



A Message from the President

by Jim Beasom

Our parks and paths are very susceptible to fire due to the lack of rain during the last four months. Please be especially vigilant in observing the no smoking and no fire rules in these areas that apply even during wetter times. Also please be careful with fires such as barbecues in areas near the park lands. Even a small escaped spark can start a fire in these dry times.

The new pool season started May 1. The Board has chosen to leave pool fees unchanged from last year even though the cost of electricity to operate the pool has increased significantly during the year. The pool is the most expensive amenity that the AHF provides for its members. We heat the pool to make it more usable during the cooler months. Please take out a pool membership if you have any interest in swimming.



AHF Maintenance Assessment Due July 1, 2006

The AHF fiscal year runs July 1 through June 30. The 2006 Maintenance Assessment of \$75.00 is due July 1. and a \$5.00 discount will apply if paid during the month of July. In accordance with AHF Bylaws II.C (1)(c), assessments become delinquent when more than three months in arrears. It is each member's responsibility to keep his/her account current.

AHF Office Closed

Monday, May 29 (Memorial Day)

Tuesday, July 4

Monday, September 4 (Labor Day)

Monthly Board of Trustees Meetings

Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. at the AHF Hall

Thursday - June 8 Thursday - August 10

Thursday - July 13 Thursday - September 14

Committee Reports Due to AHF Office

Tuesday, June 5 Tuesday, August 7

Tuesday, July 10 Tuesday, September 11

New Pool Keys

Pool keys for the 2006/07 season are available in the AHF Office. Membership is the same as last year.

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-AHF Member</u>
Annual/Family	\$150	\$315
Annual/Individual	\$ 75	\$190
Monthly/Family	\$ 45	\$ 65
Monthly/Individual	\$ 25	\$ 45
Daily/Individual	\$ 2	\$ 4

There is also a "Snow Bird Special," \$80.00 for members joining after November 1 and extending to May 1, the end of the pool season. Family is defined as two or more persons who live together in a single home site here in Melbourne Village. Individual/family memberships include overnight house guests at no charge. Refundable key deposits are \$5.00.

Welcome New AHF Members:

Thomas and Dona Gaynor

627 Acacia Avenue
Lot 316 (from Cogan)

Resident Gail Griswold

735 Acacia Avenue
Lot 416





AHF Annual Meeting and Dinner

by Debbie Seilor

March 11, 2006, the 60th Anniversary of the AHF Annual Meeting, was an historic milestone for our community. Everyone who took part in the weekend's events felt how lucky we are to live in such a special and unique community.

The Annual Meeting is an opportunity for all Villagers to meet the AHF Board of Trustees and new AHF members, review AHF activities, proposed resolutions, and the state of finances. The meeting started at 9:00 a.m. as soon as the required quorum was reached and lasted until 10:30. Everyone enjoyed coffee and donuts from Krispy Kreme.

The Annual Dinner was held the following evening. Since it was a milestone occasion, the committee focused on the food, culture, and music of 1946. The menu celebrated the end of war rations and a return to good old American cuisine, featuring roast beef, roast chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, corn, rolls & butter, salad, lemonade, iced tea and coffee. Many Villagers brought desserts to share. The Hall was decorated in white and silver, streamers, stars, balloons, and confetti with candles and fresh cut azaleas and ferns on each table. Historical photos and 1940's memorabilia were on display. A large curtain that was hand-painted by Marian "Mimi" Britten for the 6th Annual Meeting in 1952 was displayed and surprised attendees. Hot Cocoa, a quartet performing songs from the big band and swing era, entertained the audience.



"Hot Cocoa" entertained mayor Steve Gaul and the audience.

SPECIAL THANKS

to all who stayed to help clean up. We'd have been there all night without you!
 Committee members: Debbie Gaul (Chair), Debbie Seiler (Secretary), Steve Gaul, Jean Henderson, Yvonne Shingler, Juliet Kjerulff, Karen Whitehead and Betty Kinsfather.

AHF Membership Directory

The Information Committee has a summer project: The AHF Board of Trustees approved updating of the AHF directory. Many of you still have and use the fabulous directory produced by Dick Cullen several years ago. Unfortunately, that directory is badly out-of-date due to all the changes in AHF membership.

No AHF member will be included in the directory without his/her approval. If you choose to participate, we will include the AHF members' names, address, phone number and e-mail (optional), plus all household member names.

We can't do this project without your help. To approve (or disapprove) inclusion of your information,

1. Complete the form below and drop it at the AHF office **before June 10, OR**
2. Contact Sandi Jones at (e-mail) ricsanjon@aol.com or (phone) 728-1367.

