

# I REMEMBER WHEN . . . .

a collection of memories  
and everyday pleasures that  
shaped our lives since making

RIVER BEND PARK

An important part of our lives.

WRITTEN BY PAST and PRESENT

MEMBERS

Compiled by:

Grace K. McCarty

Lot # 11

January 1999

Jack and I found River Bend in the year 1969. We visited friends in Palm River who used to live in Lancaster, N. Y. too. Jen and Bill Hirst. We almost rented a lot in their park as I had bought the trailer that Larry and Beulah are living in now. We moved it on the lot next to Barbara Johnson's. Ropers lived in there.

We retired in 1971 and came here permanently. We've seen so many changes over the years. "Horse Creek Park" was what it was known then when we bought it. A retired bartender from Ohio was the one who sold to Al Shockey and from there this park has mushroomed into the beautiful place it is now.

June Groff  
Lot #18

We had to do our grocery shopping at Naples Plaza across from Coastland Mall. That was the only grocery store around.

We could go to the beach, park our car on the beach and go in swimming. No Condo's on the beach.

We could drive into "Naples." It was a two-lane road. We passed only a few cars.

We went to the school on Seagate Drive for church, then St. Williams was built.

There was only one small motel on the beach, Vanderbilt Beach. Everything else was sand and pine trees. We could walk for many miles - all open.

Kaki's was once a gasoline station and a small store.

Years ago we were really out in the country.

Riverbend was a fishing camp at one time.

Cliff and Mary Schneider  
Lot #22

We attended the North Naples Methodist Church and had alot of nice friends there.

Ruth and Frank Fenton came soon after us, also Hivelys who were from our area and we knew them.

After Beryl retired, we went to Florida for the winter of 1972. We were in Bonita Springs. One Sunday after church, we drove down to Naples to look at River Bend Trailer Park and liked it very much. We were lucky that the folks that had the lot on the end of the canal had to give it up. So we got it. Al said, "No doubles." So, we put an extension on the living room. Al said, "No tool sheds along the canal" but there wasn't any other place. So, we put the tool shed at the end of the carport. When it was completed, Al said that it looked fine.

We all liked Woody, (Bill Holmwood) and his wife. He was the manager all the time we were there.

In a year or two Cranks put a double in next to us. Schneiders and Groffs were across the canal.

Soon the park had more mobile homes and washers in the club house but that didn't last long as some of the residents got their own washers and dryers.

Some complained that we who were living on the canal paid the same rent but they didn't know that we all paid more.

All in the park always seemed nice and friendly. We lived there until Beryl died December 14, 1992.

We all liked Mavis Shockey.

We had a hobby club for awhile.

Isabelle Eberly  
formerly of lot #20.

Page 3.

I REMEMBER WHEN . . . .

In 1981 we bought lot #3 from Mrs. Hively. Before we could be accepted in the park, we had to be interviewed by Bill Holmwood, the manager to make sure we were desirable people. He also made sure that we knew all the rules - do's and don'ts and we have abided by them ever since. Apparently we met with his approval as he allowed us to move in.

Doris and Earl Donle  
Lot #3

In March of 1977 we purchased our mobile home on lot 8 from Al Shockey's sister.

In 1987 we purchased our mobile home on lot 32 from Irene Jones. Irene had purchased the mobile home from Bernice and Wilfred Diro. They were the first owners in 1979. They also lived on lot 7 for a short time before moving to lot 32.

Sally and Ted Demmink  
Lot 32

After vacationing several years in the Bonita Springs area, one Sunday afternoon driving down Rt. 41 we noticed a small sign at the corner of Walkerbilt Road identifying a mobile home park. With our friends Maurice and Cleeta Nelson, we drove down to River Bend. There were several units with "for sale" signs in the window. The Nelsons contacted the owners of unit #33 and made a purchase offer. It was accepted and they purchased the unit in the late spring of 1988.

Later in the summer unit #39, where we are presently located, was basically destroyed by fire. The Nelsons influenced us to contact Larry Vars, then president, to see if something could be worked out enabling us to replace the unit and buy into the Park. Little did we realize the logistical, financial and other frustrating problems involved.

The previous owners were arguing with their insurance carriers for a settlement which went on for months. The insurance carrier was claiming arson was involved.

