

## President's message

As this year ends two members of the GHMA are leaving the Board. This first 2010 issue of *The Oak Tree* begins its third year of publication. Who would have ever thought it would survive this long? The goals of *The Oak Tree* have always been to discuss the CC&Rs, create greater understanding of the community rules and give residents information about what was happening in Grand Haven. I think we have come a long way since our January 2008 first issue and I hope we are succeeding with our goal of increasing communication within Grand Haven.

We have two new board members as we enter into our new year. Judy Hackstaff and Gene D'Iorio are joining Vice President Roy Search, Bob Witty and myself as President on the Grand Haven Master Association Board of Directors. Judy will be your Treasurer and Gene will take on the responsibility of PLM liaison. Shortly after being elected these two board members went through an extensive training program to bring them up to date on association business. Given their extensive business experience they will be able to step right in and be valuable assets to the board and this community.

As I enter this third year my goals remain the same: communication and enforcement. *The Oak Tree* is the means to achieve my goal of communication. If there needs to be more, tell me.

On the enforcement side, in February 2009, the board hired an administrative assistant for our community manager, Troy Railsback. This has allowed Troy to spend more time in Grand Haven doing the CC&R enforcement activities. During 2009 812 violation/warning letters were issued. As has been the pattern, all but a few problems were corrected immediately. This cooperation by residents is what your board is working toward and is much appreciated.

We continue to get questions about ADC guidelines and the subtleties of a deed-restricted community. For that reason this and future issues will include clarification, ad nauseam, on these subjects. That is my responsibility and my goal. Hopefully, with the help of *The Oak Tree*, more residents will be aware of what is and isn't allowed in Grand Haven and we can have a little fun along the way. I wish you all a very happy 2010.

Kenny O'Connor, President, GHMA



## 2010 Census

The 2010 census questionnaire will be sent to all residents in early March. It is very important to the future of Flagler County that all residents fill out the questionnaire and return it in the included prepaid envelope.



When the 2000 Census was completed only 70% of Flagler County residents returned their questionnaire, resulting in a reported population of 49,832. That is the figure which industrial, commercial and retail companies judged the county for the last ten years.

Census data is reported in population ranges. Flagler County population is about 100,000 plus or minus - no one is quite sure. Being listed in the 100,000 plus range, with a small geographical area, could mean a great deal to the community. Large retail chain stores, restaurants and industry use this level to evaluate a community for further development. The census data is also used for government redistricting that determines the county's representation in state and federal government programs and grants.

The form asks for information about household members - name, gender, age, race/ethnicity, relationship to the householder, and whether the home is owned or rented. That's it.

If you would like to do less traveling to Daytona Beach to shop at larger department stores, eat at a larger variety of restaurants and like to see more industry locate in Flagler County thus increasing the tax base and assure that you will be adequately represented in congress, the GHMA recommends you fill out the census form and return it before April 1<sup>st</sup>.

When you mail back the questionnaire you insure that you will be counted, Flagler County will be represented equitably and that a census enumerator will not come to your door.

*Editor's note: Past GHMA board member and current editor of this newsletter, Ray Smith, has volunteered to be a census enumerator. If you do not send back the census form you can expect to see him at your door.*

## **GHMA 2010 Board**

Ms. O'Connor enters her fourth year on the board and third year as President. Mr. Search and Mr. Witty are continuing board members serving their second year. Ms. Hackstaff and Mr. D'Iorio were elected in January 2010 for two-year terms.



*New GHMA Board members: Judy Hackstaff, Gene D'Iorio*

Judy Hackstaff has an extensive background in banking. After graduating from Connecticut College she worked for the Bank of Boston for 15 years rising to the position of Vice President of the Mutual Funds Division. She continued her career with State Street Corporation for 12 years as Vice President of the Mutual Fund and Pension Division.

After working in the Boston and New York City areas, she retired to Grand Haven in 2000. She has served as President of the Advisory Council, Treasurer of the Grand Haven Women's Golf Association and Tournament Chairperson for the Golf Board of Governors.

Gene D'Iorio brings to the board a background in executive management. After graduating from Loyola College in Montreal and McMasters University in Toronto he worked for major international companies specializing in custom engineered aluminum products. At Indalex Aluminum Solutions he served on the Corporate Executive Committee and was President, US South Region, with responsibility for three manufacturing facilities.