During June, we will contact members we haven't heard from to request permission and information. Please be assured that all AHF members' wishes will be honored. We plan to assemble the directory in July and have it printed in August. Directories will be distributed to all AHF members as soon as they are available.

Thank you in advance for your help. Your participation by completing the form below will make this job much easier!

AHF MEMBER DIRECTORY

To All AHF Members: Please complete this form and return it to the AHF office Before JUNE 10 to authorize or disapprove inclusion of information in the new AHF Directory.

AHF Members' Names

(please print): _____

Other household member names:

Address: _____

Phone Number : _____

E-mail address (optional): _____

Please check one box below and sign the form.

I DO

I DO NOT

wish to have my personal information included in the AHF directory.

Signed, _____

Bring this form to the AHF Office Before June 10. After office hours, please use the mail drop slot. (or email information to Sandi Jones at ricsanjon@aol.com)



AHF Committee News



The AHF Committees are a large part of what makes Melbourne Village work. We are always looking for more volunteers to help on projects that the Committees undertake. If you are interested in lending a hand and your skills, or if you have a question about any of the Committees, call the AHF Office or visit the new AHF website. We saw many new faces at the Committee Orientation meeting in April and hope that all of our new members find working on Committees rewarding! Thanks, Volunteers!

Recreation Committee

Easter Egg Hunters filled the Green

The annual Easter Egg Hunt was held on April 15. Melbourne Village teens assisted with the event, and a host of enthusiastic children ran all over the Nutting Wood Green, Deerhead Hammock, Memory Garden, and the area around the police station. Some lucky children found special prize eggs and won games and gift certificates and everyone enjoyed the day. Thanks to everyone who made this event a giant success!

Mark your calendar for the Independence Day picnic and parade on Sunday, July 2. Come and show your patriotism on our nation's 230th birthday! Villagers are welcome to build floats using lawn tractors and trailers, drive their classic cars, march, or decorate bikes to participate in the parade. Watch the bulletin board for details about this exciting event.

Parks and Paths

It's air potato time again. Every May a new crop of air potato vines begins to grow. They grow rapidly, attaining a length of fifteen to twenty feet or more. They spread along the ground and high into the trees and hang down.

These invasive counterclockwise twining vines have large heart-shaped single leaves that may be eight inches long. The leaves grow alternately along the stem. As the vine matures, the aerial tubers we call air potatoes, from the size of a pencil eraser to five or more inches long, develop near each leaf stalk along the vine. These air potatoes resemble a regular potato with many small bumps. They are not edible.

However, every air potato is capable of sprouting a

new vine next year. Now is the time to reduce this year's crop by spraying the young vines or digging them up, being sure to remove the underground tuber, in order to kill the plant.

The AHF has the herbicides *Prosecutor Pro* and *Round-Up* available free to residents for spraying these invasive plants in their own yards. Call the AHF office at 723-6042 or Jean Henderson at 724-0070 to get more information about obtaining herbicides for your air potatoes.

Erna Nixon Hammock

The Hammock got its spring cleaning and was in good shape for the Historic Walk on April 2nd. Committee members cleaned paths, removed more invasive plants and cut low branches. There is some Poison Ivy close to the paths that has been sprayed but watch where you are walking and stay on the path. We are working on new maps for the Hammock with more accurate details.

After the hurricane season of '05, the Committee worked hard clearing the paths of trees and debris. Most of the cuttings were left in the park to decompose as nature intended. We are watching a couple palm trees that are leaning over the paths. They seem to be stable, but please be aware of your surroundings when in the Hammock. Remember that this is a natural setting!

Our Eagle Scout project to replace path signs and put identification tags on some of the plants continues. These projects take time to get completed, but they are a big help to our Committees.

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact any Committee member. We are always looking for help in the parkland. Remember NO SMOKING in any of our parklands, and PLEASE NO LITTERING. Dogs are welcomed on the trails but please remove any dog waste. Let's be considerate of others.



Jean Henderson and Debbie Seiler share a laugh at the Committee Orientation meeting.



Memory Garden

We've completed spring cleaning in the garden! We added more mulch to the flower beds, pruned shrubbery and filled the bird bath. The committee's plans for the coming year include the construction of a pergola, adding MORE mulch and keeping the garden neat. The Redbud tree, planted in memory of Eleanor Adkins, is growing nicely. If you have any ideas for the garden or want to help, call Sandi Dix, Chairperson or the AHF office. Happy gardening!

Building and Grounds Committee

Although the Committee is not planning a huge project like last year's painting of the Village Hall, they are working on many small projects such as the new lighting recently installed in Pat Zine's AHF Office. We urge you to call anyone on the Buildings and Grounds Committee to volunteer for on-going projects.

