



Village Voice



June 2010

The Story of Fraser and Sandy Crane

On March 7th we stayed home from church because we were not feeling well. And as I looked out my kitchen window at 10:30 in the morning I saw a sandhill crane lay an egg.

We had watched over the past month as they came every morning for about two hours and pulled reeds from the lake bottom and piled them at one spot. Then they left for the day. We hoped they were building a nest as some cranes had done so in the same area seven years before. With the egg laying we knew they were.

We thought one would immediately sit on the egg but they both left that evening. They came back in the morning and started pulling reeds again. They left again that night and when they came back in the morning the female laid another egg and then sat.

As time went by we became curious about when we could expect the chicks to hatch, so we went on the Internet to a wildlife site where we found plenty of information. The eggs should hatch in about 30 days, and the baby chicks can swim within 24 hours after hatching. That was a relief as we wondered how they would get to shore. The water was too deep for them to walk. We printed out what we had found and tied it to a palm tree along the road near where the nest was. We were sure others in the park would like to know too. The choice of a nest site was a good one as our neighbor Jim Countie keeps a bird feeder filled with seeds and corn so the cranes did not have to venture too far from home to eat.

As the days went by a pattern became apparent. The smaller bird (Mama) sat on the nest all night and in the morning about 9:00 am, Dad appeared. He sat all day till about 5:00 pm when mom reappeared and he left. We saw Mama around the

park during the day, but once Dad took off over the lake into the woods we never saw him. We think there is a Crane Motel over there and he was up to no good, but we give him credit because he came back every morning to take his turn.

During the month the birds continued to add to the nest as it seemed to sink into the water, especially when the larger bird stood on it preparatory to sitting down. Also it would shift up and down as he walked on it, finding the perfect spot. During this time we had several inches of rain all at once and we wondered if the whole thing would go down, but they worked for many hours putting more reeds and adding them around the edges, turning the eggs carefully with their beaks and pushing them into the higher areas of the nest.

On day 30, we had some folks sitting on lawn-chairs waiting for the big event and they were as disappointed as we were that nothing happened. Then began the EGG VIGIL. We used our binoculars frequently during the day to observe the eggs for any signs of cracks. We did not see any that we could be sure of, but sometimes the reeds were lying across the eggs and it was hard to tell.

On April 9th the birds gave out long calls early in the morning and then both stayed by the nest all day. In the evening Dad left as usual, coming back around 8 am. They both stayed all the next day and in the evening we noticed Mama pecking at one egg. We thought we saw a small head but were unsure. But in the morning, the 35th day, we saw a lovely little yellow chick and decided to name him or her Fraser Crane. We watched the chick struggle to walk, falling over its long legs, all wet and very young. Mama kept using her beak to fluff up the feathers and help it to dry. It fell off the nest into the lake and Dad gently
1. pushed it to a reed which it grasped and climbed

back in. By the end of the day, can you believe, it was actually swimming in the lake around the nest while Dad proudly watched. It was April 11th. We posted the hatching time on the palm tree, the total days and the name of the bird. We figured we had naming rights, since the nest was at 22 1/2 Calle De Lagos and we lived at 22!

The next day, while many park residents watched, Dad who was nest sitting began pecking at the remaining egg and in a few minutes another lovely yellow, wet, weak tiny bird appeared. It too staggered around, falling while its older sibling watched with interest. We hoped not too much interest as the bird article on the Internet said sometimes the older bird kills the younger. We decided this bird would have the more traditional name of Sandy. We have had quite a crowd observing all this, sometimes upward of 20 people.

As the day drew to a close, mama bird sat on the nest and moved her wings apart from her body a bit and we watched as the chicks awkwardly tottered into the space she left for them. When they were totally in there she drew her wings in again. Sure gives new meaning to the phrase "having someone under your wing" doesn't it? The next day Dad was there far earlier than usual. As we watched, the adults walked through the water to the shore and the chicks hopped in and swam to the shore. We were absolutely amazed. These tiny bits of fluff could already swim.

As the adults pecked at the ground for insects the chicks staggered along right near their feet at first, but then became more adventurous. Pretty soon the adults had to kind of keep an eye on them. To cause further problems, a nosy crow kept trying to sit on the nest and search for any goodies left there. Each time Dad flew at him, chased him away until finally Dad picked up the remaining egg shell and ate it. That ended the crow's search. Then the whole family slowly wandered along the shore toward the corn and seed feeder. As they neared it a woman approached, moving slowly to photograph. The birds watched as she came and suddenly one of them charged, beak extended, threatening to peck. She ran back very quickly. As the birds stayed by the feeder Mama spent her time urging the chicks to swim, having them go into the lake, then with her beak at their back ends pushing them

back to shore.

We had put a rope across the narrow grassy path between 22 and 22 1/2 Calle De Lagos to keep spectators back, so they are not in danger from these very large birds. We read on the Internet that one unfortunate gentleman had his eye pecked out by a crane when he came too close.

As the day drew to a close we watched to see if they would return to the nest. They did keep edging toward it as they checked the ground for insects and instructed the chicks on how to proceed. It was amusing to watch the chicks toddle along using their small wings outstretched to keep their balance. All of a sudden a wrestling match broke out between the chicks. The older chick, who is a little larger, attacked the younger, charging at it, bill outstretched and going for the throat. Sandy rolled and stood up and went back at Fraser. This continued for a few minutes while the adults kept checking for food and paying no attention. We were horrified because we were sure it is the end for Sandy and no bird would come to her aid. Then Sandy wisely started forward again on the trek to the nest, out of the range of Fraser. Then the whole procession started again. On reaching the nest area, after much searching for the last insect tidbits, Mama walked to the nest and one chick jumped in and swam there. Dad and the other chick wandered on the shore and then chick #2 jumped in and swam toward the nest, got into a reedy patch, had to backtrack out and then finally crawled up the reeds to the top. Now there was a lot of shifting as Mama tried to find a good place to rest for the night and the chicks scurried around to avoid being under her when she settled in. Finally, after battling each other for a prime spot, they entered the wing area from the back, a funny sight for sure and even Mama seemed surprised. Dad watched all this and then with a running start flew off over the lake back to the woods and the Crane Motel.

The morning of April 14th Dad was there very early and mama and the chicks hurriedly left the nest, swimming ashore, and started foraging right next to our house on the narrow grassy strip. There was to be no return to the nest. We felt just like we feel when our grandkids leave after a visit. A big letdown. The next morning

we took down our informational signs and removed the rope protecting their area. Now all we see from our window is a large empty nest that turtles utilize for sunning daily. It was sure fun while it lasted.

Epilogue:

Two days passed and then one evening as the sun went down, there outside the kitchen window, was the Crane family, all four of them. The chicks look good, fat and sassy. Both adults start pulling reeds and adding them to the nest until it meets their approval. Mom gets into the nest and the scramble starts again for the best spot under her wing. After several minutes of falling into the lake, little heads poking up through wing feathers and some actual scrambling onto her back, things settle down. Dad watches impassively until all is quiet then takes off, over the lake, over the woods to the Crane Motel.

It is now April 25th. The chicks are two weeks old and the family has been returning to the nest every evening. During the previous night we had a cool front pass through with much rain, wind, lightning and thunder. In the morning we see Mama sitting on the shore with her wings spread and we see one chick head poking through. After she leaves, as we ourselves are going out, Bob discovers Sandy lying the ground apparently dead. He picks her up by the legs and she gives out a weak peep and moves her wing. We are so sad because she has been abandoned. We noticed that she was much smaller than Fraser and was always way behind when the family walked around. In addition she sometime stumbled or tripped in the grass. And if Mama found an insect for the chicks she was always much slower and Fraser always got it. Consequently she was much smaller as she did not get as much to eat. On the advice of Robyn we phoned St. Lucie Animal Control who did come. We had previously tried to get Busch Wildlife and Treasure Coast Wildlife without success, as we had to carry the bird there and we were expecting dinner guests that evening and had no time. When Bob originally saw the chick she was as gray as the soil and he placed her next to one of our cactus plants so she would not be as visible to predators and he laid a curved piece of palm tree bark above her to shield her

from the sun. As we waited for help we watched out the kitchen window. Suddenly the bark moved and Sandy staggered out of the hiding place. Surprise! She was now as yellow as she had always been. She kept staggering around and headed toward the road. We got a box and put dry leaves into and got her into it. She promptly climbed out. Pretty lively for a near-death bird we thought, so we lightly lowered the lid partway and weighted it to hold her in. Finally the ranger arrived and said "Did anyone touch this bird because if someone did the parent birds will never take it back?" Bob said, "Of course I did when I picked her up and thought she was dead." The ranger hemmed and hawed a bit and said she did not know what to do with the bird as Fish and Wildlife told them to never take such a bird. Then she picked her up and examined her and said she thought she had a club foot. Well, that would explain her always being last in line for food and her trouble walking. Said "How about taking her to the Busch Wildlife Center? They said they would take her if we got her there."

The ranger thought about that for a moment and then decided she would take the bird and try to get her there. We were very happy about that as we were sure she would never have lived on her own or even with the adults if they had taken her back. Just as the ranger drove away there in our yard by the lake we saw Mama, Papa and Fraser walking around without a care in the world, busily digging in the soft soil looking for insects. Survival of the fittest seems quite cruel sometimes, especially when it involves one's own grandbirds.

Bob and Joan Green

Editors Note: I know this is very long for our usual publication, but it is a wonderful story, well told. We are all fond of our cranes. There are some excellent pictures of Fraser and Sandy on the SLCCV website.

Square Dance Benefit

The Western Square Dance held on April 10th at SLCCV netted \$1,030 for the benefit of Treasure Coast Hospice. Everyone loved contributing to an indispensable organization and got even more out of it than they gave.

The New England Club did a tremendous job greeting, baking and running the silent auction. Our Board, headed by the 'cookie lady' Dottie Fenton and her crew, had home baked cookies galore which were served all evening to the huge crowd of dancers and viewers.

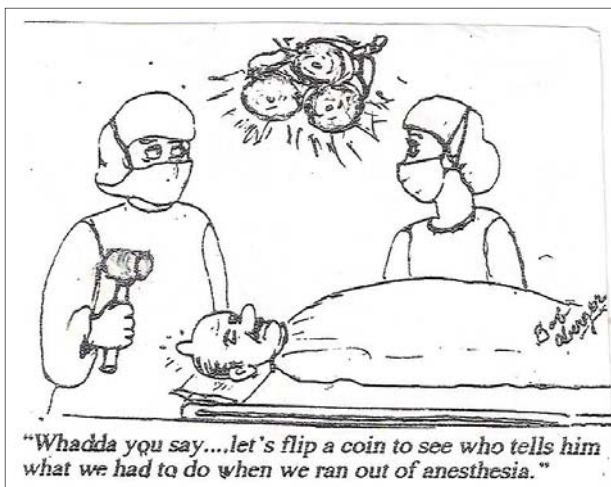
Nan and Bill McCurdy and their committee had many items displayed for the silent auction and happy winners took their loot home with smiles.

Huge thanks to the caller Gib Mattson. He did a spectacular job guiding and leading us through many maneuvers with tons of patience. Laughter and camaraderie was constantly displayed all evening. Our president Betsi Taylor welcomed everyone and thanked all who were involved.

A special banner was given to Judy Vitelli, a former hospice nurse, for her outstanding job of selling tickets to the SLCCV tennis club and for their always present support.

Terry Fesler, a representative of Treasure Coast Hospice was very appreciative of the generous donation. Her presence topped off a successful and smashing party. Just hearing all the energy on the dance floor and seeing the smiling faces lifted everyone's spirits to a higher level.

Gerrie Purcell



Three Documents You Shouldn't Live Without

Ill Health? Accident? Incapacity? Disaster? Hurricane? Don't let decisions regarding your life—what you eat, how your bills are paid, how your family or caregivers should fight to keep you alive—be made by others.

Most Americans don't have wills, but that's not the crisis that many in the estate-planning industry would have you believe. With few exceptions, most people's quality of life is not improved by a will. That's because your state already has a basic plan for distributing your stuff when you die. You're dead...what do you care? If who got your stamp collection or family heirlooms wasn't important enough for you to bother with a will when you were alive and healthy, it certainly won't matter to you after you're gone.

What your state doesn't have, however, is an efficient way to take care of you when you're still breathing but unable to make your own decisions because of incapacitating illness or injury. So—if you get in an accident and die, your estate will be distributed more or less efficiently. Get in an accident and end up in a coma, and you are in a world of hurt.

Do you want your critical decisions made by a stranger?

Who would pay your bills or wrangle with insurance companies about your care? Who would decide what actions to take for your health care and treatment – or to shut off the respirator that's keeping you going?

The state will eventually find someone to fill these roles, after a potentially costly and time-consuming court hearing. But it might not be the person you want. So at a time when you are most vulnerable, life-and-death decisions could be made for you by a stranger—or an estranged, distant or greedy relative.

That's why you need the following documents:

- 1) A **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**, which lets you identify who can and will make medical decisions for you. (This is also known as an **Advance Directive, Health Care Proxy, and/or Health Care Surrogate**.)
- 2) A **Durable Power of Attorney for Finances**, which designates who will handle money decisions.

3) A **Living Will**, which tells doctors exactly what kind of care you do and do not want to receive if you are incapacitated or terminally ill. (Some states, including Kentucky, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Virginia and Wyoming, combine the living will and durable power or attorney for health care in the same form.)

Take Charge of your Right to Direct Your Own Medical Care!

You also have to figure out whom to name as your “attorney in fact” or proxy, to help implement these decisions for you. Keep in mind:

Two heads are better than one. You don’t have to name the same person for both powers of attorney.

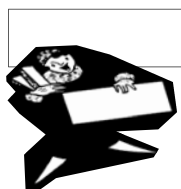
Spouses are good, but have a backup.

Keep them close. It is best to have someone who lives nearby and can travel to your hospital and banks.

Make sure they are tough. You need someone who’s forceful enough and committed enough to advocate for you.

Remember, you can change these documents at any time, as long as you are still competent. You probably should review them once a year to make sure you are still comfortable with your decisions.

Colleen Thibaut



* .. Mailbox ...

Going down memory lane with tears for myself and smiles for a wonderful life so far, I realized how many good and caring neighbors I have here at Spanish Lakes.

It is never too late to thank them for caring and support when I needed it.

Anne Eliassen

I wish to thank all of the people who expressed their love for Audrey, and all of the condolence cards that were sent to me. I am pretty sure she will be remembered. She touched a lot of people here in the Park and elsewhere.

Again I wish to express my thanks to all of you.

Joe Sciarrino

I thank you for your prayers and cards. Jane is getting well.

Peter Garbera

Thank you to all those who sent cards, flowers, food, treats and made phone calls. I am progressing slowly, but look forward to better days and seeing you all soon.

This has been very difficult for me because I have not been able to see my friends. Spanish Lakes Country Club Village speaks for itself, when the help is there.

Love you all.

Dolly Aloisi

Thanks for all the prayers, thoughts and concern since my recent illness and cancer diagnosis. Especially to the Tennis Club.

Thank you.

Joyce Guhy

The students and staff of Lakewood Park Elementary School want to thank you for your generous donation of cards, box tops, stickers and other items for our students. Your support on behalf of our children is appreciated by all.

Scott Neil, Principal
Lavonne Walker, Asst. Principal

Communication Kits for the Deaf

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of the Treasure Coast Inc. has teamed up with the Treasure Coast Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association and composed a “Hospital Communication Kit.”

The kit includes preparation tips on things to check on before one is admitted, what to do when one goes to the hospital, communication tips for hospital staff and signage to display above a bed reminding staff of the deaf’s communication needs.

To obtain a free copy, contact DHHS at (772) 334-2233 or send an e-mail to dsctc@bellsouth.net.

Summer Activities (for when you are not in the pool)

Listed below are the summer activities sponsored by the Recreation Club. These can be added to as we go along but for now I can tell you we will be having Happy Hours on Fridays, June 25th, July 16th, August 13th and Sept. 24th at 5 p.m. There is a \$3.00 admission charge, which includes two drinks.

Community breakfasts were very well received and will be repeated on Thursdays, June 10th, July 22nd, August 19th and September 16th from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Tickets for these will be sold at the desk for \$5.00 each.

There will be our July 4th picnic on Sunday, July 4th (of course), with hot dogs, baked beans, chips, soda and ice cream, courtesy of the Wynne Corporation, so no charge. Have family visiting? We would love to feed them too, so bring them along from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

There will be a potluck dinner on Tuesday, August 3rd at 5 p.m. We hope to add a new twist to this dinner by having a North & South meal. All folks living in the Del Norte section to bring "Northern" type food and everyone else "Southern" food. Let's mix it up a little. Rec. will supply Mason Dixon Line Hot Dogs (neither North nor South).

The Aussie Shepherd's Pie dinner will be repeated on September 12th at 5 p.m., with either an Elvis Concert or a Country Western singer/entertainer.

There will be dances in the auditorium on July 31st, August 28th and September 25th, yet to be confirmed. Of course we are invited to attend the dances at Fairways on June 12th, July 24th, August 21st and September 18th.

Summer bingo will start on June 14th at 6:00 p.m. and every Monday thereafter. There is a \$2.00 entrance fee and \$1:00 per card per set of games. All monies taken in will be issued in prizes. You won't even need daubers as we will be using the hard cards with slides. Come have fun and some popcorn and lemonade.

Want to start a weekly horseshoe match? We have the equipment if you have the time.

Robyn Smith 6.

Freedom

I wonder if people have always been confused by the meaning of this word? For thousands of years even to the present it was a word that applied to a few, to some, but not all. Sometimes you were "free" if you had money. Sometimes you were "free" if someone in authority said you were. The opposite of being free would be to be a slave. Millions in the world to this day are held as slaves.

Our country's founders believed that a document was necessary to enshrine the freedoms that they believed every human being was entitled to exercise. That these freedoms were inalienable; because they were conferred by a Higher Power.

Millions of people have died defending the freedom of all. Yet there are those opposed to freedom because freedom is related to individual liberty. This means individuals have power. Those addicted to power (like those addicted to money) want all the power for themselves.

Individuals want to be able to trust those to whom they given power to use that power on their behalf and for the good of all. We want to be able to trust our doctor, our clergy, our community and our government. What happens when any of the above entities fails to realize that they have a responsibility to use the power to safeguard, not curtail individual liberty? The answer is that the individual feels threatened or abused.

On the other hand, individual liberty places a tremendous responsibility on each of us to use our freedom, our liberty, our power in a manner that creates harmony not anarchy, and promotes the common good.

Notice, please, that freedom could not be defined for the purposes of this column without reference to other critical concepts; individual liberty, power, responsibility, trust, defense and rights. Safeguard your freedom.

Dr. John F. Fitzgerald, PhD, FAMP



Thank you to the New England Club

All I can say is . . . doesn't ANYBODY listen to me? Thank you to the NE Club for bestowing the 2010 Unsung Hero Award to me on April 20th. I am truly most humbled to receive this honor.

For those of you who do not know what it's all about, here's an explanation. The "Unsung Hero" award was initiated by the NE Club in 2007 at the suggestion of then president Paul Fenton, and one of the parameters is "can be voted on by NE club members only, but can be conferred on any resident of SLCCV". In 2007 Bill Brown was the recipient, in 2008, Bill McCurdy, in 2009, Bill Buzzelli, and this year to me. Bill McCurdy and I are members of the NE Club, but Bill Brown and Frank Buzzelli are not.

If you know of a worthy candidate for the future, you are welcome to suggest a nominee but only NE Club members can vote.

Besides an original plaque, the winner receives a gift certificate, a cake in their honor and an invitation to the April NE Club Dinner/Meeting. The announcement of the winner is made at the April meeting and that name is kept secret (known only to the Unsung Hero Committee) until that time.

I must say that Paul Fenton, Bill McCurdy and Lee Longchamps, the 2010 committee, really know how to keep a secret.

Thanks to ALL of you in the Club and especially to those who were so kind as to honor me.

Gerrie Purcell

Now read on . . .

Do you suppose that anyone here in our Village has not had one of Gerrie's "welcomes"? I don't think so. They come in various forms, sometimes simply a wave—often a hand shake—more often a hug. And most often, words of welcome and offers of help. But, ALWAYS, with that GERRIE Smile. If you haven't met her yet, you will. She'll find you or someone will find her for you. It's inevitable. She's like the doorman at the Ritz or the concierge at a grand resort. She's been a resident of SLCCV for a long time, and she is interested in everything and everybody.

On April 20th she was recognized and formally honored when the NE Club declared her 2010's "Unsung Hero" unanimously. Being Gerrie, she

had trouble accepting the award, but was overruled. Now that she is 'down from her surprise high,' she's back doing her thing—just being Gerrie.

In years past she had an active role in the Kazoo Bank. She is the caretaker of the late Jim Purcell Fund, which has funded the large monitor in the Pow Wow Room for the Computer Club. Monies were also pooled into the purchasing of the benches for the boccie court and, most importantly, the erection of the village flag in Jim Purcell's memory at the Spanish Lakes entry. This was originally erected to show gratitude to the village for all their help when Jim was ill, and to repay his happiness while living here for four years. Gerrie now maintains an ongoing list of potential donors who wish to honor a departed loved one. The flag is replaced as needed and is ALWAYS in A-1 condition.

Along with the Mahoneys (John and Ces) she runs the Annual Fitness Games. A month-long program of races, contests, etc. Coordinating, involving and registering game participants, securing equipment, fields and awards and finally putting together a Fitness Games Wrap Party. Along with the Mahoneys she has until this year been involved in setting up, participating in and coordinating the summer boccie games.

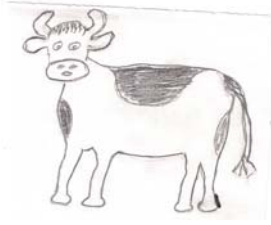
You can find "The Video Lady" several times a week in the Longevity Center's Video Library, constantly checking in and working on the over 1,000 videos. Every Monday all year, she is on hand critiquing and distributing videos. This is an on-going project and residents have recourse to the latest and best available movies. She also takes an active role in our fantastic library.

One of her "babies" is running the Benefit Square Dance every two years since 2002. All profits go to Hospice. Approximately \$7,000 has been raised by five dances and given to this grateful charity. This effort is sponsored by the NE Club. With all of that and more, she is honored for her care, cards, tears, phone calls to many in need in the village family.

In her spare time (?) she belongs to a Red Hat Chapter, the Stretchersize Class, a luncheon group, Boccie, assists with the *Village Voice* and volunteers where there is a need.

Congratulations, Gerrie, whether you like it or not.

Dotty Fenton



Latest on Elsie

Hay, have you *herd* about Elsie? When Elsie *hoofed it* back, she was pleasantly surprised to see the Canada geese leaving for their journey north. As they hadn't all gone yet "Cowboy Craig" saddled up again and *drove* Elsie and calf Bossie across the road to a fresh grazing pasture.

Elsie was *udderly* overwhelmed with so much attention. They probably will be hightailing it to your area soon for *butter* grazing, and as summer *mooves* along, we expect she will return to the barn.

This may sound *corny*, but Elsie loves *barn* dances! As on any ranch, life evolves. Will this saga?

A Snake in the Grass!

A resident of La Puerte Del Norte was startled to see a six foot rattlesnake in his yard one afternoon in early May. He lives adjacent to the woods where the fire broke out recently, and it is possible the fire had driven the snake, and/or its prey, into our park.

This snake was summarily dealt with, but those who live close to the boundaries should be aware that there are rattlesnakes around. Don't leave a shed door open or any boxes around where one might hide.

From the President's Desk

The 2009-2010 Winter Snowbird Season has drawn to a close, and our winter residents have headed to points north and beyond. We wish them all safe travel and a happy summer, and look forward to seeing old friends again next Fall and Winter. We hope you were sure to secure your properties, as this is expected to be a rather eventful hurricane season.

The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Department has a great detail on their website, where you can monitor any activity that generated a case number, by logging on to www.stluciesheriff.com, and clicking on the blue box "Report Manager".

For those who have been unable to attend, the HOA Board has a new face, with a new President, Vice-President, Activities Director, Membership Director, and Communications Director. If you haven't made the recent meetings, or just plain don't attend them (shame on you), you don't know what you're missing.

This Summer brings many new activities, and many new year-round residents. If you can't be here, be sure to stay up to date by checking in on our wonderful website, www.slccv.org for all the latest news and pictures.

Be sure to stay on top of this Summer's events and activities with the weekly bulletin, put out by the Recreation Department and included on the website. Watch for a summertime President's Corner, a new informal HOA meeting for our permanent residents.

Colleen Thibaut

DEPARTED FRIENDS

We shall miss the following departed friends. This list is as known to the front desk from February 4, 2010 to May 31, 2010.

Don Najbor	Laura Banasiak	Herb Schroeder	Edna Metzradt
Clenent Nicholson	Barbara Krieger	Edward Ozabal	Marie Lorenzini
John Santo	Sophi Chaisson	Rocco DePaul	

VILLAGE VOICE

Newsletter of Spanish Lakes Country Club Village
Home Owners Association
Editor: Carol Fensterer
Assistant: Gerrie Purcell
Advertising: Patrick Hughes
Setup and Computer: Carol Fensterer
Cartoonist: Bob Aberger