



THE MAILBOAT



VOLUME 8 NO. 1 2nd QUARTER 2002

The Town of Malabar got its 1st official Post Office and name on December 24, 1883 when R.A. Ward was named Postmaster by President Chester A. Arthur. Two times a week, the boat that travelled down the intracoastal waterway from Jacksonville, would deliver the mail to the palmetto shack post office along the river bank at Malabar. The mail was dumped on the counter for the population of 25 to shuffle through. With the coming of the railroad, in 1893, the mail boat was no longer needed.

CITIZEN PATROL

By Tom Eshenberg

The Town Council authorized the formation of a citizen patrol unit to provide increased security within the Town. This action was taken in response to a series of break-ins and burglaries last year. I have assumed the task of volunteer coordinator to organize this program. The town has a car available to patrol our roads. The plan is to have enough volunteers to provide coverage Monday through Friday from about 8am to 4pm. Assuming 4-hour shifts, and duty twice a month, this would require about 22 volunteers. My goal is 50 volunteers so there can be two people in the car and a few extras for substitution. The Sheriff's Department has offered to provide a radio for the car, background checks, and training for the volunteers.



The main purpose is to have extra sets of eyes looking for anything unusual or suspicious. Citizen patrol personnel would take no action except to notify the Sheriff's Department when observing anything unusual. Another service that can be provided is house checks. If home-owners are planning on being out of town for a while, they can notify the Town and the citizen patrol unit can give special attention to their home while they are away.

This type of program has been very successful in other communities and statistics show that it definitely reduces crime. I believe that we all have an obligation to do what we can to make our town, our community, our state and our country the best it can be for all our people as well as ourselves. Please call me at 724-1007 to offer 8 hours per month to help make us all more safe and secure.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Welcome Dr. Leedy! Dr. Leedy has moved into her new medical center at the corner of Malabar and Weber Roads. Dr. Leedy's pediatrics office was within the Palm Bay Community Hospital for the last 10 years. Her aesthetically-pleasing medical center has room for three additional physicians. Dr. Leedy lives in Malabar with her husband Chuck and their sons. We are proud to have the Leedys in Malabar and we wish them success.



Malabar Day improves every year and this year was no exception! Thank you to our wonderful Park and Recreation Board and each and every volunteer who contributed to another successful year. We look forward to next year's event and invite citizen participation in the planning. A special thanks to Malabar Mo's, The Yellow Dog Café, and Camelot RV Park for donating and serving the food.

The paving for this fiscal year is complete. This year we paved LaCourt Lane and Hall Road west of Weber Road. We were also able to have the contractor repair sections of Atz that experienced failures from last year, at no charge to the Town. We are planning to pave Atz Road, west of Weber, and Old Mission Road this October.

Thanks again to the Malabar Volunteer Fire Department, we've had a very busy brushfire season already. Our volunteer firefighters are an asset to our Town and we are very fortunate to have them. The next time you see a volunteer firefighter, be sure tell them thanks for all they do for our Town!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bill Hall".

Bill Hall, Town Administrator

From Mayor Phil Crews

I would like to thank all the dedicated firefighters who bravely fought the most recent fires. The Malabar volunteers did a magnificent job of getting the fires under control and protecting lives and property. We had help from the county and our sister cities as well. A special thank you to our local business owners who assisted in the efforts: Mike Patel, owner of the Citgo at Malabar and US 1, the Publix on Malabar Road, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army Canteen, Papa John's Pizza on Babcock, Wendy's on Malabar Road, Winn Dixie on Malabar Road, Subway on Malabar Road, French Produce at US1 and Malabar Road, Arby's on Malabar Road, McDonald's on Babcock and on Malabar Road, Dominos Pizza on Babcock, Pizza Hut on Babcock, and Wal-Mart on Palm Bay Road. We appreciate all their generosity.

Malabar now has a citizen observer force, which is headed by former councilman, Tom Eschenburg. At Tom's request, we have named the unit Eagle Corps. Photos of the car can be viewed on the town's web site: www.malabartown.org.

You may have noticed that things along US 1 and the east end of Malabar Road are looking a bit prettier lately. The old house across from the Town Hall has finally been cleared. Thanks goes to our fire department for burning the structure. Thanks also to Stuart Borton of The Yellow Dog Café for feeding our fire-fighters during the two-day event. Clearing of the property by new owners has produced visible improvements. Along US 1, which has been designated a scenic highway, plans are being formulated to make that part of town more scenic. The state will soon begin cutting some of the brush on the river's edge at the end of Malabar Road, opening the view at the light.

The Environmentally Endangered Lands Office is now working actively with the town government to select appropriate land to help endangered species such as the scrub jay, indigo snake, and gopher tortoise while complying with the town's goals and plans. I believe we are now on the right track toward a close and congenial working relationship.

With unanimous consent of Council, I have declared May to be Civility Month. I did so because I firmly believe that we can achieve so much more when we work together in a courteous and civil manner. I would like to thank the citizens of Malabar for making our meetings cordial and respectful of everyone's rights.

