

## **President's message**

Roy Search and Steven Gray were elected to the Grand Haven Master Association's board of directors at its annual meeting in January. You also re-elected me to the board and I appreciate your support.



I would like to welcome Roy and Steve to the board. Wil Hessert will be the vice president in charge of enforcement and the coordination of legal activities, while Ray Smith will continue as treasurer and director of communications.

At the beginning of 2008, I told residents that my main goals for the year would be communication and enforcement. I believe so strongly in these two issues that I repeat that focus for 2009.

From your comments, I think we have come a long way in our communications goal with the introduction of *The Oak Tree*. With the help of the newsletter, we have been able to increase understanding of the community's complicated CC&Rs in an interesting and sometimes light-hearted format. We have also gained a better understanding of Grand Haven and what makes it work.

As to enforcement of our community's rules and regulations, we have modified the process, and may do so again as Grand Haven grows and conditions change. In 2008, 548 violation notices were issued. I hope that number will drop in 2009, not for lack of inspections, but because with knowledge comes cooperation.

I would like to say my goals are world peace and prosperity, but I think our focus should be more local. Communication and enforcement may not be as exciting, but are ultimately the goals that will make Grand Haven a truly grand place to live.

I wish you all a wonderful 2009.

*Kenny O'Connor, President, GHMA*

## **Two new members elected to GHMA board**

Two new board members were elected to the Grand Haven Master Association at its January 2009 annual meeting, and Kenny O'Connor, the current board president, was re-elected.

O'Connor, a 10-year Grand Haven resident, previously served as an inspector for the Architectural Design Committee, then was named as a member of the committee. She was later elected to the GHMA board and has served as GHMA president for the past year. O'Connor was again selected board president.

Roy Search, also a 10-year resident of Grand Haven, was elected to the board. He studied electrical engineering and business at Moravian College in New Jersey and later headed the accounting department of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation before moving to Gainesville in 1982.

While living in Gainesville and later St. Augustine from 1982 to 1998, Search owned several businesses, including a real estate company that provided property management services, similar to the services provided to Grand Haven. He continues to serve on numerous homeowner, condo and golf club boards.

Steve Gray, a five-year resident of Grand Haven, is the other new board member. Following graduation from high school in Oakhurst, NJ, he worked for A&P supermarkets for 26 years, becoming a department manager. Gray also owned and operated SBM Automotive Services from 1989 to 2004 and currently works for Flagler Palm Coast Property Management.



## Who is boating on Grand Haven Lakes?

By Jim Cook

Residents may have noticed a strange little boat with two occupants moving through their lakes, stopping at certain locations, and dipping their arms in the water. Could this be a new way to catch fish?



Further investigation revealed that the CDD has a community project under way, in conjunction with the Florida Lakewatch program, to monitor the quality of the water in Grand Haven's lakes, which are actually retention ponds. Five of the lakes are currently being sampled on a monthly basis for water clarity, depth, nitrogen and phosphorous content, total suspended solids, and chlorophyll content, with analysis and reporting done by the University of Florida Lakewatch in Gainesville.

This project, in conjunction with a broader program that involves soil testing samples of random common ground and vacant and residential lots, has the goal of improving the quality of the water that eventually drains into the Intracoastal Waterway from Grand Haven, to meet state and federal standards. Other methods of controlling algae have also been approved and include aeration, littoral shelf planting, copper sulfate, and carp control for 12 lakes within the community. These practices should be implemented during 2009.

*Editor's note: Jim Cook moved to Grand Haven in 2000 and participates in the lake quality improvement programs sponsored by the CDD. Jim is looking for a few good volunteers. You can reach him at 447-8450.*

## Budget results

The Grand Haven Master Association manages four budgets. In addition to the GHMA budget, it has responsibility for the budgets of the Architectural Design Committee (ADC), the private lawn maintenance villages (PLM) and The River Club.



The overall results for expenditures versus budget estimates in 2008 were favorable. Total GHMA expenses were \$195,000; \$203,000 had been allocated. Total ADC expenses came to \$50,000; \$47,000 had been budgeted. The budget for the private lawn maintenance contracts was \$312,000; the estimate was \$326,000. The River Club had expenses of \$170,200; \$170,400 was allocated.

The combined expenditures came to \$727,000; the budget estimate was \$746,000.

## Grand Haven – 2008 by the numbers

### Overview

Total number of lots in Grand Haven	1,901
Number of houses	1,495
Unimproved lots	406
Number of villages	25
Villages with private lawn maintenance contracts	8
Total homes with private lawn maintenance contracts	463

### Enforcement of CC&R regulations

Violation notices issued	548
Complied/pending	423
Sent to Fine Committee	125



### Violations by type

Dead sod/tree/landscaping	131
Maintenance	98
Vacant lot maintenance	85
Rust/mold/mildew	72
Failed to meet buildout requirement	69
Weeds	27
ADC guidelines	27
Parking	9
Other	30

## Exercise to music

Move to Music, an interval aerobics class for people of all ages and fitness levels, is offered on Wednesday and Friday mornings at 9:10 in the Village Center's Grand Haven Room.

The exercises are done to the varied music of the Doobie Brothers, Stevie Wonder, Tony Bennett and many others. The different beat of the music dictates the type of movements done, including stretching, endurance, flexibility, and muscle work. The moves vary from low impact to higher impact.

There is no charge for the class; contact Amy or Lewis Beilman at 864-7895.

## Correction

The December issue of *The Oak Tree* included a list of residents who were in arrears in paying their annual GHMA assessments.

Some of the names on the list should not have appeared because the assessments had been paid. The GHMA sincerely regrets the error.

## Enforcement vs. compliance

A number of homeowners have commented that they have observed a wide variation in compliance with the CC&Rs, especially in landscaping, and have asked if the Grand Haven Master Association has a uniform enforcement policy.

The question is a fair and straightforward one, and it requires a fair and complex answer. First we have to separate the two subjects: the first is enforcement policy, the second is compliance.

Enforcement policy is managed by the GHMA. It comes in the following steps: 1. Establish a policy – which is already done with the CC&Rs and the ADC guidelines. 2. Hire a company to enforce the policy by regularly inspecting properties, document the findings, issue violation notices and follow corrective action or pursue fines. Our property management company handles these chores. The GHMA monitors this activity monthly but few others ever see it unless they attend board meetings.

As for compliance: What do people see as they drive around the community? On a scale of 1 to 10, the 10 goes to Mr. MasterGardner who keeps his lawn at a level only achieved by heavily funded botanical gardens.



Next door is the abandoned house of Mr. Not-Here, a speculator who hoped to flip the property - oops. Water has been turned off, the lawn is dead, weeds are growing, the driveway covered with stains and black mildew - he gets a score of 1.

Across the street is Mr. Average's house. It is certainly not as spectacular as Mr. MasterGardner's house, but the lawn is green and cut, no weeds are to be seen, the trees look healthy. He gets a score of 5. Next door is Mr. OneProblem. His place looks very much like Mr. Average's house except there is one problem - rust from his irrigation well is on the driveway, or there is a dead tree on the property, or perhaps there is a bunch of two-foot high weeds in planting areas. He gets a score of 4.



Mr. MasterGardner gets only smiles as the property manager drives by. Mr. Average gets a friendly wave. Mr. OneProblem has been issued a warning letter, has called the property manager and is having the problem fixed by a contractor in an acceptable time

frame. Mr. Not-Here was issued a warning letter, then a violation letter, was fined \$1,000 and a lien was placed on the property. The property still rates a 1.

The vast majority of the 1,500 homes in Grand Haven fall in the Average or OneProblem category. The Mr. Not-Here category is a small, but vexing minority. These properties create village eyesores and detract from the good work the majority of association members do in maintaining their properties in accordance with the CC&Rs. The not-in-compliance properties are pursued to the extent that Grand Haven's regulations and Florida law permits.



Are there variations in landscaping? Yes.  
Is there a uniform enforcement policy? Yes.  
Will a uniform enforcement policy quickly cure these variations? Sometimes yes, sometimes no.  
Is this frustrating? At times - yes  
Do you want to volunteer to help make it better? Contact Kenny O'Connor or Ray Smith.



## Controlling your dollar (weeds)

The first line of defense in controlling dollarweed (pennywort) is to take control of your irrigation system. Dollarweed thrives in areas with excess water; you'll find it difficult or impossible to control dollarweed in areas that stay wet or where irrigation occurs frequently. Lawns should be watered on an as-needed basis.

It is nearly impossible to say how many times a week a lawn should be watered. A general rule for watering is to apply  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of water when grass shows stress, which often requires watering two to three times per week in the summer and once every 10 to 14 days in the winter.

In general, herbicides containing atrazine can be used to control dollarweed in St. Augustine grass lawns. Always read and follow the product's label directions (a note from our lawyer).

Chemical control of dollarweed is best achieved during the spring (March/April) and fall (September/October), while temperatures are mild and dollarweed is actively growing. One application usually will not eliminate this weed.

Unfortunately, atrazine isn't safe for anything else. It's soluble in water, so it moves rapidly through the soil following rain or irrigation. When it contacts roots of flowers, shrubs, and trees, it can injure or kill them. It's very toxic to fish if it gets into a pond or stream. And it has become a major pollutant of groundwater in the South.

So what about the dollarweed? There are other products available without atrazine, but the main thing is water less often and attempt to get the soil to drain better.

*Editor's note: If you water so infrequently that your lawn dies, you will have an issue with CC&R compliance.*



## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

**Q.** I want to put up a bird feeder in my yard. Do I have to pay the ADC a fee and get approval?

**A.** The GHMA eliminated fees for minor changes last year, but approval depends upon what you are doing. Think of the reasonability criteria. A small birdhouse hung on a bush/tree in a backyard, blending in with the landscaping, and of a compatible color with your overall landscaping and house is not an issue. Planting a 15-foot post in your front yard, however, crowned with a bright yellow multi-stored bird condo that is visible to the entire cul de sac, would not be approved. But something in the backyard that falls between these two extremes could be approved, but an application is necessary. There is no charge for the application, which is required by the CC&Rs, and could save a resident a possible fine.

**Q.** Why did the GHMA start charging a food minimum to eat at the golf club?

**A.** The GHMA has no relationship with or authority over the golf club - nor does the CDD. Questions concerning the golf club, course, restaurant, or driving range should be addressed to Hampton Golf, the golf management company, at 445-2327.

**Q.** My neighbor's oak tree hangs so low over the sidewalk that I have to crawl to get by it when walking my cat. Can I take my machete and prune either the tree or my neighbor?

**A.** We recommend talk before machetes, specifically for trees and definitely before neighbors. From a courtesy and safety perspective, it is each homeowner's responsibility to keep the trees trimmed to a reasonable height (about seven feet) above the sidewalks. The first course of action is to suggest to the neighbor that it's time to trim. While we would never advocate it, some people have placed Christmas ribbons from low-hanging branches as a warning to other walkers. That has caused some neighbors to get the message.

**Q.** Golfers are coming into my backyard to retrieve their golf balls. I want to start a used golf ball business. Can I put a "NO TRESPASSING" sign up in my backyard to protect my source of supply?

**A.** Sorry, all signage requires approval from the Architectural Design Committee (ADC) and such a sign has never been approved. You could ask the ADC if they want to be partners in your business - that method works in Chicago. But, alas, not here.



***Grand Haven Master Association, Inc.***

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS - 2009**

The Board of Directors of the Grand Haven Master Association, Inc. (GHMA)  
will meet (unless otherwise noted):

- When:** 2 p.m., Thursday, February 19, 2009
- 2 p.m., Thursday, April 23, 2009
- 2 p.m., Thursday, June 18, 2009
- 2 p.m., Thursday, August 20, 2009
- 2 p.m., Thursday, October 22, 2009
- 2 p.m., Thursday, November 19, 2009

**Where:** Creekside Amenities Center in Grand Haven located at:

- 2 North Village Parkway, Palm Coast, Florida.

## **Pardon the delay**

Art Dycke, the Palm Coast city historian and our erstwhile chronicler of the history of Grand Haven, had a very eventful December and January. His daughter and son-in-law were both appointed to significant positions within the new administration of President Obama.

Daughter Jackie Norris was named chief of staff to Michelle Obama, while her husband, John, was selected as chief of staff to Tom Vilsack, the new secretary of agriculture.

As a result, he and Louise were focused on the important tasks of aiding the Norris' transition from Iowa to Washington D.C. The history of Grand Haven will continue in the next issue of *The Oak Tree*.



*Jack Nicklaus, designer of the Grand Haven golf course, looks over plans at the course site in 1996. More on the opening of the golf course in the next issue of The Oak Tree.*

## **Nice letter, nasty letter**

The Grand Haven Master Association has adopted a new procedure for notifying residents of CC&R violations.

In the past, when a violation was discovered, a single letter was sent to the property owner. It defined the violation and gave the resident 20 days to correct the situation or notify the management company when and how the violation would be remedied. It also warned that if these actions were not taken, the violation would be reviewed at the next Fine Committee meeting and a fine could be levied. The letter was sent via regular mail and registered mail - the latter required by state statute.

A number of residents told the board that receiving a registered letter threatening a fine in 25 days was a bit heavy handed for a first notification. The GHMA board reviewed the process and agreed that a change was required. Since about 80 percent of violations are promptly corrected, it was

decided to first send a "nice letter." For the residents who fix the problem promptly, this ends the process. Those few residents who do not remedy the problem or call the management company to set up a schedule will receive the "nasty letter" by registered mail.

The GHMA will continue to review its processes, making changes as needed, to maintain the architectural standards of Grand Haven.

