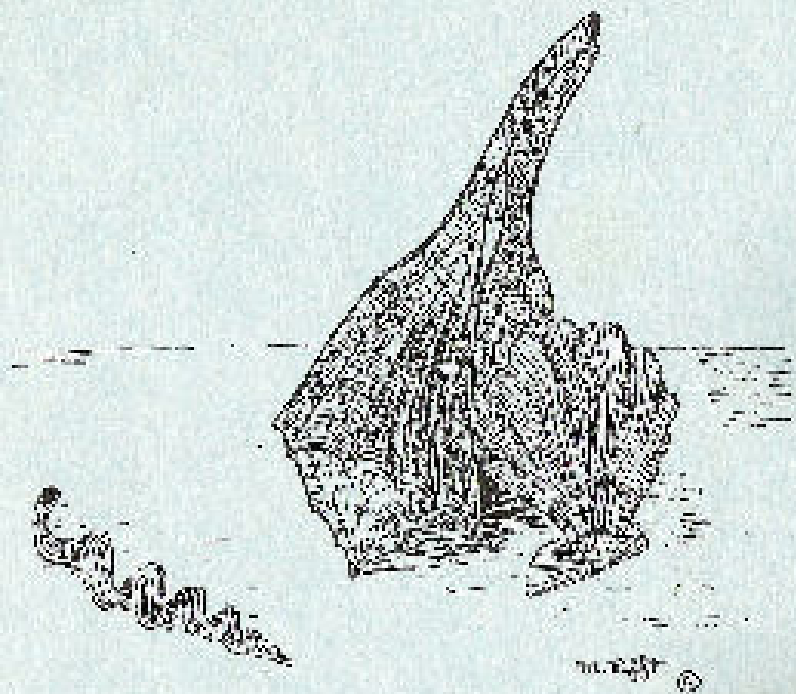


The Story of Nettles Island



Written by
May H. Tift

We all know there is a variety of nettles that grow here on the island and probably were many more at one time. They are a prickly plant that is -----well ----prickly.

One man told me he was sure it was named for the owner of the island whose name was "Nettle".

You will have to take your choice for that is what I had to do. Maybe it is just a "nettlesome" question. Look that up in your dictionary.

In researching it though, I made inquiries from Bobby Lord who was the first president of Outdoor Resorts of America. He was inclined to think the name derived from the plant. Some other interesting history of the island's beginning came to light in our conversation.

A man by the name of Dyers owned the island and had a chance to rent it to a gentleman by the name of Bill Pritchard. The rent was \$1500 and a percentage on the returns of the bean crop that he expected to raise. About then growing of pineapples was the big thing in this area of Florida and although they flourished on the mainland, the air on the island was too salty for them. Beans were the big crop on Hutchinson's Island and the northern end was used in World War 2 for jungle training. In 1930 – 1931 the rum runners used Nettles Island to hide their loot on. They would go out the port of Palm Beach to the Bahamas and then bring back rum, whiskey and scotch and hide it here and around the Stuart area. Then they would go back down to West Palm again to clear inspection..

When Dyer finally sold Nettles Island it was to Sir Dennis Losen, the Lord Mayor of London. Included in the sale was what was then called the Uplands. This was the ocean front on Hutchinson's Island where our beach pools etc. are.

In 1968 it was sold to the Lords and in 1969 the development of it as a recreational vehicle condominium was started under the name of Outdoor Resorts of America.

At the time it consisted of 50 acres. With all the fill that was used it must now be between 75 and 100 acres.

The fill was dredged from the river and also from where the canals were put in. This also raised the island from two feet above sea level to seven feet above. This is one reason we do not have the flooding that our neighbors to the south of us have. Not long after this any dredging from the river to build land was prohibited.

There were 4 ½ miles of seawalls built. It was quite awhile before ladders were installed on the seawalls at intervals because it was said the contractor ran out of money. Whether this was a fact or not they were required by law and in 1972 they were put on the walls.

Before the ladders were there my neighbor's pet poodle "bobo" fell in the canal and he jumped in to save him. We heard his calling "Save me Save my Bobo" and a boat had to be lowered to rescue them.

It can be remembered when they used to say "Don't fall off the seawall or you will have to swim all around the island to get out.

Where did the streets get their name? From the states is your answer. But were you aware that they correspond with the location they have is the U.S.A..? If you have a map just look and see.

Section 1 is North East States

Section 2 is No. W. is North West States

Section 2 South is Southern States

And so on.

I can understand why they might have named one island Porpoise. But where did Celebrity Island get its name?

In 1969, the envisionment of Nettles Island was a unique concept by the developers for recreation vehicles. It has been done many times since by them and others but one might say we taught them their mistakes such as slowing screen rooms, etc. Many things make us the one and only of our kind.

The developers were the Outdoor Resorts of America of Nettles Island. They are informally referred to as ORA. The first Board of directors were composed of investors, Bobby Lord, President, Charles McMahan, Vice President and E. Randall Henderson, secretary and treasurer.

Bobby Lord was a well known radio, T.V. and recording star from Nashville, Tenn. And acted as the first salesman also. He proved to be a respected and loved benefactor for us in the resorts beginning.

The first fifty purchasers were given cards entitling them to be members of the Founders Club. There are several who claim to be first here but the club cards show those who were the first fifty. In 1986, we find many of them still own their land here.

No one was charged a condo fee until their lot was energized with electricity, water and sewer.

Lots sold for the fabulous price of \$5500, \$6000, \$7500 and & \$8500 depending on the location.

Condo fees were \$25 a quarter and ORA rented lots for \$6 per night.

