



Bell Tower Property Owner Association's

BELL TOWER NOTES

COMCAST REPS FIELD QUESTIONS

By Suzanne Ferguson

Special Points of Interest:

- Ficus Hedge Update (P. 5)
- Summer Golf League (P. 5)
- Property Insurance Seminar (P. 6)
- Florida's Sugar Industry (P. 10-11)

About twenty residents and four POA Board members gathered in the Annex on Thursday afternoon, April 10th, to meet two representatives from our community cable service provider, Comcast. Scott Holcomb, an XFINITY Communities Sales Manager with an extensive technical background, and Melissa Mercer, a Senior Account Executive for bulk contracts, came to answer questions about Comcast service problems that have been plaguing some BTP residents since last fall.

BTP has renegotiated our Comcast contract to extend it an extra 4 years, to 2021, at a savings of \$44K in the first year of the extension and a promise of no more than a 3% rise per year in the remaining years. Holding this meeting was part of the contract negotiations.



Comcast Reps (center) answering questions.

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BELL TOWER PARK OWNER TELEPHONE DIRECTORY, FIRST EDITION, NOW ON THE WEBSITE

By Suzanne Ferguson and Richard Roux

After a long planning period, the first ever Bell Tower Park Owner Telephone Directory is now on our Website. Although many communities had owner or resident directories in the past, concerns about privacy led the Florida legislature to pass restrictions several years ago, which they revisited and revised in 2013. The current law authorizes owner directories, but allows individual owners to "opt out" in writing if they do not want any telephone number associated with their unit published.

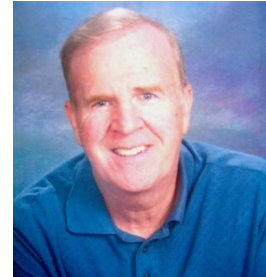
One of the original goals of the Communications Committee when it was formed in the fall of 2011 was to facilitate the production of a community directory; the Committee agreed that easy communication within the development was essential to enhancing community spirit and neighborliness. The POA Board concurred, and in the light of the 2013 statute for an "owner telephone directory" in place, it approved the production of a directory last October.

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POA ANNUAL MEETING SHOWS STEADY PROGRESS



By Dave Barnes

The Annual Meeting of the Bell Tower Park Property Owners' Association (POA) took place Monday evening, March 24th, 2014, followed by a short organizational meeting to appoint officers to the Board.

The official business of the Annual Meeting is to enact essential financial items and elect Board members when vacancies occur. The two financial items, overwhelmingly approved, were to roll over any 2014 surplus to the 2015 budget at the appropriate time, and to waive an audit of the Association's financial statements for 2014.

There were four candidates for the two open positions for two-year terms on the Board (see Candidates' Night story on p. 3). Dave Barnes, the current president, and recent newcomer Jeff Lund were elected.

In other business, the Treasurer reported that for the month of February we were \$6400 under budget. We are current with all vendors and are also in a good cash flow position.

A short POA Board officer appointment meeting was held after the Annual Meeting, and the Board unanimously appointed the following officers: Dave Barnes, President; Don Boreman, Vice President and Treasurer; and Richard Roux, Secretary. Tim Kidd and Jeff Lund are the additional Directors. □

REMINDER: IT'S HURRICANE SEASON PREP TIME

Hurricane and tropical storm season will soon be here. Unit owners are reminded to reread the article that appeared in the July 2012 edition of *Bell Tower Notes* (it's archived on the BTP Website) and to update their family emergency plan. Our snow birds should also insure their shutter installation plans and/or contracts are in place. Remember, new storm shutter regulations are now operative. Check the story in *Bell Tower Notes*, July 2013 (Vol. 2.4), p.2. □

JEFF LUND IS THE NEWEST DIRECTOR ON THE POA BOARD

By Suzanne Ferguson

Jeff Lund was elected to the vacant seat on the POA Board of Directors. Jeff is a Chartered Financial Analyst who holds a bachelors degree in economics and an MBA. Prior to moving full time to Bell Tower Park, Jeff served on the board of a condominium association in the Twin Cities area. He was unavailable for an interview for *Bell Tower Notes*. □



COURTYARD II ELECTS OFFICERS

By Jim Stewart, Treasurer

On February 10, 2014, Courtyard Homes at Bell Tower Park II had scheduled their annual meeting. However, an insufficient number of proxies had been received to hold the meeting. Incumbent President William Waldau stated that he, Paula Castallo, Jim Stewart and Martha Shaffer submitted their intent to run for the five-person board, and therefore an election was not necessary. A fifth seat may be appointed by the Board of Directors at their discretion.

Courtyard II reconvened their annual meeting on March 17, 2014. This time a quorum was reached, and the annual business of rolling over any surplus and waiving an audit was enacted. At the organizational meeting following, the Board determined that Bill Waldau will serve as President, Martha Shaffer as Vice President, Jim Stewart as Treasurer and Paula Castallo as Secretary. The Board thanked Tim Archer for his years of service to the Board and gave him a big ovation. The next regular meeting will be on April 21, 2014, at 2 p.m. at the BTP Annex. □



CANDIDATE NIGHT FOR THE POA BOARD

By Suzanne Ferguson

Two weeks prior to the POA Annual Meeting, the Association hosted a Candidate Night for the community to become better acquainted with the individuals running for the Board. About thirty members heard three of the four candidates discuss their backgrounds, their assessment of the current state of Bell Tower Park, and their agenda going forward. A fourth candidate, Sandy Archer, was unable to make the meeting, as she was in transit in connection with a family emergency. The three who did appear were Dave Barnes, the 2012-2014 President, and new candidates Jeff Lund and Bob Smith.