Swimming Pool Committee

During the month of May, the restroom building will be given a new coat of paint. There also are discussions about replacing the canopy which is near the shallow end of the pool. It has been noted that the canopy should be raised up higher to ensure that people don't bump their heads on it.

Information Committee

The AHF is now on the Web, thanks to Debbie Seiler. See the article on Page 1 for the details! We are also looking to install a computer in the AHF Library so those without computers can view the new website, www.melbourne-village.com. We are also creating a new AHF Membership directory. See the article on page 3 for details and need your participation!

Walking our Village History *by Sandi Dix*

The Annual Historic Walk on April 2nd, co-hosted by the Town Historic Preservation Commission and the AHF Membership Committee, was well attended. About 25 residents joined our guides for the walk.

We gathered at the AHF Hall where everyone got a name badge - a great way for us to put names and faces together and meet some of our newcomers. After a brief welcome, we headed over to the Memory Garden where Sandi Dix gave a brief history of the Garden. Then it was off to the entrance of Deerhead Hammock, where Jean Henderson and John Daly imparted their wisdom on this historic landmark.

On the way to where Erna Nixon once lived, we convinced a new resident who was working in her yard to join us. I think she was secretly ready for a break! When we got to the old home site of Erna Nixon, long time Villager Gail Griswold was there to greet us. She had pictures to show and stories of Erna. As you may know,

Erna Nixon and several other residents including then Village resident Gerald Einem were instrumental in getting the county to buy the land we know as Erna Nixon Park on Evans Road. In tribute to her hard work, the Village named our park after her as well.



We thanked Gail and headed to hear Tom Kjerulff talk about his mother, Georgiana Kjerulff, a wonderful writer who has published several books. There is a copy of one you may be familiar with, Troubled Paradise, in the AHF's historic room. The book contains many interesting stories and pictures about the Village. If you haven't read it, please put it on your reading list.

Next, we walked through Erna Nixon Hammock. We were shown native plants and given a brief talk about the hammock and its ecosystem. We learned that the local Native Plant Society was

(Continued on page 6)



Vision 2012 (cont'd from page 1)

Some are particularly concerned about visual and environmental impacts of recent residential construction. The Town's recent implementation of a building moratorium will help provide the Vision 2012 Committee a window of time to address AHF members' and Town residents' concerns and wishes for future development in Melbourne Village.

To determine how people really feel about the character of Melbourne Village, future residential development, and the all important quality of life issues - those intangibles that make this place home for us - the Vision 2012 Committee will be asking lots of questions. The Committee members need your assistance to obtain answers.

- *****
- What aspects of Melbourne Village do YOU think are important?
- What would you like to preserve?
- What do you want to see changed?
- How well do the Town and the AHF work together?
- Where is improvement needed?
- *****

Here's how you can help in this important endeavor:

1. Participate in workshops and attend meetings of the Vision 2012 teams. If it's not convenient or comfortable for you to attend in person, pass along your ideas and opinions to Committee members or put them in writing and drop them off at the Town office. Meetings will be posted on the bulletin board.
2. Cooperate when requests for information are presented to you. We can't come to appropriate conclusions and make good recommendations if we don't have good information on which to base them.
3. Monitor Vision 2012 progress on the AHF and Town websites which will be updated periodically.
4. Make your opinion known to Committee members via e-mail. Write tmv@fdn.com with "Attention, Gail" in the subject box and your message will be channeled to the appropriate Vision 2012 Committee member. You can get a list of Member's names and contact info at the Town Office or the AHF website.

We hope to involve **everybody** in the Village in this important endeavor. This special place belongs to all of us, and we should each have the opportunity to help plan its future. Thanks for your help!

Historic Walk (cont'd from previous page)

started by Melbourne Villagers, Erna Nixon, June Golder and Hester Wagner.

As we made our way to the Print Shop Bridge, AHF Historian Yvonne Shingler kept us entertained with stories of the Village and its residents. Then it was back to the AHF Hall for refreshments. Everyone agreed that we learned a lot about this place that we call home. If you missed this year's walk... Please don't miss next year's.



Passings

Marion Malavasic

Marion Malavasic died Wednesday, March 15. Her burial was in Little Falls, New York. Ms. Malavasic lived on Savannah Drive and had been an AHF member since 1982.

Margaret Thompson

Margaret S. Thompson, 87, passed away on January 16. She is survived by her husband of 60 years, Edgar B. Thompson, one daughter, one son, and two sisters. Mrs. Thompson was a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church. She lived on Savannah Drive and was an AHF member since 1979.