Carl Walter wrote his recollections for the newspaper in 1982 and they are so inclusive that I asked him to give me permission to use them and this he did. They are as follows:

In the fall of 1969 a dredge or sand sucker was stockpiling sand from the bottom of the Indian River onto section 1 in piles 20 feet high. Nettles Island itself consisted of a low swampy island covered with brush and mangroves. Its highest elevation was probably four feet above high tide.

Sometime during the '69-'70 winter ORA bulldozed off the beachfront and moved in a single wide mobile home and opened it up as a sales office. Among the sales literature were various maps of the intended lot layouts and various grandiose artists conceptions of what was suppose to develop from these piles of sand and overgrown swampland.

To the credit of all involved in the planning and development of the optimistic project, the final result several years. Later, matched very closely the glamorous pictures displayed in the various brochures used as sales literature at that time. A couple of items were deleted or changed, among them the big boat marina which was supposed to be located in the large canal west of the clubhouse. The over water driving range on the causeway was completed, but since it never really caught on and was impractical it has long since been discontinued.

The sales office was located just north of the beach swimming pool. Adjacent to the office ORA constructed four sample lots complete with picnic table and benches on patios just like the lots were eventually constructed.

There was also a native hut with thatched roof and open sides in which was displayed a scale model of the entire park such like the rental model in the ORA office.

At that time, since the park was in its early stage of construction, no lots were actually being sold. Instead potential purchasers were given the opportunity to choose a lot from the maps and models and were given an option on one or more lots. In other words a lot would be reserved in your name.

Since the writer chose a lot in Section 1, which was to be the first area developed, we optimistically anticipated occupying our lot when we arrived in Florida in the fall of 1970. With no communication between the developer and the purchaser we didn't know that a severe storm in the spring of 1970 sunk the 18 inch dredge. We didn't know that the original dredge had to be replaced by an 8 inch dredge, the largest then available, and which had to be prepared and towed from Norfolk, Va. We didn't know that before the second dredge arrived and was ready to go that the original dredging permit had expired and ORA had to renegotiate a new dredging permit which required several more months.

At this point ORA had their own doubts as to whether they would be able to complete the entire project and for a time they refused to discuss the purchase of any lots outside of Section 1. The premises were finally acquired sometime in 1970 and the work then proceeded but at a much slower rate

Much progress was made in the winter, spring and summer of 1971. By Nov. 1st the beach swimming pool and cabana were completed. The ORA office and entrance were finished and in use. The original sewer plant was ready to go. All the streets in Section 1 were paved and most of the driveways and patios were complete except some in the north east corner. The electric boxes were in but unfortunately the power lines were not yet completed so there was no power. People were arriving from the north with their RV's to take possession of their lots. The mobile home sales office had been removed from the beach. Some of the early arrivals were sent to Holiday Out while others were asked to park on the model lots on the beachfront since the electric should be hooked up in less than two weeks. There were soon 15 trailers and motor homes parked on the beach with all the electric cords hooked into four outlets.

At this point we could care less whether the park ever opened since we had a million dollar ocean front location with a private swimming pool, the pool heater was inoperative at that time but who cares. Since these were all RV's we could fill our water tanks by stringing three or four hoses together. Fortunately the cabana rest rooms were operable.

The two weeks stretched into six weeks and the fifteen couples, all complete strangers, from all over the eastern states, got to know each other pretty well being packed into a nondescript array of units with electric cords and hoses running in all directions.

We soon realized our units were taking a beating from the salt spray from the ocean and the loose sand which was under, around and soon in our trailers and motor homes. So it was with mixed emotions that on Dec. 19 1971 we were informed that the park was officially open and we could move in.

Owners of lots in Section 1 moved on to their own lots. Owners of lots in Section 2 were assigned unsold or unused lots in section 1. The causeway had been dredged up and was graded off as a sand road with a couple of small culverts connecting the river on each side. Section 2 was a big flat field of sand with a few tracks that the workmen used to get to their jobs. A cement contractor had his operation set up on the east end of the causeway where he was constructing the cement tables and benches that came with each lot.

At that time there was practically no development on the beach the whole length of Hutchinsons Island. Between Stuart Beach at the Museum and the Jensen Beach there were two one story apartment complexes; the Little Ocean Club and the Seaside Apartments plus two single family residences. From Jensen Beach north to Fort Pierce Beach there was Holiday Out Clubhouse and pool and Outdoor Resorts pool and Cabana. The beach was accessible in only a few places and you could walk from Nettles Island to Fort Pierce and encounter possibly eight or ten fishermen.

-end of article by Carl Walters

In late 1971 when it was possible to go over the dirt causeway and some of the roads of section 2 we would watch the construction of the clubhouse, pool, tennis courts, shuffleboard and mini gold course. The seawalls were finished and one could walk along any on them and fish in the river.. By 1972 a few owners were beginning to put in concrete driveways and it was always on interest to see who was doing what. Everyday was something new – except for the sand. Nothing was sodded in section 2 so it blew sand everyday until one almost wondered if our lots would still be there to move onto when they were energized.

While everyone was still in section 1 we make a lot of our own recreation with cook outs and things at the beach pool like snap shot contests and a craft class conducted by a lady over on the mainland. Even Bingo was introduced at the cabana by some interested players.

During this time ORA also sponsored entertainment for promotional purposes. Mr. Henderson brought the Cypress Garden Water Show to our causeway with the show conducted on the river between section 1 and section 2. The Outrigger restaurant was hired to serve a luau at the beach pool.

When the rec hall was finished. Bobby Lord presented some of his Grand Old Opry friends doing their show.

All this at no cost to us.

