

Spring Lake BREEZE

Florida . . . the way it should be.

VOL. 3 NO. 1

www.seabreezecomunications.com

JANUARY 2009



County Continues To Help



Pictured left to right: Spring Lake Supervisor Ken Poe meets with Highlands County Planner Zane Thomas and Highlands County Road and Bridge Superintendent Kyle Green to review collaborative efforts to improve drainage and water control issues.

Living With Nature

Sometimes we take for granted the wonderful birds, wildlife, animals, plants, flowers, waterways and lakes we have right here in our community. If you are an early morning or late evening walker or bike rider, you get the added enhancement of both the stillness of our community and the sounds of nature. When the sun rises and we sometimes get a light fog, it is truly a time for reflection. Is there any other place that has more beautiful full-moon views and sunsets?

Phyllis and Gary Adams were kind enough to share with *The Breeze* the wonderful experience they had one early morning in late November. Phyllis awoke, looked out her sliding glass doors and saw three deer. She woke up her husband and they took these beautiful pictures to share with all of us. We thank them for helping remind us we are truly living with nature here in Spring Lake.



Lake Istokpoga Update

By Bert Galloway, President, Friends of Istokpoga

Most of the time we think of Lake Istokpoga as our own little paradise, but in the big scheme of things the Lake is just the beginning of one of the world's most significant ecosystems, affecting primarily the Florida Everglades. Keeping this in mind, let me give you a little history of the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (NEEPP), how it came about, and how it affects us here on the Lake.

Passed by the Florida Legislature and signed into law by Governor Crist, the Landmark NEEPP promotes a comprehensive



interconnected watershed approach to protecting Lake Okeechobee and its estuaries. By expanding the Lake Okeechobee Protection Act (LOPA), the Florida Legislature recognized the importance and



connection of the entire ecosystem from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes to the north of us, through the Lake Istokpoga area watershed, and south to the Florida Bay.

The NEEPP includes short-term measures for implementation during the first three years of the plan and longer-term measures that will be put into operation post 2010. The plan represents the best blueprint for achieving water-quality standards while better managing lake levels in the entire Okeechobee watershed. Components of the multiphase plan include:

- Implementing agriculture management practices on over 1.7 million acres of land
- Adopting new regulations that reduce the impacts of development on water quality
- Building treatment wetlands to clean water flowing into the lakes
- Using other innovative green nutrient controls to reduce phosphorous levels
- Create up to 1.3-million-acre feet of water storage north of Lake Okeechobee.

If you are interested in preserving the Lake, you may want to consider joining the Friends of Istokpoga. Please visit our Web site at www.istokpoga.org or e-mail us at friends@istokpoga.org for additional membership and general information.

Happy New Year

By Pastor Katie Treadway

Happy New Year! I hope that topping your list of resolutions this year is the decision to work on your spiritual life in 2009. But how, exactly, do we do that? How do we silence the needs and grips of our "regular" lives in order to hear the spiritual yearning that is in our hearts? You know what I am talking about; something in us, more than us, urging us to pay attention. But the phone rings or the television blares, or the family calls, or the boss demands; and within seconds we have forgotten that in our deepest selves we had wanted to pay attention, to listen, to grow, to become.

Quoting *Hungry Hearts*, a newsletter of the Presbyterian Church (USA), "spiritual formation is the activity of the Holy Spirit that molds our lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This likeness is one of deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all of creation. The Spirit works not only in the lives of individuals but also in the church,

shaping it into the body of Christ. We cooperate with this work of the Spirit through certain practices that make us more open and responsive to the Spirit's touch, disciplines such as Sabbath keeping, works of compassion and justice, discernment, worship, Scripture study, hospitality, spiritual friendships, and contemplative silence."

Whether you consider yourself Christian or a seeker on another religious path, we welcome you to Spring Lake Presbyterian Church to help you succeed in your resolutions for 2009. Your presence just might help us to grow spiritually as well.

We don't offer perfection, just an earnest attempt to listen and respond to the Spirit's guidance in our lives and through our church. Worship is on Sunday mornings at 10; Sunday school is at 9 and all are welcome.