Ask The Village Idiot

*Dear Village Idiot,
What's with this "Print Shop Crossing" bridge? I mean where's*

the print shop? Is this supposed to be a short cut to Kinko's? Can you enlighten?

~Forever lost

Dear Lost,

At one time, I heard that Trolls lived under this particular bridge, charging a toll to everyone who wanted to cross. They collected so much money, residents said "it was like they had a print shop for money," hence the name "Print Shop Crossing Bridge."

Sadly, however, this story is not true. Apparently Ralph Borsodi, a partner of sorts to the "Founding Mothers" of Melbourne Village, did put a printing press in one of the barracks that was moved from the old Naval Air Station (now Melbourne International Airport) to the southwest side of the bridge, where Bill and Shirley Hills now live.

The print shop resembled the present day Hester Wagner Community House, complete with wonderful wood floors. It also had a large bell on its south side that was used as a fire alarm back when being "self-sufficient" was an everyday reality.

At some time in the late 50's or early 60's the print shop was declared surplus and sold to Scott Taylor's parents. They moved the

structure to the Sebastian River and turned it into a weekend house. Eventually Scott and his wife Andrea Verier bought it, refurbished it and called it home. Scott and Andrea have since sold the old print shop and moved back to Melbourne Village, but the building still stands on the Sebastian River in Micco.



Above: Balasz and Zoli Szabo on Print Shop Crossing Bridge. Left: Sandi Jones chats with Balasz and Zoli.

*Dear Idiot,
What's the difference between the Town of Melbourne Village and the American Homesteading Foundation? Why do we need two governments? Is this some sort of Socialist plot?*

~Easily confused

Dear Confused,

The Town of Melbourne Village (TMV) is a real chartered city, just like Miami or Orlando, only a little (OK, a lot) smaller. The city government is run by a mayor and six commissioners who are elected to their posts during the regular voting process in November and receive no pay. They share ballots with candidates for president, governor, congress etc. Our police and public works departments are run by the city. The

legal boundaries of Melbourne Village physically define the Town of Melbourne Village. Melbourne Village gets money from taxes including commercial properties such as Target, Haverty's and Kinko's, and spends money for the public welfare of its residents. The police department, Hester Wagner Community House, and Public Works shop are owned and maintained by the Town of Melbourne Village.

The American Homestead Foundation (AHF) is a membership based organization. It is a corporation formed by the "Founding Mothers" and was sort of a commune, only different. The AHF envisioned a self-sufficient community of like-minded citizens. Land was purchased and some sold for building houses. A large quantity of the land was kept for park and woodland areas. Home businesses were encouraged. Around 1957, for fear that this land would be annexed by Melbourne or some other city, the residents petitioned the state of Florida for a city charter and thus became Melbourne Village. The AHF still owns most of the land not occupied by homes. It maintains the parks and paths, built and maintains the pool and Village Hall. The AHF gets its funds from new membership fees and annual assessments. A nine-member board of trustees approves projects and expenditures. The board members are elected by the AHF membership to three year terms

(Continued on page 10)

Reserved for Calendar

Reserved for Calendar



For the Birds: April's Bird Migration

by Shirley Hills

Every year local birders eagerly await the month of April, the peak of spring bird migration in Florida. Birds are returning from their winter stay in the tropics to their breeding grounds north of us. Although millions of birds pass by overhead, few of us are aware of the phenomenon since most migrants fly by night. The smaller birds fly at altitudes of 800-1600 feet; other birds travel up to 7400 feet above the ground. Some migrants have been recorded flying at 20,000 feet and higher. Migration is a very dangerous time. Birds flying over open water may become too exhausted to continue and drop into the water; others perish in storms at sea. Migrants die by the thousands crashing into towers, skyscrapers and house windows. Free-roaming domestic cats account for millions of bird kills nationwide each year. Habitat destruction is another factor in the declining bird populations of many bird species.

In spite of the negatives, many beautiful migrant bird species can be seen in Melbourne Village during the spring. This year for the first time we had a male and female Blue Grosbeak that visited our feeder for several days. The Indigo Buntings came back in greater numbers than last year, obviously remembering our 5-star accommodations. On numerous April afternoons we sit in our chairs under



our Live Oak listening and looking at the feeder birds and the many warbler species flitting about in the canopy overhead. Cape May, Black & White, American Redstart, Black-Throated Blue, Prairie, and *N. Parula* are some of the most common warblers. Although small, they are the jewels of the bird world with riotous color combinations of black & orange, blue & white, yellow & black, etc. Looking at these spectacular creatures for the first time through binoculars opens up a new world that exists within our own. Perplexed about bird names? [Peterson's Eastern Bird Guide](#) makes identification easy. With knowledge comes appreciation and a desire to know more.

