



THE NEW VOICE

Newsletter



Volume 5, Issue 4

www.ballantraecondoassoc.com/

October 2022

A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.

Greek Proverb

Hurricane Ian Visits Ballantrae



What a stroke of luck for our community! Despite high winds and unnerving predictions, Ballantrae residents awoke Thursday morning to a number of downed trees and two mailbox stations toppled. There were no injuries or significant damage to our buildings.

Loss of power was for a limited period. Sketchy cell phone service and lack of internet access impacted many, including those who work from home.

The true character and blessing of our community was evident. Residents came out to carry piles of debris off the sidewalks and roads. While an emergency tree crew arrived Thursday afternoon, many neighbor volunteers had spent the morning with trimmers and tools and already had a big impact making the exit lanes passable. Clearing fallen trees from garages and homes was top priority. Remaining storm damaged trees in the landscaping were addressed by a second hired crew the next week. As clearing operations throughout Sarasota County and neighboring counties, Ballantrae leadership will pursue other necessary clean up options. The Board has sought assistance through FEMA operations to clear the piles of landscape debris at no cost for our community. Local officials have been reporting the clean-up process may extend four to six months.



Several roof leaks have been reported, which Lane handled by making temporary patches. We are cautiously optimistic that future rains will help us learn how well our roofs withstood Hurricane Ian. Three units had chimney caps lifted off; temporary chimney covers were installed by the Friday after the storm. The two fallen mailboxes were upright by Friday, with Lane's efforts and lots of support from neighbors. Lane returned Saturday to ensure all other mailbox stations were securely stabilized before we experience more wind or rain.

There were – and still are - so many questions. It is difficult if not impossible to provide immediate solutions due to multiple complicating factors that require research and locating available contractors and agents. Those who have lived through previous hurricanes may have more understanding of the time required to restore and return to “normal.” Along with the physical structures of our community to be repaired –there is also the deeper emotional healing that invites attention. Some residents weathered the storm sheltered alone, which can be difficult. Others were able to shelter with family or friends.

There is discussion and planning underway for restoration.

ELECTION FOR BALLANTRAE OFFICERS

All homeowners will have received mailed notice regarding the upcoming December election of officers.

It’s time for thoughtful consideration by Ballantrae homeowners. The community needs two or more people willing to stand for election to serve in Board leadership roles. While the election will be December 1 at the Annual Members’ Meeting, now is the time to **decide if and how you could take part and make a difference. Candidates must declare for election by October 25.** The board candidacy form was included in the recent mailing.

President David Dicke noted that it takes far more than five people in an official capacity of board members to support the needs of the Ballantrae community. There are both permanent and temporary committee positions to fill. Dicke added “The Board is very grateful for those who have stepped up to sustain the operations of our Association this past year.”



Many residents volunteered in 2022 to support the Ballantrae’s operations, ensuring that vital work could be accomplished. Not every community role is BIG. There are numerous ways to help. *The New Voice* editor did a quick count of Ballantrae folks who have pitched in to complete projects and provide leadership in the first 10 months. The number? There were **29 names**, and several volunteered for two or more projects. That’s nearly a third of our community! This is what is needed for Ballantrae to be successful. (*Note: That count was taken before Ian when we saw additional neighbors join forces to help with clearing storm debris.*)

We have an amazing community and we are, still and always, transitioning, like any other neighborhood over time. The condominium structure needs the best efforts of everyone who lives here to maintain the business of the community according to our charter. It is **a shared responsibility for all** who are fortunate to own or live here.

If you wait until you are invited, you could be missing out on the good feeling of a job done well and the appreciation of your neighbors. If not you, then who would you like to see help to guide the community you have chosen to live in? Please offer your support and encouragement to them.

THANKSGIVING POTLUCK

All are invited! 1 p.m. Sunday, November 20, 2022!

As our tradition, Ballantrae residents will celebrate Thanksgiving together with a shell path luncheon. We count on volunteers within the community to create this event. A generous contribution from Mary Walrath on Ballantrae Place, has this year's turkey fully provided. *Thanks, Mary!*



The yummy side dishes and desserts that come from our residents' kitchens - or elsewhere- bring true thanksgiving as we share this time together. If you wish to attend but can't walk that distance, contact Fran to arrange transport.

Let us know if you can attend. Please text, phone or email Fran Clymore at 941.266.1485 or fclymore@comcast.net with what you plan to do or bring.

CAN YOU PROVIDE ANY OF THESE FOR OUR THANKSGIVING EVENT?

