

# Turkey Creek Forest History

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## 1976

Before 1976, out of a forest of oak, ancient cypress and slender, tall pines with the faded echoes of the turpentine still, long since silenced by the passing of time, there emerged sounds of clearing and construction equipment.

Turkey Creek Forest was the combined effort of the families of Robert and William Saunders to build a first class retirement home owners community.

A swimming pool, tennis court, shuffleboard court and a beautiful clubhouse was constructed to welcome playful residents.

## 1977

May 16, 1977, 11:30 AM, the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for the planned unit development of Turkey Creek Forest were filed in the records of Alachua County, Gainesville, Florida.

After several double wide modular homes were placed June 5, 1977, Gus and Helen Sjogren were the first homeowners at 224 Holly circle, followed by Elsie and Harold Murphy, Georgian and Merle Krouse.

The first community Christmas Gala was hosted in the clubhouse by the Sanuders in 1977, which included 13 original families and TCF employees. Millie Saunders roasted the turkey and made the first corn bread dressing many had ever eaten. The remainder of the food was brought by the residents. A live poinsettia was given to each family.

## **1978**

May 1978, Paul and June Matchuny organized the Kentucky Derby Party, which became a tradition, featuring the Louisville bomb, the Mint Julep.

The first Saint Patty's day party began when Harold Murphy donated a keg of beer and Bill O'Harrin rushed home to bring a tape of Irish songs to add to the merriment which became one of many annual traditions to follow.

Home sales soared and rental options were phased out. When Bob Saunders activated the Turkey Creek Forest Home Owners Association June 1, 1978, half of sixty eight properties had already welcomed their new occupants. Five advisory board members represented the home owners including the Saunders as controlling board members of the developers. The

Association fees were set at \$100.00 per year.

## 1979

In the spring of 1979, a kiln was installed in the Arts and Crafts room, where Tom and Pat Godey conducted classes on how to create and mold a family to turkeys along with some golden eggs. Later that year, Eunice Horn took over the classes, followed by Libby Wilbanks.

1979 was the Year of Tube expeditions down the Ichetucknee River. Two funny incidences were when Millie Rooney had to be extricated from her tube and Ruth Drinkwater was detained by a ranger for bringing a controlled substance, a can of Pepsi Cola. The Melins managed to capsize their canoe during one of the river trips.

Ruth and Virgil Drinkwater captured the doubles with Dorothy Blessing and Dutch Melin taking the women's and men's Shuffleboard Tournament trophy.

A dozen men and women attended Millie Saunders's tennis classes. Amby Rooney and Margaret Youngblood helped organize the community news bulletin. The first issue of the Turkey Creek Gobbler was circulated in January of 1979.

Bingo started in March 7, 1979 at the clubhouse and the ongoing men's breakfast was organized.

The Alachua County Library Bookmobile came to the clubhouse for one hour, twice per month.

In May, 1979, Phase II of construction started on site built homes, while pre constructed homes where still being offered.

Ray Raid, Harold Murphy and Millie Rooney were elected officers of the new Bowling League on September 1979 which played at the Palm Lanes on Waldo Road.

## **1980**

February 1980, Phil and Libby Wilbanks arrived, contributing their prized organ, provided music in the clubhouse and organized the Library.

August 1980, serious golf got off the ground with Frank Casal and Tom Post. For a fee of \$8.50, at West End Golf Club, you could play 9 holes and top it off with a prize, plus a salad and a drink. You could even have a hamburger, if you brought your own meat. December 2, Frank made a hole in one on the ninth hole.

## **1981**

February 1981, at the meeting of the garden club, the name "Friends of the Forest" was chosen for the recently organized group to preserve the beauty of the Turkey Creek Forest environment and open to all residents. In an ongoing tradition, they sponsored field trips and interesting guest speakers. Their ongoing aluminum recycling program funds numerous items for the club house and many great projects.

## **1986**

October 17, 1986, The Traveling Turkeys signed up for a three day Sea Escape trip. Addie Bonanno, Darlene Richenaker and Gert Brown organized extended tips and excursions.

## **1987**

March 10, 1987, formal control of the Turkey Creek Forest Owners Association was relinquished by the Saunders. The new volunteer board of directors consisted of two members from designated volunteer committees. The first officers selected from the board were Phil Kentfield, President; Dan Pearce, Vice President; Ray Reid, Secretary and Margaret Engle, Treasurer.

## **Beyond...**

You may consult Gobbler Newsletter publications on file for more information throughout the years to the present.

Please help the Turkey Creek Forest Community to remain this very special haven for our residents. Our volunteers are dedicated to passing on the wonderful legacy of hard work and play while protecting the ancient forest and creek environment in which we live.