Leaving Atlanta, Ga. he came to Grand Haven in 2003. He has served on the GHMA Advisory Committee, the Tennis Advisory Group and is a block captain for Neighborhood Watch.

## **Deed restricted communities**

*Editors Note: This information was first published as The President's message in the June 2008 issue of The Oak Tree. In response to repeated questions on this subject it is repeated here.*

A resident of Grand Haven asked, "What is a deed-restricted community?" Are we one and is that good or bad? We do live in a deed-restricted community, where certain rules about how each homeowner may legally use his/her land are written in a document called Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs). These rules adhere to the land, so they apply to every owner of the land. Grand Haven has two levels of CC&Rs - a master CC&R that applies to all villages, and a separate CC&R for each village.

Is being a deed-restricted community good or bad? Well, that depends upon you.

Joining this type of community means having some control of neighborhood aesthetics, but it also means losing some basic rights. You have to go to the Architectural Review Committee to make any change to the outside of your house or landscaping. If you believe that your tastes are faultless and compromise is for the other guy, then these restrictions are bad. If you want to keep that rusty car up on blocks in your driveway because you are going to eventually fix it, you should not be in Grand Haven or any other deed-restricted community. Your freedom is definitely limited.

On the other hand, if you would like to be assured you will not be living next door to a double-wide trailer, a rental house with renters coming and going every week, or a three-foot deep above-the-ground swimming pool in the front yard, you might like restrictions. Ask yourself - is it more important to be able to paint the house the colors of your favorite college football team, or have some limits?

Is this good or bad? It depends. But here's the bottom line - know that you are living in a deed-restricted community, and the GHMA Board will enforce the restrictions.



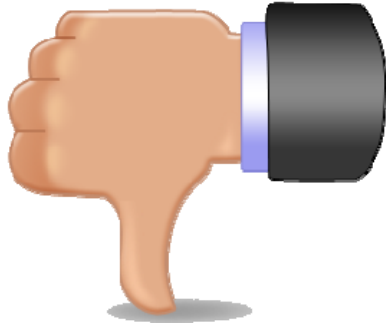
## CC&R and ADC restrictions

*Editor's note: - Below are listed some of the topics covered in Grand Haven's deed restricted community documents. Further information is available on the GHMA website [www.grandhavenmhoa.com](http://www.grandhavenmhoa.com), or by calling the community manager, Southern States Management Group - Troy Railsback, at 386-446-6333.*

The following is an incomplete list of things that are not allowed or require Architectural Design Committee approval.

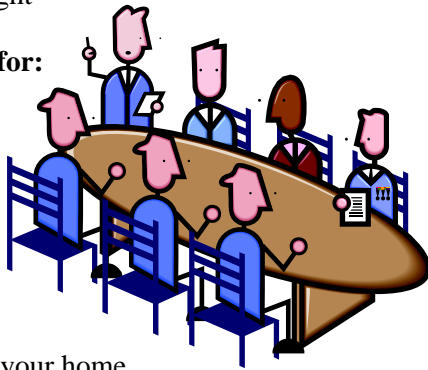
### Not Allowed:

- Sheds or outbuildings
- Gazebos
- Parking boats, trailers or mobile homes
- Converting garage to alternate use
- Screening garage door
- Operating a kennel
- Doghouses
- Window air conditioners
- Renting a home more than twice a year
- Leasing home for less than 30 days
- Reflective foil on windows
- Keeping livestock or poultry
- Occupancy by more than one family
- Loud music after 9pm
- Parking in the street overnight



### ADC Approval is needed for:

- Fences or walls
- Removal of trees
- Basketball hoops
- Children's play structures
- Drilling an irrigation well
- Changes to landscaping
- Landscape curbing
- Lawn ornaments
- Changes to the structure of your home
- Changing the paint color of your home
- Driveway pavers or painting



Grand Haven is a deed-restricted community. If in doubt about a home project's incursion of the deed restrictions, call the community management company.

## Never top a tree

To create a healthy and safe tree requires proper pruning. Shade trees should have one central leader (trunk) with well-spaced horizontal branches. Making topiaris with live oaks is bad for the tree.

