



Spring Lake BREEZE

Florida . . . the way it should be.

VOL. 1 NO. 9

OCTOBER 2007

Nuisance Gators

Alligators may be considered a nuisance when they are at least 4 feet in length and pose a threat to people, their pets or their property. When residents make a complaint to the Improvement District about an aggressive gator, we contact the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission.

The Commission has authorized trained and licensed trappers to oversee the Nuisance Alligator Control Program. Chris Lusby, shown in these pictures, is the licensed trapper that is sent to the District. Chris lives in Lake Placid and also oversees an alligator harvesting company there as well. When contacted about a specific gator, Chris will usually set a number of traps and try to remove other large gators.

From the end of August through the first week of September, Chris removed 14 gators from Spring Lake canals; from a 5-foot gator to one that measured almost 12 feet! As these pictures show, it takes a special expertise to be an alligator trapper.

If there is a nuisance gator in your community, call the District office for assistance.



Field Superintendent Randy Nelson helps Chris Lusby, a contract gator trapper, secure the gator.



Arbuckle Creek Park Upgrades

The District Board has made a financial commitment to upgrade and improve the beautiful park owned by the District at the mouth of Arbuckle Creek. This park is very underutilized, mostly because it is so hard to get to and not everyone knows they can use it. The current entrance to the park is about 100 yards east of the fish camp on Rt. 98. A key is needed to unlock the fence and a one half mile road that is very hard to navigate takes you to the park. The road is an easement the District has through an active grazing area owned by the Ming family, and the condition of the road almost prohibits using a car.



Arbuckle Creek Park

Plans are under way to secure a new entrance that goes from Istokpoga Park, owned by the county, west to our park. The new entry cuts the distance in half and the land is conducive for cars to travel. The county is currently discussing an easement for the District, and when we get it we will trade our existing easement with the Ming family to this new entrance.

Picnic tables, barbeques, a bathroom, renovated dock and new fence are all on the drawing board for the park. Additionally, a small shelter to give protection from rain and sun is also planned.

The park is available to any resident of Spring Lake. It can be accessed via the lake, or the entry off of Rt. 98. A key is needed to unlock the gate, and there is an application residents must fill out and sign at the District office prior to

using the park. Current Arbuckle Creek Park rules and regulations are as follows:

1. Park hours are sunrise to sunset
2. Park is for use by Spring Lake residents only
3. Entrance gate must be kept locked at all times
4. Access road is an easement thru private property that must be adhered to
5. Unleashed dogs or firearms are not permitted
6. Open fires are not permitted
7. Overnight camping is not permitted
8. No keys to anyone under 18. No children under 18 without an adult present
9. Park may be reserved for groups; reservations required for 20 or more
10. Failure to return key on the return date results in loss of park privileges.

Tree Project Completed

The Improvement District provided valuable assistance to the Property Association during the tree removal program. When the process first started District personnel spent many hours with District equipment hauling debris. It became apparent that the District did not have the right equipment to move the larger tree trunks and roots, so our role switched to managing the burn pile while an outside company was hired by the Association to do a better job of cutting the larger trees and hauling the debris to the District burn pile.

As the picture of just **one** pile indicates, there are a lot more trees that have been burned by the District than people realize. Through September, **three** burn permits were secured to eliminate the debris and by the time this issue of the paper is delivered, all trees and debris should have been burned.

While the tree cutting and removal was funded by the Property Association to an outside company, District personnel are to be complimented for the wonderful job they did in making this program a success. Field Foreman Randy Nelson and Property Association member, Dan Snyder, coordinated these efforts.



Some residents did not realize the commitment the District made to this project and felt that we were not cooperating with the Property Association. This could not be further from the truth and we regret that people will share false information and cause miscommunication and dissension. Some people just have too much time on their hands.

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Who's Who?