- Nametags and sharpies, decorations
- Purchase some: ice, bottled water, paper products or napkins
- Help setting up tent or tables
- Special refreshments
- Help with after-event clean up, gathering extension cords, fold tables and take down tent
- Assist with money contributions

Looking ahead to 2023, we have a few great ideas and need a committee of several residents to discuss and make them happen. Even if you are only available for one or two events each year, please consider volunteering. We want your ideas and participation!

Happy Birthday



October 19
October 22
October 30
November 8
November 9

Dennis Dryjanski
Bernice Trzos
Sonia Harland
George Harland
Lavi Mociran

November 12
November 20
November 22
November 29

Adrian Mociran
Carol Verona
Alicia Nordquist
Barbara Davis

Ballantrae Board Officers September 2022

President	David Dicke	dpdicke@gmail.com	614-579-4012
Vice President	Drew Lowther	bigfella422@yahoo.com	941-448-1921
Treasurer **	Jim Boyd	jimboyd@SVN.com	941-320-6260
Secretary	Ken Rowland	kenrocky2002@protonmail.com	941-786-2641
At Large	Maria Gwillim	poptart1249@att.net	860-558-2503

** New member

Discovering our Community - Ponds

Algae - It's So Many Things

Ever since I watched a shipment of a few young algae-eating carp being placed in a Ballantrae pond, I have been reading about algae. Our community ponds are a valuable asset for our community. More than just a visual attraction, these reservoirs are a source of irrigation water. Residents tend to grumble at the algae that lift to the surface of our mini-lakes in the heat of summer. Experience has taught us about the harmful effects of Red Tide algal overgrowth along our gulf coast.

There are **two important pieces information** I want to present immediately. **Less than 1% of algae blooms are harmful.** [*This includes your Red Tide and cyanobacteria aka "blue algae."*] Generally it is the overactive blooms of the toxic algal organisms that cause offense to humans along with physical symptoms. Over-fertilizing grass and landscape plants have a direct relationship to those overgrowths in all the water environments around us.

Algae produce up to half the oxygen in Earth's atmosphere. Algae help keep carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere by storing it. Algae are the food base for almost all aquatic life.

Additionally, algal organisms have economic value as a source of crude oil and as sources of food and a number of pharmaceutical and industrial products for humans. Largely aquatic, they are typically fully photosynthetic.

Robert Berdan, Alberta, Canada, collects water samples and creates images **of microscopic life found in ponds and rainwater like this image to the right.** With special equipment we too could find this diatom in a raindrop on a leaf. Berdan has an **amazing** website you may want to explore:

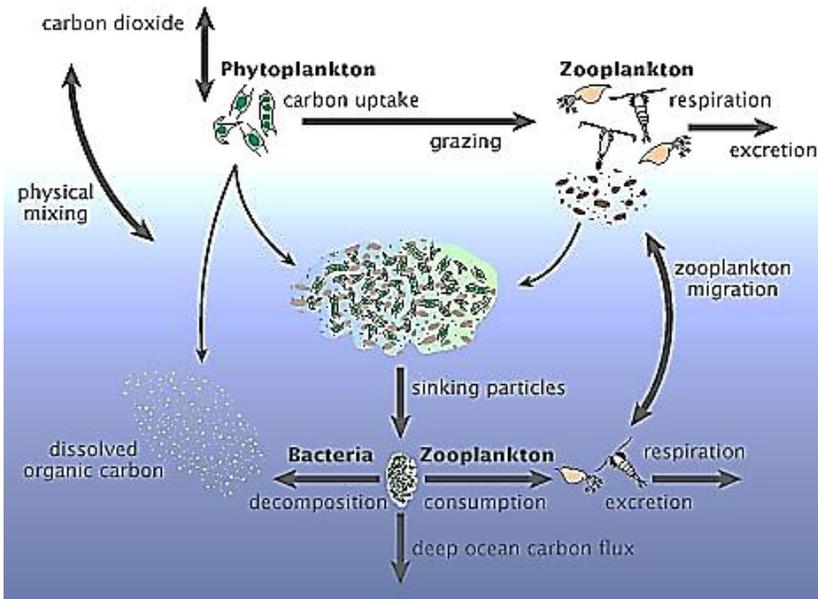
<http://www.canadiannaturephotographer.ca/contact.html>. Suggestion: If you want to view

some images created 155 years ago, check out the *Diatoms* by J.T. Redmayne 1877 on Berdan's website. There are also virtual panoramic tours of areas of Canada that are stunning.