The first party at the club house was before it was finished. It was pot luck and the lights were furnished by a generator and kept going out.

The second party was more official and was to dedicate the rec hall being completed. It was held in the snack bar and over flowed into the front hallway. Lasagna was baked and served by the ladies. When red wine glasses were raised in a toast, there were quite a few lumps in their throat at such a momentous occasion of accomplishment and happiness.

* * * * *

Captain Krutchfield who ran a fishing boat out of Ft. Pierce was one of the first to conduct classes here. He taught river fishing, ocean fishing, surf fishing and about equipment to use and what fish could be caught etc. He was so entertaining that even if one didn't fish it was a good show. One night he gave us his own recipe for fish batter. As it is the best I ever used it just has to be included. It is especially good for grouper cut in 2" strips or any fish cut in 4" squares.

Captain Krutchfield's fish Batter

½ cup cornmeal

½ cup flour

Salt

Juice of two lemons

1 egg

Shot of Worcester sauce

Liquefy with ½ milk and ½ water to the consistency of pancake batter. Roll battered fish in crushed saltines and deep fry. Drain on paper towels. Delicious and crisp.

The commercial area was still under construction so a single wide mobile home was installed to use as a Laundromat. This was in the area near where the fire trucks now are and next to that bathhouse. This surely was a welcome addition.

The Sheraton Hotel became our first neighbors to the north. Because our promoters had financial interest in that and Nettles Island, they were allowed to use the beach area including the pool.

Remember at this time ORA owned the beach property. Many of us did not read the fine print when we bought. We were under a 99 year lease to pay \$1200 per month for use of it plus the taxes, maintenance, insurance, upkeep, guards etc.

The Nettles Island recreation area (rec hall, tennis courts, mini golf etc.) was owned as common element by the unit owners.

The Sheraton, in their advertising offered our facilities as an inducement in their advertising. We objected. To this day I will never forget two prominent tennis players taking chairs and each sitting on a tennis court. When Sheraton's guest came to play they were told the courts and all recreation facilities were ours and open to outsiders except by invitation. The advertising was soon withdrawn by the Sheraton.

In 1972 and early 1973, section 2 was really having residents move on their lots and the rec hall was becoming its hub. ORA started running double – decker red buses out around Porpoise and Celebrity Islands and the rec hall and then out to the beach. It was a nice free ride and one could get off wherever they wanted to. They ran at one half hour intervals. A visitor from England wondered why one bus sign said "Prison" the destination. The explanation was that the buses were secondhand from England and the original signs were still on them. This service only lasted as long as the buses did which was about a year. It was a colorful promotion gimmick though.

The Oceana 1 was our next neighbor to the south.

Perhaps this is a good place to tell about Jim Erskine for it happened we met him about the time the Oceans was being built. Jim was a Founders Club member.

Says Jim looking up at the Oceana “I bought three of them condos. Mark my words this area is going to grow just like Fort Lauderdale did.” He wasn’t far wrong was he? It was then we dubbed him The Mayor of Nettles Island.” He used to call us the kids and it wasn’t until he died that I found out he was three years younger than we were.

Jim was a big. Tall man with a voice to match and smart! If a buyer changed his mind about his purchase here, Jim would buy it. If there were tickets to be sold he would stand by the post office and act as barker for them and ---whamo---people would crowd around and buy those tickets.

One time he was asked to be in a fashion parade for the minstrel show. He dressed up in a ladies bathing suit, panty hose with a beach bag and hat. He even pit his teeth in which he usually did not wear and no one knew him.

Jin loved Nettles Island with a passion and he was loved in return. He became one of the earlier Board of Directors.

It was decided by the Board of Directors to put a fence up along the read and the entrance to the guard house to keep out intruders. Jim lived within this area. It was accomplished bit Jim wanted a gate added so he wouldn’t have to drive his golf cart down to the guard house to get around the fence. By this time there was a new Board of Directors and they voted not to put the gate in for it would defeat the purpose of the fence. Well, Jim sued the condominium for putting up a fence on common property without the vote of the unit owners. He won too and the fence had to be taken down, voted on at the next annual meeting to be put up without a gate and then put up again. This of course cost money to accomplish.

Ironically at the time the settlement check for the suit was mailed, Jim was buried.

It is easy to imagine him looking down on Nettles Island and saying “Gotcha! But love y’all”

1973 was an eventful year in many ways. We were still in the developer’s stage but our condo fee had gone up to \$54 quarterly.

About this time the developers tried to put the lid on and ruled that no more double tip out models would be allowed in the resort. Those that were in could stay under Florida’s grandfather clause. Well !! --- you should have seen the influx of double tip outs before the April deadline.

Nettles Island had been using Martin County water since being started and in 1973 we were notified they could no longer supply us as we were in St. Lucie County. A twelve inch pipe line had to be put in from Ft. Pierce down. This took quite awhile as you can well imagine.

Some other noted I find about 1973

The small marina was finished with floating docks. These were later removed when the commercial area was sold.

The shopping area owned by ORA was progressing solely.

Bicycle racks were put up at the beach area.

Bingo in the rec hall was started on Tuesday and Friday nights.

Wind screens were added to the tennis courts.

The main boulevard to the recreational area was lit.

The first I.D. tags were issued.

The first morning exercise class in the rec hall was started.

A bowling league was started by Sterling Cole at the Jensen Beach Bowling Alleys. Later they changed to Port St. Lucie Bowling Alleys.

By Feb. 1973 a few residents were looking ahead to the 1974 annual meeting and election when we might have some unit owners as Board of Directors and a voice of our own

Eight hundred or so lots had to be sold before this could be accomplished and we were about on goal. Plans had to be made.

