



Upper Captiva News

The Upper Captiva Association mission is to

- provide a voice to address common concerns
- establish goals to enhance the quality of island life
- communicate regularly with island owners
- serve as a link with local and state government

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Fall 2015

Jackie Byrnes '16, President
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POINT OF VIEW

Eradicating Brazilian Pepper: Let's Start the Process

By A.J. LaVallie

(Ed. Note: For a first-hand account of the benefits of clearing Brazilian Pepper, please see "To Clear or Not to Clear" by Ashlynn Simms in the Spring 2014 issue.)

Isn't it amazing, when you've been away for a little while, how much they seemed to have grown? I'm not talking about the grandkids here, I'm talking about the BRAZILIAN PEPPERS!

Erin and I are back on the island and I'm once again revisiting my favorite topic...killing Brazilian Pepper! I have been working closely with the Florida State Rangers on our state lands for years. Currently, there are a couple of projects developing on the island that may provide some opportunity to get focused on eradicating Pepper from private property.

As many of you are aware, a Lee County ordinance has passed and the date has been set at January 1, 2021 when all private land must be Brazilian Pepper free (County Development Code for Upper Captiva, Section 33-1741). That date is just a short 5 years away. I am trying to raise public awareness, as well as provide an incentive for land owners to clear the Pepper NOW. Let's face it, the problem and the removal costs literally grow bigger every day. **So why wait?** Once again there is the proverbial need to address our road easements and the safe passage of both golf carts and fire trucks. There is also a new Road Company that is raising funds and bringing in heavy equipment to address the road quality issues. Easements, road quality and Brazilian Pepper eradication clearly overlap and not just a little!

Here is my thought. With a bit of positive public focus we might get some agreement among responsible

land owners to clear their lots now and once and for all.

The Road Company equipment includes some unique chippers and significant manpower that may be willing to offer services to clear Pepper off a lot. There are also other eradication service providers on island who can do the job. Efforts are being made to secure enough of the systemic herbicide Garlon to complete this project. The University of Florida has produced a good informational document on controlling Brazilian Pepper at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/aa219>.

Until we get serious about eradicating this destructive menace, there is little hope of solving our perpetual easement and road problems. C'mon, we can do this! Let's get serious about this now.

Look for more information on this pressing issue in the coming months.

FROM THE EDITOR

Starting with this issue of the UCCA Newsletter, members will now be able to access each issue in its entirety online. Two weeks after the print issue is mailed to our members, the newsletter will be posted on the www.ucca1.com website. This will facilitate following online links that are referred to in the articles. It will also give us an electronic archive of the contents. Members will continue to receive a printed copy by regular mail, but we hope more folks will now be able to find us online. If you have ideas for an article you'd like to write (500 words), or if you are inclined to write a letter to the editor (300 words), please contact me at kbsirabian@aol.com. Contributions are always welcome! Karen Sirabian

Don't forget to check out www.ucca1.com to see What's New throughout the year!

CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWS

The first general meeting of the year was on October 25th, attended by 20 plus islanders and seven board members (one by phone).

- ◆ Membership is 115 paid to date. Checking account balance is \$12,889.20, with an additional \$73,196.82 in the Island Access Account.
- ◆ Elections: Nomination Committee members Helen Justice and John Mejia are taking nominations for those interested in running for the UCCA Board. Three vacancies are as follows: Sue Ann Cousar, Ann Murphy and Bill Fry (all are currently undecided about standing for re-election). Interested candidates should contact Helen or John by the end of November, and provide a brief bio. Elections will be held via Election Buddy (electronic ballot to members), with final voting to be completed by December 31st.
- ◆ UCFRD: Acting Chief Bob Kinniry reports Chief Pepper's recovery from knee surgery is going well. The UCFRD has had 135 calls to date. Most were medical, but several involved water rescues. The fire department reminds all property owners that they are required to trim their vegetation off the road. Fire department vehicles require a 15 foot minimum road width and height in order to get through. Please see the accompanying article on Eradicating Brazilian Pepper on page 1. The UCFRD is initiating a Lock Box program: high security key boxes that can be installed to allow fire department personnel access to homes/garages in case of medical or other emergency. The high security key box system costs roughly \$225 (although quantity discounts will likely be available) and will be installed by FD personnel. Contact the FD to be put on a list if you are interested in participating. More information on the product is available at <http://www.ucca1.com/whatsnew.html>.
- ◆ About 28 houses are still lacking numbers. Noncompliant homeowners have been notified that this list is being sent to County Code Enforcement (there is a daily fine for noncompliance).
- ◆ Fran presented the latest details on the Pine Island Plan (please see discussion on page 4). He also reports that Pineland Marina has purchased property on Point House Trail which they intend to use as a dedicated parking/landing site for Island Girl once the agreement with Barnacle's ends. Details about when that is happening, and what form it will take, are sketchy at present. Complete info will be reported when it is available.
- ◆ St. Pat's Fundraiser will be held on March 17th (rain date March 18th), with a change in venue. The Board is open to ideas and suggestions, and welcomes all volunteers! Contact Jackie Byrnes if you are interested in being a part of this island-wide event!