While there are eight different types of algae, this focus will be on **diatoms** that are naturally present in virtually every body of water – even as tiny as a rain drop. Alone these microscopic organisms are responsible for producing more oxygen than all of the earth’s rainforests combined. Some estimate 25-40% of our oxygen is manufactured by diatoms. Essentially that would mean they provide oxygen for every third breath we breathe.

Algae are essential for proper and healthy ecosystem functioning. They aid in water oxygenation and purification, providing food for fish, insects and birds. They offer spawning and shelter sites for fish. Some Ballantrae residents have noted more dragonflies since mowing around ponds was restricted near waterways to allow a higher plant growth. Not only does this create deeper roots to combat erosion, herons and ducks can be seen feeding in areas of algal growth on our water systems. Observant residents may be lucky to catch a heron thrust its head to catch and consume a dragonfly that hovered nearby. [Not everything on top of the water systems are algae. There are other **plants** that are invasive and challenging to control.]



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Are there algal benefits? Absolutely. Diatoms have light-absorbing molecules (chlorophylls a and c) that collect energy from the sun and turn it into chemical energy through *photosynthesis*. They produce long-chain fatty acids - an important source of energy-rich molecules that sustain the entire food web, from zooplankton to aquatic insects to fish to whales. Algae species live in watery environments, both salty and fresh, marshy, and in smooth or turbulent waterways.

Diatom algae are particular about the quality of water in which they live. Some species have distinct ranges of pH and salinity where they will grow. This is why Berdan and others like him use microscopic observation to monitor waterways.

Ballantrae contracts with companies in an effort to control invasive algae and water plants without causing harm to the animal and plant species that help our ponds thrive.

The Elligraw *It's a drainage ditch, folks!*

Simply put, it was developed to carry water 2.1 miles, through residential property. It begins around McIntosh Road and flows into Little Sarasota Bay.

For years, due to owners’ concerns, Ballantrae officials have made attempts (\$\$) to satisfy residents’ desires to make the Elligraw look better as it runs by our homes, but this responsibility truly belongs to Sarasota County. Ballantrae does not have the ability to ensure it will be a clear-flowing stream. Basically, whatever treatments we pay for will be washed downstream by the next rain.

When you think of celery, you think of Sarasota, right?

From a Phillippi Creek website, we gleaned some history of the Celery Fields, a 440-acre nature preserve east of I-75 and on Palmer Boulevard, now a local recreation and birding area. Historically, it was once home to mammoths and mastodons that relied on its large lake. Earliest Indigenous People also had a relationship with this area depending on its important resources. Over time, the lake gradually filled in and became a sawgrass wetland. *The Everglades is a wonderful example of sawgrass marshes.*) There were also areas rich in acidic peat, called mucklands.

During the 1920s, much of the Sarasota area, including our current Celery Fields, was drained for development and farming. Mrs. Bertha Palmer's descendants developed a plan to create new farmland that involved draining some 8,000 acres. Eventually it was discovered celery was the most successful crop for most of the land, with both spring and fall harvests.

Who harvested this crop? The Celery Fields and Fruitville Road area east of Sarasota was once the center of Mennonite/Amish life here. The first Amish and Mennonites came to farm – truck patch farming and ended up working land purchased from Mrs. Palmer's company. Others came south to work the winter harvest.

Where did the water go when they drained the marshes and wetlands? Much was directed into nearby creeks and ultimately Sarasota Bay. The agricultural use resulted in more unfiltered water flowing into the water than the bay and creeks could handle. In 1994, after particularly bad flooding, Sarasota County purchased some Celery Fields land and turned it back into the water-storing, water-filtering wetland it once was.

As a result, the Phillippi Creek watershed is less flood prone. The recreational acreage has been an essential bird sanctuary, with a record of over 240 species identified to date, including many migratory breeds. Snook, bass, tilapia, otters, rabbits and reptiles find homes in this natural habitat.

Although one article called it Sarasota's only "hiking mountain," the Celery Field's height of 75 feet does not qualify as the highest landmark in Sarasota County. That distinction belongs to an area of sandy soil that Peakbagger.com reports is 99 feet high located close to our border with Manatee County.

What led me to detailing the history of the Celery Fields was an exploration of some possibly lesser known area restaurants. One is housed in a building once used as a functioning packing house for locally grown celery. For the past 24 years, J.R.'s Old Packing House boasts the sort of down-home dive-bar spirit that makes it a favorite among local blues, folk and bluegrass musicians, who perform six nights a week. It is also known for Cuban, Southern, Cajun, and Caribbean food.

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