

President's message

As I near the end of my final term as president of the Grand Haven Master Association, I think back to what my goals were when I began. My main goal was to improve

community understanding through communication. This newsletter is a result of that goal.

I hope most of you think I have made progress toward that goal. If you now know

the difference between GHMA and CDD responsibilities (you should know those acronyms by now), understand that we live in a deed-restricted community with specific rules, and recognize that we have architectural standards that are enforced, I will be happy.

Being president has definitely been a learning experience for me. I know more about HOA law, liens, insurance, contracts, landscaping, management, etc., than I ever thought I would. Additionally, I have learned a very important thing: Patience! That one I will try to take with me and utilize.

I will not be the only one leaving the board this December; Ray Smith, our Communications Director, and Vice President Roy Search, will also be finishing out their terms. These two men have provided much support for the last two years.

Ray has put the newsletter together and written all of the FAQ's, which incidentally, receive more positive comments than any other part of the newsletter.

Roy has brought to the table with his experience as a property manager, which time and again, has been very helpful.

I wish all the best to Judy Hackstaff and Gene D'Iorio, who will be working with three new board members next year.

Kenny O'Connor, President, GHMA

Trail links Colbert Lane and Old Kings Road

A new walking and cycling trail that begins on Colbert Lane and ends at Old Kings Road will open by the end of October.

It passes along the edge of Grand Haven's Wild Oaks area, goes through the Graham Swamp and emerges on Old Kings Road south of Utility Drive. Much of the trail is elevated, providing a picturesque walk through Graham Swamp with its giant oaks, pines and wildlife.

This 3,084-acre conservation area is the most recent addition to Flagler County's preserves. It is owned by the St. Johns River Water Management District and managed by Flagler County.

The historic headwaters of Bulow Creek originate in the large freshwater basin that is Graham Swamp. More than 2,500 acres of the property are covered by wetland hardwood swamp. The remainder of the property is forested upland that fringes the basin and forms small islands within the swamp.

Graham Swamp has been heavily impacted by previous ditching and the construction of dikes but it still performs the important ecological functions of retaining and filtering storm water runoff from developments lying to the west and north. The Graham Swamp Conservation Area helps maintain the integrity and quality of northeast Florida's coastal ecosystems and its associated ecological functions.

The area supports a rich variety of wading birds, water fowl and passerine bird species, as well as deer, otter, fox, and alligators.

The trail is slightly less than three miles in length.



Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

- Q:** Why is the CDD digging up all the plants around the entrance gates and the grass around the ponds? I liked it the way it was and this seems like a waste of money.
- A:** The CDD has begun a Florida Friendly Common Area Landscape Renovation Project designed to significantly reduce landscape demand for fertilizer and reclaimed irrigation water. Common areas adjacent to bulk headed ponds will be planted with a vegetative buffer. Pond perimeter sprinklers will be replaced with drip irrigation inside the new vegetative buffers. These steps should lead to a significant reduction in nutrient loading from runoff into the ponds. The program follows a similar one in Ocean Hammock that proved to be environmentally beneficial and has saved money.
- Residents can learn more about what they can do to aid in the health of our ponds by going to the CDD website www.grandhavencdd.org, Reports and Forms, Grand Haven Common Area Landscape section, “GHCCD Landscape Best Management Practices” and “New Plantings for Detention Pond Banks.”
- Q:** Someone running for an elected position within Grand Haven left a door hanger on my front door as well as all the other houses on my street. We have several part time neighbors who are not here this time of year. I thought it was a security/safety problem to leave the material hanging on the door, so I gathered them up. Is this condoned by the Neighborhood Watch Committee and is it proper?
- A:** Condoned – no. Proper – putting neighbors at a security risk is never proper.
- Q:** The Architectural Design Committee rejected my request to paint my house the Florida Gator colors – orange and blue. This is a slap in the face of a great football team, un-American and violates my right to free expression. Besides, I suspect they are Miami Hurricane fans. Can I sue them?
- A:** The rejected request is more a reflection of the color combination than an allegiance to a football team. The CCRs shield the members of both the ADC and the GHMA from liability. I suggest you change the colors even if it requires supporting a different team.