Eventually, we made arrangements to have the existing burned-out unit removed to storage, the carport torn down and removed and the land including a concrete porch cleaned out. There were code problems too numerous to get into. We became convinced Collier County did not want anymore mobile homes. Such petty violations resulting in "red tags," stopping construction as the house numbers being one-half inch too small, as the unit being one and one-half inches too close to the required 10 foot clearance to the adjoining structure, on and on endlessly.

After much frustration involving multiple trips back and forth to Indiana, we finally moved in and joined the Association in January 1989.

Our greatest disappointment was that our close friends, the Nelsons whom we planned to spend many happy retirement years with were killed in a tragic auto accident in late December of 1988 and never had the opportunity to enjoy their unit.

We have seen the Park progress and blossom into the beautiful place it is today and hope that we will be fortunate enough to enjoy many years of happy retirement as members of the River Bend family.

Roger and Phyllis Jacox  
Lot #39

One day I cut my finger and I saw a box of bandaids. When I opened the box, to my surprise no bandaids were in it. It was stuffed with money.

Later on, Shockey told me that he had misplaced \$3,000. So, I told him about needing a bandaid and seeing the money. Shockey had forgotten that he had put the money in the box which was a down payment on a trailer.

Bill Holmwood  
Lot #13

We purchased our trailer on June 13, 1990 from Fred and Mildred Ebersole. Every wall inside the trailer was painted pink.

A seven foot diamond-back rattle snake was killed on our lot - later skinned and loved by my wife. (?)

REMEMBRANCES:

March 13, 1993 flood videoed by Max Tyree. Everyone was wading.

Acquisition of the club house.

Cutest thing in the park: Master Cyle Hanker

Most Beloved Person: Rennie Blanchett.

So many acts of kindness shown us by the park on our loss of Maurice and Cleeta Nelson and the recovery of our daughter Shirley.

Jeane and Wendell Nelson  
Lot #25

We first looked at Eberly's place with the thought of buying into the park. The first person we met was Gerda Teron. We thought, if everyone in the park was as nice as her, we'd be very happy.

Soon after we moved in, Jerry fell in the river three times within two weeks. Twice off of our pier while setting it up with plastic pipes for the boat and once at the dock off of Rene's boat. However, I have received the nickname of "Splash" after falling off of Carl Zartman's boat.

Soon after moving here in 1993 we took our new boat out to see the sunset over the Gulf. On our return, approximately 8:30 P.M., April 24th, we got stuck on a sandbar and spent the next 7 hours in the middle of the Cocohatchee River until the tide came back in enough to float off the sandbar.

#### THE GHOST OF RIVER BEND.

Once or twice each year, Jerry and I am awakened by (someone) knocking on the side of our mobile. There is always 3 or 4 loud knocks. When we go to the door and turn the lights on, no one is ever there. After a few years of this, I started asking other people if they had the same thing happen. Surprisingly, quite a few said that they also had the same thing happen. Carol Carpenter said that her cats were so scared that they spent the day under the bed.

We're looking forward to many more adventures here at River Bend, #20.

Donna and Jerry Dowling  
Lot #20

In 1988 we found this beautiful park on the Cocohatchee River so we could have a boat. I took my maiden voyage making Carl turn around long before getting to Wiggins Pass. I just knew we were lost.

While living in unit #29, I had my first encounter with a snake. Coming back from grocery shopping one evening after dark with a sack in each arm and waiting to get the door open, I felt the stick I was standing on begin to wiggle. Realizing it was alive, I screamed for quite awhile. Carl killed the snake and left it until morning to find out what kind it was. By morning it was gone.

In 1991 we purchased unit #33.

In 1993 the residents of the park surprised me with a birthday party.

Carl and Janet Zartman  
Lot #33

Immokalee Road had a name change to David C. Brown Road and then changed back to Immokalee Road.

Walkerbilt Road was a dirt road.

Harts made milk deliveries here.

Tried a Naples Daily News rack in the park and delivery person was paid instead of us being billed.

A block house about where numbers 4 and 5 mobiles are now.

Ruth Fenton  
Lot #12



In February 1987, we moved into River Bend Mobile Home Park. At that time it was a rental park. In the spring of 1988 we didn't get down but Larry called and wanted to know if we were interested in buying into the park. At that time, Gene didn't know if he would be down again.

Since then we have seen many changes, all for the better. Also, all the repairs that had to be done with very little money and lots of free help.