The Improvement District is managed by a Board of Commissioners, a full-time staff and advisors. Here are the people in charge of SLID:

Board Of Commissioners:

Leon Van	Chairman
Marsi Benson	Vice Chairperson
Bill Rentel	Secretary
Ken Poe	
Brian Acker	

District Staff:

Joe DeCerbo	District Manager
Diane Angell	Administrative Assistant
Greg Gretz	Water Department Supervisor
Randy Nelson	Maintenance Department Supervisor
Gladys Eaglen	Secretary

Field Staff:

John Laiosa	Brian Murray	Brian Patrick
JR Clarke	Neil Wilkinson	Buddy Heinley
Bill Maine	Corey Jones	

District Advisors:

William Nielander	Attorney
Gene Schriner	Craig A. Smith Engineering
Craig Wrathell	Financial and Management
Bruce Stratton	Accounting and Auditing

Residents Improving Their Properties



Before



After

Many residents have been complimenting the District on the way our community looks. Better equipment and a committed staff have greatly improved the aesthetics of Spring Lake. Lot mowing, trimming, weed control and general maintenance has had a most positive influence on all of our neighborhoods.

In addition to the work of our District staff, many residents are taking the time to work on, and improve, their own homes. We must not forget that Spring Lake was created in the early 70s and some structures are more than 30 years old. Sitting among the swaying old oak trees are a few older homes being redone by their owners. One such house, pictured here, sits

on 8017 Granada Road and is owned by Bruce and LaVonne Gunn, formerly of Okeechobee. When they moved into the house in July of '05 they sent friends their new address by calling it, "Serenity of Spring Lake."

As you can see from the before and after pictures, much has been done to "spruce" things up and we can certainly appreciate the effect. What a difference some paint, curbing and landscaping can make.

We thank the Gunns for sharing their story and urge other residents to let *The Breeze* know what you have done with your home and let us print it.

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency 911

Spring Lake Improvement District	655-1715
SLID After Hours	655-0615
Spring Lake Property Association	655-2230
Ambulance and Sheriff	385-5111
Sheriff Dispatch	402-7200
Highlands County Emergency Center	385-1112
Lorida Fire Department	655-0122
Desoto City Forestry Division	655-6407
Animal Control	655-6475
Florida Game and Wildlife	800-282-8002
Reliable Sanitation	385-0817
Auto and Boat Registration	402-6685
Comcast Cable	385-2578
Drivers License Facility	386-6053
Progress Energy	800-700-8744
Lorida Post Office	655-1321
Sebring Post Office	382-0578
Embarq	800-339-1811
Voter Registration	402-6655
School Board	471-5555
Hunting and Fishing License	402-6685
Hammock State Park	386-6094
Highlands Regional Medical Center	385-6101
Florida Hospital	314-4466

Neighborhood Watch

Chairman	Vohn Steinlage	655-4981
Village I	Dan Snyder	655-2723
Village II	Don Vandygriff	655-1762
Village III & IV	Joanne McCulley	655-1701
Village V	Lynn Benson	655-1081
Village VI	Ann Steinlage	655-4981

Legal Notice

Notice Of Meetings

The Board of Supervisors of the Spring Lake Improvement District will hold their meetings at the District Office, 115 Spring Lake Blvd., Sebring. The meetings will be held the second Wednesday of each month, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Any person requiring special accommodations at these meetings because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the District Office at (863) 655-1815 at least five calendar days prior to the meeting. Meetings may be continued at a later date and time, which will be announced at the meeting.

Each person who decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the meeting is advised that that person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which such appeal is to be based.

Fountains Can Be Installed In Waterways

Were you aware that fountains can be installed in canals and other bodies of water? Several years ago, the Improvement District Board approved criteria for the permitting of fountains. Since that time only two permits have been issued, probably because residents are not aware of this opportunity.

It was recognized that fountains can improve the aesthetics of a property, as well as helping to move water and prevent unwanted plants and weeds from growing. All costs for installation and maintenance are borne by the resident. There is no cost for the permit and applications are available at the District Office. Here are the criteria established by the Board:

1. No electric pumps or power lines are allowed in the water body.
2. Fountain draw and return pipes will have a minimum of 24 inches of cover on District right-of-way.
3. Pump and all exposed piping will be on the owner's property.
4. Owner shall have adjacent landowners sign a consent form, as well



as landowners directly across from the fountain location.

5. Fountain shall **not** be operated from 9 p.m. through 7 a.m. daily.

6. No lighting fixtures are allowed.

7. The maximum height of the water column shall not exceed 10 feet.

8. Fountain water column or spray shall not be allowed to act so as to inconvenience neighbors, erode canal banks or District right-of-way.

9. Fountain and associated piping will be installed so as to allow clear passage for the emergency/maintenance boat.

10. SLID shall have the right to terminate the operation of, and/or the removal of the fountain due to any improprieties, or other circumstances, at the owner's cost.

11. SLID reserves the right to relocate or terminate the operation of the fountain for routing canal maintenance at the owner's cost.

12. Fountain must be at least 25 feet from adjacent property lines.

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Public Opinion

By Jack Marino

The following article was submitted to The Breeze by Mr. Marino and the content and opinions offered are strictly his. While The Breeze welcomes public opinion, views do not represent the District.

"I have spent much time reviewing the minutes of the Spring Lake Property Association to formulate my article, in spite of the fact that nine months of minutes were not done correctly. Many omissions were conversations between Board members who were actually code violators. I have discussed my concerns with a number of people, and what I have to say may not be a surprise to them. For those who are not aware of what I am outlining, you have the right to look at the same information that I did."

Wanted: Dedicated people to serve on the Board of Directors of the Spring Lake Property Association.

Requirements: Agree to comply with and enforce the bylaws and deed restrictions of the Association; be a registered property owner who has resided in Spring Lake Proper at least six months before the February '08 election.

"The Spring Lake Property Association (SLPA) includes Villages I thru VI, and is the largest of the four associations in our community, with approximately 2,700 eligible home and lot owners. The SLPA Board consists of nine officials who are elected by its members for a term of two years. There

will be four or more Board seats up for re-election this coming February. It will give the current members a chance to correct what I view as some questionable policies and omissions practiced by select officials rooted on this Board. I feel the Board has been ineffective and self-serving over the past several years, and further believe there has been a lack of leadership regarding proper use of member funds. There is also ambivalence by the Board toward enforcing the bylaws and deed restrictions of our association.

"I have become very concerned over the last 18 months as the current leadership continues to steer funds to a single organization that has leadership directly connected to the SLPA Board. Donating \$23,000 for equipment and training courses has its merit, but how can a \$75,000 pledge be made to the department without ample discussion with Association members at a series of meetings rather than at sparsely attended gatherings before the "winter" people arrive? The pledge, by the way, is in limbo.

"I am not against supporting the Fire Department, but shouldn't the costs for a new facility in Spring Lake be borne by the entire community? Why just the SLPA? The other associations and the Improvement District should formulate a master plan for fire and safety and secure broad support. Again I ask, why just the SLPA?

"Over the past few years there has been a decline in the appearance of certain neighborhoods. Each year the SLPA

Board receives complaints about the need to be more proactive in code enforcement, yet as people refuse to adhere to the deed restrictions, not one penny has been spent to enforce the policies through the legal system. It concerns me that we continue to see RVs, campers, commercial vehicles and boats in full view. I realize that boats and campers are allowed in Village I, but not the other areas. Some members are now challenging the deed restrictions by placing unapproved storage sheds on their property. My research indicated that several Board members are violators themselves!

"Another problem that I see is the lack of legal representation at Board meetings to assist the Association in clarifying the codes and to pursue a legal course of action against offenders. Having a Board attorney is the cost of doing business when you have 2,700 eligible members and a large amount of money. Bylaws and deed restrictions need constant review and oversight and having an attorney would keep the Board on a much more even keel. My guess is that an attorney would advise the Board to discuss their more pertinent items, especially giving money away, during the winter months when a lot of people are here to discuss it.

I want to conclude by offering the following positive suggestions:

1. Allow members a write-in forum in the monthly SLPA newsletter
2. Minutes of monthly Board and member meetings should be available to members after one week
3. A Web site should be created and marketed
4. Membership is in arrears by over \$40,000, down from \$60,000. Offer some kind of incentive for people to get caught up in their dues
5. The Board should be reduced to five voting members and four nonvoting members
6. A part-time violations officer should be hired to enforce our codes and not play politics or favorites because someone is associated with the Board
7. Current bylaws and deed restrictions should be strictly enforced
8. Board members should **set** the example regarding code, not **be** the example
9. Names and addresses of repeat code violators should be printed in both the SLPA newsletter and *The Breeze*
10. Repeat violators should be taken through the legal system.

I thank *The Breeze* for allowing a public opinion in our community newspaper. My intentions are to help create a more effective and viable Property Association and watch Spring Lake continue to grow and prosper. I hope my fellow members will get more involved and find out for themselves whether or not I am correct."

Hyperbaric Chamber Has Spring Lake Connection

Many of us might know this chamber from watching divers come out of the water, entering a metal device and going through decompression. These chambers are now being used in wound care centers as a result of recent technology. Florida Hospital Heartland Division installed their chamber on Aug. 8, and Highlands Regional will install theirs in November.

James C. LeVangie is a retired U.S. naval officer who now resides in Spring Lake and related a very interesting and unique experience he had with the chamber over a 43-year period. He believes you may find this story useful in the reduction of pain and suffering for you and your family members. With his permission, we are sharing that experience.

"In 1979 I was officer in charge of a U.S. Navy research facility in what is infamously known as the Bermuda Triangle when *Hurricane David* blew through. After evacuating over 1,000 U.S. citizens off the island, we returned to find a small utility boat sunk. A simple problem, I sent a diver down and the boat was soon returned to the surface; however, the diver scratched his leg during the dive. Both civilian and military doctors were unable to stop the resulting infection caused by the very warm tropical waters and soon the doctors were announcing that gangrene was setting in ... the leg must come off. I remembered in 1964, when I was on a very secret submarine which existed before Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines (FBMS), there were conventional subs with big hangars on the back for guided missiles. "Conventional" in those days were called diesel-electric, but now you would call them hybrids, like the cars.

"When FBMS came into operations, the guided missile subs were scrapped and the hanger was removed from the *USS Barbaro* and sent to California for hyperbaric operating room experimentation. Pressurized oxygen in the operating rooms was assured of killing the stytic infections that are so prevalent even today. The baby was thrown out of the bath water when they became concerned that oxygen in the presence of electrical equipment in the new operating rooms would pose a fire hazard. Then, in 1979, we had no help from the medical community so I relied upon that earlier experience and assignment. Writing

orders for the injured diver who scratched his leg, I instructed him to be put in the large pressure chamber for three hours at 45-pounds pressure of pure oxygen. When the diver arrived at the chamber, the attending physician was going to send him to Bethesda, but the diver insisted he had orders to be put into the chamber. The first hour was uneventful and the leg remained black, blue and greenish yellow. The second hour the colors started to fade and we began to exercise it. I softly massaged it. By the third hour the colors were gone and the leg returned to normal color: if anything, a little pink. The attending physician checked out the diver and did extensive tests on the leg, including taking blood samples. I can still remember him shaking his head and saying he could find nothing wrong with the leg and cleared the diver for normal duties after further checks at Bethesda. The diver had gone from amputation to normal in three hours!"

Jim has taken a very active role in ensuring that the hospitals will use this chamber to the utmost advantage of its patients. He has written to both hospitals, sharing his experience and knowledge about treatment to doctors in the wound care centers.

"I am concerned that the chamber will not be used first and at full strength. Its potential in the area of agricultural injuries, diabetics and the aged has unlimited potential; what will appear to be miraculous recoveries.

"I want my fellow residents to know that this piece of medical technology can bring pain relief and reduce suffering. Be sure to ask your doctor for the possible application of the chamber."

For more information on this interesting topic, please go to <http://wound-care.org> or google hyperbaric chambers. If you would like more information and insight from Jim, you can e-mail him at JLE_Vangie@tnni.net.





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Villas For Sale

MLS #	ADDRESS	PRICE
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192670	207 Villaway East	\$139,900
192544	2208 Villaway East	\$179,000
194561	303 Villaway East	\$148,500
188797	1010 Villaway West	UNDER CONTRACT
193389	1103 Villaway West	\$128,000
194557	1202 Villaway West	\$124,900
194287	1302 Villaway West	REDUCED TO \$89,000



MLS # 190363

Large pool home, 3 Bed, 3 Bath, 2+ cg, large lot, over \$60k worth of recent upgrades. Hot tub/spa stays! Lawn Mower Stays!!!
Recently Reduced \$229,000.



MLS # 192889

Sellers relocating. MUST SELL!!!! 3 Bed, 2 Bath, 2 cg, large screened breezeway, all on a cul-de-sac. Come take a look and make an offer! \$173,000.

Staff Profile

Randy Nelson joined the staff of the Improvement District in 1991, shortly after graduating from Sebring High School. Unlike most of us who live in Spring Lake, Randy was actually born and raised in Highlands County and is well-known to the many longtime rancher and farmer families here.

Randy has held just about every job there is on the maintenance side of District operations: lot mowing, parks, mechanical, backhoe and other heavy equipment, weed control, mosquito spraying and maintaining the pump station, to name a few.

Currently, Randy supervises a staff of seven, oversees all field and drainage operations for the District, and ensures compliance with all charter requirements and regulatory agencies. He is the licensed member of our staff to administer



District Foreman Randy Nelson

and oversee the District's Mosquito Control and Aquatic Weed control programs and maintains all proper licenses for such responsibilities.

Randy also oversees and manages all functions of flood control drainage, including the daily operation and maintenance of all pumps in the District. He is responsible for lot mowing, parks and facilities maintenance and daily work order processes.

In spite of the myriad of responsibilities Randy has, which often calls for coming back in the evening and weekends, he still finds time for outdoor hobbies. He and his wife, Crystal, along with their two children, live on five acres of land and enjoy fishing and hunting. He also tries to tell people golf is a hobby as well, but we know better!

Improved Pump — Installed


Spring Lake Water Superintendent Greg Gretz continues to stay one step ahead of our water department needs. Greg recently supervised the installation of a new high service pump that increases the amount of pressure throughout our water system. This not only impacts water that comes to your home, but also increases the pressure to our fire hydrants.

On Aug. 17, the people who are pictured assisted in the transition to our new high-service pump.

Greg Gretz (far left) and his team of installers representing Censtate, Amp Check Electric, Bailey Electrical Engineering, Hudson Pump and Craig A. Smith and Associates.



October Calendar



- 2 County Commission Meeting, 9 a.m.
- 3 Yard Waste Pickup
Women's Social Club, 9:30 a.m., Community Center
- 8 **Columbus Day:** District Office Closed
SLPA meeting, 7 p.m., Community Center
- 9 County Commission Meeting, 9 a.m.
- 10 Women's Social Club, 9:30 a.m., Community Center
SLID Meeting, 2 p.m.
- 11 Bridge Club, 6 p.m., Community Center
- 16 National Boss' Day
County Commission Meeting, 9 a.m.
- 17 Yard Waste Pickup
Bunco, 9:30 a.m., Community Center
- 23 County Commission Meeting, 9 a.m., Community Center
- 24 Women's Social Club, 9:30 a.m., Community Center
- 25 Bridge Club, 6 p.m., Community Center
- 27 **Trick or Treat Night**, 6 to 9 p.m.
- 31 Women's Social Club, 9:30, Community Center
Halloween

Signs ... Signs ... Signs!



Highlands County Code Enforcement has recently written numerous articles about sign violations and their commitment to enforce current codes. Here in Spring Lake the biggest problems occur on county right-of-ways. These areas are all the medians that begin at our various entrances, as well as Duane Palmer Boulevard and 15 feet off of each roadway. The county expects the Improvement District staff to **remove** any signs that are on these right-of-ways unless they are permitted. Currently, the only signs that are permitted are the District entrance signs and the new signs recently erected by Golf View Villas at several key locations. These new signs were approved by the county engineer only after Golf View Villas went through an application and review process and had a meeting with the county to ensure proper sign dimensions.

The code also includes no signs on trees, posts and utility poles. Not only will the signs be removed, but the violator risks being fined. Highlands County Code of Ordinance 12.14.303 and Florida Statute 337.406 clearly outline the penalties for unauthorized use of the public right-of-way. For Sale and Realty signs are to be on the **inside** part of the drainage ditches, closer to the house and on the property owner's land.

Several agencies across the state and the county participated in a statewide cleanup on Sept. 29. This is the start of increased enforcement and the Spring Lake community will be continually involved. If you have any questions about the validity of any sign you want to use, call the County Code Enforcement at 402-6945.



Spring Lake Residents



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Community Center Hosts *Fantasy!*



Team owners contemplating their selections



Carole and Rob Frederick supervising the selections

Football That Is

Fantasy Football is a fantasy sports game in which participants, called owners, are arranged into a league. Each owner drafts a team of real-life American football players and then scores points each week based on those players statistical performance on the field. Leagues are arranged in a head-to-head competition, and playoffs are conducted during the latter part of the regular NFL season. No NFL player can be drafted by more than one fantasy owner.

During the course of the season, each owner plays one quarterback, two running backs, three wide receivers, one kicker and one defense. The total scoring, based on league rules, determines the weekly winners. Trades and pick-ups

occur during the season as a result of injuries to the real players or poor performance.

This particular league is predominantly made up of Spring Lake residents, and there is a dedicated Web site that owners go to for all the information they need on their team and their opponent for that week. Local resident John Delaney is the organizer and commissioner for the league, along with Rob Frederick and Leon Van assisting with the weekly administration.

Each owner selects a name for their team, and here is the complete listing of all the Fantasy League Football Fanatics:

Wandering Colts	John Delaney
Midway Monsters	Leon Van
Bald Eagle	Rob Frederick

Lady Wolverines
The Chosen Ones

Windy City Boys
Semper Fi
Wolverines
Bud Lite Chix

Destroyers
Pie O Mie

Roaring Packers

Linda Poe
Dave Ferguson and
Crystle McKee
Joe DeCerbo
Bill Patton
Ken Poe
Joyce Reaume and
Teri Swisher
Jimmy Acevedo
TJ DeCerbo and
John Schroeder
Cal Swisher and
Charlie Reaume

Aquatic Plant Management Permitting

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) oversees the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management. Highlands County is under the jurisdiction of the offices located in Bartow (863-534-7074). This department oversees the authorization for a waterfront property owner to manage aquatic plants along a shoreline adjacent to their property. These permits are issued according to Rule 62C-20 of the Florida Administrative Code.

Florida law requires all persons to obtain a permit from DEP prior to controlling, removing or altering aquatic plants in waters of the state unless the waters or activities are expressly exempt from the permitting requirements.



How do I obtain an aquatic plant management permit?

Download an application from the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management Web site at www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec or contact the Bartow office.

How much does an aquatic plant management permit cost?

There is no charge ... it is absolutely free.

What are the benefits to having a permit?

With a permit you can remove exotics, which will allow room for native aquatic plants to grow and expand. It will ensure that you have a plan for managing your waterfront that will not harm the waterbody and help protect the investment you have made in it. Proper management of the shoreline will also enhance aesthetics; improve food and habitat for fish and wildlife; provide erosion control and soil stabilization; ensure plants are present for nutrient uptake which will result in cleaner water.

Before permits are issued, DEP biologists will need to know:

That you have thought about the task at hand and that you have a plan; that you know and can identify the plants you want to control; that your efforts will not adversely affect nontarget plants and wildlife; that you understand the plant management options available; and that the tools you propose to use, such as machines or herbicides, are the most appropriate for the job.

The Improvement District currently maintains all necessary licenses, permits and chemicals needed for the canals. Field Foreman Randy Nelson is certified by the state of Florida to oversee District spraying. If you have any questions about plant control prior to contacting the state, call Randy at the District Office, at 655-1715.