MORE WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS:

Our 2 eaglets are flying all over the neighborhood and should be leaving for their summer migration soon. A wild boar has been seen in yards abutting Azalea Park. A pair of male peacocks has been seen, and heard, in Erna Nixon Hammock and on Hammock, Crane, and Acacia Roads.



Captured! On film anyway. Bob and Susan Lester caught this wild pig rustling up a late night snack in their yard by using a motion sensitive camera.

Village Idiot (continued from previous page)

using a mail-in ballot and are not paid for this privilege. The AHF spends its money on the parklands, community events and maintaining the Village Hall and pool.

This appears to be a fairly unique symbiotic relationship between a governmental body - the TMV and a civic organization - the AHF. Together they provide residents with a wide array of services. The office staffs of both organizations are most helpful and will make sure that any requests you have go to the proper authority.



Bats, Bats, and More Bats

by Marge Derrick

I learned recently that Melbourne Village is included in the habitat range of at least six species of bats. This explains why my nose almost bumped into one hanging upside down on a bit of foliage at face level on an Erna Nixon Hammock path. I now know it was an Eastern Red.

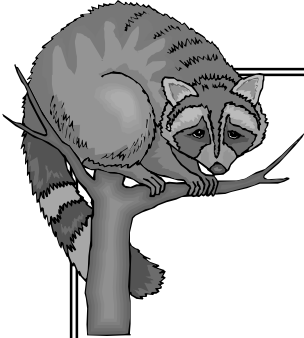
They are extremely helpful, devouring huge numbers of night-flying insects. In the big picture of things, each has its niche. The Eastern Pipistrelle, seen early in the evening flying erratically, is perfectly suited to catch moths. The Seminole, also an early evening feeder, is a straight flyer just over treetops, putting him in line to catch, hopefully, some of our flying exotic cockroaches (native palmetto bugs don't fly).

Spanish moss is a favorite roosting spot for Seminoles and Northern Yellows. I hate to say it, but the Big Brown favors human habitation, preferring stucco or brick porches, not to mention open garages for sleeping. The tradeoff is far fewer mosquitoes, pine borers and other unlovelies we would have around us.

Loss of trees means loss of habitat for these valuable creatures. We can help them by putting up bat houses and holding down the use of pesticides to an absolute minimum. We can also inform ourselves by writing Bat Conservation International, PO Box 162603, Austin, TX 78716-2603. It is well worth the effort. These creatures are an important part of the environment.



I promise you what I've just said is the truth although you might not believe it if you had seen what I saw one evening in a national park. The ranger was lecturing an attentive audience about bats, how harmless they are, what good they do etc. Her talk terminated suddenly when a large bat, focused on his insect prey, sailed right over her head. Her eyes bulged. We were then treated to the spectacle of watching her run around the stage flapping her big ranger's hat at it and screaming, **"I HATE THOSE THINGS!"**



My Little Friends *By Marie Moser*

When Larry and I bought Georgina Latta's little house in the woods, we learned quickly that we had also bought two raccoons. They watched me as I worked in the woods. They paced back and forth as we relaxed on our screened porch. We named them George and Funny Face, but George became Georgette when she appeared with two babies.

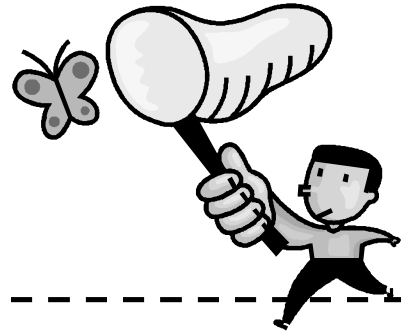
We put out seed for the birds, to the delight of squirrels and raccoons, so we shifted to dog food for the furry ones. When I worked, often late at night in my greenhouse-become-doll workshop, Georgette always guarded over me at the door. I knew that I was quite safe, and that there was no one around.

Georgette produced four babies; Funny Face had two; and other raccoons joined the original two. Eventually, we were feeding fifteen raccoons. We realized we were wrong to be feeding wild animals, and it was very, very hard to give it up. It is still so tempting as I watch four babies playing nearby. We had enjoyed a special experience and have wonderful memories. But, no more food for raccoons- just plenty of fresh water.





Children's Summer Program June 19-23



Mark your calendars - the Melbourne Village Children's Summer Program will be held June 19-23, from 9 a.m. to noon daily. We anticipate a fun-filled week full of educational information and surprises for the kids!

