

Everyone's Vote Matters; Do Your Part on Nov. 8!



*"Voting is the expression of our
commitment to ourselves, one another,
this country, and this world."*

—Sharon Salzberg, Author and Educator

Be Aware of Changes

Some of our neighbors no longer will vote at Optimist Park. Voting precinct boundaries are adjusted periodically to balance voter population among adjacent precincts. The Florida Legislature recently decided to divide the Indianhead Lehigh neighborhood from one big precinct into two smaller precincts. This redistricting means that we now have two different voting locations and slightly different ballots.

You may have discovered this change during the primary election in August, when you showed up at Optimist and were redirected to John Wesley. Before you head to the polls in November, please look at the new voter registration card that was mailed to you in mid-June. It will identify your polling location.

Continued on page 2

On November 8, Floridians will elect or reelect officials to serve as governor, US senator, US representative, state senator, local county commissioner, town mayor, and other officials. This is an important election, folks.

- **Voter Registration Deadline: October 22**
- **General Election: Tuesday, November 8, 2022**
- **Voting Hours: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.**
- **Voting Locations: Optimist Park Clubhouse or John Wesley United Methodist Church**

Notice Anything Different?

This newsletter reflects the sadness and joy of change. Graphic designer Charity Myers, who left an indelible mark on numerous IHLNA projects, has moved to Guatemala with her family. As we wish her well, we welcome our new designer—Linda Ogle. A native Tallahasseean, Linda has thirty-five years of graphic design experience, mostly with the state. A lifelong artist, Linda paints, draws, makes jewelry, and works with stained glass. Her creativity is evident in the new nameplate above and the following pages.

★ ★ YOUR VOTE COUNTS ★ ★

Neighbors living in the following areas will now vote at John Wesley United Methodist Church, rather than at Optimist Park. The church is located at 1689 Old St. Augustine Rd., west of the First Commerce Credit Union.

- Neighbors living on the north and east sides of Chowkeebin Nene (until it intersects with Chinnapakin Nene, heading south);
- Neighbors living on the east side of Wahalaw Nene;
- Neighbors living on the south side of Wekewa/Mountbatten; and
- All of the Lehigh Acres neighborhood.
- To see a map of the redistricted boundaries, go to: <https://tlcgis.leoncountyfl.gov/SOE/index.html>.

Another change enacted by the legislature concerns the solicitation zone in front of a polling site. The restricted area is now 150 feet from the front door of any Florida polling station. Because of this change, the Indianhead Lehigh Neighborhood Association no longer will offer free food and beverages at the polls.

Personnel at the office of Leon County Supervisor of Elections (SOE) can answer any questions you have about voting. The website is easy to navigate, and staff pick up the phone when you call. They make it exceedingly easy to access voter information.

The website to visit is **LeonVotes.gov**.

The phone number to call is **850-606-8683**.

The location is **2990-1 Apalachee Parkway** (corner of Capital Circle SE and Apalachee Parkway).

Know Your Candidates

To view your own ballot in preparation for this election, visit LeonVotes.gov. Follow the prompts by providing your name and birthdate, and your ballot with pop up.

To become more informed about the candidates and their positions, several nonpartisan organizations have collected easy-to-use information:

- League of Women Voters of Florida;
- Florida Ballotpedia; and
- Vote411.org.

Consider reviewing the position of local organizations, especially those that are meaningful to you. What position have they taken on the candidates? The more information you collect, the more educated your vote.

Three Ways to Vote

1. Election Day Voting: Polls for our neighborhood are at Optimist Park Clubhouse and at John Wesley United Methodist Church; 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. Check your voter registration card for your location.
2. Vote by Mail: Voting by mail is easy. Simply request a Vote-by-Mail ballot at LeonVotes.gov or by calling 850-606-8683. Or, pick up a ballot at the SOE office. Ballots become available about thirty days before Election Day or this year, around October 9, and they will be mailed to people who sign up. Make sure to sign the envelope of your Vote-by-Mail ballot on the designated line. Return your completed and signed ballot in one of three ways.
 - **Put it in your mailbox.** The US Postal Service recommends mailing it at least seven days before Election Day.
 - **Drop it off at the SOE office.** Business hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 - **Deposit it at an Early Voting site during Early Voting hours.** Each drop box will be staffed by an election worker to ensure your ballot is safe.
3. Vote early: Cast a ballot at an Early Voting location. Sites will be available October 24 to November 6. You can vote early at a number of locations, including the Leon County Courthouse, Dr. B. L. Perry Branch Library, and the SOE office at Apalachee Parkway and Capital Circle. Early Voting extends from October 24 to November 6.

Register to Vote

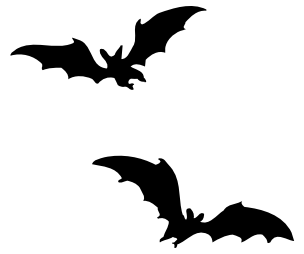
You can now register to vote online, by mail, or by phoning the SOE office. To register online, visit the LeonVotes.gov website; or visit the SOE office on Apalachee Parkway. Numerous agencies around town provide voter registration forms as well. To register, you must have either a Florida driver's license or Florida ID, and provide the last four digits of your social security number. You must register at least twenty-nine days before the election—by October 11, 2022.

Please remember that our democracy depends on you. Your single vote will help shape the future of our county, state, and country.