Gene and Shirley Myers  
Lot #8

I bought and moved into my mobile in 1988. Bill Holmwood was living in the boy's house - cottage was rented. Residents purchased the park from Shockey and Larry Vars spent many hours, money, etc. trying to convince everyone to buy in. Millie, lot #6, practically forced me to attend park meetings, also ladies' bonko which was extremely noisy, lots of banging and laughter which gave me a headache! Millie was the sunshine girl! Margaret (Hutchenson) invited me to the ladies' weekly get-together, personal crafts and gossip.

I helped Bill with the accounts receivable which was the beginning of my book involvement. No one wanted to do it!

Gene and Shirley, lot #8, were not here until my second year due to Gene's health.

Barbara Johnson  
Lot #7

We had been visiting Lillian and Ted for quite a few years. Ted was Frank's brother and Lillian our sister-in-law.

We had some wonderful visits over the years. They both weren't healthy. She died first in August and it was hard for Ted to live without her. Frank helped Ted by being there for him. One month later in September (1986) Ted died.

They left the Florida home and car to Frank in his will. We never expected to own a home in Florida. It sure was nice and we are enjoying our winters in Florida.

Dorothy and Franklin Boergers  
Lot #40

I first arrived at River Bend on a December evening in 1985. Rene had been coming to the park for a couple of years - but I had never even been in a trailer until that night. Christmas lights seemed to be on every place and it looked quite unreal.

Thanks to Beulah Vars my first few weeks were great fun. She took me somewhere nearly everyday. I enjoyed every minute of it. We had some great times.

My first boat ride to the gulf, however, was a very different story! As we started out into the river, there appeared to be a maze of mangroves and little waterways - everything looking exactly the same! Rene proceeded to tell me juicy things as, "you head for that bleach bottle hanging over there. Then toward that tape on the tree over there, etc., etc." These were supposed to be channel markers??

Anyway, as we passed through Wiggins Pass out into the Gulf, I thought, "This is more like it." Little did I know! Rene immediately increased the speed and off we went - bouncing, crashing, and rolling off the waves while he beamed with pleasure! I held on the edges of the seat screaming at him just what I thought of the "Joys of Boating"!!

Rene really loved being at River Bend but always seemed to get into situations that would have me out there "chirping" at him especially about such things as ladders, falling into the water or backing into immovable objects with the car! We did it all!!

Jean Blanchet  
Lot #27

On October 1988 I purchased Unit #10 from Wallace Hall and rented the land from Al Shockey. One day while remodeling some of my mobile home, Cliff Schneider came over to me and stated that the park was for sale. Cliff asked if I would like to join with some other park members and form a co-operation. I joined at a fee of \$50.00. George McCarty came over to my place about a month later and asked if I would consider buying a share of the park along with some other park members. I said to George, it's better to own property so I agreed to buy a share. The park was purchased with 24 members from Al Shockey in June 1988. I feel lucky to be part of the owners here at River Bend Park.

Bill Taylor  
Lot #10

Several prominent events of our early days at River Bend. First, learning where the boating channel was for getting out of the river and into the gulf required a couple of hair-raising trips of bouncing off the bottom and going around the wrong side of an island, plus learning which trees contained the channel marking jugs.

Secondly, loosing the boat propeller in the lower bay and having to bum a tow to the Coast Guard Auxillary docks is difficult to forget. However, a telephone call to George and Grace saved the day. They graciously towed us back to River Bend.

Last, we will always remember setting our clocks by Bill Holmwood's raising and lowering the flag each morning and afternoon. Right after the morning colors, the tractor made its appearance and off to work for Bill.

Jim and Mary Brachnell  
Lot #6

I remember an incident, possibly 1991 during my early days at our park. while having 9:30 A.M. coffee in the old recreation building with Frank Fenton on a hot morning: the air conditioner kicked on giving cooling comfort. Frank said, "Your brother Maury donated that air conditioner and had it installed." This information gave me a proud feeling, but not surprised, in that Maury Nelson was a generous person as well as an aggressive business person.

1997 was a memorable year: it was the 50th year of our marriage. Glen and Ann Smith won the River Bend Shuffle Tournament. Glen caught the largest fish off the dock for the fishing derby championship. At the April carry-in dinner at Betty's Place, Geneva and Glen were requested to sit at the head table with our president and his wife: we were honored with the center piece for our April 5, 1997 anniversary. Our family celebrated on Father's Day, June 15, 1997 at our daughter's, Patricia Feerst, Crown Point, Indiana: truly a great year for the Glen Nelson.