Association Manager Scott Thompson was the able moderator, keeping time and selecting from a group of written questions submitted by the audience. After introducing themselves, each candidate gave his opinion of what is going well at BTP and what could perhaps go better.

The question period addressed such items as “what is wrong” with the way things are going in community (not that much, all agreed); whether the Board “micromanages” the manager (which would depend on the distinction between “supervising” and “interfering”); the proliferation and enforcement of rules; how to get more people involved in volunteering for the community; and what could be done to make the buffer preserve area we maintain just north of the community more attractive and useful.

The assembled group thanked the candidates for their availability and candor with applause, and there were thanks to the Board and CAM for providing this opportunity to inform the membership. □



Candidates Lund, Barnes and Smith (pictured left to right) presented on Candidates Night.

COMCAST (continued from the front page)

“Comcast is confident they will be better able to serve their bulk customers by the end of 2015.”

Most of the initial questions were prepared by the POA Board and presented by BTP CAM Scott Thompson. Many questions pertained to interruptions in service and difficulties in reaching technical support. Holcomb announced that with the installation of new cable along Bell Tower Park Boulevard and a new, 400-450 position bulk-contract call center that is opening at the Comcast Daniels Parkway location to serve all of Florida, Comcast is confident that they will bet-

ter be able to serve bulk customers like BTP by the end of 2015. He also promised that we will have a designated account manager who visits BTP to field problems and bring information on new products and services, and there will be a team of agents in a center in Boca Raton specifically for CAMs to call.

Comcast is also in the process of replacing the current small extended-service HD digital boxes, which are an

older technology, with new boxes designed specifically for Comcast; these should also resolve a number of problems with stability of reception.

In closing, Holcomb had some advice for those leaving BTP for longer periods. In order to avoid rebooting problems, leave the cable box plugged in and connected to the incoming Comcast line, but unplug the cable going from the box to the TV. □

OWNER TELEPHONE DIRECTORY (continued from the front page)

“Directory changes can be made in person or by mail through the CAM office.”

Subsequently, “opt out” forms were sent out to all residents by Cardinal Management with the 2014 annual budget materials. The opt-out choice was discussed at several subsequent POA meetings, and also announced in the newsletter and on the Website. A number of owners did opt out in writing.

The directory now on-line is presented by sub-association: that is, Courtyard I, Courtyard II, and Carriage Homes have separate directories, but all are available to all Bell Tower Park owners from the same Webpage “home.” Once owners have had a chance to review and update the on-line version, a revision will be published on the Website, and

those wishing to have a print version may request one from the office.

In compiling the first edition of the directory, it was found that many owners have multiple telephone numbers. In the light of the wording of the 2013 statute, in order to restrict the directory to “official” numbers associated with an address, a decision was made that, for the first edition, only a single, local (239 area-code) number would be listed. Owners may now add any other alternate or additional numbers they prefer. (Renters cannot be listed in this directory; a renters’ directory may be devised in the future if there is interest from the renters.)

We know that many people nowadays do not have 239

numbers, but use cell phones with other area codes as their principal number. We are hoping that these people will want to be in the directory and will notify the office which of their numbers to use.

Changes, additions, and corrections to the on-line directory can be made in person at the CAM office or by requesting a change form and then signing and submitting it in writing by U.S. Mail (not e-mail). Users of the directory are reminded that it is for the private use of BTP owners only. Disclosure of directory information to third parties is strictly prohibited. □

SAVING OUR FICUS HEDGES

Replacement cost if the fixes fail could reach \$300,000!!!

By Dave Barnes

After several months of consultation with our landscaper, Mainscape, and with representatives from the University of Florida Extension Service, on the damage to our extensive and valuable ficus hedges along the southern edge of our property and elsewhere, the POA Board called in Plant Health Care Professionals of Wesley Chapel, FL (PHC), to do a detailed ficus hedge report for us.

Their ficus hedge expert, Dr. Stephanie Bledsoe, spent three hours on our property in March evaluating all our hedges and coming up with solutions to make them healthier, remove the cancerous galls, fill in the dead leaf areas and make sure they last longer. Dr. Bledsoe is the top ficus hedge expert in Florida, with over 20 years experience with ficus hedges, especially on Florida's east coast, which had similar problems as our hedges in the past few years.

Dr. Bledsoe will be working with Mainscape to come up with a proposal, additional recommendations and a time schedule to start our renovation program. She concluded that Mainscape had done an excellent job eradicating the white fly infestation that we have had during the last two years, fertilizing and performing normal maintenance of the hedges.

Now, Mainscape will be removing the cancerous galls, thinning out the insides of the bushes and cutting them back so that the bottoms will fill in better. She warned us that they might look worse once the work gets started, but ficus hedges grow three feet a year, so hopefully by the time our seasonal residents come back in the fall, they will look much better.