The Education Committee can't do this program without the help of volunteers, so please call the AHF Office at 723-6042 if you can spare any time during the week. Teens, you are always welcome to volunteer!

This is a great summer treat and any resident child age 5 through 12 is invited to attend. If you have grandchildren that would like to join, feel free to sign them up too. Register at the AHF Office so we can plan for the right number of children (deadline for sign-up is June 12th). Hope to see you there!

Registration forms are available at the AHF Office. The program is free and open to any resident child. Please Pre-Register



Canterbury Tales at the AHF Hall

Join us June 15, 16 & 17 for three Midsummer Eve performances of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

The Brevard Theatrical Ensemble will entertain us with a combination of story-telling, music and food to set the stage for six tales from the original work.

Written by Geoffrey Chaucer after 1387, *The Canterbury Tales*, in the form of an unfinished poem, introduces a group of pilgrims journeying from London to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury. The pilgrims represent a cross section of 14th-century English life and share their stories. Chaucer intended for 30 pilgrims to tell the tales, however, only twenty-three pilgrims received a story before his death in 1400. The *Tales* quickly spread throughout England in the early 15th century and scholars feel they reached instant and continued success because of their accurate and vivid portrayal of human nature, unchanged through 600 years since Chaucer's time.

The Brevard Theatrical Ensemble has been performing *The Canterbury Tales* to sellout audiences since 1999. Talented storytellers, musicians and

singers will provide an evening of entertainment, treating audiences to the sights, sounds, music, aromas, and flavors of Medieval England.

The performances are expected to sell out quickly. However, the Thursday, June 15th show has been reserved exclusively for Melbourne Villagers and their friends. This show will not include food, but will treat Villagers to all the entertainment planned for the other two shows.

Tickets for June 15 are \$15, and for June 16 & 17

are \$30. Call 676-0697 for Reservations. Learn more about BTE theatrical productions by visiting www.brevarden-ensemble.com

There will be a Special Performance for Melbourne Villagers and their Friends

Thursday, June 15th

Tickets for this show are \$15. Call 676-0697 for information.



Women's Guild on Summer Hiatus

In April, members of the Women's Guild took their third annual field trip; this year traveling to McKee Botanical Gardens in Vero Beach. Susan Lester, Guild President, arranged a tour guided by one of the garden's volunteers. It was interesting to see how many of the same plants we have growing here in our gardens. In fact, Susan Lester, Sandi Dix or Janet Metcalf could have given the tour as well as our guide - whatever our guide didn't know, one of these wonderful Village gardeners did. Having the three of them along certainly made the tour more delightful.

McKee Jungle Gardens, as it was formerly known, opened for the first time in 1929 as an 80 acre tropical hammock along the Indian River. By the 1940's more than 100,000 tourists had visited, making it one of Florida's most popular attractions. In the early 1970's attendance dropped dramatically due to construction of I-95 which pulled traffic from Route 1 and competition from new large scale attractions, and the garden closed.

The land was sold, all but 18 acres were developed, and the remaining acreage sat vacant for twenty years.

In 1994 a fund-raising campaign began and in 1995 the property was purchased for \$1.7 million. The Garden held its formal dedication and reopening ceremony in November 2001. Since that time millions of dollars have been spent refurbishing and stabilizing this piece of Florida history. To find out more about McKee Botanical Gardens go to www.mckee garden.org. If you haven't visited McKee Gardens, it is located on U.S. 1 just south of Vero Beach. And is well worth visiting. If you purchased an Entertainment book from one of the neighborhood children, there is a two-for-one coupon for McKee Gardens.



Women's Guild Members at McKee Botanical Gardens in April.

At our last meeting of the season in May, the Guild held their annual auction, one of many fund-raising events. Lots of treasures were donated by Guild members and a good time was had by all.

Our next meeting, a Covered Dish Welcome Back Luncheon, will be on Wednesday, September 13 at 12:30 at the AHF Hall. All women are welcome, even if you can't join us for every meeting.

Have a wonderful Summer!



Calling all Crafters

It's never too early to start planning for the Annual Holiday Bazaar. After all, December is going to be here before you know it!