When a tree is topped and branches are snipped off at the ends, rapid re-growth is stimulated creating a small compact ball. This method reduces proper sunlight and airflow through the tree and will put the tree in jeopardy during high winds. Improper pruning also contributes to decay in



branches and insect infestation.

If a branch needs to be removed it should never be done with a flush cut to the trunk. The correct method is cut above the collar. The collar is the swollen area at the base of the branch. The collar should not be removed.

*This punning weakens Live Oaks*

Additional information is available at the University of Florida website [www.solutionsforyourlife.com](http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com) or by contacting the Flagler County Extension Office, 437-7464, located at 150 Sawgrass Road, Bunnell, FL.

Mary Ann Shields

*Editors note: Mary Ann Shields is a resident of Grand Haven and a registered Master Gardener.*



*Proper punning of Live Oaks*

## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)



- Q.** I just moved in and wondered if there were any regulations about dogs?
- A.** You bet your puppy there are. Palm Coast regulations state that dogs and cats must be licensed and vaccinated for rabies and other diseases. Dogs are not allowed to run at large and must be leashed when in public or residential areas. Dogs in the open bed of a pickup truck must be confined or leashed with at least two tethers. Owners are responsible for picking up waste created by their dogs on public or private property. If you have further questions contact Palm Coast animal control at 986-2520.
- Q.** Grand Haven is far too complicated. Why do we need both a CDD and a GHMA? Couldn't we get rid of one and save some money?
- A.** The short answer is yes. However making the change is complex, time consuming and would require a majority of members of both the CDD and the GHMA to be dedicated to that objective. It has been done before, but not by many communities.
- Q.** I want to knock out a wall at the back of my house and put in a window. Since it is inside my lanai I don't need ADC approval do I?
- A.** Any change to the outside wall of your home requires ADC approval.
- Q.** My neighbor tripped over my raised sidewalk. Who do I call about getting the sidewalk fixed?
- A.** Sidewalks belong to the homeowners. It is your responsibility to get that toe catcher repaired. See article on page 5 about the methods to repair your sidewalk.
- Q.** I received an e-mail that said the homeowners association would not let the new local newspaper, *The Palm Coast Observer*, be delivered in Grand Haven. Don't you believe in freedom of the press? Why did you do that? It is a good weekly newspaper focused on Flagler County.
- A.** No mea culpa. It wasn't us. However we did investigate the subject and can report that the new community newspaper, *The Palm Coast Observer*, will be delivered free to your home beginning March 4, 2010. If you do not want it delivered, please call the paper at 386 447-9723. If you leave for the summer, let them know. The Observer has been supplied with a list of known vacant houses.
- Q.** We had a terrible winter and a lot of my plants have died. Do I have to have ADC approval to replace them?

- A.** The master gardeners recommend you first give them a chance to come back when it finally warms up. Then if they are truly dead and you want to replace them with the same type of plant, you do not need ADC approval. However, if now is the time to rethink your landscape scheme which includes big changes, draw up a plan and take it to the ADC. There are many Florida friendly, minimal water requiring, freeze tolerate plants on the approved plant list.
- Q.** I like my Christmas lights. They look nice at night. Can I leave them up all year?
- A.** Unless you are Greek Orthodox, Christmas has been over for two months. The ADC guidelines give you 14 days after a holiday to enjoy your lights and decorations. Then you must take them down.
- Q.** How do I know what the CC&Rs are for my village? You keep talking about them all of the time and I know that they are different for each village, but I cannot find my copy.
- A.** Go to the GHMA web site [www.grandhavenmhoa.com](http://www.grandhavenmhoa.com) and you will find all of the CC&Rs for each village, plus the ADC Guidelines.

## Condensed alphabet soup

**GHMA** - "Grand Haven Master Association" - The resident controlled Board responsible for enforcing the deed restrictions (CC&Rs) and architectural (ADC) guidelines.



**CC&Rs** - "Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions" - It places significant restrictions on what you can do with your property. It sets a standard for the community appearance.

**CDD** - "Community Development District" - A resident controlled board that owns and manages all of the commonly owned property within Grand Haven.

**ADC** - "Architectural Design Committee" - They approve new house construction, major modifications to properties and minor changes (i.e. landscape changes).

**SSMG** - "Southern States Management Group" - A Palm Coast based community Management Company hired by the GHMA to execute the day-to-day responsibilities of the GHMA.