- Q:** You print information too early. I can't remember stuff I read yesterday much less two months ago. Does the city pick up trash on Thanksgiving Day?
- A:** There is no pickup on Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's Day. Since Thanksgiving falls on a Thursday, Grand Haven's regular day for trash and recycling, pickup will be on Friday. We will send a note about Christmas and New Year's Day in December.
- Q:** I called Southern States Management Group to speak to Troy Railsback; he wasn't there, according to the answering machine, so I hung up without leaving a message. He did not call me back. Why?
- A:** How can this be said diplomatically? – To save money, the mystic that was on the GHMA staff was fired. Leave no name, no phone number and you will get no response. Ok, perhaps that wasn't very diplomatic, but complaints like this have been forwarded to The Oak Tree.
- Q:** I just checked my irrigation system. I did the cat food can thing for measuring how much water gets to the lawn. I can't believe how the system gets out of adjustment so quickly. Am I unique?
- A:** You are not unique. Irrigation systems need to be checked every few months. The cat food can measuring is a proven method. Use 20-40 cans, depending upon the size of your yard and put them in places that appear stressed. Very few lawn services check your sprinkler coverage and flow rates regularly. Their normal scope is cut, edge, trim, and blow. The PLM contracts within Grand Haven provide minimal service in this area. According to the Florida Extension Service, the leading cause of dead lawns is lack of water. The responsibility comes back to you and your cat can. Remember, beginning November 7, you can only water once a week. Make sure your system is covering the full lawn.

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Eagle pair returns to Wild Oaks

After raising one youngster earlier this year, Mr. and Mrs. Wild Oaks Eagle left the area in May. The eaglet left on April 25, dad took off May 17, and mom departed May 24. “She probably had to stay longer to clean up after the other two – the female’s job is never done,” according to one Audubon official.

They vacationed somewhere up north; younger eagles favor the Chesapeake region because of its plentiful forage while adults may venture as far as Canada. When a pair of eagles leave the nest, they go do not stay together. Taking separate vacations each year may be one reason that eagles mate for life.

Mrs. Eagle returned to the nest on August 31; the male returned September 3. Last year they were seen together for the first time on September 3, so they are on schedule. Many Florida eagles have returned earlier this year, Audubon members say.

Florida eagle nesting season officially begins October 1. Since the pair returned, it has been seen in the nest, around the nest area and across the Intracoastal Waterway. The eagles are chatting a bit and adding to their nest; things will get serious in the weeks to come with bonding and mating. Incubation should begin around Thanksgiving and hatching should take place by the first of January.



Mr. & Mrs. WO Eagle

Grand Haven CERT team seeks volunteers

By Frank Benham

Forty-five Grand Haven residents are part of a team of emergency responders organized to aid neighbors in the event of a hurricane, wildfire, tornado, or other natural disaster.

Known as the Grand Haven CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), the group is part of a nationwide organization whose members have been trained by the County Emergency Operations staff in team organization, disaster preparedness, basic first aid, light search/rescue operations, damage assessment, and fire suppression.

Grand Haven CERT is currently seeking new members to join the team; training sessions by the Flagler County Emergency Management Services began on October 13 at the Emergency Operations Center in Bunnell.

Make-up sessions are available for volunteers who were not able to attend this or subsequent sessions. Grand Haven residents are encouraged to attend any sessions that fit their schedules.



Members of the Grand Haven Cert Team

All Grand Haven residents interested in learning more about the CERT Program should contact either Steve Davidson (386) 447-9169, e-mail sdavidson13@cfl.rr.com, or Frank Benham (386) 864-7004, e-mail fbenham@cfl.rr.com.

The Grand Haven CERT Team has activated a Website: www.grandhavencert.org. Visit this website to learn more about the team and the GH CERT program.

Editor’s note: Frank Benham has been a resident of Grand Haven since 2005. He and his wife moved to The Bluffs from New Jersey after he retired from an engineering management position.

The principles of safe bicycle riding

Editors Note: The following article is in response to a letter from a new Grand Haven resident inquiring about bicycling laws and safe riding practices in this area. Legal content was taken from the "Florida Bicycle Law Enforcement Guide," published by the Florida Bicycle Association. Safe riding practices are from "Bike Florida" and the Grand Haven Biker Babes.

Should I ride on the sidewalk or the road? It depends.

Cyclists on roadways fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles. Nationally, only 30 percent of bicycle injuries treated in emergency rooms involve collisions with motor vehicles. Crashes in traffic are caused by avoidable errors. In 70 percent of these cases, the cyclists involved had violated traffic rules; in a minority of the incidents, motorists had violated the rules.

A cyclist is safer riding with traffic than facing it. A cyclist who rides facing oncoming traffic increases his risk of being hit by a motorist by two to four times. Drivers entering and exiting the roadway at side streets and driveways do not expect bicycle traffic to approach from the wrong direction. A cyclist driving against the direction of traffic on the roadway can be cited.

If a cyclist is riding at night or just before dawn, Florida law requires the use of a headlight and a rear reflector, even when streetlights are lighting your way. It is recommended to use a very large rear reflector either on the bike or on your back. Car drivers cannot see you at night. Your safety depends on how much lighting you provide on your bike.

A bicycle is defined as a vehicle for purposes of the Uniform Traffic Control Law. A cyclist is in control of a vehicle and therefore must follow the traffic rules common to all drivers plus specific rules adopted for bicycles.