Work on the hedges was scheduled to begin April 15th. □

BTP SUMMMER GOLF LEAGUE STARTS MAY 1ST

By Mike Powell

The new BTP Golf League is taking shape after our initial meeting on March 25th, with play starting May 1st. The group decided to play every Thursday morning, May through October, using play in May to establish a league handicap. Play is open to both men and women, and we will play different games each week but in all cases will play our own ball (no scrambles).

After a lot of discussion among those half dozen attendees at the meeting on where to play and length of courses to play, the group decided to play three weeks per month at Hideaway Country Club (Par 67), travelling one week per month to a longer course.

Coordinator Mike Powell has made arrangements at The Hideaway CC for tee times every Thursday morning between 8 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. at a cost \$30, which includes golf with cart, lunch and one beverage. Sean Balliet, Head Golf Professional at Hideaway, will also assist with handicaps and making tee times for us when we travel to other clubs.

Those wishing to join must notify Mike Powell, (239-292-3051 or Mike@MikePowellRealtor.com) of their intention to play by 7:00 p.m. on the Monday before the Thursday they intend to play.

So mark your calendar for May 1st (call or e-mail by April 28th), and let all the golfers in BTP know about our new summer league. Our focus is to have fun and hopefully play some good golf with friends and neighbors. □



THIRTY-FIVE PLUS ATTEND INSURANCE SEMINAR

By Jim Stewart

Chuck Schmelzle, Chief Operating Officer of Insurance and Risk Management Services, Inc. (IRMS) made an informative presentation at the Clubhouse on property insurance the evening of March 11th, 2014, to over 35 BTP residents, who were full of questions. He explained what is covered on the POA's community policy and what the homeowners should cover for themselves. Typically, a "package policy" does not include flood damage, so you should purchase separate flood insurance.

Property and Liability coverage was discussed in some detail. Chuck admitted that it is an educated guess as to what dollar amount to have on your property. He passed out a worksheet that would help a homeowner determine the amount of property insurance to cover, pointing out that it is a waste to have too much insurance as well as too little.

However, if you have too little, you may not even get what you might think you have paid for. Coinsurance provisions require you to be adequately insured or suffer penalty after a loss. For example, if you really need \$100,000 of coverage but you buy only a \$50,000 policy on your personal property, then have a fire and claim the full \$50,000, the insurance company can pay you just \$25,000, since you only had half the coverage you needed.

Chuck stressed that you can improve property protection with intervention strategies such as clean hoses and filters, replacing outdated or worn items such as batteries, valves, or switches and turning off as many utilities as you can if you are taking an extended trip. Also, he urged people to consider home watch services.

Finally, he recommended that you make a video of your property, which would save time and effort in the event of a claim as well as speed up claim payments and possibly get you more money.

You can view Chuck's slide presentation at www.IRMSadvantage.com. □



Chuck Schmelzle, IRMS

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

By Ronnie Vaccarino and Kathy Gambino

The Committee is taking a small breather after a very busy and successful season that included one or more events each month plus the Sunday morning coffee hours. We have one more special event lined up for Saturday, May 24th, that we are calling "Taste of the World," for which we invite everyone to bring their favorite ethnic entrée while the Committee supplies salads and desserts. The event is free, but you must r.s.v.p. for planning purposes. (See our ad, p. 12)

A summer pool party and additional summer and fall activities are in the planning stages.

The Committee continues to meet on the first Tuesday evening of the month at 7 p.m. in the Clubhouse. Additional members will be welcomed. □



St. Patrick Coffee Hour treats



Kathy Soares welcomes residents

PICKLEBALL COMES TO BELL TOWER PARK

By Frank Kersanty

If you have been walking through our community on a Tuesday or Thursday morning, you may think that we have a flock of woodpeckers invading the property. If you hear something that sounds like a slow-motion woodpecker, you may actually be hearing a graphite racquet striking what looks like a whiffle ball.

We have had a great interest this spring in one of the fastest growing sports in America, known as pickleball. Confirming our experience, NBC Nightly News recently broadcast a segment tracing the growth of this new sport in the United States. There is even an International Federation of Pickleball. Already we have about 16 to 20 residents who have come out to play this game.

This fun, fast-paced game is easy to learn and can be played well by people of all ages in a short period of time. At BTP, it is being played on the basketball court. Our Property Owners' Association has had two pickleball courts superimposed on the basketball court. Each court is 20 feet wide and 44 feet long, which is about half the size of a tennis court, and the game can be played as doubles or singles.

Nine out of ten of those who play this game in our community are new to the sport. They have quickly picked up the scoring, the rules and the skills needed to be a successful pickleball participant.

While the game may be new to BTP, it was actually created back in the mid 1960's as a kind of low-budget combination of badminton and outdoor table tennis. A family from outside of Seattle Washington developed the game. They had a cocker spaniel named Pickles who really liked the game. He would hide in the bushes and as soon as a ball came his way, he'd dash out, grab the ball and run away. While it's not certain, many believe that's how the game got its name.

We currently have two nets, four extra paddles and a dozen pickleballs to use when playing. So all you need is the appropriate court shoes, and we have all of the rest to get you involved with a sport that is fun, great exercise and certainly gives you the opportunity to meet your neighbors within our community.