It was thought that a fair way would be to have a meeting of representatives from each area of the island to convene and discuss how to proceed.

Joe Fischer represented Celebrity Island

Edele Lager represented Porpoise Island

Dean Avise)

Bob Tifft) North Section 2

Bob Campman)

Matt Vogel) South Section 2

Ann Murphy)

Grace Mc Kee) Section 1
Coleman Dee)

The conclusion of the meeting was that an organization of communication was important.

And so the "Lot owners Service Association" was formed. By March the officers were formally selected. They were:

Chairman-----Matt Vogel
Vice Chairman -----Joe Fischer
Secretary -----Ann Murphy
Treasurer -----Idele Leger

In 1974, we truly became Nettles Island Condominium with our own directors. They were Bill Creighton, Idele Leger, Norman Sands, Randall Henderson of ORA. Charles Ludwig, Harry Lippner and Matt Vogel. And we inherited a debt of \$250,000. Plus we owned no office equipment. Not even a pencil sharpener. No maintenance equipment. Everything had been rented.

It can be remembered by some how Jim Erskine used to knock on trailer doors to collect monthly fees or advances in order for us to pay bills. Our credit was minus nil. Everything had to be bought on a cash basis for quite a few years.

The first condo office was where the library now is and Doris Wagner Parsons was the first paid employee.

Matt Vogel, Idele Leger and Norman Sands went of Nashville to ORA to discuss the predicament. I'm not sure what transpired bit the results were good. The \$250,000 debt was reduced to \$75,000.

Just think of all the things that have been bought and paid for besides our overhead nd improvements since then.

Our credit now is Plus – super.

This was accomplished over the years with the patience, tenacity and wisdom of our various Boards of Directors. It entailed making budgets for condo fees which had to be raised. All this had to be done following the guide lines of our Articles and By-Laws set down by our Declaration of Condominium and coinciding with county and state laws.

It is impossible to thank each club, organization and individual who gave moral and financial support in the efforts to make it possible for Nettles Island to be the wonderful place it is. There are so many, many, many!

In 1974 when we became an incorporated condo, we also inherited the Declaration of Articles and By-Laws. It was a very well thought out book but had over gone quite a few revisions by 1979. At this time it was rewritten to include the changes and indexed with rings in the book so that any further things can be added. This was voted to be done by your Board of Directors in 1978 and with Loretta Scanlon, secretary doing a great deal of the research and work on it, each owner since 1979 now has the new copy of the Declaration of Condominium of Nettles Island, Inc.

The story of Nettles Island cannot be complete without more colorful relating of incidents and characters.

Two that came to mind are these.

About 1973 there were quite a few lots on the north side of the rec hall rented to a band of gypsies. They stayed for a week or so and were the cause of quite a lot of speculation. The curious would walk by to see them cooking and actually living in their yards with tents up etc. Someone was either tactful or firm for they only stayed a week or so.

While the developers were still in control, the Creightons moved out to their lots in section two and started their landscaping by first putting an old boat on their frontage with driftwood and plantings around it. Of course, this was upsetting to ORA for they were afraid others would try this but without the artistic ability and the resort would end up looking like a dump. This often happens when things are not kept under control by rules etc.

One of the Creightons lots was rented by Jack Summers. He later bought two lots and also became a member of the Board of Directors. Jack could talk like chain lightning but he could also listen. About now Mr. Henderson the developer had it with the Creighton's landscaping and decided to talk to them about it and lay down the law. They were not there but Jack was. Assuming Jack was the owner, he was told in no uncertain terms that the boat etc would have to go. After several minutes when Mr. Henderson finishes, it came Jack's turn to talk. He said, "But I don't own these lots." By the way, the boat is still there ---and more under the grandfather clause.

As churches so many times in history are the foundation of a new community, so was the Nettles Island Church.

Irma and Leonard Van Dergraaf might be said to be the spiritual leaders in this work. Bobby Lord was surely a help too for he asked L.C. Campbell, an assistant Baptist Church pastor in Stuart to visit our island and lead church services. Twenty two attended the first service. Bobby played his guitar and "L.C." preached. If the drawbridge delayed the starting on the service so that "L.C." was late. Bobby Lord was usually there to play his guitar and Leonard would distribute song sheets.

Bobby also paid L.C. Campbell \$10 each Sunday to hold the service. Finally offerings were taken to purchase hymnals.

John Olson dubbed the congregation "The Bridge Choir" because sometimes they sang so many songs waiting for the bridge to close.

Soon there was enough money to purchase a used Hammond Organ on time (\$40 a month) and some of those months had to be sweated out for the \$40 just made it into the fund. The organ is still in use today. After its purchase, "L.C." brought his own organist from the Stuart church and praise could really be sung.

The church grew so much that the Van Dergraafs felt a church board should be organized to take care of the business part. This first board was compromised of Sue Sutfin, Harold "Doc" Ackert, Evelyn Ganz, Herman Bender and Leonard Van Dergraaf.

The weekly Bible studies have always proven an educational as well as spiritual experiences for those attending.

In 1976, Scottie Burns became official pastor. With him and his wife Gladys who plays the organ, they are ideal for this type of non-denominational service and we are loved by them as much as they are loved and respected by us.

As you see, this church with its small beginning on May 29, 1972 of twenty two people has grown to what it is now, a capacity congregation of 400 plus. It has been a blessed factor in our community life.

Not to be forgotten are our friends of Jewish faith who share the traditions of their faith with others on the appropriate dates.

P.S. As of November 30, 1986 the Roman Catholics now have confession and mass in the Recreation Hall.

The story about our so – called post office is interesting. At the beginning, mail was picked up at the ORA office and was disbursed from a alphabetical, accordion manila folder. By fall 1972 an area was allotted in the same ORA office and 6" x 6" boxes were arranged on a wall with a letter on each box. If your name was Brown, you went through all the B section mail. Needless to say if your name was with a Z, you had the box pretty much to yourself. By 1973 this facility was outgrown and not too satisfactory for the population had grown and also it made for confusion in the office. The commercial area was partially finished so it was moved to a room in the arcade there in back of what is now the beauty parlor. It was divided into an office and lobby and the first ones to dispense mail were Jim and Dorothy Wallace. The rooms were about 10x12. If you think we have lines now, you can imagine it then ---- especially Christmas time! We would pack in there like sardines and when it

rained, it was like being in a steam bath. Of course, the lines still formed on the outside waiting to get in the cozy spot. There was a man whose name is not recalled but he had part of an arm removed. If special deliveries or special messages were received, he delivered them by bicycle for 50 cents each. Eventually it was again imperative to move. Jim and Dorothy set up for business at the south west end of the rec hall under the balcony. When there was a back up of mail, it had to be sorted on tables at the entrance to the snack bar. Did you ever realize how much space those newspapers require?

But this was neither cooled or heated and only had one dispensing window. So it was moved again. This time to the North West end of the rec hall under the balcony where the area was large enough for two windows etc. Incidentally I believe those original 6"x 6" are still being utilized.

You probably realize that this is not a U.S. post office. It is a convenience we pay for in our condo fees but it does have some compensations other than picking up our mail. It is a place where notes to one another and general notices can be left without postage, where friends meet and greet each other while waiting in line and where all the clubs sell their tickets during post office hours.

Security is an important part of our mutual complex.

In asking my husband if he could remember when the first guard house was built, he replied, "They didn't need one the first year or so. The salesman caught you as soon as you came in." It was probably about 1972. The first security chief was Don Paris Sr. The first guard house was not too much larger than an oversize phone booth. In 1982 it was replaced by a large one.

Security has always had lots of problems. Many are always the same. People getting in to use our facilities for free, holiday vandalism, not obeying rules etc. There have been many trials and errors in trying to control them. The tag system has been changed several times with each time a little better. When stickers with different colors each year were issued for cars it helped some. And the gates installed in 1984 helped also. But no matter what is done a few seem to figure a way to get around the rules. And there are always those who think they should be an exception when it comes to following the rules.

A lady remarked the other day, I can go out walking at night and feel safe. Where else can one do the nowadays?

Security is a very important area in a resort such as ours and we have a 24 hour patrol. We can be proud that we have a reputation of having about the best security around here and in the beach area.

Physical changes of Nettles Island

The recreation hall underwent some changes over the years.

When it was first designed the rental office for shuffleboard, golf etc. was outside the east end under the stairs. It was not a practical location because of temperature changes, size and it was unable to supervise the game tables. The former space is now used to house a kiln for ceramics. Now with the office inside, whoever is in charge has better control over that recreation area.

The library is on the first floor also and has undergone its growth in our history. Few if any condominiums have such a complete facility. It was and is sponsored by the Nettles Island Women's Club since the fall on 1974. It has been maintained by volunteer help over all the years.

In November 1974, Edith Johnson as advisor and Edith Avise as librarian after obtaining permission from the Board of Directors opened the library. A table with a few donated books was set up for business. People straggled in but by March it began to be very busy. On March 15th, Lyman and Selma Hall's contribution of 194 hard covered books started more contributions coming in. Now, shelves were needed and four male residents donated their time to build them. It really began to look like a library.

On Nov. 20th 1975 a disastrous leak developed and all the books had to be piled up in another area until repairs could be made. The rec director's office next door was also flooded. What a mess! To correct the condition a sump pump had to be installed outside. By Dec 8th with new carpeting down and volunteer help to refit the shelves, the library was back on the road.

A small children's library was added under the supervision of Nina Leonard but later had to be set aside as children would take out books and not return them. There are still several shelves of books for them though. A children's story hour was attempted but did not warrant the room required and most children preferred to be outside playing. Duplicate donations are either sold or traded for something the library does not have. Both fiction and non-fiction are available. The library now boasts over 5000 books and had to be enlarged in 1980 to accommodate them. There is a circulation in season of around 900 books a month.

The recreation director's office next to the library and off the game room has seen thirteen directors in change over the years.

The first one was hired by ORA. One year the manager tried doing it by hiring a "director of special events".

Each person or pair have contributed a great deal to our fun and enjoyment. They each made their mark in our progress and each had their own ways of accomplishing it.

It must be said though that it could not have been done without faithful volunteer help from unit owners.

As one comes into the hall from the front entrance, on the left wall is a bulletin board listing classes and events. In a glass case are pictures taken of current tournaments and social events. This case was a new addition in 1978.

To the right of the entrance is a large magazine rack which is kept filled with unit owners contributions. This used to be by the library but was moved when it was necessary to enlarge the library.

In 1984 another glass case was put up at the right near the drinking fountain and snack bar. This is used for trophies won in the Christmas parades since 1982 and also to recognize special groups such as those who gave \$30 each to the porch and ramp fund in 1985. It is inscribed "By their generosity they serve."

The Snack Bar

The snack bar has always been leased but has changed hands a number of times. Finally came a period when no one could be found to lease it. This condition lasted for two years.

At first it was tried for a game room and youth area but without supervision, the game machines were broken and it became out of control.

So then it was utilized for classes and meetings. Private parties by unit owners were allowed by appointment with the recreation director.