NEWS & NOTES



Nene Halloweenee

Sunday, October 30 • 4:30 p.m. • Optimist Park

Plans for the annual, spooktacular Nene Halloween party and costume contest are underway. Keep an eye on the INLNA Facebook page or your emails for details. Everyone knows this event is *the best way* to show off your Cinderella, Jack Sparrow, or Minecraft costume.

IHLNA General Meeting

Sunday, November 13 • 1:00 p.m. • Optimist Park

Local residents are encouraged to attend the Neighborhood Association General Meeting on November 13. All of the board of directors' quarterly meetings are open to the public, but during the General Meeting, board vacancies are filled and important initiatives are presented for discussion and/or a vote. This also offers an opportunity for Nenelanders to share suggestions and concerns relating to the neighborhood.

As a special addition to the General Meeting, Lily Anderson-Messec, director of North Florida Programs and the TorreyaKeepers project coordinator with the Florida Native Plant Society, will share her knowledge on the multiple benefits of planting native, not tropical, milkweed and how the different types of milkweed impact monarch butterflies.

Everyone's Favorite: Pony Rides!

Sunday, November 13 • 3:00–5:00 p.m. • Optimist Park

It's time to don your boots, bandana, and broad-brimmed hat! For the second time this year, Black's Horses and Ponies will provide free rides around the park. A local business for more than forty years, the company began when then six-year-old Traci Black "walked her pony, Honey, to Bradley's Fun Day and offered rides for a quarter [and] came home with her pockets full of quarters."

Holiday Lights Ride

Monday, December 19 • 6:30 p.m. • Optimist Park

Join us with bells and lights for the 10th annual bike ride (can you believe it?). We will pedal about three miles through the neighborhood to view the best holiday lights and decorations. We welcome adults, kids riding independently on two wheels accompanied by a parent, and children as "cargo." All bikes must have front and back lights, and we give extra credit for holiday lights. For additional information, contact Marie-Claire Leman at (850) 728-7514.

Breakfast Group Invitation

A new resident in the IHLNA community is extending an invitation to folks who enjoy breakfast and morning conversation, especially present and past members of the military services.

Hello! My name is Mike Zieman, and I have just moved to Tallahassee from Jacksonville. I am a retired chief petty officer in the US Navy, and while stationed in Jacksonville, I was a part of a group of mostly retired military folks who met for breakfast once a week to share stories and support one another in our journeys. If one of these groups currently exists in this area, I would like to participate. If none exists, I would like to organize one. Anyone can join—active, retired, or reserve military as well as civilians. Please contact me at (850) 904-343-6431 or zcamoman@aol.com. I look forward to hearing from you and, hopefully, having interesting chats over tasty meals.

Terry Anne Kant, Broker **Sharon Kant-Rauch, Broker**
(850) 567-3033 • terry@kanthomes.com rauchsh@aol.com • (850) 524-3033



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Thoughts on Personal Safety

By Walter Liddell

The slogan "If You See Something, Say Something"® was created and trademarked by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, and it remains meaningful and relevant today. In law enforcement, we call it situational awareness, or "being aware of your surroundings." This behavior benefits you as well as those around you. Here are some safety tips to keep in mind.



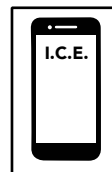
Walking on the Street. It's common for residents to take advantage of the fall weather to get exercise, but remember that the days (and daylight)

are shorter. When walking in the early morning or late afternoon, always walk facing oncoming traffic. And as difficult as it may be, leave your cell phone at home. The other day, I saw a woman talking on her cell phone while walking with traffic in the middle of the road. You'll increase your safety immeasurably by purchasing a fluorescent vest, which can be found at specialty shops such as our local Marpan Supply or big-box stores such as Walmart or Target. The vests are not expensive, and they are worth every penny. When you're walking on the street, here's a simple safety tip to remember: Walk against, Peddle with. Here's another one that's equally important: bike riders, especially children, need (and ought to be required) to wear a helmet when riding a bike. Adding a bright-colored safety vest provides an additional measure of safety.



Firearms. If you decide to carry a firearm in your vehicle, be sure to lock the doors and verify that all are locked—for example, with a key fob that causes the horn to honk—before

you step away. If this is not an option, take the gun inside! Store it in a safe place that is not accessible to children. It's a simple fact that criminals and gangs are looking for guns and electronic devices, so folks need to be proactive about safeguarding their property.



Emergency Contact. Whether you use a flip or a cell phone, I.C.E. should be listed as one of your contacts. I.C.E. stands for "In Case of Emergency." By policy, no police agency will deliver tragic news over the phone, so first responders are trained to look for I.C.E. in the phone directory of an accident victim.



Scam-O-Rama. Local authorities are seeing a variety of one-on-one scams, and the perpetrators are very creative. Be aware that Tallahassee city policy prohibits an employee from going into a home without a legitimate cause. If an individual claiming to be from the city or a law enforcement agency simply shows up at your home, ask for identification, but do not allow entry unless you are satisfied that he or she is there for a bona fide reason. And never, ever allow entry to someone who claims "to be out of gas" or "in need of directions to such-and-such street." Under no circumstance should you allow someone into your home unless you know or are expecting that person.



Travel Plans. It's important to have a plan for the home when you are away. Talk to your adult children, family members, or neighbors about what to do in case of an unexpected event. Be sure to leave written instructions about where you will be, how to contact you (or a surrogate), when you will be home, and how to deal with other situations that may arise (for example, what to do with deliveries). In view of the forthcoming holiday season, when many folks will be going out of town, securing your home is no less important than your travel arrangements.

IHLNA neighbor Walter Liddle has worked as a Florida state trooper for thirty-four years. Although semi-retired, he remains committed to the safety of Tallahassee residents.



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Steps and Preps Are Key To Disaster Preparedness

By KC Smith

As we know, accurate weather prediction is elusive, which is why Florida's public safety agencies encourage folks to be proactive about assembling disaster supplies and making an evacuation plan. The City of Tallahassee website talgov.com promotes the adage, "Make A Plan. Build A Bucket. Stay Informed." It facilitates planning by providing links to weather and emergency sites and a downloadable, step-by-step hurricane preparedness guide, available at 2022-hurricane-guide-web.pdf talgov.com. Leon County Government also addresses disaster threats and offers a downloadable "Disaster Survival Guide" at <https://www2.leoncountyfl.gov/haveahurricaneplan/assets/2022-leon-county-dsg-tab.pdf>. The Leon County Citizens Connect app sends real-time emergency information to mobile devices or tablets. Although the city and county sites echo similar details, both are worth exploring.

Emergency experts encourage households to prepare a "disaster bucket" that includes enough food, water, and other supplies to last seventy-two hours. Commercially packaged kits are available that vary in the number of people and/or days accommodated; however, they are not inexpensive. For most households, a bucket tailored to family members' preferences, needs, and resources will provide comfort and relief during a stressful time. When selecting the contents, keep in mind that local utilities—electric, gas, water, sewer, and telephone—may not be available for several days.

For convenience, foodstuffs and tools can be grouped in containers of different colors or markings; regardless, each should have a tight-fitting lid. Store water in unbreakable containers, and plan for one gallon per person and pet per day.

While preparedness websites list similar bucket contents, folks should tailor the list to meet their personal needs. In general, bucket lists include the following essential items: batteries, cash, duct tape, dust mask(s), first aid kit, flashlight(s), toys and games, hygiene products (toilet paper, paper

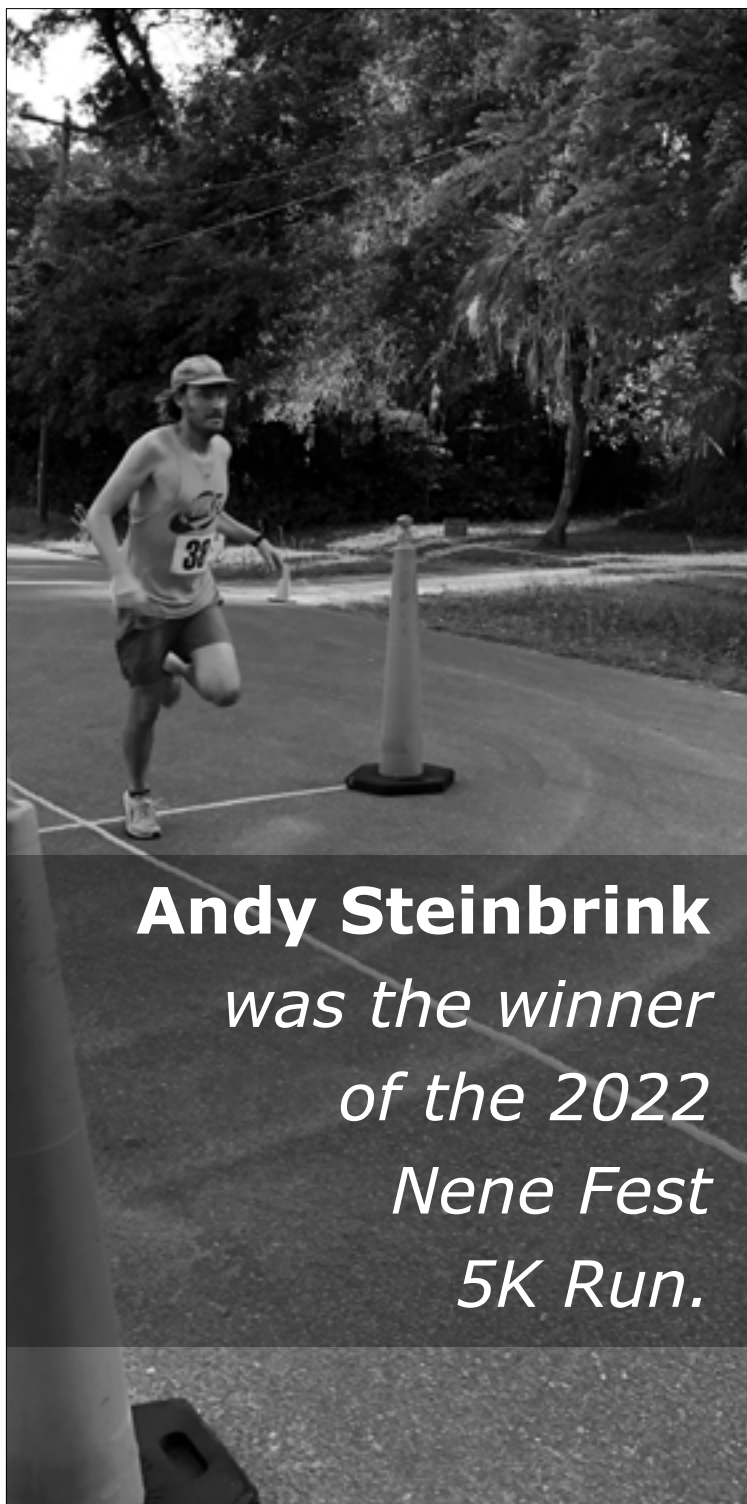


towels, soap, feminine products, diapers, towelettes, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.), keys for car and home, large plastic trash bags, local maps, medications, multipurpose pocket knife, nonperishable food, pet supplies, photos of family and pets, poncho, portable phone charger, radio and extra batteries, rope, tarp, towel(s), water, waterproof bag with family documents, and whistle. Taking steps to prepare when the first weather alerts are issued will enhance personal safety and peace of mind if a severe storm arrives.



2022 Nene Fest Run

Featured a Two-Way 5K



By Marie-Claire Leman and Will Hanley

After a two-year hiatus, the Nene Fest 5K & Fun Run returned with a twist this spring to Indianhead Lehigh neighborhood streets. Runners were able to choose the direction in which they wanted to run the course—either tackling a tough hill early in the race while one's legs were still fresh, or opting for more gradual inclines throughout the course.

Participants wondered whether one direction would be markedly faster than the other. Given that different runners followed each route, it's difficult to say. However, the first seven finishers had to run the course in reverse—that is, starting with the tough hill up to Hartsfield School along East Indianhead Drive.

Rickards High School cross-country coach and IHLNA resident Andy Steinbrink was the overall winner, with a time of 19 minutes, 30 seconds. Elyse Gallegos was the next to cross the line; her time was 22:14, followed by Sean McConnell at 22:38 and Monica Toth at 23:00. Cate Rozier and Chase Sims, third-place winners in the female and male categories, shared a finishing time of 23:31. An honorable mention went to Loranne Ausley, who led the way in the other direction and was the first person to finish the traditional course with a time of 24:50.

Children of all ages participated in the 1 mile Fun Run. Between sand traps at the start and heckling chickens on the course, it was a wild route! Ironically, although these were unplanned hurdles, they provided numerous ideas for new Fun Run twists in the future.

Heartfelt thanks are extended to the runners, volunteers, donors, and sponsors who made the race possible. The event raised more than \$4,000 to support Hartsfield Elementary, our neighborhood school. Equal thanks are extended to the businesses that support the school and the race year after year.

All photos courtesy of Marie-Claire Leman.

Diamond Sponsor: (our first!): Kingdom First Realty

Golden Sponsors: AFL-CIO; Kant Realty of North Florida

Silver Sponsors: Awards4U, Burch Orthodontics, Canopy Road Café, Community Co-op Market, Hair on Earth, Just Fruits and Exotics, and Vertigo Burgers & Fries

Bronze Sponsor: Affiliate Auctions, Lucilla, Ology Brewing Company, Orchard Pond, T. Davis Catering, and Trinity House of Praise.

Other sponsors included: Trader Joe's, Fiorini Chiropractic Center, and Sandra's Flower Basket, which provides gift certificates for door prizes every year.

Donations also were received from IHLNA neighbors. Many thanks for the support! Race organizers go to great lengths to keep the associated costs as low as possible because proceeds from this event are given to Hartsfield School.

The Eighth Annual Nene Fest 5K and Fun Run will be held Saturday, April 29, 2023. For information about participating, volunteering to help, becoming a sponsor, or making a donation, contact race directors Marie-Claire Leman and Will Hanley at marieclaireleman@gmail.com.

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Chase Sims and Cate Rozier were the third-place finishers.



A banner at Optimist Park thanked the 2022 race sponsors.



Runners await the start of the race.

Distinctive Box Turtles

Enhance IHLNA's Ecology

By Dave Almquist

I realized a while ago, mostly from posts on the IHLNA Facebook page, that people seemed to be seeing a lot of box turtles in the neighborhood, considering that we live in a very small community in the middle of the city. Naturally, I was curious about how many we might have living here.

In early July, I started collecting records from my amazing neighbors to put into iNaturalist, assuming in the beginning that most of the observations would be the same individuals roaming around and that we might have twenty or so adult box turtles living here. It turns out that some box turtles have a home range radius of only about 250 yards, although others may roam around up to ten acres, and their ranges may overlap. We now have more than 150 observations by at least 45 neighbors for slightly more than 100 individual turtles, with more coming in every day, which to me is incredible!

You may think I'm overestimating, but the combination of shell and head patterns has been shown to be very distinctive—as in something akin to fingerprints for humans. Some people have “yard turtles,” with multiple adults—as many as six!—on their property, which they have documented repeatedly for years. Some people feed them, similar to how some people feed feral neighborhood cats, although turtles have been documented scavenging fallen figs and oranges and snitching outdoor pet food as well.

Box turtles do not reach sexual maturity until somewhere between four and twenty years old, depending on the source of information, although it seems to me that about ten years is the most reasonable measure for wild individuals. At least one source claims they are not actually reproductively active until around twenty years, even if technically mature before that. They easily live for more than thirty years and may live to more than 100 years.

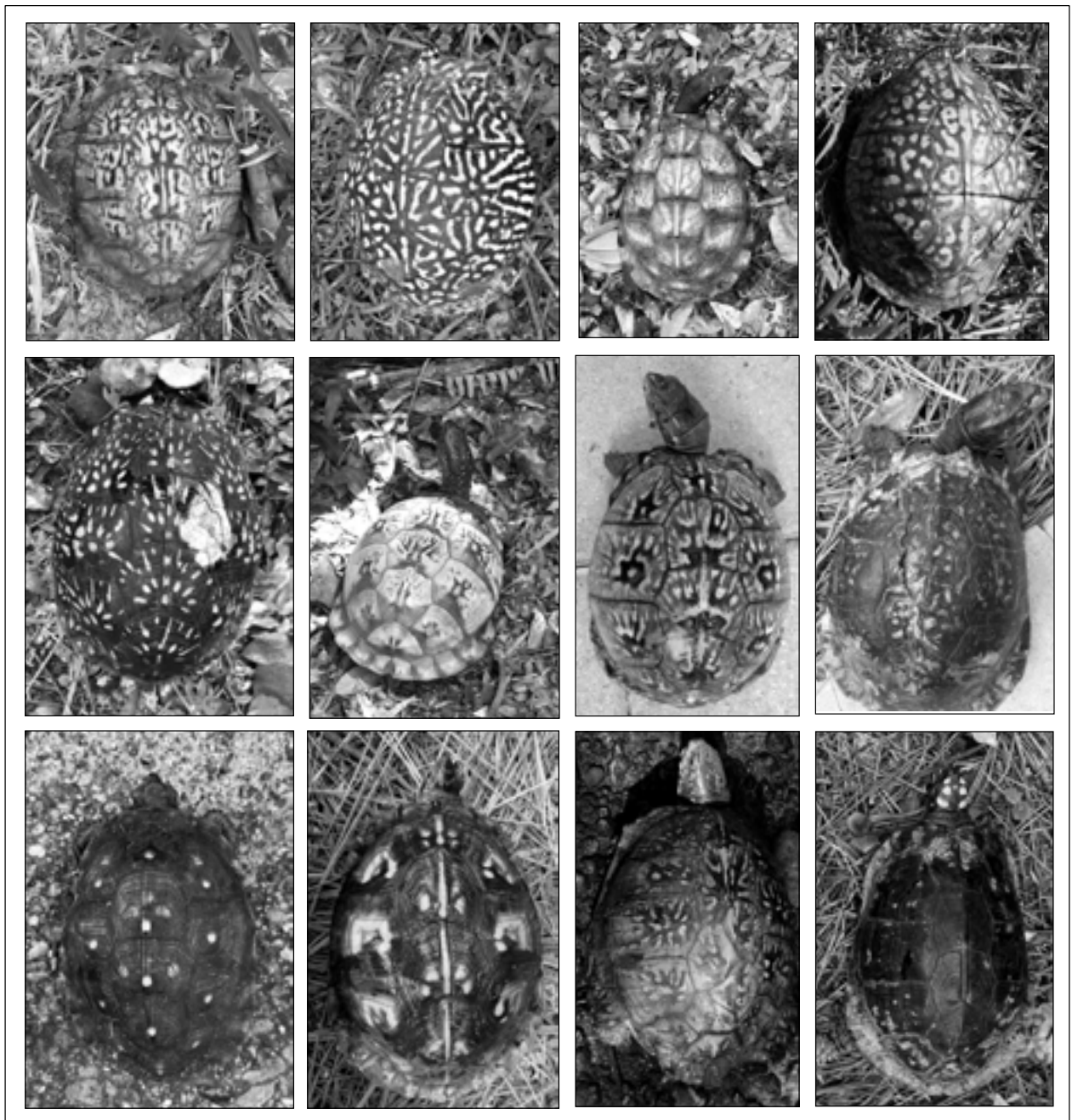
Several of our neighborhood turtles have damage to their shell and/or scarring or missing scutes, and it

appears that lawnmowers may be a cause of some of these injuries. One individual, pictured below, has been documented from 2015 to 2022 with what appears to be a large crack in its shell, so what might appear to be catastrophic damage to a human may be easily survivable for box turtles.

People who are interested in this project should go to [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org) and search for the Indianhead Box Turtles project. A project Facebook page requires an invitation to join. Please contact me at daidunno@hotmail.com for assistance accessing the resources mentioned in this article. Thanks to everyone who has submitted observations and/or just been interested in this study, especially Paul Marty, who has helped immensely with various aspects of the project!



This iNaturalist map shows the locations of box turtle observations in Indianhead.



Variability in markings and evidence of damage in turtle shells are evident in the photo montage. Contact the author at daidunno@hotmail.com for image source details.

Fast Turtle Fax

*"Try to be like the turtle—at ease in your own shell."
—Bill Copeland, Australian athlete*

Here are a few random facts about turtles and tortoises.

- They are nearly as old as dinosaurs, with examples dating more than 200 million years ago.
- They actually make a sound, even though they do not have vocal chords.
- They don't have ears, but they can perceive low-pitched sounds.
- They can see color and have a preference for red, orange, and yellow.
- Tortoises orbited the moon before astronauts did, in the Soviet space probe Zond 5.

Source: <https://www.thequotablecoach.com/try-to-be-like-the-turtle-at-ease-in-your-own-shell/>

Neighbor to Neighbor Offers Thanks and Exciting Plans

By Betsy Tabac

There is so much going on at Neighbor to Neighbor in the Nenes (N3) that we hardly know where to begin. An obvious starting place is to thank our generous donors for their support in the last several months. More than 100 friends contributed during our spring fundraiser, which generated about \$4,500. Thirty-three people made donations via the IHLNA membership form, yielding just over \$1,000. And then there was the day our hearts stopped because we received \$1,000 from a single resident via PayPal. Thank You, Everyone!

We're now focusing fundraising efforts on "sustaining donations"—those we receive every month from the same donors. It works like this. Using PayPal, donors indicate a monthly amount they want to contribute. PayPal transfers that amount from the donor's account to the N3 account for as long as the donor wishes to give. It is easy for contributors and extremely important to N3 because it represents income we can count on. We already have two sustaining supporters, and we hope that neighbors will join their ranks.

Other big news concerns our upcoming search for an executive director. Since N3's founding in 2018, it has been run by volunteers and sustained by the strong and special community-caring ethos so prevalent in the IHLNA neighborhood. It is time to recruit and hire new, paid leadership to carry on this project.

N3 coordinators also are upgrading the website so the aging-in-place resources identified over the past four years and those still to be discovered are readily accessible. These include local, state, and national resources in narrative and video formats. They will be organized in an easy-to-use system and include such topics as driving, and not driving; safety in the home; financial issues; technology; and other topics.

It was our plan to spend 2022 on capacity-building for N3, and thanks to community support, we are doing that. We are moving the procedures we created in our heads to useable media available to anyone. One major effort has been creating a policies and procedures manual. New N3 leadership will have



written information about how to do the things we do now. Our computer documentation also is coming along—a major step because Club Express, our software platform, is powerful but not user friendly for technophobes. Our volunteer orientation and training manual also is nearly finished.

A final important item to mention: N3 is looking for board members. We need people who care that the organization exists and want to keep it afloat well into the future. I imagine a motto: "As Long As There Is A Need." As long as elder Indianhead Lehigh residents need services to feel safe and secure in their homes, N3 will be here.



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New Heights for Hartsfield!

By Dr. Rhonda Blackwell-Flanagan, Principal

Have you heard the news? Your neighborhood school is now called Hartsfield Magnet School for International Studies. As you may know, Hartsfield is a candidate for the International Baccalaureate® (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) Authorization. We wanted to share with you some information about our school's academic initiatives.

Our Mission

Hartsfield Magnet is a diverse school family that embraces change. We are committed to providing a rigorous and equitable educational experience. It is our responsibility to provide students with an environment conducive to academic, social, and emotional growth to ensure they become agents of their learning. To this end, we seek to facilitate an inquiry-based instructional delivery model that encourages collaboration and problem-solving. We promote international mindedness by developing the ability to connect with others in the interest of acting with compassion and serving the global community.

What is different about an IB PYP School?

What makes PYP schools unique is "how" students are taught, versus "what" students are taught. IB PYP schools strive to develop internationally minded learners who are able to understand themselves and others, fostering the attributes necessary to thrive within a global society. The PYP focuses on the development of the whole child as an engaged



inquirer, demonstrating agency (ownership) for their learning both inside and outside of the classroom. In the PYP classroom, learning is concept based rather than topic based, taking place through a transdisciplinary lens. PYP teachers also teach students multiple Approaches to Learning (ATLs), so that learners are equipped with the skills essential to becoming lifelong learners. The ATLs are listed in the chart.

IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programs is to "develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world."

As IB learners, our students will strive to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, and reflective. IB schools believe that focusing on these ten attributes can help students become responsible members of local, national, and global communities.

Continued on page 12

Approaches to Learning	Descriptor
Social Skills	Developing positive interpersonal relationships and collaboration skills. Developing social-emotional intelligence.
Research Skills	Information Literacy Skills, Media Literacy Skills, Ethical Use of Media Information.
Thinking Skills	Critical-Thinking Skills, Creative Thinking Skills, Transfer Skills, Reflection/Metacognitive Skills.
Communication Skills	Exchanging Information Skills, Literacy Skills, ICT Skills.
Self-Management Skills	Organization Skills, States of Mind.

This year, each grade level will implement six “Units of Inquiry” that fall under the following Transdisciplinary Themes (PreK and K, will implement four units). The six units include:

- Who We Are
- How We Express Ourselves
- Where We Are in Place and Time
- How the World Works
- How We Organize Ourselves
- Sharing the Planet

The IB is committed to making sure that students in IB programs meet and exceed state standards. With the implementation of the Primary Years Programme, we are ensuring that the curriculum is aligned to the B.E.S.T. standards that guide instruction in Florida schools. We are on the trajectory for authorization in spring 2023.

Wishing you well this year and beyond!

Hartsfield Elementary School is a candidate school for the Primary Years Program. The school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy—a commitment to high-quality, challenging, international education—that is important for the students. Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programs: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programs, visit <http://www.ibo.org>.

Buying or Selling In This Crazy Market?

By Terry and Sharon Kant-Rauch

It's scary out there! As interest rates continue to climb, both Buyers and Sellers are in a bind.

For Buyers, home prices and interest rates have risen. A year ago, interest rates were about 3%; today, they are more than 6%. The difference for a monthly mortgage payment on a \$250,000 loan is \$400 to \$500. Ouch!

Home prices also continue to rise, making Buyers more hesitant to purchase a home. It could take some time for this pendulum to shift back. Real Estate is in uncharted territory right now. We haven't seen this phenomenon in more than twenty-five years of working in the real estate industry. The good news for Buyers is that there are fewer “bidding wars” going on, so the hectic rush to see a house and put an offer in, often over asking price, has slowed down, allowing Buyers some breathing room.

For Sellers, the higher interest rate means that Buyers are not banging down the doors, and they want homes to be in better condition. This makes a prelisting inspection for anything over ten years old even more important than it was previously.

Sellers who want a smoother deal are wise to invest in a home inspection and a WDO (wood rot/termite inspection). Depending on the structure and age, this will cost from \$450 to \$700, but it is worth every

penny. Finding a home's hidden issues before it goes on the market allows the Seller to fix things and price it accordingly. For example, insurance companies have gotten much tougher about the age of a roof, so if this needs replacement in order for a Buyer to get a loan and insurance, a Seller can get quotes and advertise that a new roof is coming. It's better to know in advance than to have to negotiate a reduction in the middle of the deal.

In addition, putting a home back on the market after a deal falls through creates the appearance that something went wrong with it. The momentum in a sale is always highest the first few weeks on the market, and sellers should take advantage of this fact. They also should ask a realtor to do a current market analysis, as prices are fluctuating weekly now. Try to price it at what the Realtor suggests. Selling at market value or slightly below seems best right now for a good and quick sale, and it also increases the possibility of multiple offers.

Take the time and money to fully vet the home so the rest falls into place. We often work with Sellers a month or more before a home is listed. When the aforementioned steps are done in advance, the property almost always sells quickly with fewer deals falling through.

Terry and Sharon Kant-Rauch are brokers/owners of Kant Realty of North Florida LLC and Indianhead residents for more than three decades.

Hartsfield is Abloom!

By Marney Richards and Marie-Claire Leman

The campus at Hartsfield Elementary has inspired many new initiatives in recent years, including additional vegetable garden beds and the transformation of a barren corner into a beautiful butterfly garden. The gardens will continue to thrive—if we put our efforts into them.

Over the years, neighbors have worked together to support the school's initiatives, and their role has changed annually. Before Covid, we led an after-school garden club for 3rd to 5th graders who worked on maintaining the vegetable gardens: planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting. Students took veggies home for their families, held special after-school markets for teachers and staff, and occasionally ran a booth at the Frenchtown Heritage Market, selling produce from the gardens. When schools closed in 2020, and through the next school year when contact with students was temporarily suspended, we kept the gardens going and continued to provide fresh veggies to the teachers and staff.

With help from community volunteers, Hartsfield teachers, students, and staff transformed a small corner of the campus into a place teeming with life. Caterpillars, butterflies, native bees, other insect pollinators, and even hummingbirds now visit the garden. This “firsthand classroom” allows students to learn about seeds, plants, insects, and birds, as well as their life cycles and how they interact. Outdoor lessons in science, math, and language arts engage students in new ways. The garden also is a place to pause and breathe in a beautiful space.

Many hands make light work. Seeing what we have accomplished in the last few years motivates us to do even more! Teachers and staff are inspired with ideas to further transform the school grounds, and they need our help. We hope you'll join us in continuing to support these initiatives at Hartsfield Elementary School. Gardening experience is not required. For additional information, contact us at hartsfieldgardenclub@gmail.com.



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Growing Luffa in the Nenes

By Joe Gabriel

Did you know that you can grow your own luffa?
You can!

Luffa (also spelled loofah) is a wonderful plant for your garden because of its natural beauty and many uses. Luffas produce large gourds that look a lot like a fully grown zucchini. The gourds grow on beautiful vining plants with large, yellow flowers that pollinators love. Inside the gourd is a natural sponge. A lot of people use these sponges in the shower to exfoliate their skin. In our home, we also use them to clean dishes in the kitchen. Perhaps best of all, most of the plant is edible and tasty, and it has many medicinal uses. What a plant!

Growing luffa is easy, but it does take some patience. You can purchase seeds from an online organic seed company, and at least two local nurseries carry the seeds or plants. You also can ask me for some seeds; I have a lot left over from last year, and I would be happy to share.

Planting Process

Soak the seeds for twenty-four hours before planting. Sow small groups of seeds two to three feet apart after the danger of frost has passed (early April to be safe). Some growers recommend more space between plants, but mine did fine even closer than this. Plant the seeds along a strong fence or a trellis in a sunny location. Luffas prefer rich and well-drained soil, so add plenty of compost or fertilizer. Seeds can take up to two weeks to sprout. Thin to one plant when they are an inch or two high. They like a lot of water, and try not to plant them near other members of the Cucurbitaceae family (squash and cucumbers), which also are thirsty when growing. You can fertilize luffa once a month with compost or organic fertilizer, and don't forget to sing to them from time to time so they don't get lonely.

Luffa produce vigorous vines that can grow more than thirty feet long. One vine can produce ten to fifteen gourds, and each fruit can weigh about three pounds. Thus, if you plant multiple vines, they will need a strong fence or trellis on which to grow. You also can grow them on the ground; however, the sponges then get curled up, and the plants are more susceptible to downy mildew and other diseases. Nobody wants that. If you don't have a fence or trellis (and you don't want to make one), try them on the ground. Why not?

