



# The Civic Courier

The Women's Civic Club  
of Panama City Beach,  
Inc.

Volume XI - Issue 4  
December 2021



## From the President's Desk

**Diane Vitale**

S'mores!!! What do they have to do with Thanksgiving? Well for me, today, quite a bit. As a little girl growing up, being a member of the Girl Scouts it was all about the campfire, roasting marshmallows and creating that kid friendly yummy item, eating them to the point of a tummy ache.

This afternoon at Grand Panama Boardroom, nineteen WCC ladies and friends came together for an elevated s'mores experience. It was the seamless mass production that naturally flowed. The sounds of laughter, sharing the broken pieces of chocolate and graham crackers. Thank you, Patty Rocco for baking and sharing the chocolate chip cookies.

Today was the first step in our "Home for the Holidays" participation. Next week, we will have two days of dispensing our precious S'mores kits. Watching families making memories, children's excitement and the wonderful Christmas spirit coming from the stage performers is magical.

One of my favorite quotes is called "A Thankful Heart". I try to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know. Author unknown.

Happy Thanksgiving and I hope to see everyone at our Christmas luncheon on December 2nd. As a reminder, it is important for our attendees to be respectful to our speakers and presenters during the Christmas program, or any luncheon program, by giving them your undivided attention.

*Diane, President*

## "Foundations of the Club"

The December edition of The Civic Courier, "Foundations of the Club" is highlighting Jean Cooney and focusing on Membership Sponsors.



**Jean Cooney**

Jean was born in Providence, Rhode Island and lived in Warwick, Rhode Island, just south of Providence, until she and her husband Frank retired and moved to Panama City Beach 30 years ago. She was married in 1946 at the age of 17 and did not work for the first 18 years of her marriage. She took a job in a supermarket where she worked as a cashier or in the meat or in the floral department for 23 years. When she worked in the floral department, she remembers going to the Senior Center and giving classes on floral arranging.

They moved to Panama City Beach to be near their daughter and Jean said she also wanted to live on the water. They bought a townhouse on Grand Lagoon and lived there for 30 years. She said the water was right outside her townhome. Her husband passed away just a few years ago and Jean recently moved into Charter Senior Living on Magnolia.

Jean's friend recruited her for the Women's Civic Club and in October 1993 she was installed in the club. Jean served as the Chairman of the Membership committee. She also remembers helping with the dance and serving on the food committee. She said "back when" most of the events they worked were held at Frank Brown Park.

When asked if she had any words of wisdom to share with the club members she replied, "Get Involved!"

### Membership Sponsors

As a result of the enthusiasm and dedication of the Women's Civic Club members, ten new members have been installed this year. Sponsors serve as a mentor and provide support to the new members during their first year. (By-Laws, Article 1 Membership). Every new member will begin forming their opinion about the value of our club the minute they join so the sponsor is critically important.

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## "Foundations of the Club -Membership Sponsors"

As a mentor, the sponsor provides insight and information for the new member's success. She connects with them, directs them to resources, gets them involved and follows up. Not only is the sponsor important, but it is also important for each member of the club to help the new member feel welcome. Investing in not only our new members, but also in all of our members, will only serve to make our club stronger.

## "Members and Guests Enjoy the November Luncheon Meeting"



Forty-four members and guests enjoyed a buffet lunch at Pineapple Willy's Restaurant for the October Women's Civic Club Luncheon Meeting. Panama City Beach Councilman Paul Casto shared some history of Panama City Beach, the progression of his career and what is going on in Panama City Beach.