- Are you interested in making and creating things?
- Do you have an idea, but don't know how to start?
- Do you have a talent you would like to share?
- Did you know that you can sell your hand-made items at the Annual Holiday Bazaar in December?
- It's fun working together here in this beautiful town of ours, sharing and building small business like our "Founding Mothers."
- We want to meet all of our wonderful community crafts-people - new members and old - interested in showing and their goods at the Annual Holiday bazaar.
- If you have ideas to add to our unique craft bazaar, please call **Theresa Degregory at 952-9624.**

The Villager is published 4 times each year by and for the members of The American Homesteading Foundation, Inc. News items, stories and comments can be addressed to the AHF Office or to the Information Committee at tovillager@aol.com

Information Committee Members:

Gary Hayes, Chairperson

Sandi Jones, Secretary

Leslie Fay, Layout

Grayson Dix, Photography

Sandi Jones and Mary Wood, Editorial

Bruce Benson, Community Bulletin Board

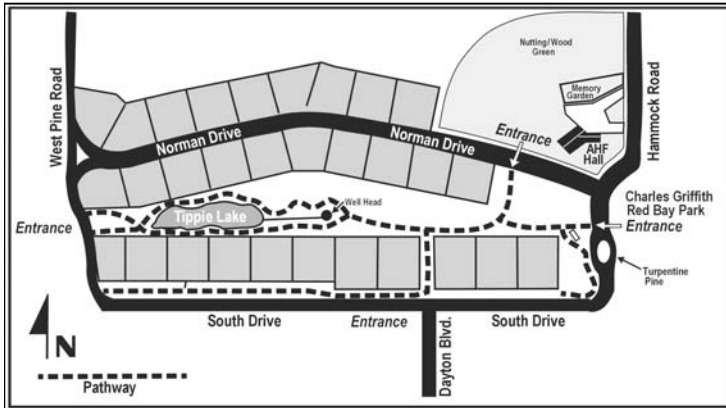
Nancy Bustelo and Steve Gaul



A Walk in the Park:

From Charles Griffith Red Bay Park to Lake Arthur Tippie

by Steve Gaul



Long before developers started dividing Florida into endless quaintly-named subdivisions, each with its own man-made “borrow pit” lake, Villagers were busy making their own artificial lake. Lake Arthur Tippie, in the oldest section of Melbourne Village, lies between Norman and South Drives. Recently, I spent a sunny afternoon walking around “the Lake.”

I started at the Hammock Road entrance to Charles Griffith Red Bay Park. This park used to be part of Lake Arthur Tippie Park, but was renamed in '96 or '97 in memory of Charles Griffith, who for years was active on the Parks and Paths committee. As a matter of fact, Bill and Shirley Hills and 'Chuck' Griffith cleared the air potatoes from this parkland in the 1990's. You'd be hard-pressed to find one there today.

I didn't travel far before finding an inviting resting spot – a bench provided by the Parks and Paths Committee. From that vantage point I could see the other name-sake of this park, a red bay tree (there are several, I'm told). As I walked westward, I was struck at how open and light these woods are, composed mostly of pines. The undergrowth, also noteworthy, was practically crawling with smilax and grapevines. This time of year, the smilax is crazy with growth, their tender, tendril-studded shoots climbing everywhere.

Continuing on, I noted a few oaks, but it's the pine trees that leave an impression. I imagined workers walking along these same wooded trails, collecting sap from pines to be made into turpentine. An old sentinel, a dead turpentine tree from those early times, stands nearby where the main path through Charles Griffith Park meets the path from South Drive. This area is also a great place to find Habenaria orchids blooming next to the trails in December and January.

Continuing west, things started getting interesting. The path forks around an old wellhead that was used to maintain water levels in the Lake. The water is guided to the lake by a small stream and the path continues on both sides of it. I'm sure that eventually this stream bed will disappear into the undergrowth, as the AHF opted to pipe the well water directly to the Lake several years ago. In and around this area I marveled at the stands of bamboo, in places leaving a blanket of spent bamboo leaves underfoot and dead canes arched overhead. There's also an area of uncontrolled growth of invasive 'house' plants from neighboring yards, including several types of philodendron. These non-natives really transform from mere house plants to jungle foliage once they start to climb a tree, but they are none-the-less invasive and don't belong in our parkland.



Bamboo canes similar to these arch high overhead in the middle of the park, creating an ethereal setting.



After the last stand of bamboo, the trail opens up to Lake Arthur Tippie, named for an early member of the AHF who served as President from 1948 to 1953. AHF records trace this man-made lake to Melbourne Village beginnings - indicating its completion around 1951. There's a trail that circles the Lake but the parkland is very narrow and has the appearance of going across residential yards that back to the Lake. As I walked around the Lake, I wondered how deep it might be and what was living in it, but the Lake offers no clues. Its surface is clogged with thick clumps of algae growth.

At the west end of the lake there are two exit paths that end on West Pine Road. Walking through this area I noted more non-natives including several Melaleucas, trees native to Australia that were used as "quick" landscaping for years because of their rapid growth.

As I retraced my steps back to the entrance on Hammock Road, my thoughts turned to the wisdom of early Villagers to set aside these parklands and to the volunteers who, over the years, have maintained the trails and preserved these parks for our enjoyment.