An EELS Update

The County purchased a parcel of land on US1 near Rocky Point and then began to clear it. Shortly thereafter concerned citizens began calling Town Hall and asking what was happening. In order to provide accurate information we went to the source, Zach Prusak who is the EEL (Environmentally Endangered Lands) Land Manager for south Brevard, and asked a few questions ourselves. Here are the results:

Q. Is there a good reason that the EELS cleared the land?

A. The land wasn't actually cleared in the sense that you see land being prepared for development and totally cleared of all vegetation. We brought in mechanical equipment to crush and lower the height of the scrub vegetation. This was done to prepare that site for a prescribed fire. The vegetation present on that site consists of oak scrub and scrubby flatwoods, both fire-dependant ecosystems that depend on a regular cycle of fire for many of the plants and animals on-site. Since natural, lightning-started fires are suppressed by fire officials due to the threats to homes and highways, natural fire has been kept from the site you mention for a very long time. As a result, much of the scrub vegetation has grown thick and dense - a natural occurrence, but one that lends itself to a very intense and dangerous wildfire should a fire start due to arson or lightning. I can't perform a prescribed fire within such a dense plant community for safety reasons. The height of the scrub combined with the drastic weather conditions needed to burn scrub results in a very unsafe and uncontrollable fire. The mechanical reduction of the vegetation allows us to perform a prescribed fire under much safer weather conditions (low winds, higher humidity) that result in a much more controllable fire. The end result is the return of fire to this habitat under safe conditions while keeping people safe.

Q. Was there injury or devastation to any wildlife?

A. Since the scrub that was reduced was very dense and thick, there were no active tortoise burrows present, since they prefer a more open scrub habitat. During and after the process I walk the site, and I didn't see any large animals, birds or snakes killed or injured. Undoubtedly there were some animals injured by this process that escaped my detection, but the long-term goals of restoring a more open scrub in this area will result in an increase of animals such as the gopher tortoise and even the scrub jay. If these habitats remain unburned, the tortoises and other scrub dependant animals will slowly vanish from this site. An increased number of plants and animals will die if caught in a scrub wildfire, since this fire will move much more rapidly and erratically.

Q. Will this process occur again or was it a one time event?

A. This is a one-time event that is performed in areas that we acquire which consist of very thick, dense patches of scrub that cannot be burned in a safe manner. Once the site is mechanically reduced then prescribe burned for the first time, we will continue to burn in a random cycle to insure the open scrub areas persist. No further mechanical treatment is needed.

Q. Are there plans to do this anywhere else in town?

A. Any new site our program acquires that needs prescribed burning will be reviewed to assess the burning strategy (where homes are, roads, thick scrub, dense trees, etc.). Decisions will be made as to where to place firebreaks (down-to-soil barriers between houses and natural areas that allow for safe prescribed fires and also allow firefighters access to natural areas), and what scrub might need the mechanical treatment.

Q. Are there any areas that have been mechanically cleared and burned, and have grown back, so that citizens could visit those areas and see the result?

A. Yes, in the Malabar Scrub Sanctuary there are several sites that show the result of recent activities:
mechanical reduction and fire:
January 2000
just fire: February 2002
mechanical and fire: March 2002

Zach Prusak would be happy to lead a field trip to any of these sites or to answer questions. He can be reached at 255-4466.

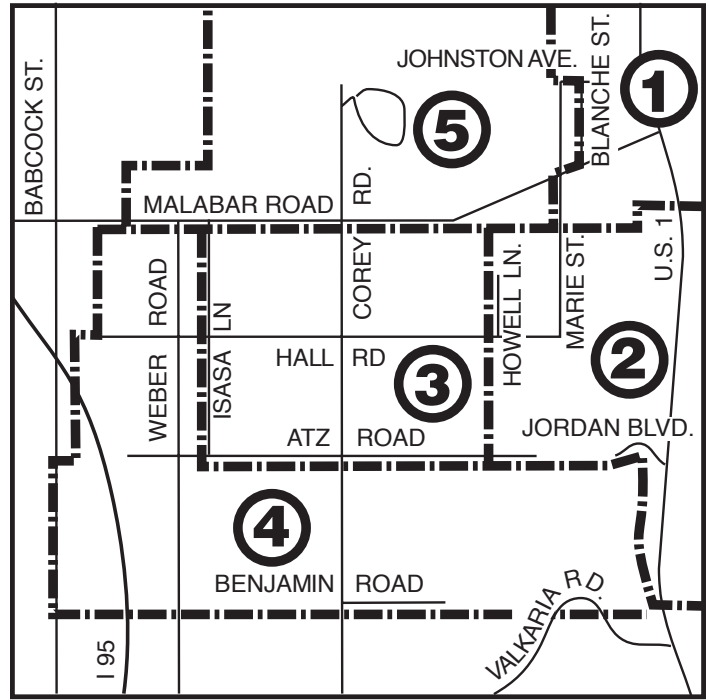
Trash Bash

Malabar wins again! Thank you to Malabar Boy Scout Troop 37 and Malabar Cub Scout Pack 37 and the 83 volunteers who showed up to collect trash on Saturday, April 20th, your hard work won first place! With 976 bags of trash Malabar collected more trash than any other community in Brevard. We won \$500 for the best performance based on population, and another \$500 for the most trash collected. The Town will award the winnings to the Park and Recreation Board, Malabar Boy Scout Troop 37, and Malabar Cub Scout Pack 37. A very special thank you goes to Carl Beatty, from Malabar Public Works, for volunteering his time for the third year in a row to organize and run Trash Bash in Malabar.

Know Your Representatives on Council

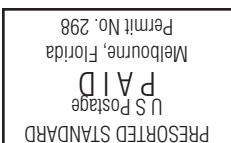
The following Council members represent these districts:

District 1	Nancy Tinio-Borton 141 Riverview Drive	953-3912
District 2	Charlene Horton 2175 LaCourt Lane	727-2194
District 3	Steve Rivet 2005 Rivet Lane	956-6551
District 4	Bobbi Moccia 3135 Kramer Lane	722-3447
District 5	Bob Rossman 1635 Country Cove Cr.	729-9444
Mayor	Phillip Crews 2480 Johnston Ave.	951-0422
Town Administrator	Bill Hall Town Hall	723-3261
Town Clerk/ Treasurer	Susan Kabana Town Hall	727-7764



Editor - Susan Kabana www.malabartown.org

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Town of Malabar
2725 Malabar Road
Malabar, Florida 32950-4427