**PLM** - "Private Lawn Maintenance" - This mandatory village wide lawn care program is applicable to 9 of the 28 villages within GH.

**CERT** - Community Emergency Response Team- a volunteer group of GH residents organized to assist in time of emergencies.

## Beauty and the Beast

Grand Haven developer, Lowe Corporation, had a vision. A vision of a natural environment with trees and landscaping, creating an inviting, attractive community in which to live and play.

The vision included the native Live Oak trees planted as street trees along Waterside Parkway and on each neighborhood street. They would form a beautiful avenue throughout Grand Haven and in time, with proper trimming, would create a magnificent canopy over every street.

Unfortunately, this beautiful vision comes with some problems. As the trees grow larger and begin to form majestic arches, the root systems are also growing. If the tree is planted within three feet of a sidewalk, the roots will eventually raise portions of the sidewalk. This has already begun to happen within Grand Haven. A lifted sidewalk can create a hazard to residents walking or biking along the sidewalks. The CDD will repair all sidewalks on common property within Grand Haven. However, maintenance of sidewalks on private property remains the responsibility of the individual homeowner. The University of Florida



provides several "do's and don'ts" concerning this problem. The number one "don't" is, do not cut the tree roots. Cutting the roots may eventually kill the tree, and then the homeowner would have to replace it. But before it dies, the tree will be weakened.

If the roots were cut on the side that faces the home and a wind were to cause the tree to fall over, the path of least resistance would be directly toward the house.

At the top of the "do's" list, and the best permanent solution, is to reroute the sidewalk around the tree giving the roots space to grow.

There are other methods to eliminate the toe catcher portion of a raised sidewalk. The first would be removing and then replacing the concrete slabs, creating an even sidewalk. The CDD has done this on Waterside Parkway where the large oak roots have been creating problems.



The second method would be slab jacking. This involves going under the offending slab and raising it up to once again meet its neighbor. This method has been used in Grand Haven and seems to work fine as long as no roots are cut in the process.

The third method would be sawing the raised portion down to meet the adjacent slab. This is not grinding nor pulverizing. It is using a horizontal saw to eliminate the trip hazard. This method can be used for hazards up to 2.5 inches high.

The fourth method is ramping, which is filling the trip area with concrete. This is a very temporary fix and should only be used with that understanding.

Actually, none of these methods are guaranteed to permanently address the root problem (pun intended) - i.e. growing roots that will eventually raise the sidewalk again.

This University of Florida web site [hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/urbansidewalk.shtml](http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/urbansidewalk.shtml) lists other methods plus a great many ideas concerning landscaping alternatives.

## ***GHMA accomplishments***

At the annual meeting of the Grand Haven Master Association on January 21, 2010 GHMA president Ms. Kendra O'Connor reviewed the board's accomplishments for 2009. For those residents that chose not to venture out into significant rain that evening, below is a condensed list.

The Crossings Village was formally merged into the Master Association. Like all other villages within Grand Haven, The Crossings had its own homeowners association while it was being developed. Following the pattern of other villages, they chose to dissolve their individual association and assign the responsibilities to the Master Association. The Master Association thus performs general responsibilities applicable to all villages plus any village specific requirements for The Crossings.

The GHMA joined with the CDD to obtain Fire Wise Community status for Grand Haven. The initiative led to receiving a grant funding the fire mitigation program.

To reduce future costs a part time administrative assistant was hired to relieve the community manager of clerical tasks. This allowed the CM to spend more time on priority activities given to him by the board.

Lake bank maintenance received increased attention. Some of the lake banks, particularly vacant lots, had grown weeds that approached being small trees. Detailed inspections were performed and residents were requested to correct the problem.

There has been a Unimproved Lot Maintenance program for several years. This program hires a contractor to cut unimproved lots for a yearly cost of \$250. This worked well for most unimproved lot owners, but not all. Starting in 2010 there will be four programs available to unimproved lot owners. Program A will cut cleared unimproved lots for a fee of \$250. Program B will cut cleared unimproved lots and maintain lake banks for \$400 annually. Program C is for wooded lots. This program cuts the front of the lot for \$100. Program D (\$300) is for wooded lots with a lake bank. Unimproved lot owners are encouraged to maintain their lots or join one of the aforementioned programs. The board will notify lot owners of the first violation, however, subsequent violations will be referred directly to the Fine Committee.