Glen and Geneva Nelson  
Lot #29

I first drove through the park and saw the little laundry shack in the middle of the drive and now all the improvements that have helped beautify the park. It is wonderful!

Herb and Norma Milster  
Lot #14

Cyle remembers our mobile home in Florida. He really liked running down the street to visit Aunt Grace and Uncle George. He remembers riding his bike around the park and walking down to the dock with Uncle George. He especially liked his "buddy" Wendell Nelson and going on golf cart rides. His "buddy" also took him miniature golfing.

Cyle liked his neighbors, Terry and Len Van Pelt. He would watch for their white Honda to come back next door. He became good friends with Tommy, grandson of the Winns. Cyle would also visit Mrs. Fenton.

Cyle Hanker, age 6, written by Ruth  
formerly of Lot #14

I first visited the Naples area in 1970 with my parents, West and Jean Kandle. We went to Vanderbilt Beach and stayed with friends in Golden Gate. From 1976 - 1979 we returned every January and stayed in Vanderbilt Lagoon Apts. There was no Ritz Carlton or high rises on the beach.

During that time we visited Mary MacDonald who lived in #13 in River Bend. I remember playing shuffleboard, looking in the Rec room, and walking down to the dock to see the pelicans.

My parents, along with my Aunt Grace and Uncle George McCarty, bought homes in River Bend. Ed and I visited them in 1984 after they had settled into #14. They were enjoying the best years of their lives together - taking us out to eat, shelling, fishing, picnicing on the beach and entertaining their friends from New Jersey.

Ed and I inherited the property in 1993 and spent several weeks in January there through 1996. Our son Cyle took his first steps there, learned to ride a bike and made lots of friends.

We have seen plenty of changes, Betty's Place, new gardens, a bigger dock and new street lamps.

Ruth Hanker  
formerly of #14

We first moved into River Bend, my first impression was "how warm and welcoming" all the residents were to us. We were made to feel as though we were accepted into the River Bend family like long, lost relatives. It was wonderful.

Then Cyle and Ruth arrived for a winter visit. Tommy had a wonderful time playing with him and looked forward to seeing him again. So far, they've managed to miss each other by a week or two. Tommy is thrilled to find he'll see Cyle again. And, I'm sure Cyle will be happy to find someone his age instead of all "old people."

Peggy and Frank Winn  
Lot #9

12/2 82. Let's see what's at the end of the road- - - - Our son, Rick, had directed us to the mobile home park next door, saying, "I think you'll like it." We looked. We didn't! I asked the above question as we were exiting. Turning right we saw the entrance to River Bend and were immediately captivated by its openness and spaciousness. We drove up to the marina where we encountered a "little old lady on a tricycle." After we howdied and commented on the attractiveness of the Park we asked if she knew of any available units. She sort of looked us over, then said, "Yes, mine is. Would you like to see it?" We did and we liked it, but wanted our son to see it first. Early the next morning he came with us and was as excited about it as we were. Then and there Andy hand wrote a brief contract to buy Betty Clavich's place -- enabling her to go ahead with the double-wide she wanted. We enjoyed it for many years with Dick and Dorothy Thom.

After Andy died in 1991, I bought out Dick's and Dorothy's share, since they were no longer able to travel. I've been enjoying it ever since. I miss Betty greatly, as she became a good friend. I treasure my visits with her in what is now our lovely meeting place-- Betty's Place.

Larry Vars had many sessions with Dick and Andy about the purchase of the Park and he was the moving force behind our eventual ownership. He deserves a great deal of credit for his vision and tenacity. There have been many changes and improvements since then. The Park has changed from attractive to a real little gem, deserving true harmony from us all.

Liz Boylan  
Lot # 26

In 1990 when wallpapering the living room, the house looking its worse with furniture piled in the middle of the room and out in the porch and no draperies on the windows, an impressive-looking car with N.J. tags stopped out front and a gentleman I didn't recognize came to the door. He told me that he was looking for West Kandle's place that he had a campsite with him and asked if I knew him. I informed him that I did know him and that we were twins. We invited him in. My brother was still in New Jersey.

He introduced himself as Mr. Florio whereupon I asked him if his son was N.J.'s governor and he said, "yes." Mr. Florio stayed for about an hour and seemed completely oblivious to our messed-up house. We greatly enjoyed his visit and we hope that he did too.

George and Grace McCarty  
Lot #11