PLANT PROFILE

Smilax spp

Common names – greenbriar, catbriar, briar

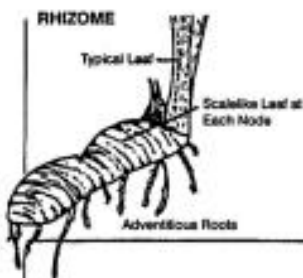
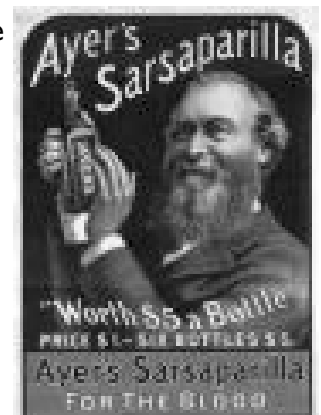
Location - Smilax is found in most of the eastern United States, from the Great Lakes states and southern New England, south to Florida. It grows as far west as Texas, Illinois, and Oklahoma.



Description – Smilax is a woody, climbing vine (up to 30') with stout thorny stems that climbs both by clinging and with tendrils. The leaves are often ovate, elliptical, shaped like a fiddle or arrowhead with distinct lobes at the leaf base. They are simple, alternately arranged, evergreen or deciduous. Glossy green leaves are smooth above, paler below, and grow 2" to 5" long and 1/2" to 4" wide. Flowers are small, greenish-white clusters that bloom in spring and turn into shiny, black berries in late summer or fall.

Uses – Sarsaparilla, a beverage and medicinal used against rheumatism, is obtained from the rhizomes of various species. The fleshy rhizomes of several species have the texture of firm, crisp apples, and were used by Native Americans and early settlers in the same manner as potatoes and in making bread and mush. A jelly can be made from the rhizomes and young, succulent stems of several species are used in salads or cooked and used like asparagus.

Even though many people dislike this native plant, it makes many important contributions to the ecosystem. The leaves and vines provide cover, a wide variety of birds eat the fruits, and many forest animals use the foliage and tubers as a food source.

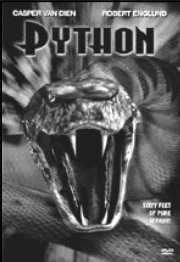


Smilax rhizomes have many uses.



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Gentle on my Mind - Achy Breaky Snaky - Part 2

by Nancy Bustelo

So here we were with two new roommates---a "down on his luck" teenager and his 8-foot Albino Burmese Python named Assassin! Well, the teenager hardly made a ripple in the chaos

of our everyday life but the snake was another story. For some reason he was bound and determined to get into the main part of the house and often succeeded. Numerous times I saw him disappearing under a couch or gliding by a doorway. One day, unbeknownst to me, the snake climbed up on the other side of a closed door and braced himself on the door-knob so with his head five feet up in the air. I opened the door in my typical "gung ho" manner only to see a frightening reptile coming right toward me at eye level. I lunged back with a shriek as the snake executed a Wile E. Coyote fall to land on the tile with a gigantic **SPLAT!!!** My mother always told me to wear clean underwear in case I'm in an accident. Sometimes that's easier said than done!

The snake and I gradually got used to each other. I even gave him back rubs - very difficult to do for obvious reasons. The only thing I couldn't abide was feeding time. The kids made a sign to put up at this time. It said "SNAKE AT WORK!" When it was posted on the door, I knew to give that room a wide berth until he had his meal. There were some benefits to having an enormous snake though. My sister-in-law absolutely

refused to come inside the house, so I didn't have to worry about cleaning up the place when she dropped by. My popularity quotient was on a new high with the teenage crowd, and my snake experiences made for great conversation material.

I began to take the snake for walks and one day encountered a Villager. His eyes bugged out as he started backing away from us. He must have been thinking about our new column in this Newsletter because I heard him muttering under his breath something about the "Village Idiot."

Another day I thought it would be a nice change for the snake to go in the woods. We were ambling and slithering, respectively, when all of a sudden he streaked forward and rapidly began disappearing down an abandoned hole. I threw myself down to the ground with a foot on both sides of the hole and grabbed and held on for dear life to the last half of the snake. He was incredibly strong! Thank goodness I was close to the house and let out a bellow that quickly brought a half dozen teens at a run. It was bad enough to almost lose someone's Pet Python but the "How could you do something so incredibly stupid?!!" looks I got from all the kids was awfully hard to take!

Stay tuned for the exciting conclusion of the **Slithering Snake Saga!**

Snake at work