Next UCCA meeting: January 17, 2016 at 11:15 a.m. at the Safety Harbor Club. Members, remember to check your email for Election Buddy information in early December and CAST YOUR VOTE by December 31, 2015!

CHALLENGING SEASON FOR SEA TURTLES

By Sue Ann Cousar

We marked 38 Loggerhead nests on our residential beach, marked and caged or screened 58 nests on the state land (one of the nests a Green Turtle), and marked three nests down at South Banks. For almost a month beginning July 15 we had exceptionally high, strong tides that washed away a number of nests. Others that were repeatedly washed over are still being evaluated and often result in a high percentage of whole, unhatched eggs as they were cooled too much by the water and incubation was interrupted. Others turned up many dead hatchlings because the heavy, wet sand was packed too hard and the hatchlings couldn't dig themselves out. And, as always, about 50 nests were predated by raccoons. Despite harsh conditions a number of determined hatchlings prevailed.

If you are on Island between May and August and interested in training to be a turtle monitor, contact Sue Ann at sacousar@embarqmail.com.

Upper Captiva Fire & Rescue District

4511 Hodgepodge Lane

P.O. Box 322

Pineland, FL 33945

Phone: 239-472-8899 / Fax: 239-472-1582

Richard Pepper, Fire Chief: uppercapfd@aol.com



servicing the community with pride

Robert Kinniry, Assistant Chief: kinniry@yahoo.com

Dear Islanders,

Here we are again. It's that time of year when we return to paradise to enjoy the island life. Just a reminder, when an accident happens or a medical issue arises, the UCFRD is here for you. For any Life Threatening Emergency, call 9-1-1. We have been in ALS mode since June 1st 2015. Our updated equipment and staff are ready to assist 24/7, 365 whatever the need may be. We have responded to over 135 calls this year so far, some of them ALS, as well as several rescue/evacuations with our boat.

Accidents can happen at any time. As we age and with many homes being rented the possibility of misplacing the key, someone becoming incapacitated or something occurring when no one is home increases. In these cases, the fire department may need to forcibly make access to your home or garage. Forcible entry unfortunately causes damage. We are offering an alternative: secure lock boxes. We can install a safe, secure lock box to hold the key(s) to your home and/or garage that only the fire department can get to. In the event of an emergency we can gain entry without causing damage to your door or window and save time. The cost of the box will be covered by the homeowner. The fire department staff will install them and maintain the key to the lock box. This service is offered to all homeowners and businesses on the island. Information is available at the station and online at <http://www.ucca1.com/whatsnew.html>. Please contact us to learn more or to add your name to the list for purchase.

Now I would like to address an island issue that has been a problem for a long time: easements for the roads. Golf carts, not to mention larger vehicles like the fire department trucks, cannot go down many of the roads without obstructions causing damage to them or endangering their occupants. And the problem continues to grow... literally. Throwing money at it year after year without a permanent solution is the definition of insanity; we keep coming up with the same results. Every year it seems to be the "worst ever." There is a simple solution.