It was nice when it re-opened again as it is a convenience and service to the unit owners.

A big volume of business is not there because it is a seasonal thing and so not too financially attractive to those leasing it. It may always pose a problem.

Before leaving the downstairs of the rec hall, it should include that in the center area are bathroom facilities with hot showers. One might not think these belong in a history but over the years various conveniences have been added. At one time it can be remembered that sometimes even when a dance was in progress the toilets would be stopped up. Signs and receptacles were added and cleared up this condition. Of course there is always refurbishing that has to be done all the time.

The saunas remain much the same.

Our complete exercise room was recarpeted and things have to be kept in condition. It is a favorite place of health enthusiasts and there are a lot of those these days.

There has been a horse shoe pit ever since there was organized recreation. The Creightons for years tried to get people interested in it. All of a sudden in 1983 they finally started playing and it has become so popular that two more pits have had to be added. They are on the south west side of the rec hall.

Bocce is another sport that has become popular just recently here at Nettles Island. It started in 1983 and 1985 another court had to be put in. They now have both Men's and Women's days for playing. These also are at the south west corner of the rec hall.

The upstairs of the rec hall has seen quite a few changes over the years. Could it ever tell stories and more history than any other area. Oh, so much!

Of course the church and bible class have continued to use it since its inception. It has always awed me how Saturday night it can contain a dance with the band and BYOB's and then Sunday morning be so quiet and sanctified, all under the same roof. It is like the people here, fun loving but respectful of Him who makes such a wonderful place possible.

There are many social activities held here plus club meetings, theatre presentations, all kinds of classes, Board of Director's meetings, occasional weddings etc. We have had and are having our money's worth out of this building.

Back in 1978 a storage area for stage props was added at the back of the hall. We were beginning to bulge at the seams with accumulation of things. Previously lockers had been installed in back and to the side of the stage for each club and for supplies.

In the original format there was a wet bar lounge at the west end of the rec hall and in back of the stage. Many of you, no doubt, remember it. Its use was limited for it was encumbered with a long bar and stools plus numerous tables and chairs. The decor was well done but it became necessary to choose between more working area or its scant use as a lounge.

I recall an interesting incident that happened when it was still a bar. It was the night of the first minstrel show. The cast were using it as a dressing room. A party of six had rented it for the evening for a private party. They arrived to take possession of it about the time the show was already in progress. Al Ganz, our producer met them at the lounge door, white face and with arms and legs spread eagle declaring "Over my dead body!!!" I believe he meant it too.

It was hopeful that a kitchen could be made of the area but it had to have the vote of the unit owners and the vote failed twice.

However, in 1979 the chairs had started to disintegrate and the bar was not functional so they were removed by 1980. Refrigeration, sinks, cabinets and counters were put in as replacements. A group

of men helped do much of the work. Though it is still not a kitchen with stoves etc., it is much more functional for use in serving food, holding classes and use in theatre productions.

Originally, the balcony in the back at the west end had a canopy over it and was such a delightful place to have cocktails and watch the sun go down. But the canopy blew off and it was not in use for quite a long time. Finally the canopy was replaced with a roof in 1984 and in 1985 it was enclosed with windows and a ramp built up to it to match the one being put in for the pool area. The upstairs had never had a fire escape so this ramp served a dual purpose. It helps those who have trouble with the stairs and serves as a fire escape which was needed.

Once again, this whole area is in use for the growing demands of classes, small parties and meetings and general things.

Part of this was some by the condominium but a great deal was financed and accomplished by the Men's Club.

Beach area Pool

Anything directly on the beach is built in defiance against the sea. There was destruction on the board walk in the early 1970's from a storm and high tides. Some of the men residents helped maintenance repair the damages. But in 1979 when Hurricane David hit, that was something else. The beach area and the sea walls took the brunt of it. Several owners lost screen rooms but only one trailer was tipped over and that was not tied down. Winds reached 95 miles.

The Island was evacuated.

The roof blew off the cabana, the pool filled with sand, the deck was cracked and the board walk was completely destroyed. Sea walls were damaged too. We could have gotten a government disaster loan but did not accept it as our insurance was adequate and we would have had to pay interest on a loan. This is only mentioned as the reader may have wondered about it. To digress for a moment, it would be noted that originally the shuttered rooms in the cabana were to be used as dressing rooms or card rooms but before the fence was put up beach people were found sleeping in them every morning. How convenient with bathroom adjacent!

Also at this time, late arrivals were allowed to stay over night in the parking area with their RV's. And there was a single mobile home set up on the south side of the parking area that ORA used as a sales office. At this time the beach area was owned by ORA of course.

Back to the main subject of the beach property.

It really isn't necessary to go into the political hassle that went on over this area. Suffice to say that the recreation lease gave us a first option to buy it for \$250,000 if it was sold within ten years. The Sheraton suffered considerable loss during Hurricane David, even some of its beach front and was eventually sold. Our pool area and the 99 year lease went with it. The new owners of the Sheraton

converted to condominiums but eventually went into receivership so that the banks owned it. A committee from Nettles Island went to the bank in New York to see if we could renew our option which had expired by then. It would be too lengthy and time consuming to go into all the negotiation of this. The culmination was that the beach property would be sold to us for \$250,000. Now it had to be voted on by the unit owners at the annual meeting to determine if we should buy it. Carol Somosky is to be credited with staying on the phone and soliciting over 500 votes from people not at the meeting and had not voted. On August 29, 1980 we became the proud, elated and happy owner of the beach property. The Thanksgiving of 1984 strong storms and high tides once again caused damage in this area and to the sea walls. One cannot fool with Mother Nature and her strong elements.