## **GHMA information**

Residents are welcome to write articles about something they feel may be of interest to others - a Grand Haven activity, club, happening, sporting event, etc. - for this newsletter. They can also submit questions for *The Oak Tree's* Frequently asked questions column.

Contact Kenny O'Connor at [koconnor12@cfl.rr.com](mailto:koconnor12@cfl.rr.com) or Ray Smith at [raymondsmith@cfl.rr.com](mailto:raymondsmith@cfl.rr.com) for submissions or more information.

### **Members of the GHMA board**

President	Kenny O'Connor	446-3587	<a href="mailto:koconnor12@cfl.rr.com">koconnor12@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Will Hessert	446-5204	<a href="mailto:Whessert@cfl.rr.com">Whessert@cfl.rr.com</a>
Treasurer	Ray Smith	445-3666	<a href="mailto:raymondsmith@cfl.rr.com">raymondsmith@cfl.rr.com</a>
Director	Roy Search	445-4519	<a href="mailto:rsearch@cfl.rr.com">rsearch@cfl.rr.com</a>
Director	Steve Gray	446-9357	<a href="mailto:steve.gray@cfl.rr.com">steve.gray@cfl.rr.com</a>

### **2009 meeting schedule**

The board meetings are scheduled on Thursdays at 2 p.m. in the Creekside Amenity Center. All residents are welcome to attend.

Meeting dates:

February 19  
April 23  
June 18  
August 20  
October 22  
November 19



### **The Oak Tree staff**

Kenny O'Connor, President, GHMA  
Ray Smith, GHMA communications  
Diane S. Zeeman, Editor  
Troy Railsback, Production manager

***GHMA NEWSLETTER***  
***Grand Haven Master Association, Inc.***  
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Southern States Management Group .....	(386) 446-6333
Community Development District .....	(386) 447-1888
LandMar Group .....	(386) 446-6428
Grand Haven guard gate .....	(386) 445-2376
Village Center office .....	(386) 447-0192
Village Center café .....	(386) 447-0239
Grand Haven Golf Club pro shop & tee times .....	(386) 445-2327
Grand Haven Golf Club restaurant .....	(386) 445-1027
Palm Coast City Hall .....	(386) 986-3700
Flagler County property appraiser .....	(386) 313-4150



## **Ticketing controversy ends**

Parking tickets will not be issued to vehicles parked on Grand Haven streets during daylight hours unless they are obstructing traffic, city officials announced at a jam packed City Council meeting. Several residents' cars had been ticketed in mid February, following a complaint by a resident.

Under a city ordinance, parking is prohibited on all Palm Coast streets, but because of the unique nature of Grand Haven, that is, having curb, gutter and sidewalks, vehicles had not been ticketed unless they were restricting the flow of traffic. City Manager Jim Landon told Grand Haven residents at the Feb.17 City Council meeting that the past practice would continue.



Landon emphasized that the parking ordinance was necessary but would be implemented in the community's best interest. It was pointed out however that residents who continue to park in a manner that prevents access by emergency vehicles, use the street as a daily parking lot or park overnight would be cited.

## **GHMA board member resigns**

Steven Gray, a newly elected member of the Grand Haven Master Association board, resigned effective February 16, 2009.

## **Special message from the president**

I thought I was going to relax the second week of February, but while I was on a boat cruising around the Caribbean, I received a slew of e-mails about parking tickets in Grand Haven.



By the time I returned on Feb. 14, many residents knew of the problem and planned to attend the Palm Coast City Council meeting the following Tuesday. I want to thank those residents who spread the word.

To give you background on what was happening behind the scenes, on Monday I contacted Palm Coast Mayor Jon Netts to alert him of this issue and request his aid. At the same time, Wil Hessert, vice president of the Grand Haven Master Association, enlisted the aid of Tom Lawrence of Grand Haven, a former Palm Coast city councilman, to facilitate communication with the city manager's office and sheriff's department. By late Monday, all parties involved agreed to continue prior practices.

I wish to thank Mayor Netts, the City Council, City Manager Jim Landon, and Captain Marc Carman for their professional and timely resolution of this problem.

During a break in the Tuesday City Council meeting, I spoke with Mayor Netts about a procedural matter. After responding to my question, he asked: "Are all of these people in the audience from Grand Haven?" (the room was filled to capacity), to which I replied, "Yes, just about all of them."

As in all political activities, showing up to cast your vote is very important. The GHMA and the CDD thank all the concerned residents who spread the word and showed up at this meeting. Common sense has prevailed and we can now go on with our lives in Grand Haven.

*Kenny O'Connor, President, GHMA*

*Editor's note: This newsletter was printed and ready to mail when the parking issue surfaced. Distribution of The Oak Tree was delayed until the parking subject was resolved and this one page was inserted.*