Luffas take from three to six months to reach full maturity. You should harvest your luffa when they are turning from green to yellow and starting to turn brown. If you harvest them too early, you still will get a nice sponge, but the gourd will be quite difficult to peel. If you let them get completely brown, they should still be okay, but if they get blackish, they may be moldy inside. Once you pick the gourds, you can let them dry out for a few days, or you can peel them when they are still wet inside. It's a little messy, but fun. Luffa produce a lot of seeds, so you will need to shake them out of the gourd. Wash and save them for later, or roast them for a snack. Wash the sponges thoroughly, remove any remaining seeds, and let them dry. They may be discolored or have mold growth. If so, soak them for a half-hour or so in a very mild bleach solution. This will restore a nice, uniform beige color. Then, *voilà!* You will have luffa sponge.

Myriad Uses

As mentioned earlier, luffa sponges are great to use in the tub or shower to exfoliate. The scrubbing process (not too hard!) feels really nice, and it is healthy for your skin. Be sure to let the sponge dry thoroughly in open air to prevent mold from forming. You also can use them as sponges in the kitchen. Luffas are not very abrasive, so can't really remove food stuck to pots and dishes, but they are a great replacement for soft sponges and dish rags, and they dry easily on the counter. They also last a surprisingly long time, and once they have started to deteriorate, they can be tossed in the compost and replaced with another one from the pile that you grew earlier in the year. You'll be very happy to say goodbye to dirty dishrags and store-bought sponges.

Luffa is purported to have many medicinal qualities and, like many of the plants easily grown in the Nenes, it often is used in herbal medicine. It also is used in traditional Chinese medicine and in Ayurvedic medicine, and there is some research into its health benefits from the perspective of Western medicine. In some places, it is used for preventing colds as well as treating arthritis, sinus problems, skin disease, and other health problems.

Luffa also is edible and tasty. The gourds, leaves, and flowers can be cooked or eaten fresh. The gourds

should be eaten when small, before the inner sponge forms, and they taste similar to a zucchini or summer squash. They are a popular ingredient in Indian and Vietnamese dishes. The leaves have a mild and slightly sweet taste, somewhat like squash leaves. The flowers are a gorgeous addition to a salad. As noted above, the seeds also are edible and make a great snack when roasted. One word of warning though: mice love the seeds, so if you plan to save seeds for next year, be sure to store them in an airtight, mouse-proof container.

Luffas are a great addition to any garden, so keep this in mind as you make plans for the spring. Please feel free to contact me if you would like some seeds: jmgabriel71@gmail.com. Happy gardening!



The gourd resembles a zucchini while growing on the vine.



Plant luffa seeds along a sturdy fence or trellis.



Luffa gourds, leaves, and flowers are edible.



Dried luffas can be used for many purposes.



All photos courtesy of Joseph Gabriel.

Trees: IHLNA's Majestic Neighbors

Replant with Native Species

IHLNA neighbors Ryan Wilke and Gordon Magill have created a native tree advocacy group, Friends of Native Trees, to encourage the planting of appropriate species in Indianhead Lehigh. According to Wilke, "The aging neighborhood tree overstory has been thinned by hurricanes and needs the addition of young, new trees to rejuvenate the native forest canopy."

When residents decide to plant native trees on their property, the two men will offer information about various species and resources, and guidance with hands-on plantings. Magill says, "We plan to collaborate with a native tree advocacy group and generally follow the guidelines for urban forestry in Tallahassee as found in the 2018 Urban Forest Master Plan." This document can be found at <https://www.talgov.com/place/pln-urbanforestry2.aspx>.

In January, Friends of Native Trees sponsored a tree-planting seminar in Koucky Park, attended by eighteen residents. Native Nurseries cofounder Jody Walthall demonstrated best planting techniques, pointing out that cool or cold weather is the best time to plant young, native trees to ensure good root development. The group is planning future events, including clean-up projects along the IHLNA greenway, a Nene Fest booth featuring native plants, and a public presentation by Tallahassee's urban forester. For details, contact Magill at tallyman01@comcast.net.

Neighbors Plant Fruit Trees

In the fall 2021 newsletter, IHLNA board member John Tomasino described a City of Tallahassee Vibrant Neighborhoods Grant the board had submitted to enable the planting of nine fruit trees in public areas in the neighborhood. He now reports that the grant was awarded, and the first crop of planted trees is thriving along the sidewalk in Optimist Park.

On May 6, Jamake and Marlee Robinson, the owners of Just Fruits and Exotics, helped volunteers to plant the first five fruit trees, including a Methley plum, two Owari Satsuma tangerines, a Tango Mandarin tangerine, and a Sugar Belle tangerine. Neighbors who assisted included Edward Acoff, Connie Bersok, Nantahala Devoss, Angel Eason, Rick Groshong,

Marie-Claire Leman, and Phil Rozner. With seven volunteers, the holes were dug quickly as a hearty storm closed in, but the downpour ensured that the saplings were drenched.

Newly planted fruit trees require lots of water. Summer rains helped, but devoted volunteers Connie, Angel, Nantahala, and Ryan Wilkie watered them regularly during the first two months and periods of scant rainfall. Their service helped to ensure the project's success.

The next group of trees slated for planting in late October include a Hollier fig and a Biscamp Soft pear. They will be planted along the greenspace where Ostin Nene turns into West Indianhead. Two Chickasaw plum trees will be planted at the end of Nancy Drive.

If all goes well, the neighborhood will begin to enjoy the "fruits of these labors" in about two years. Updates will be posted on Facebook and in The Optimist when the trees are mature enough for fruit picking.

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