## "New Member Installation"



Gloria Turner (sponsor), Cherie Lagace, Nancy Stovall (sponsor), Karen Gunsaulus (sponsor), Karen Demeester, Pam Kremm, Sue Schmitz, Diane Vitale (sponsor), Carol Metaxas, Arlene Klaas (sponsor), Beth Reedy



Membership Bouquet Display

## "Welcome New Members"

At the November luncheon meeting, Karen Demeester sponsored by Karen Gunsallus, Pam Kremm sponsored by Nancy Stovall, Cherie Lagace sponsored by Gloria Turner, Carol Metaxas sponsored by Diane Vitale, Beth Reedy sponsored by Arlene Klaas, and Sue Schmitz sponsored by Ginny Schmertmann were installed in the Women's Civic Club. Each of the new members took the time to share some things about themselves.



**Karen Demeester**

A little bit of background about me, I am originally from Buffalo, New York. My husband, Dave, and I have made Panama City Beach our home for more than 4 years. We have 2 sons. Our oldest is a homicide detective for the City of Atlanta, has a wife and 2 kids, and our youngest son is a firefighter for Panama City Beach Fire Department, has a wife and twin 4 1/2 year old sons. I retired a year ago, so am looking to become more engaged in fun activities that benefit the community. I love to travel, play golf, garden when it is not too hot, and am beginning to learn how to play pickle ball.

I'm a retired physical therapist, bartender, bar owner/manager, and last but probably least, on leave from being a Home Depot cashier. I have 3 grown children, all boys. Two are married and I have a fantastic grandson and a beautiful granddaughter. I moved to Panama City Beach from Cincinnati, Ohio, where I lived for 50 years. I was born in Indiana and graduated from Indiana/Purdue University for my physical therapy degree. I miss my kids and grandkids but not those gray, cold Cincinnati winters. I'm very happy to be a Floridian.



**Pam Kremm**



**Cherie Lagace**

I moved to Panama City Beach four years ago. I'm from a small town in upstate New York. I originally found Panama City Beach when I was a truck driver for the Bendix Corporation. I loved the beautiful beaches and wanted to bring my husband to see them so we came one winter. Three more winters and then we moved here four years ago.

I was a Special Education teacher for twenty-eight years. I also worked at our public library, was an EMT helping with our volunteer rescue squad, coached volleyball at our high school, and taught Religious Education for twenty-seven years. I served on the school board, was a church elder, brought communion to shut ins, was the President of Rosary Society for over twenty-two years, worked on the opening of our community center and ended my time as President after serving in all positions on the board. I never learned what the word "NO" meant so I was very active in our community.

I have a daughter and a son. My kids never learned "NO", so they have followed where I left off. I'm so proud of them. I have four grandchildren and with our combined family I have thirteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

I live at Tidewater Condos and love getting up every morning and looking out at the ocean and ending my day with the beautiful sunsets. I have been truly blessed by our Lord.

## "Welcome New Members"



**Carol Metaxas**

I grew up in Mississippi. Graduated from The University of Southern Mississippi. Married Jerome A. Metaxas and moved to New Orleans where I taught Home Economic and Jerry was in the car business. We eventually moved to Birmingham and started an Automotive Sales Training Company. We conducted sales training workshops for Automobile Dealers across the Southeast for many years. We retired to our home in Sandestin for several years before moving to Panama City to be nearer our daughter and her family, Mark and Melinda Cowart, grandson Michael and his wife Kalyn. Melinda teaches kindergarten at Breakfast Point, Mark is a manager for Count's Realty, Michael fishes The Redfish tournament series and owns Shallowtails Adventures, Kalyn owns Pixie Travel and works for a local bank.

After moving to Panama City, I went to work for 12 years at Home Depot on the beach as a kitchen designer. My husband passed away from Parkinson's in 2015. I finally retired again to enjoy life. In 2015 I underwent my third back surgery and woke up paralyzed from my midsection down. After months in rehab and by the grace of God I have recovered to be able to walk with the aid of my cane or walker. Water aerobics has become my passion as I attend class almost every day at Frank Brown. My goal in life is to be grateful for each day, encourage others and share the blessings of Jesus Christ.

Thank you ladies. I am excited to be a part of the group. I am so thrilled to be back in Florida, living my best life. Love God, my kids and my pups. Always up for a new adventure and making new friends.



**Beth Reedy**



**Sue Schmitz**

I am the mother of three successful young men and the grandmother of eight fabulous grandchildren. My husband and I were married for over fifty years until his untimely passing two years ago.

For most of my life I have been a very active teacher of high school students. My subjects included English and government. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my opportunity to work with young people which also included teaching Sunday School to 12th grade students.

Many of my students talked me into running for public office, and as a result I was elected as a state representative. I served twelve years in the Alabama legislature before I decided to move to Panama City Beach. I enjoy the beach atmosphere and look forward to many years here.

Since moving to Panama City Beach I have been an active member of the Gulf Beach Garden Club serving as President and District Director. I enjoy meeting people and find it important to share my talents with others. I also enjoy being a member of the Port Washington United Methodist Church where we have many avenues to serve those who need assistance. Presently I look forward to the many opportunities afforded by the Women's Civic Club.

# "Fulfilling Our Mission of Improving Life in Panama City Beach Community"

## *Raising Funds*

### **Ironman**



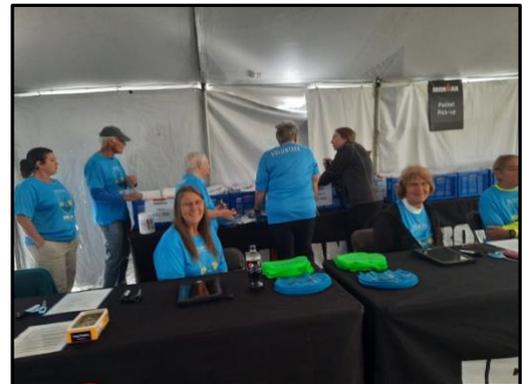
**Members Lynn Padgett, Karen Gunsallus**



**Members Tammy Haight, Monica Thomas**



**Members Lynn Padgett, Nancy Stovall, Susan Curry's back, Beth Reedy, Patty Rocco**



**Member Patty Rocco**

Thank you for volunteering your time to Ironman. The Club's members worked countless hours during Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We are a small part of the PCB community needed to made Ironman a successful bi-annual event. Sincerely, Barbara Vecrumba



**Members Diane Vitale, Luciann Jacobs**



**Carol Lynn, Monica Thomas, Sony Edwards**

## ***Raising Funds***

### **Silent Auction**

The Silent Auction is a large annual fundraiser for the club and is held in conjunction with the Beach Boogie Dance scheduled for February 5, 2022. The committee has received several items (forty to be exact) for the Silent Auction. To achieve success, at least one hundred items are needed. If each member would solicit or donate at least one item, the club would reach their goal. Several larger value items and items that appeal to men are needed. Please contact Tammy Haight [tdhaight@bellsouth.net](mailto:tdhaight@bellsouth.net) for solicitation forms and more information.

### **Amazon Smile**

"Shopping is cheaper than therapy" and all of us like to shop. Did you know that you can support the Women's Civic Club as you shop on Amazon?

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

How to sign up for AmazonSmile (Smile.Amazon.com)

- Go to Smile.Amazon.com. Either create an account, or login to your current Amazon account.
- On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you are prompted to select a charitable organization from the list of eligible organizations. Select Women's Civic Club of Panama City Beach.

Anyone can shop on AmazonSmile and choose to donate to The Women's Civic of Panama City Beach. Encourage your family and friends to support our club!

## ***Supporting the Community***

### **Food Pantry**



Beth Reedy, one of our new members, designed and with support from Arlene Klaas created the artistic display at the Food Pantry. Both Beth and Arlene, along with Sue Jiles and Cheri Leistner volunteer at the Food Pantry. Gloria Turner, Luciann Jacobs, Monica Thomas and Susan Curry support when needed.