The fact is every property owner is responsible for maintaining their easements. The sizes of the easements vary from location to location. The details can be found on the Lee County Property Appraiser web site www.leepa.org. Easements run from 7.5ft up to 25ft on each side of the property line. Any vegetation, fencing or other obstruction that is within the setback should be moved back, trimmed or removed permanently by the owner and then maintained on a continuing basis. The fire department prefers a minimum clearance of a 15ft width (7.5ft on each side of the property line) by a 15ft height throughout the island.

A large part of the problem is Brazilian Pepper. The [County Development Code for Upper Captiva \(section 33-1741\)](#) will require the eradication of all Brazilian Pepper by January 1, 2021. There are specific steps that need to be taken to effectively remove the Brazilian Pepper. This website offers valuable insight into the Brazilian Pepper and its proper eradication at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/aa219>.

I would encourage each of you to research your property boundaries and setbacks and make the proper arrangements to help correct this problem once and for all. Thank you.

Yours in Public Safety

Assistant Chief Robert Kinniry

Don't forget to check out www.ucca1.com to see What's New throughout the year!

PINE ISLAND PLAN UPDATE

County officials, led by Commissioner John Manning, presented the much anticipated Pine Island Plan amendments to more than 300 residents on Pine Island on October 23rd. While the panel entertained questions, the public hearing was largely to explain changes to the original plan. For those who are interested in the full details of the new plan, and the most frequently asked questions about it, links to complete information can be found on the UCCA website at <http://www.ucca1.com/whatsnew.html>.

The chief aspects of interest to islanders are these. First, officials confirmed that no new bridge to Pine Island is planned “at this time.” Second, the existing height requirements remain in place (no high rise developments on the horizon!). Third, a compromise has been hammered out regarding development versus preserving green space involving transfer development rights (TDR), which may serve as a blueprint for not only Pine Island but county (and possibly state) actions in the future. Finally, the county attorney announced that settlement of the outstanding 8 litigations that sparked the whole review in the first place has been negotiated. There is still some wrangling over how the preservation of green space will be effected, but it is fairly clear (to this writer) that the new Plan as presented will be the one that is approved. Several more public hearings will be scheduled before the final adoption process begins.

3RD ANNUAL 5K FUN RUN/WALK

Plans have been finalized for the popular 3rd Annual 5K Fun Run/Walk, to be held on December 31st. Proceeds from the event, which is spearheaded by Tom Jenkins, benefit the Upper Captiva Fire & Rescue District. This year, Tom reports that participants will meet at the entrance to the North Captiva Island Club at Rum Road and Bartlett Parkway, as that area can accommodate the growing number of folks who want to be part of this island-wide event. Registration forms will be available at the Firehouse, NCIC, Safety Harbor Club office, Barnacle’s, and Over the Water. The entrance fee is \$25 for adults, \$10 for kids 12 and under, and includes a T-Shirt and, for those who finish, a medal! **This year, registration will take place at the Firehouse on December 27-30 from 1-3p.m. Participants can complete their registration forms and pick up their T-Shirts at this time.** Don’t miss this opportunity to close out the year with a delightful run, stroll or jog through our magnificent State lands!

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CALENDAR OF ISLAND EVENTS

December 19/10am/Firehouse: Upper Captiva Fire and Rescue District (UCFRD) Meeting
December 31/9am/NCIC Entrance at Rum & Bartlett Parkway: 3rd Annual 5K Fun-Run/Walk
January 16/10am/Firehouse: Upper Captiva Fire and Rescue District (UCFRD) Meeting
January 17/11:15am/Safety Harbor Clubhouse: UCCA General Meeting
February 13/9am/Firehouse: A Valentine for the Island (Island Clean-Up)
February 20/10am/Firehouse: Upper Captiva Fire and Rescue District (UCFRD) Meeting
March 17/5:30pm/**LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED**: UCCA St. Patrick’s Day Party (Rain Date March 18)
March 19/10am/Firehouse: Upper Captiva Fire and Rescue District (UCFRD) Meeting
April 16/10am/Firehouse: Upper Captiva Fire and Rescue District (UCFRD) Meeting
April 17/11:15am/Safety Harbor Clubhouse: UCCA General Meeting

(Note: To list your event please send your information (including date, time, location) to the editor: kbsirabian@aol.com. Please note that for inclusion in this section the event must be open to the island public.)

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