By now, we had voted to have a reserve fund which took care of the financial part of it.

Howard McCracken and Lyle Jones and the contractor went back to the drawing board so to speak and now hopefully we may possibly not have quite such a problem.

Many of the condominiums that have been built are having more severe problems than Nettles Island so we must be doing something right.

In the late 1970's benches were put on the board walk and later more were added. It really gives one a nice place to relax and view the ocean or to watch a sunrise or see the moon come up. Did you ever see a sunrise? It is a beautiful picture and a treasure in one's heart.

Fencing around the pool was necessary to secure our privacy and investment. Lighting was added in back on the board walk which was a welcome addition. Of course, the lounge chairs and furniture have been replaced and added to over the years. I think originally there were not more than two dozen lounge chairs. Can you imagine that today?

The landscaping in the beach area was done over. Rocks were moved around in different groupings as were the plantings. On the grade in front of the pool area trimmed shrubs spelled out "Nettles Island". The upkeep of this eventually made it seem wise to replace it in 1985 with tile lettering.

Originally there was a snack bar in the cabana by the table luncheon area but it also had the same problem with leasing that the one in the recreation hall has had and the salt air has not been kind to the equipment.

Otherwise, the only other changes are the front fence and limited entrance to protect our property and privacy.

On the road side of the fence is where our new perk system is installed.

Nettles Island Newspaper by Loa

The first attempt at a newspaper was about 1977 and it was called "The Horn". They declared it would be "Published thrice annually". This short lived but at least an attempt.

June 1979, the LOA started publishing the newspaper under the leadership of some dedicated people and now it is received monthly nine months of the year. It is called "The Nettles Islander".

Andy Anderson was the first editor and Ed Weinerman was advertising manager. Soon they each realized they were each in the wrong jobs so switched places with Ed becoming editor and Andy in advertising. Dorothy Anderson was business manager doing all the labels and file work.

There were 60 original subscribers but in a few months jumped to 600. When Ed died, the position of editor passed on to Fran Neubauer who remained faithful to it for many years.

Remember all these people have been volunteers with no pay. It has been a lot of work and a lot of time spent.

The newspaper is truly an extension of the voice of the people for it contains Board Meetings, editorials, club news, obituaries, birthdays, and anniversary notices. Needless to say there is not much under birth notices.

Rae Weinerman, Ed.'s wife has taken care of folding and mailing all these years with a faithful staff of volunteers.

Is it all worth while?

Yes, it is important to those who read it which is about everyone here. And last but not least, it is the only newspaper in the world that prints our important news!

Clubs and Organizations

Organization 1

Lot Owner's Association was originally formed in 1973 (as previously noted) under the name "Lot Owner's Service Association" and have met regularly ever since.

From the beginning, their meetings have been well attended because owners can get up and ask questions and make suggestions. Sometimes the air gets pretty blue but mostly it clears the air to have things explained and discussed. The officer then passes on any constructive ideas to the Board of Directors and manager for their consideration.

They have social functions and contribute where necessary.

In 1982 they organized a marine watch and a crime watch program.

In 1984 the numbers of lots were painted on all garbage can covers.

They were instrumental in our being able to get windstorm insurance in December of 1980 through the work of one of their committees.

Perhaps one of their most notable contributions to the resort is the Nettles Island newspaper. The directory is also their "Baby". As of this year 1986 they are included with your membership LOA at no cost to you.

In May 1984, they decided to proclaim their purpose formally as follows:

Organized for the general purpose of providing interested owners of Nettles Island with an opportunity for exchange of ideas concerning Nettles Island and to engage in all other lawful activities or business permitted under the State Laws of Florida and the U.S.A. At this time they also registered their name as "Nettles Island Lot Owner's Association, Inc."

Organization 2

The Volunteer Firemen

This is an organization that cannot be overlooked. They formed in 1979 and are a dedicated group. February 1980 they bought a fire truck for one dollar! That's right \$1.00 laughingly some said, "Now they can play fireman with their truck!" But they busied themselves with it, restoring it and making it operational. They had and still have fire drills every week. They have proven themselves useful at times for fires, rescues, etc.

In 1982, they received a grant of \$5000 from IBM through the efforts of Woody Freese.

At this time they had a chance to buy a better truck and needed more capital. The Nettles Island Clubs responded and donated more than enough for them to purchase the truck so that they now have a working capital for repairs equipment etc.

There was a dedication ceremony at the flagpole by the big marina for the new truck on March 27, 1983.

The firemen have social events during the season and also take care of aluminum collection for extra income.

We now have a fire station on Hutchinson's Island but often our own fire department arrives at the scene of emergency sooner.

The trucks are stored up near the condo office and a sign over the front of the structure reads "In Memory of Ed Weinerman."

* * * * *

P.S. Unfortunately because of new insurance laws this group had to disband in 1987. The trucks were sold and their assets were distributed to worthy causes in the N.I. Resort.

The three oldest clubs of Nettles Island are:

Men's Club

Women's Club

Musical Theatre

They are primarily social clubs with regular meetings and planned social functions.

However they also enjoy working together on projects to make money so they can support their philanthropies.

The Men's Club have their Las Vegas nights, raffles etc.

The Women's club have flea markets, sells T shirts, have raffles etc.

The musical Theatre puts on musical productions several times a year.

All these "Specials" produce the money with which to buy things and to contribute to the welfare and the enjoyment of the resort. Recreation is most often the recipient but sometimes money is given for other things like blood pressure machines, CPR dummies or the fire department etc.

By the very fact that they furnish functions to be enjoyed by everyone, they make it a more fun place to be and it is a plus for the recreation department for they could not do it all physically for financially by themselves.