A bicyclist riding on a sidewalk or crosswalk has the rights and duties of a pedestrian. A cyclist riding on a sidewalk must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and must give an audible warning before passing – "Passing on your left."



A bicycle rider or passenger under 16 years of age must wear a helmet, older but wiser people will also wear a helmet. Even if your feet are only one foot off the ground your head is six to eight feet in the air. When the bike stops and you dive over the handlebars, your head isn't much of a match against concrete.

Cyclists may not wear a headset, headphone or listening device, other than a hearing aid, while riding according to Florida laws.

A cyclist on a roadway should ride single file as close as practicable to the right hand curb except in the following situations: when passing another vehicle, making left turns, when necessary to avoid hazards, when a lane is too narrow for a bicycle and another vehicle to travel safely side by side. Bottom line: If you are a casual biker riding at 5 to 8 miles per hour, ride on the sidewalk, wear a helmet, announce you're passing to walkers, get off the bike and walk across all intersections.

If you are an advanced biker riding at 15-25 miles per hour, you know all this stuff and would not consider riding without your helmet – you should represent bikers' standards by exercising the courtesy of riding single file on roadways where appropriate.

If you are an intermediate biker riding 9-14 miles per hour, wear your helmet, ride the roads or sidewalks that feel safe to you, walk across intersections and enjoy one of the great benefits of living in this area.

GHMA election and annual meeting

Three GHMA board positions will be vacated at year end. Leaving the board will be Roy Search, Ray Smith and Kenny O'Connor, having fulfilled the requirements of their respective terms.

The three empty positions will be filled at the GHMA Annual Meeting held on January 20, 2011, at 5:00 pm in the Grand Haven Room at the Village Center.

Notice of the annual meeting and candidate sheets, for those wishing to be on the ballot, will be sent out on November 15. The candidate sheets must be returned by December 6, 2010. The second notice will be mailed to all residents on December 15, along with a copy of the candidate sheets which have been received.

Explore mind-body harmony with Tai Chi

By Wil Hessert

Throughout the world, many people can be seen gathering in the early morning in parks or quiet places to begin the synchronous and flowing movements of the Tai Chi Form. They are relaxing into the flowing postures of Tai Chi in a ballet that requires a calm and focused mind, relaxed body and elasticity of flow. They are suspending the computer functions of the brain and allowing a mind/body harmony to take place. This effort promotes the maximum flow of energy in the body, and restores and enhances good health.

In Grand Haven, we have our own Tai Chi Club that practices this ancient art form.

The Tai Chi Club meets Mondays at the Creekside Amenity Center and Wednesdays in the Grand Haven Room in the main Amenity Center. Classes currently are divided between beginners and intermediates. The two certified instructors are Wil Hessert and Lee Willman.

Instruction at the club covers three areas: Tai Chi Chuan (Supreme Ultimate Fist), Qi Gong (Breath or Energy Work), and Meditation. Tai Chi is an internal Chinese martial art practiced for both its defense and health benefits. The club concentrates on the Yang Style Solo Form, primarily for health benefits. The slow-moving form improves balance, mobility and flexibility.



*Kay Borer, Wil Hessert, Gwen Chimsee,
Wendy Rogers, and Kenny O'Connor*

Qi Gong, or energy training, is a Chinese discipline that is more than 4,000 years old. There are more than 1,000 Qi Gong exercises, but the club emphasizes Soaring Crane Qi Gong. Qi Gong training uses breathing techniques combined

with moving exercises to improve the movement of life energy, "Qi", through the body's meridians. Body meridians are the same channels used by acupuncturists to assist patients in addressing health issues. All of the Qi Gong training is designed to reduce stress and allow one's body to relax. Traditional Chinese medicine teaches that a smooth, uninterrupted flow of Qi requires a relaxed body in order to restore health and improve longevity.

Meditation is simply a way to calm the mind, relax one's body and "be in the moment." Meditation reduces tension and stress, both physically and mentally, resulting in lower blood pressure and better circulation of Qi. Essentially, the club practices techniques for external relaxation and inner tranquility.

All three disciplines complement each other. The Tai Chi Form actually becomes a meditative exercise for the body. The slow movements of the Form improve balance, body alignment, motor control and rhythm of movement. All of the elements reduce stress and tension, resulting in lower blood pressure. Ultimately, the goal of Tai Chi is true harmony of body and mind and the achievement of central equilibrium.

Editor's note: General Wil Hessert (Ret.), a Grand Haven resident, initiated this activity within the community and is an instructor. Contact the Village Center if you are interested in attending.

Grand Haven campaign policy

No signs on common or private property without required approval.

No leaving materials at residents homes without their permission.

Knocking on neighbors doors to discuss issues may be done by residents.

These policies protect the security of absent residents and have been in place since Grand Haven was established.

GHMA approves no increase assessments

At the October 22, 2010 meeting the GHMA board approved budgets that resulted in no increased assessments to Grand Haven residents for basic services. The only changes in assessments affected those villages that receive private lawn maintenance. The basic cost of those services remained level except for changes in funds needed for working capital and bad debt reserves.

FAQs

(Continued from page 2)

Q: My neighbor has a well and the water stains the sidewalks. Although he cleans it every once in a while, it immediately deteriorates. Can you do something?

A: The problem of recurring violations is most commonly seen in two areas: Rust from irrigation wells, and failure to maintain unimproved lots. It appears that residents wait for the warning letter then clean the rust or cut the lot and then don't do anything else until they get another warning letter. To address this situation, the board adopted a habitual offender policy. If a resident is cited three times within a 12-month period for the same violation, the violation goes directly to the fine committee for action. Maybe a \$100 fine will change behavior patterns.

Q: Since you have harped at us so long, I knew that I needed to send my plan to change my landscaping into the ADC for approval. I drew a map of what was coming out and where the new things might go in – I really hadn't decided – so I listed options. I also gave the committee two lists of plants – big and small – that I might use – each with the options of where I might plant them. They denied it. How come?

A: The ADC is not a Chinese restaurant. You cannot say to them, "I will chose one from column A and one from column B and I will decide about white rice or fried rice later." At the risk of harping on the principles again, the plan must be definitive and you should go to the meeting. Requests that are not understood are denied. Thirty minutes of your time to attend the review of your plan and clarify any questions will assure that your request is fully understood and gets through the process smoothly.



Grand Haven cyclists ride for charity

Five members of the Grand Haven bicycle group participated in the October 2-3 annual North Florida MS150 event to raise money for multiple sclerosis. They were joined by more than 2,700 cyclists from around the country as they rode from St. Augustine to Daytona on Saturday and then back on Sunday. The Grand Haven group rode under the sponsorship of the PGA Tour; it was their ninth year of participation in the charity event, the second under PGA Tour sponsorship.

It was a beautiful weekend for riding with plenty of sunshine and low humidity. A 15-mile an hour breeze from the north gave them a push on Saturday as they pedaled to Daytona but the same wind on Sunday made the return trip a lot more challenging.



Cyclists (from left) Jim Kamalsky, Sheila Seeley, Joy Mottel, Kenny O'Connor, and Jim Gibson following their ride.

GHMA sets up e-mail blasts

To further communication between the Grand Haven Master Association and residents, the GHMA will begin sending e-mail blasts to residents later this year.

The e-mail system will be used to communicate time-sensitive information of GHMA business or community concern. The e-mails will be labeled GH Master Association for easy identification and they will not duplicate e-mail information regularly received from the CDD or the Amenities Center. Volume is expected to be very light, possibly five to ten e-mails per year.

The initial e-mail list of residents was provided to the GHMA by the CDD. With each e-mail, residents will have the option to opt out or change their e-mail address.

Tips from your local burglar

There are lots of scams that potential burglars may use to gain entry to your home. Here are ten possible ones your burglar won't tell you:



-- Of course I look familiar. I was here just last week cleaning your carpets, painting your shutters, or delivering your new refrigerator.

-- Thanks for letting me use the bathroom when I was working in your yard last week. While I was in there, I unlatched the back window to make my return a little easier.

-- Those yard toys your kids leave out always make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.

-- I really do look for newspapers piled up on the driveway. And I might leave a pizza flyer in your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.

-- If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set. That makes it too easy.

-- A good security company alarms the window over the sink. And the windows on the second floor, which often access the master bedroom - and your jewelry. It's not a bad idea to put motion detectors up there too.

-- It's raining, you're fumbling with your umbrella, and you forget to lock your door - understandable. But understand this: I don't take a day off because of bad weather.

-- I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions somewhere or offer to clean your gutters.

-- Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table, and the medicine cabinet. I almost never go into kids' rooms.

-- I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.

GHMA

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: Position on the GHMA board. There will be three positions open at the end of this year.
Qualifications: Ability to smile while being told you have not solved all the problems.

Job 2: Person needed to write *The Oak Tree*.
Qualifications: Ability to write and a sense of humor.

Contact Kenny O'Connor at koconnor12@cfl.rr.com or Ray Smith at raymondsmith@cfl.rr.com for submissions or more information.

Members of the GHMA board

President	Kendra O'Connor	446-3587	koconnor12@cfl.rr.com
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Treasurer	Judy Hackstaff	447-7306	jhackstaff@cfl.rr.com
Director	Gene D'Iorio	446-2995	gdiorio@aol.com
Director	Ray Smith	445-3666	raymondsmith@cfl.rr.com

2010 GHMA meeting schedule:

Board meetings are scheduled on Fridays at 2 p.m. in the Creekside Amenity Center. All residents are welcome to attend.

Upcoming 2010 meeting dates:

November 19

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

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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