Please feel free to join us on any Tuesday or Thursday morning from 8:30 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. I know that you will thoroughly enjoy the experience, the competition and the camaraderie amongst all of the players.

Some comments that we have been hearing from the participants include the following:

"New to pickleball, I am enjoying the Tuesday and Thursday pickleball experience. Come and join us." **VINCE VACCARINO**

"Pickleball is a great game for family and friends to get together. It provides fun and communication for all ages. It almost has a picnic-type atmosphere and is a great outdoor activity and exercise." **BILL AND JO JOHNSON**

"I was looking for an activity that would be easy to learn and play, and also have the added benefit of getting to know more BTP neighbors. I found it in pickleball. The rules are few and easy to learn, and the easygoing competition makes getting exercise more fun. We all seem to enjoy the camaraderie and have made many new friends of all ages. I plan to get my children and grandchildren involved with pickleball when I go back north so we can all enjoy the fun of participating in the same activity together."

NORM SMITH □



Serving up a storm!



Frank Kersanty pursues a point

ANNUAL TIKI PARTY ENDS THE “SEASON” WITH DANCING

By Kathy Soares and Ronnie Vaccarino

The Bell Tower Park Activities Committee hosted the annual Tiki Party on the pool deck at the Clubhouse the afternoon of March 8, 2014. Nearly a hundred residents and guests enjoyed an afternoon of music, food and drinks under a picture-perfect blue sky in a spectacular display of southwest Florida’s ideal climate.

Music was provided by "The Jesse Allen Trio," invited back after playing for the Sock Hop last fall. Now they had people dancing to such favorites as the "Stroll." BTP resident Ross Mannina plays bass in the group, which also features a drummer and vocalist/keyboard player Jesse Allen. Everyone had such a good time the band was asked to play for an extra half hour.

A tropical feast of pulled pork and teriyaki chicken grilled on the premises, paella, a veggie platter and fruit was served up by Gold Coast Kitchen catering. The desserts included pineapple upside-down cupcakes and chocolate coconut brownies. Key lime pie was purchased at Costco.

Members of the Activities Committee served soft drinks and fruit mixers from the Tiki Bar on the deck. Those who wanted margaritas or other alcoholic beverages brought their own. To add to the fun, several door prizes were raffled, including gift certificates from Bonefish Grill and Bed, Bath and Beyond. Several bottles of donated wine were given as door prizes.

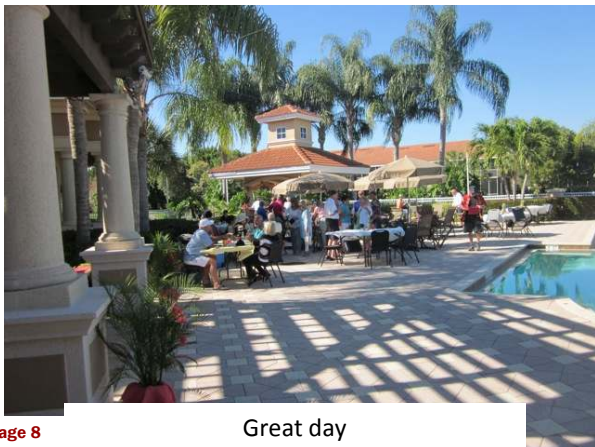
The Activities Committee would like to express their continuing gratitude to Ralph Newman and Arnie Harris, our former sales personnel, now partners at ReMax Realty, for continuing their generous financial support for the Bell Tower Park social activities, including this year’s Tiki Party. Thanks, too, to all those who helped set up and take down the party. Events like the Tiki Party can only occur through the initiative and collaboration of a number of our residents. We have been very fortunate to have such talented and hard-working volunteers. □



Good Friends



Tasty Food



Great day



Wonderful Volunteers

“COFFEEHOUSE” CHAMBER CONCERT ENTERTAINS

By Suzanne Ferguson

Transforming the Bell Tower Park Clubhouse into a 17th-century English coffeehouse for a spring Sunday afternoon may seem a bit outside the usual range of events sponsored by our Activities Committee, but it turned out to be a delightful occasion for both the performers and the audience.

With canapés and cookies to munch and coffee and lemonade to sip, along with entertaining historical and musical commentary by one of the top viola da gamba players in America, Mary Springfels, a group of over sixty residents and outside guests listened attentively to music from the 1500s and 1600s played on replicas of string instruments of that time by players from the Ft. Myers area as well as several from southeast Florida and one from the St. Petersburg area.

The viola da gamba, Springfels explained, is a family of instruments that originated in Spain and around Europe in the 1400s and 1500s. With their flat backs and six strings on a fretted fingerboard, their relationship to the guitar is pretty obvious—but they are played with bows held underhand, unlike the violin family. All, from the smallest, violin-sized treble instruments to cello-sized basses, are held by the legs (the “gambas” in Italian and Spanish).

The program consisted of dances of the period as well as pieces that were variations or “divisions” on popular tunes and a couple of “fantasias,” pieces with free imitation of themes by the different instruments. They ranged from three to six parts.