On Saturdays beginning January 17, all youth ages 12 to 18 are invited to Roserio's Pizza in the shopping plaza for **free** pizza from 1 to 2 p.m. Your first slice of pizza and drink will be provided compliments of a grant from the church. All additional slices will only be 50 cents ... you can't beat that anywhere! Following pizza time all youth are invited

Happy New Year on page 2



"Heart Pillows" are made by ladies of the church to provide comfort for surgical patients at Highlands Regional Medical Center. During the past year 308 pillows were delivered, a wonderful accomplishment.

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
FORT MYERS
FLORIDA
PERMIT NO. 751

Happy New Year from page 1

to the church for supervised outdoor play, basketball, games and skateboarding until 3 p.m. You **must** provide your own transportation. If you have any questions about this activity, want to be involved in the project or want additional information, please call the church office at 655-0713.

Jan. 17 also marks the date of the Doc Decker Annual Memorial Golf Tournament. We are hopeful that many of Doc's friends and acquaintances will sign up to make the first tournament in Doc's memory a huge success.

Many thanks to all in the community who have contributed to the church's food pantry; we want to be a community church. If you know of someone in need, please feel free to contact the church office and we will be happy to share our resources. We expect nothing in return!

May the source of all hope and love strengthen you and your families in 2009.

Focus On Local Business

General Manager Reinhard Haubner has turned the Four Points by Sheraton and the Sebring Chateau Elan into one of the finest hotel and dining facilities in the County. Located at the Race Track and Airport complex, major additions and improvements have been made over the years. The facility now has over 4,000 square feet for weddings, receptions, parties and meetings. The Esperante restaurant inside the hotel offers one of the best daily lunch buffet bargains you will find at under \$8 and there are always dinner and holiday specials being offered, especially the very popular two-for-one prime rib dinner on Saturdays.



Four Points Sheraton

Spring Lake residents are fortunate to have an upscale, yet conservatively priced, hotel and restaurant in our backyard. Stop by and make sure you let Reinhard know that you are from Spring Lake; he is always ready for a conversation!



\$10

OFF YOUR NEXT ROUND OF GOLF
CALL 655-0101
FOR TEE TIMES
COUPON REQUIRED

Expires 1-31-09

LIFE TIME FREE GOLF
FOR DETAILS CALL
LAKEVIEW REALTY 655-0007

863-655-0007

Specializing in Spring Lake

Lakeview Realty

Spring Lake Golf Resort Clubhouse 100 Clubhouse Lane, Sebring, FL

\$375,000



Spectacular luxury home on double lot, Panther Creek golf course. 4/3, 3 car garage, 5000 sq ft. Must see!



Publisher Terrence C. Reid
Production Director Jacquelyn Reid
Sales Department
Sales Manager Lisa E. Hartford
Teresa (Teri) Brady
Al Ullio
Director Of Mailing Operations
Sherry Whalon
Mail Room Katie Idler
Production Manager Carol Sands
Production Department
Elaine Donholt • Ruth Nekoranec • Clara Doster
Lora Cox • Nancy Glazers • Katie Heystek • Polly Bryden
Joyce Bunting • Millie Poland

All rights reserved. Reproduction or utilization of these contents in any form by any electric, mechanical, or other means, including xerography and photocopying is forbidden without the written permission of the Publisher.
The Publisher is not responsible or liable for misinformation or misprints herein contained and reserves the right to accept or reject all copy deemed unsuitable for publication.

(239) 278-4222 • Fax (239) 278-5583
5630 Halifax Avenue * Fort Myers, FL 33912
Ft. Myers • Bonita • Estero • The Palm Beaches • Boca Raton
www.seabreezecomunications.com

Shop Foreman Staff Profile

One of the major investments a community makes is in its equipment and vehicles. Preventive maintenance, repairs and general upkeep can add years to the life of these most important assets. As the new maintenance facility was being completed, the District felt there was a need for a shop foreman to oversee the facility and be the long-needed mechanic. When two lot mowing employees resigned prior to the summer, the District hired two seasonal employees, rather than full time, thus enabling us to hire a full-time shop foreman. This has proven to be a very cost effective bonus to our District. The maintenance facility is a very well-organized, clean and functional building; and our equipment and vehicles have never looked or operated better.



Shop Foreman James Hicks at his workbench

Shop Foreman James Hicks started with the District in September after serving a number of years as the mechanic and building manager for Turf Care, which is located at the Sebring Airport. James can operate any number of vehicles and equipment as well as maintain and repair them. Along with his primary duties at the shop, James also oversees the diesel and electric motors at the pump station and fills in on other equipment jobs when needed.

James is a lifelong Florida resident, born in Avon Park and educated in North Florida at Poplar Springs. He has been married to his wife Belinda for 20 years and they have two sons: Robert, 19, and Dustin, 15. They live in Lorida and James enjoys fishing and riding airboats.

Prior to being hired, District Manager Joe DeCerbo told James

he was looking for someone who could keep a shop clean and neat, was organized, had systems, and was going to treat the new building like it was his own baby! James has done all of that and more; he sets a great example for our other staff members.

Anyone who would like to see the new maintenance facility and meet James personally should feel free to stop by and tour the building, located adjacent to the water plant at the end of Tizzwood, just off Duane Palmer Boulevard.

Board Notes

- At the December 10 Board of Supervisors meeting, direction was given to move forward with contract negotiations on a possible land acquisition of the Spring Lake Golf Course. This purchase would be directly related to the District's drainage and water control plan that is outlined in the Florida Statutes and the District Charter, and is an unfunded mandate from the South Florida Water Management District. If successful, this acquisition would eliminate the need for the District to proceed with a \$6 million bond issue. Improvement District Attorney William Nielander, who has an extensive background in large land transactions, will be overseeing the contract negotiations. An appropriate due diligence period will be established so the District can secure all the needed information and data required prior to making a decision. Public meetings were being scheduled as this issue of *The Breeze* was being written; call the District office for dates and locations.

- As a result of the water department study by Florida Rural Water Association, the Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing to review and revise water rates and policies for the future. The hearing will be set for either January 14 or February 11; please call the District office for confirmation.

- The 2009 Holiday schedule has been set; the District office

will close on:

- January 19
- February 16
- April 10
- May 25
- July 3
- September 7
- October 12
- November 9
- Nov. 26 & 27
- December 25

- Martin Luther King Birthday
- Presidents Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

- The lot-mowing program is still being reviewed and any revisions of the program will not be confirmed until the Board has further discussion at future meetings.

- Congratulations to Board Chairman Leon Van and his wife Gail. Their greatly loved dog, **Goose**, is one of only 13 pets that will be featured in the 2009 News-Sun calendar; possibly as the cover pet! The next issue of *The Breeze* will highlight our soon-to-be famous Spring Lake pet.

The Board of Supervisors wishes everyone a Happy New Year.

Government Documents Accountability

With the ever-increasing need for government to be more accountable, all levels are looking at providing information and interaction via the web. This is a daunting task for Spring Lake as minutes, financials, reports, surveys and other documents can be traced back to 1972. All of the current information is in hard copy and has been sitting in notebooks and file folders. The recent purchase of a Fujitsu Scan Snap and a stand-alone monitor will allow all items to be put into PDF document files and be searchable. Additionally, starting with the November 2008 Board of Supervisors meeting, all discussions are now downloaded and can be sent to anyone who has enough audio capacity on their computer to have it e-mailed to them.

The District will also be installing portal software to enhance accountability. Similar to solutions like My Yahoo, portal software allows information from multiple systems and sources to be collected and viewed in one place and accessed securely via the web. Because portals are web-based, they allow the information collected in them to be accessed by internal staff, and also external users as well: constituents; other agencies; vendors; Board members; and people who

have passwords and user names via registration.

By using a web portal to manage documents or workflows, and capture forms such as public permit requests and various applications, information is far more easily managed and disseminated. This not only meets demands for accountability, but also eliminates potentially thousands of dollars in hidden expenditures from filling, redundant clerical tasks, paper and other consumables.

Priscilla Gilbert and John Delaney are working on this major task on a part-time basis, and we hope to have the information ready for access by June 1.



Priscilla Gilbert scans documents at the District Office.

Vandalism Continues

It is very unfortunate that a few ignorant individuals, who will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law if caught, are once again causing damage to property. And that means **your** money has to be spent on fixing the vandalism. As this picture shows, these ignorant individuals are trying to ruin the playground equipment at Pine Breeze Park that so many of our young people are using.

What are not shown in this picture are the power lines that were cut to turn the spotlight off, graffiti on the garbage cans, feces spread over the slide, feces thrown into the recycle bins, dead animals thrown into the recycle bins, the bathroom walls in the Gazebo punched out and burned pieces of paper that could have caused a fire at the Gazebo.

Everyone must help catch these ignorant individuals.

District personnel have their assumptions on who is causing this damage, but we cannot police the Park and other areas 24 hours. If anyone has any information to help us catch these people, please call the District office anonymously at 655-1715.



Looking for the best Homeowners or Auto Insurance?

We will shop and compare to help you find the best coverage at the lowest price.



Visit our new office at 1105 U.S. 27 North
(863) 385-5171 or www.Heacock.com



FEMA Assisting Spring Lake

As a result of additional expenses incurred by the District in preparing for Tropical Storm *Fay*, Spring Lake qualifies for a number of reimbursable expenses. The Federal and State Disaster Field Office administer this program, which is part of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). This is the first time that Spring Lake is taking advantage of this opportunity and the District anticipates receiving a 75 percent portion of the expenses submitted, which total almost \$15,000.

The District qualifies as a result of the emergency protective measures taken by pumping down the canals prior to the arrival of the storm. Personnel costs at the pump station, diesel fuel to operate two pumps and electric to operate the other two pumps are costs that were submitted. Additionally, District staff assisted Highlands County Road and Bridge crews when they were working on the washed-out control structures and culverts that were causing roads to flood. Those personnel and equipment costs are also part of the request.

Since this was the first time the District has gone thru this process, an extremely large amount of background information was needed on Spring Lake including data on staff, budgets, demographics, permits, pump station records and other needed



State of Florida Public Assistance Coordinator Richard Inglis (left), FEMA Project Specialist (center) and SLID Field Foreman Randy Nelson discuss areas affected by Tropical Storm Fay.

reports and forms. Now that Spring Lake is "in the system" we know how to properly record our work and expenses using the approved forms and how to communicate with our main contacts, both of whom are pictured above.

Any reimbursement issued to the District will be placed back into the General Fund and to the Drainage program, where expenses were originally allocated.

Humane Society And Animal Control

As you leave Spring Lake and travel down Haywood Taylor Boulevard toward the race track and airport, both the Humane Society and Highlands County Animal Control have their facilities and entrances on the west side of the road.

The Mission of the Humane Society is to provide shelter to lost, homeless and unwanted animals; to furnish medical and other services for the care of companion animals; to care for, protect and find quality homes for the homeless and neglected cats and dogs; to advocate for animal welfare; encourage community involvement; and education to further the bond between people and animals for the mutual benefit of both. The facility on Haywood Taylor is a **no kill** entity; animals will remain in their care until they are adopted. They are not euthanized unless they are terminally ill or are aggressive, which would make them a threat to the public. Some animals stay for more than two years until they find the right family.

The Mission of Animal Control is to ensure the public safety and health concerning animal-related situations. This is carried out by the enforcement of the Highlands County Ordinances and State of Florida Statutes pertaining to animal control. The enforcement can include the arrest of offenders resulting in mandatory court

appearances and requires a close working relationship with the State's Attorney office as well as local law enforcement agencies. The agency provides 24-hour on-call coverage for all County citizens and duties include stray dogs, cats and livestock; trapping of certain wildlife; picking up animals trapped in cages by residents.

In the past year, Animal Control was successful in getting 138 dogs and 17 cats adopted to new homes, and 78 animals were donated to nonprofit rescue organizations similar to the Humane Society. Overall, Animal Control impounded 2,423 cats; 1,751 dogs; 745 livestock and wildlife. Of those, 430 dogs, 22 cats, and 9 livestock were claimed by owners. Unfortunately, due to long-term lack of space, the agency had to euthanize 1,086 dogs and 2,346 cats.

Adoptions at the Humane Society cost \$75 for dogs or puppies and \$50 for cats or kittens. Included with each adoption is: an overall health exam for the pet; tests for life-threatening communicable diseases; required shots; nutrition; treats; and toys.

Animal Control Director Daryl Scott recently stated, "A lot of people come here and said they never knew that we did adoptions. We also get referrals from the Humane Society, and we send people there as well. We are all out for the same thing, to find animals a good home."



