will be collecting donations for the Alva Fire Department from February 2nd through February 23rd.*** If you are out of the area, checks may be sent to Janet McCaskill, 3 Ilex, Alva, FL 33920 and made payable to RAC.

Now it's time to send out kudos to some folks who donate their time and effort for the benefit of all Oak Park: Thank you Judy Zellmer and Jerry, too, for religiously sitting down at your computer to produce the daily Oak Park News. Day in and day out it almost magically appears in your inbox. That's dedication!

Thank you, Joe Geffre and Char, too, for planting and maintaining our inviting landscape focal points. The beauty that you see represents hours of consistent hard work and attention.

Take a few minutes when you see these folks and say "Thanks for all you do!"

If there is someone you would like to recognize for their contribution to the amenities and activities of our park, please let me know, so that I may send kudos their way.

SWEETHEARTS DANCE



*Saturday, February 14th
7:30pm - 10:30pm*

*Music by Dick & Diane
BYOB & Snacks for your table*

*The new Oak Park King &
Queen will be crowned.*

Tickets: \$10 per person, sold in advance:

Aloe - Ruth Berry (21 Aloe)

Ashe - Doug/Sue Vine (2 Elder)

Eboe & Erica - Nancy Benham (4 Erica)

Basil, Cork & Dill - LaVonne Schafer (6 Cork)

Elder & Fig - Al/Audrey Vine (5 Elder)

Grape, Hay & Ilex - Pauline Bailey (7 Ilex)

Jute & Kelp - Barb Hagelshaw (1 Ilex)

*Table reservations will be arranged. Please contact
Barb Hagelshaw, 1 Ilex, 728-6652*

BEAN BAG WINNERS:

Jerry Zellmer & Janet McCaskill



GARDEN CLUB

The Alva Garden Club will hold their meeting at the Alva Museum on February 17th at 2:00pm.



Master Horticulturist Bob Cook will teach "Container Gardening". (He may also bring plants for sale).

Don't miss this class.

Everyone welcome!

(Nina Rigby)

ITALIAN NIGHT

Come join us for fun and a great meal.



Saturday, February 7th
Social Hour at 4:00
Dinner at 5:00



Donation of \$5 at the door. BYOB
Sign up in Clubhouse by Wednesday, February 4th.

The Italians'

The Bauer's, The Fornell's, The Studer's, The Perone's,
Connie Angelone, Tina Baldino, Bill Cobey

REPORT ON FLAROC SOUTHWEST CHAPTER MEETING
HOSTED BY OAK PARK COOPERATIVE
9:30AM, JANUARY 21, 2015

The Southwest Chapter of FLAROC was delivered a complimentary, deluxe continental breakfast by our Resident Activities Council at 9:00am. Oak Park President and SW Chapter Secretary Ford greeted the crowd. Fifty one (51) people attended. The area parks attending the meeting were: Oak Park, Bay Palms, Tropicana, River Haven, Six Lakes Country Club, Old Bridge, Mary Lu and Maple Leaf. Visiting professionals were Kristen Hubler of Stonegate Bank and Rayne McGreevy of Stroemer & Co (CPA).

The meeting was opened around 9:35am by Chapter and State President Jim Toth. The Treasurers report was read by Oak Park and SW Chapter Treasurer Lorraine Graves. President Toth informed attendees of current pending issues at Lee County and Florida State levels. Some of the pending legislation being discussed in Tallahassee is detrimental to our various associations and efforts to counter these actions are being undertaken by FLAROC. One example of issues affecting some communities in Lee County is a pending action which would require a 100% increase in water usage fees in communities that use city/county water by charging those communities at a multi-family rate. Another proposal would cause communities to retrofit their common facilities (clubhouses) with internal sprinkler systems.

The guest speaker for the event was Amelia Shekitka from the Florida State DBPR. (The Department of Business and Professional Regulation). CAM licensing is one of this bureau's functions, Board of Director member certification is another of its functions. Much information was delivered and booklets were handed out regarding Cooperative Association Elections, Florida Statutes chapter 719 (the Cooperative Act), Chapter 723 (the Mobile Home Act), a packet of referral information guidelines for government agencies with website and telephone contact information and a website containing the various licensure departments, regulations and requirements in Florida. All contractors doing business in Lee County are required to be licensed and registered with the County.

FLAROC is planning to address Florida laws about how Board Directors are replaced when they don't finish their term of office. Currently, we as a Board, replace vacancies on the Board for the duration of the vacated Directors term. Another option being discussed is replacement at the next year's Annual Meeting when elections are held. The meeting was adjourned at 10:37am. These are not minutes. It is just a report. The next FLAROC meeting will be held on February 18th.

Report by Oak Park Cooperative Board Secretary Ingram



NEW'S YEAR EVE IN OAK PARK:

