

A Wonderful Time of the Year



# Christmas on the Stairs

A cherished annual tradition continued December 8 with the Oak Hammock Singers and guests blending voices to spread some holiday spirit. Across the top (L-R): residents Ron Hoopes, Lori Hoopes, John Spindler, and Keith Berg were featured. On left (T-B): Jennifer Gardner, UF soprano; Anthony Celano, UF baritone; and Shathi Campbell, UF mezzo soprano; shared special selections. Directors Ron Burrichter and Brenda Smith with our wonderful guest pianist, Nansi Carroll, made it all possible.

-Sandy Furches, content; John Furches, photos

## Welcome Ann and Eric Beshore

Meeting Ann and Eric, I wanted to spend more time with them. Introduced by Eric's cousin 8 years after both were widowed, they married. Now, 21 years later, they join family member Richard Johnson as Oak Hammock residents.

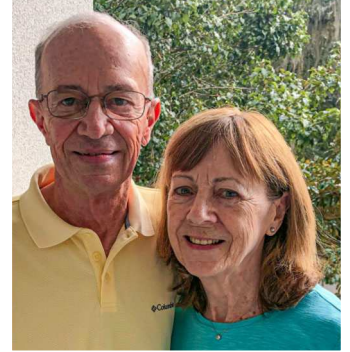
Ann, originally from Hannibal, MO—Mark Twain's hometown—fondly recalls helping in her grandmother's shop dedicated to Twain's memory. She earned a bachelor's in secondary education from the University of Nebraska and a master's in elementary education from UF. Ann enjoys indoor gardening and painting watercolor nature scenes.

Eric, from Port Washington on Long Island, grew up sailing and boating. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Penn State and a master's in civil engineering from the University of Arizona, earned in 1971 during his 28-year Air Force career. His work included leading the design of the Large Rocket Test Facility at Arnold AFB, TN, and overseeing the adaptive reuse of historic Wright Field in Dayton, OH, to create a state-of-the-art Acquisition Management Complex.

Ann and Eric have three daughters and two grandchildren. Two daughters live in Gainesville, with one in Nashville. They enjoy outdoor activities like hiking and boating. While living on Santa Fe Lake, they owned a fleet of kayaks, rowboats, sailboats, and a pontoon boat, all of which they reluctantly parted with when they moved to Gainesville.

Loyal Gator fans, Ann and Eric regularly attend UF sports events and are excited to focus on Oak Hammock's activities after more than a decade on the waiting list.

-Mary Brenner



## Welcome Mark and Stephanie Olson

Minneapolis natives, Mark and Stephanie met in high school. Mark attended West Point and Stephanie studied at the University of Minnesota. They married in June, 1970. After Mark completed Officer's Training at Ft. Bliss, TX, they moved to Germany. Mark served as an Air Defense Artillery officer. Stephanie embraced life as a military wife. Their children, Lars and Stacy, were born there.

In 1973, Mark's reading of "Small Group Development" by UF Psychology Professor Marvin Shaw, sparked interest in group productivity with different skill sets. This led to an Industrial Psychology MA at UF and a dynamic career.

Despite 18 moves in 16 years, Stephanie completed her Social Psychology BA at 31 and became a Human Resources Analyst for the Army. Later, she earned an MA from American University. She retired after 32 years, finishing her career as Director of Training for the Department of Defense National Security Personnel System.

Mark's final military assignment was at the Pentagon where they both worked. After retiring, Mark transitioned to the private sector in Information Technology before returning to government service with the National Security Personnel System.

They moved to Gainesville in 2016 and to Oak Hammock this October. Avid travelers, they've explored from the Grand Canyon to the Taj Mahal. They volunteer with Friends of the Library and the Alachua County Board of Elections. Mark shares his tech expertise and is eager to take up pickleball. The Olsons love the hospitality of Oak Hammock residents and are happy to be here.

-Jan Havre, content; Sandy Furches, photo



## Farewell to Mary and Lori

A large group of OH residents and staff gathered in the Upper Commons on November 20 to bid a reluctant goodbye to Mary Salvamoser and Lori Fishel.

Each was honored with speeches of heartfelt thanks for her invaluable contributions to our community and received mementos of her time here. Laughter erupted when Mary opened a candle inscribed with "not my problem anymore!", and Lori received a tee shirt featuring a picture

(Continued on page 3)



of a Corgi, her favorite dogs. After enjoying cake and cookies, we sent the ladies off with our best wishes for good luck and much happiness in the next chapter of their lives.

-Jan Havre, content; Sandy Furches, photos



## Mary Salvamoser

Mary has been a cornerstone of Oak Hammock since its beginning, arriving a month before the first residents. Initially managing our campus branch of M&S Bank alongside Sherry Graddy (we fondly dubbed it the “Mary & Sherry Bank”), Mary quickly became much more than a banker. She welcomed new residents, answered endless questions, and provided invaluable guidance about Oak Hammock and the Gainesville area, becoming a genuine friend to all.

When M&S Bank closed, Mary and Sherry transitioned to Ameris Bank. After Ameris closed in 2019, Mary took on roles with an investment firm and worked part-time at the OH Reception Desk before October 2020 when she became Executive Assistant to the first of three OH CEOs, including Kevin Ahmadi. Over her 20 years here, Mary developed deep expertise in navigating legal and medical minefields while building a vast network of professional contacts.

Mary is now embarking on a new chapter. After spending time with her mother in Buffalo, NY, she will begin a career as a Court-Appointed Guardian

for Seniors and Adults with Disabilities. Having completed training and the Florida State Exam, she plans to establish her own LLC in Gainesville. This new venture allows Mary to help others while enjoying a more flexible schedule.

Though Oak Hammock will miss her greatly, Mary is excited for this next step, and we look forward to her visiting often. Best wishes, Mary, in your new venture!

-Jan Havre, content; Sandy Furches, photo



## Lori Fishel

Lori is one of the “unseen VIPs” at Oak Hammock and has served as Accounting Supervisor for eight years. Among her responsibilities are Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, and Payroll Supervision. She also assists Andrew Davey, our CFO, with the ledger and audits. Although officially retired, she will return on occasion if needed.

Originally from Ohio, Lori plans to become a “snowbird,” working with her companion of 33 years to restore an old farmhouse in Ohio and do more gardening. Although she has no children, she is Mom to two Corgi “fur babies” and has enjoyed meeting so many dogs at Oak Hammock.

Among Lori’s vivid memories of Oak Hammock is the day Jeff Hagen, then CEO, appeared in a grass skirt. We had a Hawaiian-themed event and Jeff stole the show!

Lori has enjoyed working with all the residents and will miss them but says she will not miss the daily commute from Interlachen!

-Bill Castine, content; Sandy Furches, photo





**It's beginning to look  
a lot like Christmas!  
...in the Health Pavilion**

**-CHRISSEY SMOAK**



**-Sandy Furches**

## Anniversary: The Early Years 2004 - 2008

*Note: This is Part 7 of a series on the history of Oak Hammock (OH)*

From 2004 to 2008, Oak Hammock (OH) grew rapidly, fueled by the energy and creativity of its young and expanding resident community. By the end of 2004, only 65% of Independent Living units were occupied, reaching close to 100% occupancy by 2008. Unlike corporate senior living facilities, OH evolved organically through the vision of its founding residents and the University of Florida (UF).



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The community's development began before its official opening in March 2004. Early contributors included UF leaders and prospective residents, many of whom had already formed connections through local events or the Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) beginning in 2002. These individuals and founding residents were the driving force behind OH's unique culture.

Moving to a new residence, creating a new community, and forging new friendships was exciting. The average age was 74, relatively young and active, most without scooters or walkers. Everyone was welcoming. There were social events and other opportunities to meet and help new neighbors.

Rather than mandate programs and activities, the OH Board empowered residents to make many of their own decisions, thus painting their own ideas on an empty canvas. This flexibility led to the creation of over 60 interest groups covering education, the arts, nature, recreation, and travel. Successful initiatives that thrived included hallway art displays from resident donations; others died on the vine, like a film studio that became obsolete due to evolving technology. Staff members Katherine Osman and Sara Lynn McCrea, both new to senior living, supported resident-led ideas, helping turn suggestions like river tubing into reality. "Great idea; I'll help you do it," said Katherine.

Some design and construction errors surfaced. Hurricanes in 2004 exposed issues with porches that caused apartment flooding and mildew. Offered a no-charge opportunity, residents chose to enclose their porches, except for Bill Castine and Janet Janke. Other problems included incorrect windows replaced at contractor expense, malfunctioning fire alarms, and a flawed key fob system for the elevators that limited resident, police, and fire department access. Some toilets were too low and required replacement. On the other hand, low peep holes in doors were appreciated by the women, shorter than men. The fire alarm system challenges found residents gathering outside in the middle of the night or going to IHOP in their pajamas with new friends. These events, though frustrating, fostered camaraderie as residents bonded over shared experiences.

OH's early years of creativity, resilience, and a collaborative spirit set the stage for our vibrant, resident-driven community enjoyed today. Special thanks to the following founding residents and staff who gave generously of their time and memories for this article: Andrew Davey, Janet Janke, Jerry and Gaye Kirkpatrick, Betty Kramer, Katherine Osman, Mary Salvamoser, and Charles and Margi Sidman. Conversations with other OH residents and the Samuel Proctor OH oral history video interviews at <https://buff.ly/3oQKGZ0> were also enlightening.

-Neill Hollenshead

## History of the Institute for Learning in Retirement

A belief in lifelong learning inspired the University of Florida (UF) to establish an Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) before Oak Hammock (OH) opened. OH and the UF Institute on Aging began planning ILR in 2001.

Elderhostel (now Road Scholar Institute), was an example to follow. A group of OH depositors and Gainesville community members formed an Advisory Council after an informational meeting at Haile Plantation Village clubhouse. They visited other ILRs and planned the first semester, drafted a budget, formalized ties with UF, selected courses, recruited leaders, set fees, designed brochures, and marketed ILR. The first chairman was Helen Rothschild, with future OH residents Nancy Green and Jim Piety assisting. The Advisory Council became the ILR Board of Directors with by-laws adopted in 2004.

Early ILR programs included book clubs, religion, world affairs, and writing autobiographies. Estelle Aden, retired UF humanities professor, led a series on theatre and drama. Classes, attended by 50-75 members, were initially held in venues like the Harn Museum, local churches, Hospice, and the OH Marketing Office. In March 2004, classes moved to OH.



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(Continued on page 6)

The partnership between OH and ILR benefits both: OH offers classroom space, meals, and staff support, while ILR serves as a marketing asset. ILR operates under OH's not-for-profit status.

Charles Sidman, former UF Dean, became Curriculum Committee Chair in 2004, expanding the committee's role and inviting UF faculty to present research. "The UF faculty were very receptive, exceedingly generous with their time, and gave excellent lectures," recalls Sidman. In 2006, Walter Kalaf reorganized ILR with two sub-committees: Humanities and Science, Technology and Medicine. Staggering three-year terms of service balanced continuity and fresh perspectives in ILR leadership.

ILR partnered with the UF Center for Gerontology Studies in 2004 to offer monetary awards to students, a tradition continued by the UF Institute on Aging after the Center's 2006 closure. In 2009, ILR, aided by the Institute on Aging, created the Outstanding Mentor Award for UF faculty in aging studies.

For a dozen years or more, ILR has conducted two research competitions; one for UF graduate and undergraduate students in Aging Science Research, and the other for Santa Fe College students in their Research in Undergraduate Education course. Submissions by students in both programs are judged by ILR members with final presentations by the students at Oak Hammock. Monetary prizes are awarded.

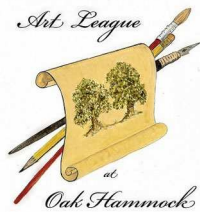
ILR has contributed over \$48,000 in gifts to OH, including a grand piano, AV equipment, microphones, chairs, cabinets for opera DVDs, and projection tools.

In 2010, ILR was recognized by Clifton/Larson Allen/Third Age Consulting as the leading lifelong learning institute affiliated with a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). ILR remains active with winter term, January 6 - February 14. ILR has maintained a web presence since 2009; more information is at: <https://www.oakhammock.org/ilr/>.

-Nancy Dickson and Sandy Furches

## History of the Art League at Oak Hammock

In autumn 2006, Marion Siegel and Margaret Zircher (pictured), new residents of Oak Hammock, bonded over their shared vision as artists during a chance encounter near the gardens while dog walking. Their connection led to the founding of the Art League at Oak Hammock (ALAOH) in 2007, with seven founding members: Cynthia Clements, Mary Sue Koeppel, Alice Miller, Karl Schwartz, Susan Shafer, Marion Siegel and



Margaret Zircher.

Jean Subers designed the winning ALAOH logo in a contest open to everyone. To foster art among residents, they organized art classes, monthly programs, and collaborated with local artists to bring diverse creative opportunities. Early activities included drawing classes, presentations like Harn Museum docent emeritus Susan Shafer's art history discussion on the Tong Horse, and shared art films and documentaries. Fundraising efforts, such as raffling members' original artwork, supported these initiatives. The monthly presentations in the Oak Room continue today under the current ALAOH director, Susan Bankston.

The ALAOH travel committee planned bus trips to art venues for day trips including luncheons at excellent restaurants. A pivotal 2008 collaboration with the University of Florida initiated by OH Dean of Residents, Sara Lynn McCrea, allowed residents to display their art in the Reitz Union Art Gallery. The landmark exhibit featured over 100 art pieces from 25

OH artists that passed UF review for professional art. Mary Sue Koeppel created a booklet of the artists' biographies. On May 29, 2008, three busloads from OH as well as students and Gainesville community members



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attended the reception. A capacity crowd and *Gainesville Sun* coverage cemented ALAOH's reputation in the community. UF also welcomed OH residents for classes at their pottery studio.

In 2009, ALAOH established a gallery on the inside corridor walls around Duckworth Garden at OH, showcasing residents' and community artists' works,



Marion Siegel and Margaret Zircher

(Continued on page 7)

including the Gainesville Fine Arts Association’s annual Fall show. In 2010, amazing artists Jane Polkowski Levy and Michael Levy moved to OH and Jane became Director of the Art Gallery. She selected a Gallery Board, arranged for installation of a hanging system, and later added lights. Michael assisted and displayed his photos featuring OH nonagenarian residents. Regular exhibitions began and continue today with receptions and awards on certain judged shows.

Art activities flourished, from jewelry making by Sandra Smith and nature painting by Cynthia Clements, to multiple classes by Marion Siegel, Margaret Zircher, and local community artists. The “Art in the

Corridors” project led by Pat Lucoff continues to decorate the campus with donated artwork. Though the COVID-19 pandemic paused most activities, the gallery continued, and ALAOH rebounded with new leadership like Gloria Nelson and Sara Ogg while long term leaders remained active: Susan Bankston, Jane Polkowski Levy, Keith Berg, and others.

Today, ALAOH is a vibrant hub for artistic expression, enriching the lives of Oak Hammock residents bringing joy, creativity, and purpose. Art promotes well-being, healing, and vigor. Life at OH hums with the energy of artistic endeavor.

-Marion Siegel

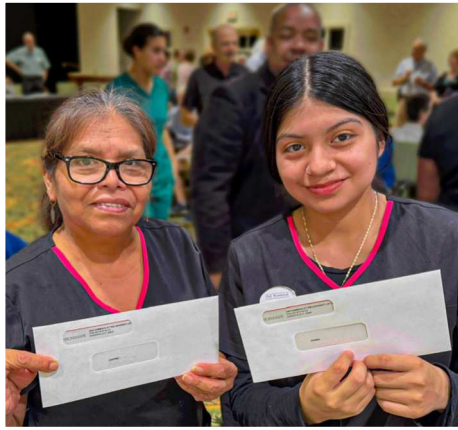
## We Love Our Employees!

Oak Hammock residents are not allowed to make gifts or leave financial tips for employees. However, each year we residents contribute to the Employee Appreciation Fund, which is distributed among staff members other than managers, contractors, and commission workers. This year’s fund reached a new high of \$348,291.50 from 289 residents and 10 miscellaneous sources who contributed. The average check size was \$1,216 for the 287 employees rewarded.

Co-organizer Marcia Brant congratulated all who contributed saying, “Your generosity far exceeded our expectations. A housekeeper shared her thanks saying her family thanks you too. Here’s one giant bear hug through this article for you. Sometimes words just aren’t enough!!”

On November 13, the Oak Room was the scene of hugs, handshakes, and perhaps a few tears of joy as our staff members came by to receive rewards for their seemingly untiring efforts over the past year. What a joyful segue into the November and December holidays! Ice cream treats capped off the event.

-Bill Castine, content;  
John and Sandy Furches, photos



## Super Wrap Up!

A fabulous group of Super Elves showed up to wrap some 50 boxes to put under the Lobby Christmas Tree this year. It was quite the production, working in groups of three, coordinating colors and sizes. One of the elves said, "Thank you for doing this. It brought back so many wonderful memories of when I was a child." It was such a happy and merry group of workers, putting us in the holiday spirit.

-Gloria Nelson, content; Jeani Valter, photo



## Singing Promotes Happiness!

The Oak Hammock Singers' fall concert, "United We Sing," featured familiar, patriotic, and inspirational music. Director Ron Burrichter chose songs of joy and beauty. Co-Director Brenda Smith and accompanist Nansi Carroll contributed to everyone's enjoyment in the Oak Room. Kevin Ahmadi presented gift baskets in appreciation for the dedication of the group's leaders over the past twenty years. Why not join the fun of singing? Rehearsals begin January 13 at 3:30 in the Oak Room. No prior experience needed. Hope to see you!

-Barbara Dockery, content; John Furches, photos





### Cool Zoo



November 21 was a breezy, chilly morning when 19 Oak Hammock residents boarded the bus for Santa Fe College's Teaching Zoo. Our student-led guided tour was informative and entertaining. Some zoo residents were staying close to their heaters but my favorites who visited with us included Matschie's Tree Kangaroo, caracal, nyala, and the gibbon family of Cajun, Eddie, Cusa, Holmes, and Onyx, who serenaded us.

Just 7 miles from Oak Hammock, this 10-acre zoo features 70 different native and exotic species. It is the only zoo on a college campus accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The zoo is maintained by students in the college's premier Zoo Animal Technology program. A portion of ticket revenue supports conservation initiatives.

-Sandy Furches



From scissor and knife sharpening to handcrafted cards and jewelry, the Arts & Crafts Fair on November 21 was a shopping opportunity for all.

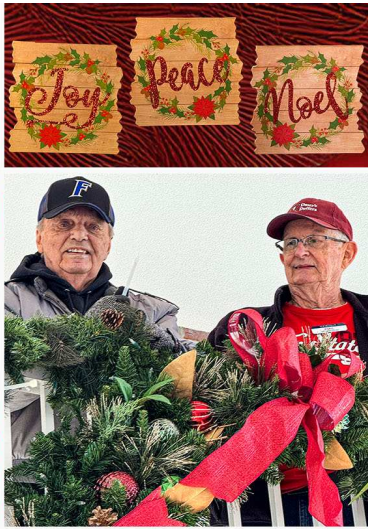
-Sandy Furches



### Art in the Corridors

With Chris Kaufman's leadership, Art in the Corridors resident volunteers recently gathered larger Oak Hammock artwork themed "outdoor recreation or relaxing." The long wall near the Fitness Center was a welcoming space. Take a walk down this corridor leading from the main kitchen toward Assisted Living and reminisce with the new scenery. We may not have been part of a water-ski team, but most of us have done a little birdwatching or shell collecting along a beach...and that hammock looks so inviting!

-Vanda O'Neill, content;  
Sandy Furches, photo



## Sounds of the Season

Three bus loads left after dinner on November 22 for the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual UF School of Music "Sounds of the Season: Songs of Hope & Joy." The program began with a French noel, "Carol to the King" and concluded as the crowd rose to George Frideric Handel's "Hallelujah" from *Messiah*. One of many highlights was the touching song, "Longfellow's Christmas," narrated by UF President W. Kent Fuchs telling Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's personal story of tragedy and triumph. All exited the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts with smiles reflecting the blessings of being part of the UF campus. Over 300 student and community performers did an awesome job of kicking off the holiday season with this traditional gift from the UF School of Music. Kudos to Kathy Subak for juggling OH free ticket requests and our faithful drivers, Anthony Thomas and Myra Jones.

-Barbara Dockery and  
Sandy Furches, content; Sandy Furches, photo



Thanks to Mr. Tim Noe  
for helping to deliver  
the many Christmas  
packages that were  
left at reception  
the other day ☺



## Musical Magic in the Oak Room

The Oak Hammock Chamber Players did it again! Piano, strings, and wind instruments, woven into their annual holiday concert of familiar Christmas and Hannukah songs. Conductor Gary Langford, professor of Music Emeritus at UF (known as Mr. Music for his many years directing various groups), introduced each number with interesting comments and humor. He commended the Chamber Players' dedication to perform the challenging Arcangelo Corelli's Christmas Concerto and George Handel's *Messiah* selections. The musical magic offered lighter fare for dessert: "A Holly Jolly Christmas" and "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree". The Oak Hammock Chamber Players, comprised of OH residents and community members, welcomes additional musicians—no Carnegie Hall experience needed. -Barbara Dockery, content; Sandy Furches, photos



## Thanksgiving



Oak Hammock followed its long tradition of serving a bountiful buffet on Thanksgiving Day. Attendance was high, with lots of residents and their guests. The offerings were tempting and plentiful; no one could have left hungry! Now, on to the Fitness Center.... *-Bill Castine, content; Victoria Carson, photo*

## Special Treasures Holiday Sale

Santa's elves were busy for months collecting and preparing resident and family donations of home décor, holiday items, linens, tools, beautiful china and crystal, gourmet cookware, art objects, plus the "Glitter Team's" costume jewelry, purses, and accessories to create our one-day store in the Acorn Room. It took a small village of 43 resident volunteer elves working over four shifts, plus publicity and logistical support from Kathy Subak, Danny Grant, and Rebecca Snowden's muscle men to help us set up and break down the chaos of many boxes into attractive displays of terrific bargains.

We set up the night before, started sales at 7:30 a.m. on November 22 to give staff first choice, then all were welcomed until 2:00 p.m. Clean-up was done before 6:00 p.m. We loved the newer residents who joined in the fun this year as sherpas, unpackers, sales team members, cashiers, and re-packers (which is work, but a lot of fun and camaraderie) as we quickly pull it all together. There are tasks for anyone willing to lend their talent.

The real joy is seeing customer smiles as they discover our bargains for themselves and as gifts for family and friends. Our teamwork raised \$2,320.60, plus \$1,168.00 from the Vintage Cabinets during the four weeks prior to the sale. Every penny goes to Recycled Riches projects and benefits OH needs and special funds. We were delighted! *-Judy Plaut*



Exquisite bonsai of resident Nelson Logan are placed in The Grove (Building 1) fourth floor atrium lobby for the enjoyment of all.

*-Sybil Farwell, content; Sandy Furches, photo*



**Join us for New Year's  
Eve Dinner and Dancing!**

**Details at the reception  
desk.**



### The Sedoctaves

On December 4 our spirits took flight as The Sedoctaves presented their Christmas Concert in our Oak Room. Dressed in red and green, the young women performed secular Christmas music such as "All I Want for Christmas" and "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch". To paraphrase a blurb from their program, The Sedoctaves are a dynamic and inclusive a cappella ensemble from UF, united by a shared passion for music and a commitment to excellence. These talented women from diverse academic disciplines foster a strong sense of community and empowerment, on and off stage. Through their original compositions, captivating performances, and unwavering positivity, they inspire and connect with audiences, showcasing the power of music to transcend boundaries and uplift spirits.

-Tallulah Brown, content;  
Sandy Furches, photo

### Art League...Coming Soon!

The Art League has a full schedule for January:

- ◆ **January 5** - Seniors Art Exhibit Opening Reception in the upper commons featuring photographs of many Oak Hammock nonagenarians. Exhibit in the Art Studio
- ◆ **January 7, 9, 14, & 16** - Gloria Nelson's beginning watercolor classes
- ◆ **January 15, 17, 22, & 24** - Gloria Nelson's watercolor classes, some experience helpful
- ◆ **January 25** - Frank Barone's acrylic workshop, all levels
- ◆ **January 27** - Field trip to Melrose Bay
- ◆ **January 28** - Harn Museum presentation of new exhibit, "Silver Linings"

Watch for more details in coming days!

-Nancy Dickson



### Gloria Nelson's Art Reception

Gloria Nelson's art reception on December 9 was enjoyed by many admirers of her talent. "I believe art, whether painting, music, acting, etc., is food for the soul. Also, I would be cranky without painting!" says Gloria. Her display remains in the art studio until January 2, 2025, so stop by if you have missed seeing the stunning variety in her lovely creations.

-Sandy Furches, content;  
Sandy Furches & Beth Paul, photos



## The Interesting and Different in our New “Icon” Software

So that residents can “one stop shop” to find topical and ongoing happenings at Oak Hammock, the “Icon” steering sub-committee has been working to guide the implementation of a program combining the features of Touchtown (Uniguest) and Infoh. Features that are fun and useful:

- \* Response times, navigation, and searching are quicker and easier.
- \* Feature packed area for groups to organize and communicate internally.
- \* Internal messages can be exchanged without email or phone texts.
- \* Improved search functions make finding documents MUCH easier.
- \* Dining and the calendar are inclusive of all at OH, with filters to refine individual views.
- \* Interest groups can be created; invite others to gatherings.
- \* Individual photos and videos can be shared by residents with the community.
- \* “Shortcuts” can be created for any pages and will appear at the top of your “dashboard”.
- \* Personal appointments can be added to your “Icon” calendar, combining it with the OH calendar.
- \* Locate fellow residents with similar interests and backgrounds.
- \* Submit maintenance requests directly into the “TELS” system that maintenance uses.
- \* Fitness Center activities will be available in the calendar, filtered to your personal interests if you wish.
- \* Lots more transportation and services information.



A feedback loop and updated content are insured by your resident sub-committee.