POE BUILDERS, INC.



RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

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For Information Call 863•471•1122

Yard Waste Pickup Change

Reliable Sanitation has announced a new schedule for yard waste pickup. All residents with garbage collection on Monday and Thursday will have yard waste pickup on the **first and third Wednesday** of each month.

Please remember that yard waste must be tied, bundled or in a container less than 5-feet long, and each bundle must weigh less than 50 pounds. Yard waste is vegetation grown in your yard and is a result of normal yard care and maintenance.

Changes still occur on the four major holidays: New Year's, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

25 Special Districts In Highlands County

The Spring Lake Improvement District is one of 25 special districts that have been created in Highlands County. While Spring Lake was created by a Special Act of the State Legislature and has the power to assess non-ad valorem taxes, it is considered an Independent District and does not require county intervention in its operation.

There are a number of Special Benefit Districts that have been created that provide a very specific service to a very specific population in the county. The state Legislature, in 1989, authorized Highlands County to create, amend, merge and abolish Special Benefit Districts. Even after creation, Highlands County continues to play the lead role in the operation of these Special Districts.

In accordance with State Statute, a Dependent Special District in Highlands County must have the same governing Board as the county, and the Board of County Commissioners acts as the Board of Supervisors of each District. They levy the necessary assessment to fund District expenses. Here is a list of those Districts that are under the jurisdiction of the county:

- Sebring Country Estates, special benefit district
- Orange Villa Mobile Home Estates, special benefit district
- Istokpoga Marsh Watershed, improvement district
- Sun 'n Lake Estates and Acreage of Lake Placid, special benefit district
- Desoto City, special benefit fire district
- Placid Lakes, special benefit fire district
- Red Hill Farms, improvement district

- Sun 'n Lakes of Lake Placid, recreation district
- Highlands Park Estates, special benefit district
- Lorida, special benefit fire district
- West Sebring, special benefit fire district
- Placid Lakes, special benefit district
- Avon Park Estates, special benefit district
- Leisure Lakes, special benefit fire district
- Hickory Hills, special benefit district

- Highlands Park, special benefit district
- Sebring Hills, special benefit district
- Orange Blossom Estates, special benefit district
- Sebring Acres, special benefit district
- Lake Haven Estates, special benefit district
- Orange Blossom Unit 12, special benefit district
- Highway Park, special benefit district
- Venus, special benefit fire district

Poetry Corner

I Am There

This poem was written by James Dillet Freeman and gained prominence when Apollo Mission Astronaut Alan Shepard left it on the moon:

Do you need Me?
 I am there.
 You cannot see Me, yet I speak through your voice.
 You cannot feel Me, yet I am the power at work in your hands.
 I am at work, though you do not understand My ways.
 I am at work, though you do not understand My works.
 I am not strange visions. I am not mysteries.
 Only in absolute stillness, beyond self, can you know Me as a feeling and a faith.
 Yet I am here. Yet I hear. Yet I answer.
 When you need Me, I am there.
 Even if you deny Me, I am there.
 Even when you feel most alone, I am there.
 Even in your fears, I am there.
 Even in your pain, I am there.
 I am there when you pray and when you do not pray.
 I am in you, and you are in Me.

Only in your mind can you feel separate from Me, for only in your mind are the mists of "yours" and "mine." Yet only with your mind can you know Me and experience Me.
 Empty your heart of empty fears.
 When you get yourself out of the way, I am there.
 You can of yourself do nothing, but I can do all.
 And I AM in all.
 Though you may not see the good, it is there, for I am there. I am there because I have to be, because I Am.
 Only in Me does the world have meaning; only out of Me does the world take form; only because of Me does the world go forward.
 I am the law on which the movement of the stars, and the growth of living cells are founded.
 I am the love that is the law's fulfilling. I am assurance.
 I am peace. I am oneness. I am the law that you can live by.
 I am the love that you can cling to. I am your assurance.
 I am your peace. I am ONE with you. I am.
 Though you fail to find Me, I do not fail you.
 Though your faith in Me is unsure, My faith in you never wavers, because I know you, because I love you.
 Beloved, I AM there.