The GHMA continues to work with banks to maintain abandoned or foreclosed properties. As of the end of the year there were 59 such properties within Grand Haven not including the unfinished condos. Any expense incurred is

added to the resident's account and is collected with interest and penalties when the property is eventually sold.

The attached homes within the River Club were painted. This is an example of a village specific responsibility that the GHMA assumed when the River Club merged into the Master Association. Like all village specific responsibilities, the GHMA administers the task but the costs are fully funded by the specific village.

Six issues of The Oak Tree newsletter were published in 2009.

Grand Haven by the numbers:

1901 lots in Grand Haven  
1493 developed  
360 unimproved lots  
48 unfinished condos  
812 CC&R warning letters issued  
643 compiled  
111 pending  
58 sent to fine committee

Historically, 95% of residents comply with the CC&R requirements after being reminded of those requirements. For those not in compliance, fines are collected, but it does take time.

### ***Want to help cure cancer?***



Still using your toes for complicated mathematical problems? Why not use your toes for something that really counts. Join the American Cancer Society Relay For Life.

Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's version of an athletic relay, but with a new twist. Relay For Life is a family-oriented event where participants enjoy the camaraderie of a team and walk to raise funds to support the activities of the American Cancer Society.

"Relay For Life is as much an awareness raiser about the progress against cancer as it is a fund raiser," said Bob Witty, event Chairman. "Relay For Life reminds us that progress has been made in the fight against cancer and that everyone who participates is making a difference."

Lace up your athletic shoes and help support the fight against cancer during the American Cancer Society Relay For Life, held May 14-15 at the Palm Coast Town Center. For more information call Relay Chairman and Grand Haven resident Bob Witty at 931-6179

## Grand Haven eagles

On Dec 24 the eagle's nest in Wild Oaks was minus one egg and added a little hatchling. With the unusually long cold winter, a number of eaglets perished. However, Mr. and Mrs. W.O. Eagle know how to build a sturdy nest. They continue to add to it daily, assuring safety for their youngster.

When it comes to frigid temperatures, bald eagles are tougher than most humans. Incubation begins immediately after the first egg is laid. Both Mr. and Mrs. W.O. take part, although Mrs. does most of the incubating. Mr. W.O.'s job is hunting for food. Both adult eagles develop a "brooding patch" on their lower abdomen that is an area of lost feathers and increased vascular circulation that facilitates heat transference to the eggs.

Once the egg is hatched the parents continue to brood (incubate) as the hatchling is unable to regulate its body temperature for several days. With 7,000 feathers and a body temperature of 105 degrees covering the chick, the baby eagle is warm and toasty.



*W.O. Eagle Jr.*

Pictured at 7 weeks, W.O. Eagle Jr. is over 1 foot tall (1/3 adult height), peering over the nest and checking out the area, starting to self-feed, busy exercising his already huge wings and developing dark feathering. By mid March this teenager will be adult size and ready to take the all-important first flight.

*Editor's Note: Grand Haven offers our congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. W. O. Eagle for raising a youngster under these cold conditions.*

## 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.

### Help wanted

Job 1: Person needed for one hour per week to help keep Grand Haven grand.

Qualifications: You care.

Job 2: Person needed to write articles for The Oak Tree.

Qualifications: Ability to write.

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	Kendra O'Connor	446-3587	<a href="mailto:koconnor12@cfl.rr.com">koconnor12@cfl.rr.com</a>
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Treasurer	Judy Hackstaff	447-7306	<a href="mailto:jhackstaff@cfl.rr.com">jhackstaff@cfl.rr.com</a>
Director	Gene D'Iorio	446-2995	<a href="mailto:gdiorio@aol.com">gdiorio@aol.com</a>
Director	Bob Witty	931-6169	<a href="mailto:rwitty@bellsouth.net">rwitty@bellsouth.net</a>

### 2010 GHMA meeting schedule:

Please see enclosed 2010 meeting notice.

The ADC meets at 9 a.m. at the Creekside Amenities Center on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

### The Oak Tree staff

Kenny O'Connor, President, GHMA

Ray Smith, writer/editor

Troy Railsback, Production manager



***GHMA NEWSLETTER***  
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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