After all recreation is the name of the game and the hub of Nettles Island

Nettles Island Men's Club

The Men's Club is the oldest social club in the resort. It was formed in 1973.

As you can see in what you have already read, they have made a great contribution in many facets of life here.

For several years, they held an appreciation day in the parking lot with band, food etc. for everyone in Nettles Island. People Danced, were entertained and enjoyed each others company.

When the recreation department did not have enough money in the budget back in 1974, they raised money to pay the band.

They have given much financially and in labor to the recreation area for the benefit of all to enjoy. It would be difficult to enumerate it all but one could almost say this is a "Service above self" clubs.

You have already read in this history about many of their important philanthropies and can judge for yourself.

The first president was Bill Creighton but when he became president of the newly elected Board of Directors, he resigned because there might be conflicting interests. Al Ganz succeeded him as president. It is not recorded who the vice president was the time. Carl Walter was the treasurer.

The Men's Club at this writing is stronger and doing more than ever in these last thirteen years.

In reviewing some of my dates that could not be included, these are some that may have some nostalgia for the reader.

1974 Serious vandalism occurred in the bathhouses – people hiding in them, garbage dumped in them, curtains with cigarette holes burned in them, shower heads stolen, you name it. One holiday weekend alone over \$3000 damage was done. It became impossible for guards to monitor them all the time with their other duties so neighbors to the bathhouses started monitoring them at holiday times.

1975 Bathhouses were locked and keys issued to owners which solved a lot of problems.

First pool exercises were conducted by Dorothy Engel

Oceana was completed.

The big new bridge at Ft. Pierce replaces the old draw bridge.

The Atomic one was built.

1976 The Church, Men's Club and Women's Club purchased a new piano for the rec hall

1978 The golfers started a group to play at Indian River Plantation. Later they changed to Holiday country Club to play on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sundays.

1979 The first Bloodmobile came in. (See health section)

When Hurricane David came in all our equipment was moved to higher ground. Water valves and electricity were shut off. Nettles Island was vacated. It was reported the eye of the hurricane went over Jensen Beach and here. The first ones back to prevent looting were the manager, head of maintenance and security chief.

1981 The first Nettles Island Directories were published. A logo contest conducted by the newspaper and won by Carol Somosky gave us our own logo to use. Vital of life was distributed. (See health section)

Retired teacher's club formed.

1982 Monday night Bridge Club was formed.

First Christmas parade was held under the supervision of Marty & Bob Witherow, recreation directors.

1983 A group started playing Bocce. (See Recreation Section)

Solar heat in the bathhouses.

1984 Sidewalks from the Commercial area to the guard house were put in. The first Spring Festival under the big tent was held for three days. This again under the same recreation department and directors. The clubs sponsored it and it was a full three days of fun and excitement.

1985 A sidewalk from the commercial to the rec hall was completed. A ramp was built up to the rec swimming pool.

See recreation section for more about the renovation of the balcony and ramp.

New drapes (Gift from the Women's club) were hung in the upstairs rec hall. More new furniture bought for rec pool.

Health & Welfare

Probably Fran Swensen should be called "Nettles Island Florence Nightingale" for she seems that to most of us because of her concern about our health and has done so much in that was for us. She instigated the first Bloodmobile visit to our island in 1979 and they now come in annually. Now any Nettles Island owner can receive blood free by saying they belong to the Nettles Island BLOOD bank. There is at this writing an unlimited supply.

With the Women's and Men's clubs buying blood pressure machines, she started weekly blood pressure stations for residents. With volunteer help she has made this service free to us since 1982.

In 1981 she also with volunteer help distributed Vial of Life. This is a sticker on your door that alerts medical help that a vial in your refrigerator door lists your allergies and medication. Another person who has contributed a great deal to health over the years is David Rothbaum who has conducted CPR classes for quite awhile. His dummies (Annies) which he teaches with were bought by the Women's and Men's Clubs also. Of course, the Ambulance Fund Drives are now a thing of the past since we have paramedics at the fire stations on Hutchinsons Island. However they were a very vital necessity in the years when we had to call Jensen Good Samaritans Ambulance from Martin County. Even though we were not in their county they responded to our calls.

In 1977 three ladies of the theatre group thought something should be done to reciprocate. With permission of the Board of Directors a drive was started for donations. The ambulance came in to show their equipment and the ladies had collected \$900 to present to them. The following two years (1978 & 1979) an interested unit owner with some volunteers took over the drive and far exceeded the original donation.

In 1980, Bob Body became known as "Mr. Ambulance" for he devoted so much time and work to this drive for four years. The last drive in 1984 netted over \$15,000.

When Ft. Pierce put in their fire station with paramedic on Hutchinsons Island, Martin County no longer allowed their ambulance to come in here even if we donated money to them.

More recent residents may wonder why all those years we preferred the Martin County ambulance to a St. Lucie (our county) ambulance. It was a matter of time which is of the essence in an emergency case. Martin County was 5 or 6 minutes away and Ft. Pierce was 25 minutes away and the hospitals likewise. The service was certainly appreciated all those years and they in turn welcomed our donations.

CONCLUSION

Well ----- I stayed clear of politics and prejudices didn't I? The prejudice area was difficult because since I first became a member of the Founder's Club I have had a love affair with Nettles Island. I am proud of it! We have been through a lot together. Good and bad but mostly good.

Like a fine wine, it grows better with age ----- and I am pleased to say, more beautiful too.

It had taken many dedicated caring people to bring us through our growing pains and I thank God for them and for each of you who continue to make Nettles Island what it is.

There is no other place like it!