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## Food Pantry

For the month of October 2021, the Food Pantry serviced 168 people for a total of 1,512 meals. For the 3 days the pantry was open on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>, they provided 700 meals and several of those clients are new to our area. The pantry receives food donation from several businesses, just to name a few: Longhorns, Panera's, Publix, Olive Garden and Starbucks. Other donations come from churches, individuals, and organizations such as ours. With the continued support/donations from the community the pantry can provide meals, once a week, to families, individuals and the homeless. You are very appreciated for your kindness and willingness to support the Food Pantry with your donations.

Gloria Turner, Food Liaison, [gloturn1@gmail.com](mailto:gloturn1@gmail.com)

## Food Pantry

*At the December Meeting we will be collecting:*

- Toiletries - Shampoo, Men and Women's Deodorant, Shaving Cream
- Toilet Paper
- Spaghetti and Spaghetti Sauce
- Cereal
- Plastic Grocery Bags (great way to recycle your grocery bags)

## Spending Time Together

### Member to Member



Member to member has scheduled a bunco for Thursday January 20th at Taylor's Restaurant. Play begins at 10am. Cost is \$18 and includes lunch and prizes!

## Working Together

### Home for the Holidays Preparation



**Dena Roewe, Monica Thomas  
Jeanette Poland (guest), Pam Kremm**



**Nancy Stovall, Monica Thomas, Susan  
Curry, Monica Thomas, Pam Kremm  
Patty Rocco, Carol Metaxas  
(continued on page 8)**



**Cheri Leistner, Kay Vider, Diane  
Vitale, Nancy Stovall**

## Home for the Holidays Preparation



**Brenda Bryson, Karen Gunsallus, Jackie Logan, Sharon Williams, Lynn Padgett**

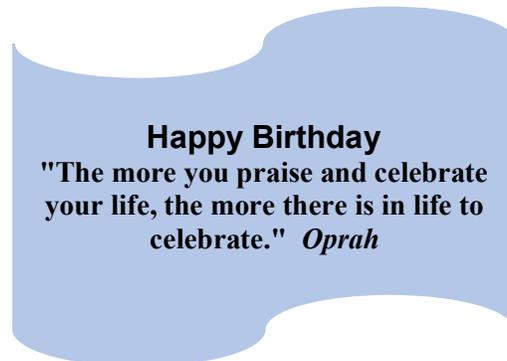
"In preparation for Home for the Holidays, nineteen of our members, future members and friends assembled 2,000 s'mores kits in a little over two hours. Home for the Holidays will take place the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving at Aaron Bessant Park starting at 3:30 p.m. each day. This is an annual event sponsored by Visit Panama City Beach (part of the TDC) and features campfires for roasting marshmallows, the tree lighting, Santa and Mrs. Claus, live music and fireworks. We will be handing out s'mores kits on both days."

## Recognizing our Members

### Birthday Wishes !!

#### December

- 03 Elaine Litchenberger
- 09 Jean Cooney
- 09 Luciann Jacobs
- 14 Susan Curry
- 30 Gayle Oberst



### Member Updates

Address Change  
Jean Cooney  
Charter Senior Living  
Room 102  
6012 Magnolia Beach Road  
Panama City Beach, FL 32408

### In our thoughts and prayers

Rowan Quave and Julie Sanders for the loss of Jerry Quave, a husband and a father. Our sincere condolences to the family.

## Save the Date



## Upcoming Events

- December 2 Christmas Program and Luncheon at Edgewater Beach Resort Conference Center, 11 AM
- December 6 Kitchen Committee Meeting at Grand Panama Business Center, 10 AM
- December 8 Beach Boogie Dance Committee Meeting at Chamber of Commerce, 10 AM
- December 30 Board Meeting at Chamber of Commerce, 309 Richard Jackson Boulevard, 10 AM

## The Women's Civic Club of Panama City Beach, Inc

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### This newsletter is the product of a collaborative effort

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