Since the instruments have gut strings (rather than steel, like most modern string instruments), they are not only quieter than modern strings, they require a lot of tuning: as one participant commented, “The sheep didn’t consent to have their intestines used this way, and they protest!” Springfels’ commentary filled in the tuning time delightfully, and as a treat, she played some solo “divisions” from 16th-century Spain, accompanied by four players.

At the end, the audience was invited to come up and try the viols for themselves, and quite a number did so. The players were very pleased to have such a pleasant venue for their pieces, prepared during four weekends of coaching and lessons with Mary Springfels starting in September at the home of Suzanne Ferguson on Cheshire Drive.

Several of the listeners took the time to send thank you notes, much to the players’ gratification. Susan Knutson wrote, “What a wonderful event! Thank you for bringing us such beautiful music. Bravo!” Ronnie Vaccarino noted that she “found the concert to be very enjoyable. I had never heard that type of music in person before, and I enjoyed it very much. It was interesting to learn about the pieces and their composers.” Joyce Lindabury wrote: “Thanks for making this pleasant afternoon available to the Bell Tower Park community. We’ll look forward to an encore.”

The players also want to thank the Activities Committee for their support and assistance in serving, cleaning up, and returning the room to its normal appearance. □



Mary Springfels

A TRANQUIL SETTING.....

One of the first two community benches donated by residents of BTP overlooks our fountains. See full story in *Bell Tower Notes* 3.2, February 2014, p. 4.

In March a third bench was donated, leaving two of the proposed sites unclaimed. □



Memorial Bench– Lake #1

FLORIDA SUGARCANE: AN OVERVIEW

By Jim Stewart

[Editor's Note: The sugar fields might seem far from Bell Tower Park, but they are intermingled with many other critical issues in Florida: the state economy; the use of fresh water; the disposal of fertilizer- polluted water into our waterways and the Everglades; political influence at the state and national level in the "corporate welfare" of sugar subsidies; maybe even our health as we consume this sweet but subversive product! So we sent out our investigative reporter to find out about Florida sugar at the source. We hope you did "want to know."]

Sugarcane is a crop that can be grown throughout Florida. In many areas of the state, sugarcane is grown only as a hobby crop for syrup production or as a source of "chewing cane." However, in South Florida, sugarcane is grown commercially for the production of crystal or "white" sugar.

Sugarcane is a tropical grass native to Asia. Methods for manufacturing sugar from sugarcane were developed in India about 400 BC. Christopher Columbus brought the plant to the West Indies in the sixteenth century, and today sugarcane is cultivated in tropical and sub-tropical regions throughout the world. Roughly 75% of the world's sugar comes from sugarcane.

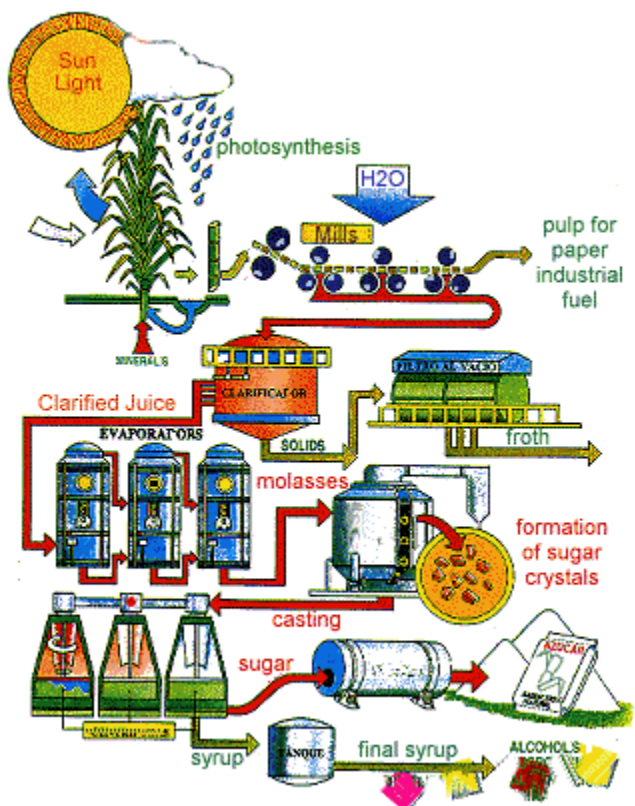
Palm Beach County accounts for approximately 75% of the commercial sugarcane in Florida. The remainder is grown in Hendry, Glades and Martin counties. All of these counties are adjacent to Lake Okeechobee, which is the northernmost portion of the historic Florida Everglades system. This area of commercial production is so compact, most visitors to the Sunshine State never see a commercial sugarcane field.

In recent years, commercial sugarcane production has declined slightly. Sugarcane acreage has decreased from a high of 454,000 acres in the 2000-2001 crop year, yielding 17.3 million U.S. tons of raw sugar, to approximately 400,000 acres for the 2008-2009 crop year, yielding 1.55 million U.S. tons of raw sugar. Placing the current size of Florida's sugarcane crop into perspective historically, prior to the Cuban embargo in 1961, Florida had only 50,000 acres of sugarcane.

In 2008 Florida's raw sugar crop was valued at approximately \$450 million. Most of the fibrous portion of the cane stalks (bagasse) is burned as fuel for the mills, saving sugar producers an estimated 113 million gallons of fuel oil or 2.1 billion kilowatt hours of electricity. Sugarcane is Florida's most economically valuable field crop, worth more than the combined value of Florida-grown corn, soybean, tobacco and peanut crops.

In 2007-2008 Florida contributed an estimated 48% of the cane sugar and 24.3% of the total (from sugarcane and beets combined) sugar in the United States.

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Typical process flow sheet

CONTINUED ON P.11 ➤

FLORIDA SUGARCANE (Continued from p. 10.)

Florida is the largest producer of sugarcane in the U.S. followed by Louisiana, Hawaii and Texas in order of production. Sugar beets are grown in Minnesota, North Dakota, Idaho, Michigan, California and in six other states, providing approximately 50% of the sugar produced in the U.S., with sugarcane accounting for the remaining 50%. All U.S. sugar production combined still falls short of U.S. consumption. As a result, almost 1/5 of the sugar consumed in the U.S. is imported. We do not export any sugar, oddly enough.

Sugarcane planting takes place from late August through January. Typically, a sugarcane field is replanted every two to four years. After a field has been harvested the first time, it is maintained free of weeds, and a second crop of stalks, called a ratoon, grows from the plant stubble. The second crop is harvested about one year after the first harvest. When annual production declines to an unacceptable level due to insect, disease or mechanical damage, the old sugarcane crop is plowed under after harvest, and the land is prepared for replanting with new seed cane.

Sugarcane is harvested from late October through mid-April. Given no damaging effects from freezes, sugar yields are typically highest after December. However, to complete the entire South Florida sugarcane harvest within the optimal time period, some fields must be harvested before sugarcane plants have reached maximum yield potential.

Controlled fires in sugarcane fields burn off dead leaves and other biomass “trash” which would otherwise impede the harvest operation, increase transportation costs to the mill, interfere with milling machinery, and absorb sugar during the extraction process. Fields are burned immediately before harvest. The fires are rather spectacular, but of short duration; a 40-acre field burns in 15-20 minutes. Burning is done only in the daytime and only when dispersal of the smoke by air currents causes minimum nuisance.

After the sugarcane fields are burned, mechanical harvesters deposit the cut cane directly into field wagons. At special ramps near the field, the cane is dumped from the wagon into highway trailers or rail cars for transport to the mills.

At the mill, the sugarcane is crushed between heavy rollers to squeeze out the juice. Small amounts of hot water are then added, and the fiber is again squeezed several times to remove as much juice as possible, then lime is added to help filter out cane fibers and soil particles and to prevent conversion of the desirable sugar (sucrose) into other sugar forms that won't crystalize. This sucrose solution is concentrated by evaporating off the water (which is also recovered and reused by the mill) until raw sugar crystals form.

For each pound of sugar produced, 6.5 pounds or 3 quarts of water must be boiled off. Most of what appears as “smoke” emitted from sugar mills is actually water vapor, steam generated from boilers in the mill.

Raw sugar is a coarse, brownish material containing impurities that must be removed in a separate refining process. Raw sugar is stored in high piles in large warehouses to await shipment to a refinery. There are two refineries in South Florida that produce both granulated sugar and liquid sugar. About 65% of the raw sugar produced in Florida is processed in these refineries, one in South Bay and the other in Clewiston.

The granulated sugar is packaged in consumer-size bags. Liquid sugar is shipped in tanker trucks for use in beverages, processed foods and bakery goods.

In 2008 the average refined sucrose sugar in the U.S. was about 66.3 lbs. per person per year. This total could be produced from roughly 221 stalks of sugarcane. At 30,000 stalks per acre, one acre would supply sugar for roughly 137 Americans for a year.

World demand for sugar is rather constant and, under normal growing conditions, production of sugar matches the demand, resulting in stable prices for raw sugar. However, good growing conditions sometimes result in higher-than-normal sugar yields in the major sugar beet and sugarcane producing areas of the world—Brazil, India, and the European Union—and prices drop. When surplus quantities of sugar enter the world market, sugar can be purchased well below the normal market price.

To prevent unpredictable disruptions to the U.S. sugar industry, the federal government annually adjusts import quotas on foreign sugar. These quotas help insulate U.S. consumers, as well as sugar producers, from the sometimes rapidly fluctuating sugar prices on the world market. According to a recent Economic Research Report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. sugar program uses price supports, domestic marketing allotments and tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) to influence the amount of sugar available to the U.S. market. The program supports U.S. sugar prices above comparable levels in the world market. The origin of the program can be traced to legislation in the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (1981 Farm Act). It was renewed in the 2014 Agriculture Bill. □

This information was drawn from a report from L.E. Baucum, regional extension agent, Hendry County, LaBelle, FL; and R.W. Rice, agronomics crops extension agent, Palm Beach County, Belle Glade, FL, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

SEAHORSE GRAND FINALE: BTP Campaign Nets Over \$10K

By Suzanne Ferguson

Through the energetic and persistent efforts of BTP Seahorse Campaign chairs Jane and Tom Kearns, and the generosity of individuals and local businesses, the first fundraising phase of “A Seahorse Dream” for the new Golisano Children’s Hospital topped \$6,000 in early February. This total enabled both the Kearnses and our resident artist, Rick Sanford and his wife, Dawn Mannina Sanford, to attend the March 7 Grand Gala and Auction at Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort and Spa, and gave us space for a BTP ad in the Gala program book.

An additional set of tickets for the Gala was given away in a drawing at a BTP reception celebrating our success, won by Richard and Kerry Roux. Consequently, a distinguished BTP “delegation” –including area co-chairs Dave and Paula Eberhardt—was present to see our seahorse, MS. BELLE, draw \$3750 at the auction.

Of the 18 seahorses up for auction, MS. BELLE gained the fourth-highest total, to the credit of our artist and the delight of our representatives at the Gala.

Everyone who contributed should feel pleased with the Bell Tower Park contribution to the Golisano Children’s Hospital; this kind of fundraising was a new experience for most people who were involved, and a gratifying one. □



Rick and Belle

[Note: Jim and Betsy Stewart were accidentally left off the list of donors published in the February Bell Tower Notes. Our apologies.]

Taste of the World

Date: May 24th 2014

Time: 5:30 to 9 PM

Place: Club House

RSVP – Kathy Gambino 239-288-6958 by May 7th

Bring your favorite traditional dish to share with your friends in Bell Tower Park.

Vote for the Prize Winning Dish.

Desserts and coffee will be provided by the Activities Committee.

BYOB

No admission fee



PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE PARK.....



Wild bees removed from near the playground
April 10th



Wood stork near Cheshire Blvd. in early
March



Otter family frolic near Chelsey Ln.
March 15th

OP-ED: TENNIS ADVICE— FOOTWORK IS A KEY

By Richard Roux

With the completion of our free BTP tennis lessons, many of the participants are now scattered across the country continuing to work on the skills they acquired until the classes hopefully resume next winter. What departing guidance did I provide to them? I asked them to watch the tennis players at their local courts, where they will often see players “shadow-swing” the stroke they missed. This action can be interpreted as a player’s believing the miss was a result of a poor stroke, a breakdown in technique. While stroke mechanics can indeed break down and cause mistakes, often there can be other, more significant mistakes that the player is not recognizing. One of the most common is footwork. First and foremost, the aspiring players should work on their footwork.

Footwork is a serious part of any successful point and each stroke within that point. Footwork deficiencies cause players to not position themselves so that they can strike the ball optimally.

When taking a lesson or clinic, the pro is hitting balls and setting up drills so that the player knows what balls are coming and where they will be hit. Consequently, the player is often in good position, even without having to reposition much, to strike the ball at the best angle. This is in contrast to actual play where the opponent is hitting shots intentionally away from the player – trying to get him or her into a disadvantageous position. If players do not train to set up for shots properly when faced with balls hit with a variety of speeds and spins (intentional or otherwise), they will often find themselves hitting balls off balance or out of their “strike zone”.

Professional Movement

The professional tennis player takes an average of 10 to 12 steps between hits. Club players usually average as little as 4 to 6 steps. This comparison alone should be pretty revealing.

There are two statements that we can make when observing professionals play tennis:

- Similar strokes by the same player look nearly identical from just about every position on the court.
- Pros seem to have much more time than club players to set up and hit even though the ball is traveling much faster.

Because pro players move so well and take so many steps between shots, they can get in optimal position for each shot more often. The result of this constant movement is that most balls are struck in the ideal hitting window. They are not controlled by the ball; they control the ball. Recreational players typically have to swing at the ball as the ball dictates.

Drills

Club players can work on this in practice by counting each step taken between each shot, with the goal of raising their average number of steps. A goal of 8 to 10 steps is a target to work toward. (Obviously, you won’t always be able to take this many steps for each particular shot. The idea is to be conscious of taking more steps than you are comfortable taking until taking that many steps becomes comfortable!) Remember, the pros are in incredible shape and, for the club player, taking 8 to 10 steps between each shot in practice and in a three-set match can be physically demanding, so you need to put a serious, concerted effort into this training. □

IMPORTANT HOME CLOSING TIPS ON WEB SITE

By Richard Roux

Each spring a segment of our population heads back to their cooler weather locations. Our BTP Website has collected a set of tips to remind owners about the long-term closure of their units. Some of the many topics that are explained in detail at www.belltowerparkcommunity.com are

highlighted below.

- POOL
- SMOKE DETECTOR BATTERIES
- WASHER/DRIER
- A/C UNITS
- HUMIDISTAT
- DISHWASHER
- GARBAGE DISPOSAL
- TOILETS
- ELECTRONICS
- REFRIGERATOR

- HOT WATER HEATER
- HURRICANE PREPARATIONS
- WATER
- PEST CONTROL
- ENVERA
- HOME WATCH
- INSURANCES

Reader comments and additional items for the list would be welcome; please send them to Richard.roux@ymail.com.

□

DID YOU WANT TO KNOW?



By Jim Stewart

Q. What is going on at the building that used to be the Lexus dealership across U.S. 41?

A. The owner of the Lexus dealership in the new building across from our entrance also owns Scanlon Acura, located a few miles south of us on U.S. 41. The old Lexus building will house Scanlon Acura when it is renovated in a few months. They are not sure what they will do with the building they will vacate at Briarcliff.

Q. What is the deal with the new restaurant south of Barnes & Noble where Balleyorney used to be?

A. The name of the new American sports bar and grill is Tilted Kilt. They opened on March 27th, 2014, and seem to be doing a good business. The first Tilted Kilt was built in 2003 in the Rio Casino in Las Vegas. There are now 97 franchises with 10 of those located in Florida. One of the co-owners is Chris Karakosta, who has previously owned several restaurants in Ft. Myers. The other owner is Jim Belushi—yes, the famous actor and brother of the late John Belushi. They will be open 7 days a week from 11 a.m.-midnight and on Fridays and Saturdays until 2 a.m. The menu will have a couple of Irish dishes, but mainly it is your typical sports bar menu with appetizers, pizzas, wraps, sandwiches, burgers, wings, salads and some classic entrees. Upstairs holds a separate business called Belushi's. They will cater to the "more mature ages" featuring jazz, blues and contemporary rock. According to General Manager Steve Jacoby, the only food item at Belushi's will be cheeseburgers, in honor of John Belushi's famous Saturday Night Live skit of years ago. The recipe for the cheeseburger was made up by Guy Fieri, a favorite chef on the Food Channel. One weekend a month they plan to have a comedian come in and perform at Belushi's.

Q. I heard Walt Disney World has a big wardrobe. How big is it?

A. WDW boasts more than 2.5 million individual costume pieces and nearly eight miles of costume racks, the largest working wardrobe in the world. The Disney Creative Costuming team uses more than 650,000 yards of fabric each year, which, if stretched end to end, would cover the 369-mile distance between New York City and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania! □

OP-ED: RECYCLING EFFORT MIXED

By Suzanne Ferguson

Walking or riding my bike around Bell Tower Park on a Friday morning, I have been taken aback by what I see people have put out with the recycling. Lee County has a wonderful recycling program, and our ability to just toss paper, metals, glass and plastic in the same bin is a great convenience.

But some things we might think could be included in these categories actually cannot be recycled. These include the filters from our air conditioners, window screens, Styrofoam (as from packaging materials), empty paint cans and plastic grocery or trash bags. When these and other non-recyclables are put into the bins, or *when real recyclables are put out in non-recyclable plastic bags, they cause difficulty* and expense at the recycling facility. The collectors cannot just leave these things on the street, so someone must dispose of them at the facility.

Just recently, the county sent us a big post-card displaying a "pie" chart with a list of examples of what can and can't be recycled. I cut mine out and put it on the refrigerator (another good spot could be above the recycling bin). The county website also publishes a full list, and for the past several years we've gotten a "Solid Waste Management and Resource Recovery" calendar that also has a lot of information about what to do with hazardous waste, such as chemicals and certain kinds of batteries.

Our BTP Website as well has a complete list of what's recyclable and what's not: just use the SEARCH WEBSITE button on the home page.

Let's make Bell Tower Park exemplary for recycling—as we are in other ways! □



SUZANNE FERGUSON,
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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

For each new issue of *Bell Tower Notes*, the staff puts its collective head together (no photo for that) to imagine what our residents need and want to get out of this newsletter. We always have whatever news from the Associations we can get; news of developments in the amenities; news from the Activities Committee. Jim Stewart's "Did You Want to Know" has proven a favorite, and generally we try to have something on things to do nearby, especially if they are new.

In this issue we have sent Jim farther afield to look into the sugar industry of south Florida, since it has numerous points of contact with the environment and economy of our immediate area. We have a couple of "op-eds"—one extending the free tennis lessons offered this winter and the other making a plea for more careful recycling efforts.

We would like to hear from you about what YOU find interesting or valuable, what you would like to read about, what you don't care for. If you would like to write something, we'd like to know that, too! Please get in touch with me at scf@case.edu.

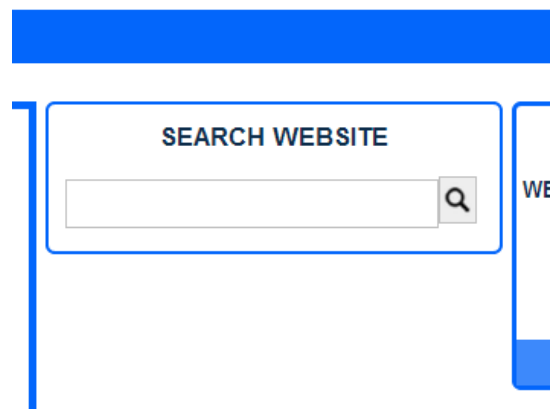
Suzanne Ferguson
Editor



PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR CURRENT NEWS!!

To minimize intrusive e-mail "blasts" to all residents, the POA Board recently enacted a policy of limiting broadcast e-mails to essential BTP business. Consequently, residents should check the BTP Community Website Resident Home Page on a regular basis for the calendar, announcements about activities, meetings, lost animals, construction or landscape renovation, pool closings, and the like.

And remember, if you cannot find something you are looking for on the Website, the Resident Home Page contains a "SEARCH WEBSITE" tool (see photo) to aid you. Typically it is located just above the "User Profile" in the right-hand column of the page, next to the Events Calendar. Just put in what you consider to be the key words for your search and click the magnifying glass. Still can't find it? Submit a WEB Site Request form, found under menu item "eForms."



WEBSITE search tool