-Your RISC sub-committee:

*Dave Brumbaugh, Bill Castine, Chris Johnson, Michael Levy, Phil Parsons, and Bonnie Umphreys*

### Count the Dogs - 1-2-3

Back in the 1970’s everyone was singing “Joy to the World” and not necessarily the Christmas carol. Rather, the catchy song recorded by the iconic rock band, Three Dog Night. The band’s name refers to the number of dogs an Aboriginal Australian might cuddle up to on a cold winter night! Peg Owens couldn’t resist buying the three ceramic dogs years ago. She created the wall hanging quilt in their honor. The quiet sentinel dog observing the scene is on holiday from his usual station—guarding the entry to the Owens’s apartment. Stop by to view the wonderful display cases on the lower level, near the pool table. Maybe hum a few bars of Joy to the World with the dogs. It’s that time of the year! -*Barbara Dockery, content; John Furches, photo*



Ornaments made from wooden spools of thread complete another creative Needle Arts Window. Thank you, Paulette Gird!

-*Sandy Furches*



### Southwest UMC Choir

On December 14, residents were treated to a concert that varied a bit from “the usual.” Led by Sara Nussel, Director of the Southwest United Methodist Church choir, the group of 10 singers opened with familiar Christmas music. They were joined for the finale by The Music Junction Jammers, five musicians headed by Leon Barrows. The combined groups then performed a work that Sara had conceived last summer to highlight our American roots: songs from Appalachia, Native American hymns, and African American spirituals. Her motivation was that, by looking to our ancestors, we have a better idea of the work God is calling us to. What a novel and varied approach!

-*Bill Castine*



## November Driveway Party

On a crisp November 21, Michael and Jane Levy and Bill and Lyn Rainbow hosted a delightful party for street people. Great food and conviviality were the order of the day. Five members of the OH Singers staged a "flash mob," entertaining neighbors with a lusty version of "Albuquerque Turkey" wishing all a Happy Thanksgiving!

-Jan Havre, content; Michael Levy, photos



## Pool Volleyball

Don and Rhonda Smith were interested in starting a water volleyball game for months. A net was installed in the lap pool, and an athletic group met to establish rules. The participants quickly grew from six to ten, and it will probably increase after the holidays. Sonda Dawes, Steve and Paulette Gird, Doug Merrey, Tom and Sara Ogg, Elliot Simon, Don and Rhonda Smith, and Jack Spencer are our athletic friends. Don jokingly exclaimed, "Getting an accurate head count is difficult because some more enthusiastic players spend half their time under water."

Jeani Valter is scorekeeper and referee. Others have taken on roles of cheerleaders and bystanders. There are no winners or losers because the players switch up sides and it is hard to hear Jeani shout out the score because of the echo. All are invited to participate, observe, or show up with their pom poms and lead a cheer for their favorite swimmer. The game begins at 2:30 p.m. each Saturday.

-Beth Paul

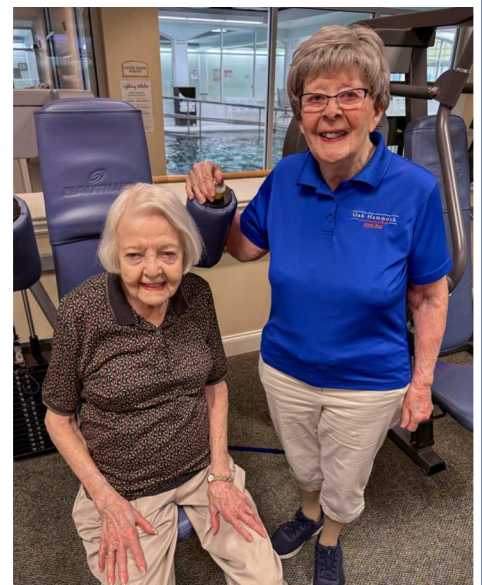


## Inspiring Gym Rats

Ruth Brown and Roxane Bleiweis, both age 92, are frequent flyers in the Oak Hammock fitness center and encourage you to join them. As a retired nurse, Ruth knows the importance of fitness for a healthy senior lifestyle and continued her workouts 12½ years ago when she moved to OH. Roxane has exercised seriously since age 50 and, in the spirit of her social work heritage, has been inspired for the last 11 years by the student interns here with their knowledge and willingness to help. Roxane also finds the interns "fun!" and adds, "We are very lucky to have them. They motivate me."

Ruth advises, "Try it! You will feel much better physically and mentally. I feel far better after my workouts." They both encourage us all to "keep at it, don't give up, and exercise regularly for increased strength, endurance, and flexibility." Stacey Hogan and her staff will warmly welcome you to our "great" fitness center and will set up a program personalized to your needs and goals.

-Sandy Furches



## The New FLiCRA Website Is Worth a Look

The Florida Life Care Residents Association has recently debuted a new look to its website: [flicra.com](http://flicra.com). At the top of every page are 5 topic choices. Clicking on a topic from anywhere on the website takes one to that topic.

**"About"** links to a description of what FLiCRA is and does. It includes the by-laws of the statewide organization and a roster of the state board of directors.

**"News and Events"** connects to the most recent issues of the *Resident Connection* and to the latest report of the Governor's Continuing Care Advisory Council. It also links to a video "FLiCRA: Speaking for Us", my presentation at our Oak Hammock FLiCRA chapter's annual meeting in February 2024.

**"Membership"** includes FLiCRA member benefits, a short promotional video, membership brochure, and application.

**"Advocacy"** details the work that FLiCRA does before the Florida State Legislature and state regulatory agencies on behalf of CCRC residents.

**"FLiCRA Chapters"** has links to compliance reports of individual CCRCs and inspection ratings for skilled nursing departments. Oak Hammock's skilled nursing rates highly.

If you wish to know more about the regulation of CCRCs in Florida, FLiCRA's new website is a good place to start.



-Tom Gire

## Dining Corner

Everybody doesn't get an A, and everybody doesn't get a trophy. If they do, the bar is too low. Well, that is what has happened: almost all our dots have been green.

When we developed the color system, our initial guess was that anything above a TR score of 60 would be acceptable. We arbitrarily set any score above 64 as green. Since practically all TR scores have been in the green, there isn't any information. Clearly, not all meals are excellent. If every meal shows green, there is no incentive to improve, yet that is the goal of our entire system. Therefore, we are adjusting the color scores for meals as follows:

⇒ **Green:** 80 and above; good and no serious adjustment is needed

⇒ **Yellow:** 70-79; okay but could be better

⇒ **Red:** Below 70; not very good and evaluation is needed

The TR scoring system will not change. The taste and recommendation scores are both averaged, added together, and the sum multiplied by ten to create a range 20-100. If we had been using these color criteria from the start, about 1/3 of the meals would have been red, 1/3 yellow, and 1/3 green.

I hope this color score change will not cause confusion. The goal is to provide helpful information to the dining staff to improve our dining experience.

-Steve Gird

## Open House at the UF Smart House

There is lots going on in the Smart House across from our Health Pavilion. I'll share just two projects with you. Two of their scientists are conducting a study, originated in Japan, on dried papaya and its effect on cognition. If you would like to participate in the study, they are looking for volunteers.

Automobile safety is another of their ongoing projects. For instance, adaptors can be added to the steering wheel to help a person with limited arm mobility, another adaptor is available for those with leg or foot issues. As pictured, our own CFO, Andrey Davey, tried out the simulator where a person's ability to drive a car safely can be assessed.

Keep your eyes and ears open for new and continuing projects at the Smart House for Oak Hammock and beyond.

-Mary Brenner, content; Sandy Furches, photo





### Older Driver Safety Awareness

Sandra Winter, PhD, OTR/L, DRS, from our own UF Smart House at Oak Hammock shared an engaging and comprehensive older driver safety awareness program in the Oak Room on December 3. The objective is always to utilize help available to empower driver safety regardless of age, not to take away your keys. There are free Fitness to Drive screenings online <https://www.fitnessstodrive.org> and assessments are accomplished through SmartDriver Rehab <https://www.ufhealth.org/smartdriver> from the Smart House where 2 driver rehab vehicles are utilized. With only 600 driver rehab specialists nationwide, we are fortunate to have these resources at our fingertips. Rather than age, it is vision, reaction time/processing speed, cognitive function, flexibility, and physical strength that determine one's ability to drive. Compensatory strategies and equipment are available and extend driving years when used appropriately. An abundance of cookies and pastries were enjoyed by those attending.



-Sandy Furches

### By the Numbers December 1 Independent Living

	Total	Sold	Available
Houses	57	56	1
Apartments	212	209	3

### Health Pavilion

	Total	Occupied	Available
Assisted	52	52	0
Memory	12	10	2
Skilled	73	70	3

-Andrew Davey and Nadia Luna

### The Benevolent Fund

Donations of \$2,530 in honor of Pat Liston and \$50,000 from Golf Tournament 2024 for total donations of \$52,530 in November.

-Jonathon Mann



### Bikes 4 Vets Update

On December 15, Bikes 4 Vets, a project of the Gainesville Cycling Club, picked up 14 unused bikes donated by Oak Hammock residents. Bikes 4 Vets repairs donated bikes and distributes them to veterans at three locations: The HONOR Center in SE Gainesville (residential rehabilitation); GRACE Marketplace in NE Gainesville (shelter and services for homeless vets); and Cabins for Veterans in Lake City (transitional housing).

-Bob Palmer, content; Mary Christman, photo



### Acorn Clinic

Thanks to the members of the 6 Oak Hammock Book Clubs, Candice King accepted 350 children's paperback books to be given to children who go to the Acorn Clinic in Brooker, FL for dental work. This is a yearly service project to give books to children who don't have many of their own.

-Janet Janke

### Third Graders and Our Veterans

On November 20, fourteen Oak Hammock veterans were seated at 9 tables in the Oak Room ready to share their stories with 50 third grade students from Caring and Sharing Learning School. The students arrived just before 10:00 a.m., immediately went to their assigned tables, and the sharing began. Every 15 minutes there was an orderly movement by the students to the next table.

After 4 rotations, the students assembled in front of the stage and sang a medley of patriotic songs. When they sang the song from the Army, 6 veterans stood; from the Navy, 5 stood; and from the Air Force, 3 stood. Oakley appeared with 5 books representing the 5 branches of the Armed Services to take back to their classroom.

The students sat quietly in the lower commons waiting for their bus to take them back to school. They were welcomed back for a holiday program on December 17. *-Janet Janke, content; George Arola and Patsy Nelms, photos*



### The Bookends

With an acoustic and electric combination and a soprano, an alto, and a baritone singer, The Bookends presented their Fall concert.

If folk music is your thing, then you could not have gone wrong the songs we all knew and loved, such as, "Turn! Turn!" by Pete Seeger, "Blowin' in the Wind" by Peter, Paul, and



Mary, and sounds of John Denver and David Maloney. To our delight, the old-fashioned tunes just kept on coming.

Emily Edwards, Chief Resident in the UF Department of Medicine, accompanied all on her electric piano, while Kelly Kirkpatrick, Sandy Hege- man, and Patrick Duff completed this ensemble. We are grateful they returned December 13 with their Christmas Concert.

*-Tallulah Brown, content; Sandy Furches, photo*



Oak Hammock will not be outdone!



*-Bill Brant*

### Al's Accordion Concert

Al Goebel entertained with nostalgic accordion music in the upper-level commons. Emcee Phil Morrison and drummer Keith Berg completed the show, which included name that tune. Even Oakley came through and paused to find a dance partner! Al concluded a fun time with the American folk song, "Goodnight Irene."



*-Sandy Furches*

### Steve Sternberg

On November 23, in the middle of the UF-Ole Miss football game, Steve Sternberg and Keith Berg presented a wonderful music program in the Oak Room. The concert was “perky, spunky and sparkly” as Sheila Dickson described it. Songs like “What a Wonderful World” and “Chattanooga Choo Choo” woke us up to music. Steve is an accomplished pianist, and he made that piano jump to new heights! He sang many of the songs as he played while Keith accompanied on his drum box. You will want to watch for notice of Steve’s next concert, hopefully again with Keith, and not miss it. *-Bev Cone*



Thank you, First Federal, for being our bank and celebrating your 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Oak Hammock with us. Your reception on December 3 was delightful. We anticipate many more years together! *-Sandy Furches*



*Keeping an eye on the gardens (George Arola)  
Air traffic over Oak Hammock (Karen Arola)*

### Challenge Accepted!

OH residents set a record for the 2024 IFAS Peanut Butter Challenge: 136 jars totaling 230 pounds! Thank you for your generous hearts. Since the Challenge started 5 years ago, Oak Hammock has contributed 500+ pounds of nutritious peanut butter to The Alan and Cathy Hitchcock **Field & Fork Pantry** for current UF students, faculty, or staff members experiencing food insecurity. *-Ray Goldwire, content; Katherine Osman, photo*



The RC Active Lifestyle Committee tour at UF featured several poinsettia varieties grown by students for their popular annual sale. *-Anne Barron*



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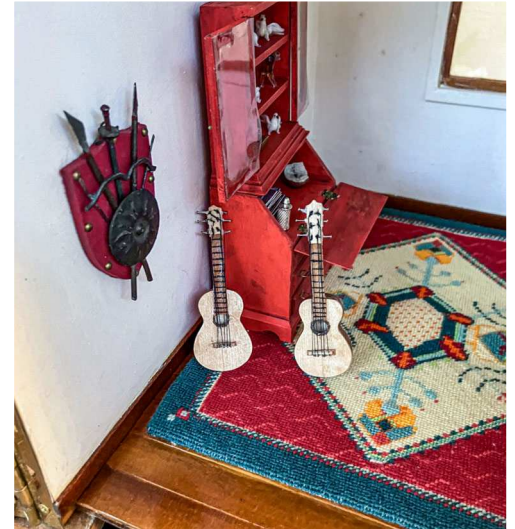
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## Not Your Ordinary Doll House

Ann Meyers recalls being eight years old and playing with a doll house. It had a bathroom, electric lights, and wooden (pre-plastic) furniture. It was a generic Midwest style house. While living on St. Croix in 1984, Ann decided to build an adult doll house! An 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish townhouse—*Casa Cantamar*, typical of Seville, Spain, architecture—was born. Using the scale of 1 inch = 1 foot, it took 25 years to complete, plus two additional years to make the furniture.



The combination of being curious and artistic has advantages (and disadvantages) for producing beautiful objects (or complete failures). All silver pieces and copper kitchen utensils were made by Ann. The suggested use of dental sutures for the guitar strings proved wrong. Moisture dissolved them. Very fine sewing thread to the rescue. Designing and creating the area carpets were much easier. The 4600 terracotta roof tiles were made using a clay extruder gun. Talent knows no boundaries.

Today, *Casa Cantamar* resides with Ann at Oak Hammock, and she enjoys sharing her adult doll house. Barbie and Ken never had a life so good. *-Barbara Dockery*

## 2025 Residents' Council & Committees

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Buildings & Infrastructure	3rd Wed 1:30 p.m.	Lynn Nelson	<a href="mailto:Lnelson944@gmail.com">Lnelson944@gmail.com</a>
Charitable Giving	1st Tue 3:00 p.m.	Leslie Bram	<a href="mailto:Ldbram0709@gmail.com">Ldbram0709@gmail.com</a>
Finance & Stewardship	3rd Thu 1:30 p.m.	Pat Kelley	<a href="mailto:pkelley@khsatty.com">pkelley@khsatty.com</a>
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Growth & Renovation	2nd Wed 3:15 p.m.	Neill Hollenshead	<a href="mailto:neill.hollenshead@gmail.com">neill.hollenshead@gmail.com</a>
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Technology & Communication Services	3rd Fri 10:00 a.m.	Bill Zegel	<a href="mailto:wzege@gmail.com">wzege@gmail.com</a>

\*Non Residents' Council member Subcommittee Chair