'Twas The Day Of Red And Green

By Debbie Delaney

We were dreading the 38-degree forecast for the annual Spring Lake Women's Golf Association Red and Green Tournament held on Dec. 3. Several ladies canceled, but the majority of the players braved the sunny day that started chilly but developed into a very comfortable day for golf. Players were divided into two teams, Red and Green, to play a four-person scramble on the Cougar Trail course.

The players and other club members brought nonperishable food donations for the Spring Lake Presbyterian Church food pantry; Sharon Warner coordinated the delivery of donated food.

We returned to Michaels Clubhouse restaurant for a luncheon and installation of the 2009 officers. Vice President Gail Whiting presided and introduced guests Lois Hoffman, Betty McClure, Bette Schroeder and Mary Shantz. The dining room tables were festively decorated by Boni Berg's fabric lollipop arrangements. Every lady received a Christmas gift bag prepared by Maggie Robb and myself. To create a holiday mood I read, *'Twas the Day of Red and Green*, a humorous twist on the popular *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*.

Marsi Benson presented the luncheon prayer and the women delighted in the homemade soups and salad buffet. A variety of rolls and red and green frosted brownies complemented the meal. The Michaels staff, led by Beth Spikes, did a wonderful job.

Past President Marg Bates installed the 2009 officers: Members at Large Terrie Austin and Nancy Ostapowicz; Secretary Sharon Warner; Treasurer Pearl Bradford; Vice President Judy Dunn; and President Gail Whiting. Marg also presented outgoing President Bernie Ray with flowers and words of appreciation for her service to the SLWGA. Gail announced the tournament results with the Green team scoring 188 to defeat the Red team that scored 183.

What would a Christmas luncheon be without door prizes? Several lucky ladies won Boni Berg's custom hand-designed gifts and six winners received decorated Norfolk pine trees. The 2008 Birdie winners were congratulated and collected nominal gift awards.

If anyone is interested in joining the SLWGA, please contact any of the 2009 officers for information.



2008 President Bernie Ray (left) and past President Marg Bates (right) presenting a certificate to Terrie Austin. Barb Stevens, Terrie Austin, Sharon Warner collecting food pantry donations.



Red and Green registration



Installation of the 2009 SLWGA officers – President Gail Whiting, Vice President Judy Dunn, Member at Large Terrie Austin, Secretary Sharon Warner, Treasurer Pearl Bradford

Yard Debris And Waste Schedule



The County picks up yard waste the first and third Wednesday of each month. This does not mean that your bags and debris should sit on the County right-of-ways for days or weeks. Yard debris should **not** be put by the street until the evening before pickup is to take place. This picture shows bags that were put out 12 days before the County picks up! Placing waste and debris on County right-of-ways is not permitted. Help keep our community neat and clean and let's not have bags and debris sitting in right-of-ways for days on end.

Shop At Home Service

Carpet Ceramic Vinyl Wood Laminate *** Commercial Residential Marine	<p>Coastal Carpet of Lorida Alan or Linda (863) 633-9228 Fax (561) 627-7137 1679 US Hwy 98, Lorida, Florida 33857</p>
--	--

unity

Life Enrichment Centre

Helping You Discover How Wonderful Life Can Be

10417 Orange Blossom Blvd. S.
 Sebring, FL 33875
 unity@vistanet.net
 www.UnityOfSebring.org

JOIN US THIS SUNDAY AT 10:30AM
 A New Facility • A Place To Grow • A Place For Family • A Place to Find Peace
 • A Place To Experience God • A Place to Share Love.
For Information Call 863-471-1122

Spring Lake banks at



All the bank you'll ever need ...

***Checking, Savings, Internet Banking with Free Bill Pay,
CDs, Mortgages, Loans, Business Accounts***

... and the personal service you deserve.

Main Office

2600 U.S. 27 North
Sebring
385-8700

Downtown Sebring

205 W. Center Ave.
Sebring
385-7737

South Sebring

3540 U.S. 27 South
Sebring
386-1900

Avon Park

400 U.S. 27 North
Avon Park
453-6400

Sun 'n Lake

6505 U.S. 27 North
Sebring
314-9797

Lake Placid

120 U.S. 27 South
Lake Placid
465-2700



www.highlandsindependentbank.com