In Memoriam

Just prior to publication of this issue, a memorial service was held for longtime Spring Lake resident Robert F. Ames, who died on Sept. 1. He and his wife, Dixie, were very active in Spring Lake Golf Resort and many friends and acquaintances attended St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church in Lake Placid on Sept. 5 to pay honor to Bob.

Bob and Dixie moved here from Cortland, N.Y., where he had a successful auto dealership. He is survived by his wife and three children. Bob was a friend and gentleman to all who knew him.

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Floridians

Submitted by Amanda Baptiste

You know you are a Floridian if

- Socks are only for bowling.
- You never use an umbrella because you know the rain will be over in five minutes.
- A good parking space has nothing to do with distance from the store, just shade!
- Your winter coat is made of denim.
- You can tell the difference between fire ant bites and mosquito bites.
- You're younger than 30 but some of your friends are over 65.
- Anything under 70 is chilly.
- You pass on the right and honk at the elderly, but pull over for a funeral.
- You've driven through Yeehaw Junction.
- You could swim before you could read.
- You have to drive north to get to the South.
- You know that no other grocery store can compare to Publix.

Publix.

- Every other house in your neighborhood had blue roofs in '04 and '05.
- You've gotten out of school early on Halloween to trick or treat before it got dark.
- You know that anything under a Category 3 just isn't worth waking up for.
- You dread love bug season.
- You are on a first name basis with the hurricane list ...

Charlie, Frances, Ivan, etc.

- You know what a snowbird is.
- You know why flamingos are pink.
- You think a 6-foot alligator is actually pretty small.
- You were 12 before you ever saw snow, or you still haven't.
- "Down South" means Key West.
- "Panhandling" means going to Pensacola.
- Flip-flops are everyday wear.
- Shoes are for business meetings and church.
- No, wait ... flip-flops are good for church too! Unless it is Christmas or Easter.

- Sweet tea can be served at any meal.
- An alligator once walked through your neighborhood.
- You smirk when a game shows grand prize is a trip or cruise to Florida.
- You measure distance in minutes.
- You have a drawer full of bathing suits and one sweatshirt.
- You get annoyed at the tourists who feed seagulls.
- All local festivals are named after a fruit.
- A mountain is any hill 100 feet above sea level.
- You think everyone from a bigger city has a northern accent.
- Its not soda, cola, or pop ... it's Coke, regardless of brand or flavor.
- Anything under 95 is just warm.
- You've hosted a hurricane party.
- You go to a theme park for an afternoon.

- You can pronounce Okeechobee, Kissimmee and Thonotosassa.
- You understand why it's better to have a friend with a boat rather than own one.
- Bumper stickers on the pickup in front of you include a Confederate flag.
- You were 5 before you realized they made houses without pools.
- You were 25 when you first met someone who couldn't swim.
- You get angry when people say Florida isn't really part of the South.
- You've worn shorts and used air-conditioning on Christmas.
- You know what the "stingray shuffle" is and why it's important.
- You recognize Miami-Dade as "Northern Cuba."

Landowner Election

On Wednesday, Nov. 14, the Spring Lake Improvement District will conduct a landowner's election to determine who will sit on the Board for the next three years. As a Special District, Spring Lake has two Board members who are elected in the general election process and are on the county ballot. The other three Board members are elected by landowners. Each landowner has a vote determined by the number of acres, lots or homes they own. If someone has a single residence in Spring Lake, they have one vote; a residence and a separate lot would give you two votes; three lots equal three votes, etc. You also have votes based on acreage that you might own, such as 12 votes for owning 12 acres of land.

Each landowner seat on the Board is for a three-year term,



beginning with the November meeting. Candidates can pick up proxy forms at the District Office and bring them to the landowner election on Nov. 14. All proxies are submitted at that time and a winner declared. If you have any questions, please contact the District Office.

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For more information
call 863-655-1715



Changes in the Breeze at the Crossings of Spring Lake

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