

# Our Continental Stories



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This collection was Jackie Weddle’s idea. Her family has been here forever and now the second generation has three families here. The stories were collected as part of the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Continental Country Club

Kathleen Kelley Orr

We originally stayed at Red Oaks in Bushnell with our RV. Prices kept going up so one of our friends had family who lived here and we decided to just take a ride. We didn't find anything besides we wanted to be on the water. Friends from Ohio came to visit and wanted to take a ride to where we had looked to buy. We came back to CCC without any interest in buying. We asked if any places opened up to the canal. One home had just gone on the market, and we would be the first to see it. My husband fell in love with the location and view -so April 2012 we signed papers. Made improvements, changed decor and nowhere I am. So happy my husband got time to enjoy it here I am. Seminole Path - last house.

Marnie Leopold

Came here in 1999 to take care of my mother and stepfather, Marian and Jerry Moore. I was 51 at the time, and my school pension would not kick in until I was 60. That gave me the opportunity to work and meet many people in CCC. I did yard work, painted many (more than I wanted to) ceilings cleaned off roofs and gutters, airport runs and anything else I could do to make money. I had taught for 30 years and was sort of over it. It was fun being my own boss, but the work was sometimes almost too much!!! Jerry passed during my first year and Mom lived four more years. I really loved CCC and enjoyed the amenities that we had. I sold my condo in Atlanta and have now lived here for 24 years. I am fortunate that I can go to the Leopold cottage near Erie, Pa. I think anyone who has found CCC and decided to live here -they are blessed. Enjoy every day because they really go fast.

Marnie

My name is Charlie Reim.

I've lived here for ten years. My wife Marjorie and I came 13 years ago, but rented for 3 years before we bought. What convinced us to buy in Continental is that we looked at places all over the country, not just Florida. We looked up and down the east coast and west coast, all over the place and found Continental to be the best. After we decided to come to Continental, we saw a place we liked and almost bought but the price was higher than we wanted. Since we didn't want to insult the seller with a low ball offer, we passed on it and headed home. Just a month after we went home friends of ours, a couple that was renting down here called us about a possible home for us. Bernie said there's a house for sale down in Continental and he thought we'd like it. Gave me the seller's name (Mike Berger) and number so I gave him a call. I asked about the house -it seemed nice and \$36,000 was a good price. I thought it was worth a plane trip to come back down to look at it. So my wife and I flew in and came back to Continental to check it out. It was a nice place - lots of wine stains on the rug but otherwise seemed in pretty good shape. I gave him \$2500 down and told him that I'd be down in September to give him the rest of the money in cash. He wanted it earlier, but we had trips planned so he had to wait until September. We wanted to have it inspected. Of course -the seller didn't want a building inspector to be involved, he was actually pretty mad about it, but we insisted. The inspection was perfect except for a possible small leak. So we hired a Dunstan to come look at it and luckily -the plumber said it wasn't a leak at all -just sweating pipes. Dunstan didn't even charge us for the house call! We came back in September and closed on October 12th. Mike left all his furniture and kitchen stuff so it was really a great deal. We moved in and loved it! We were there for eight years before Marjorie passed away (two years ago). Many of you probably knew her - she was really active around Continental and had a lot of friends. Among our closest friends were Maxine and Russell Nero -they were great people. Another friend is Dennis the handyman who still stops by for a visit - he's a great guy too.

Carol Malanga & Norman Reid How we found CCC

When we decided to move to Florida it was near Norman's sister that we wanted to be.

Unfortunately we weren't willing to pay the higher price in Orlando, so I asked my realtor Jodenny, to find something within 45 minutes from where she lives. We wanted not to have a mortgage & gave a price range to stay in. My daughter & I came & saw many homes in a 3 day period 3 or more were here. My daughter liked one on sandalwood but I wasn't convinced... after she went home I took a break from looking, but a lot of the homes I was shown I wasn't impressed... then we came up to CCC again to see 3 more homes & I really liked 28 magnolia lane... got to meet the neighbors next door & new this was the place I wanted to live because I wanted to be in a community with a pool & lots of things to do so I could meet people and feel a sense of community. This is one of the best decisions we've ever made it's such a great place to live and we've made so many amazing friends.

Steven Sharp

My recollection of how the Sharp Family found CCC

I was 17 years old when my family visited CCC the very first year it opened as a (Campground). My parents would take us on trips nearly every year from Stoughton, Wisconsin to various locations in Florida in our station wagon and pop-up camper.

I would often do research searching for the next year's camping destination. I luckily came across a new listing in the AAA Camping Book and was immediately interested in what I supposed as a new Luxury Campground.

We were very pleased to find all as advertised. After all, how many campgrounds have an 18-hole championship golf course and an Olympic size pool with very large campsites? And how about the impressive club house with restaurant-bar and camp store.

Plus, all the activities like tennis courts, mini-golf, shuffleboard and more. At the time I remember the golf course being excavated and the pool water at a cool 68-70 degrees. But that did not stop my brother, sister and I from swimming all day and night and jumping off the high dive and spring board in what was at the time the deep end of the pool.

After a few interim visits and approximately 20 years later, my parents Richard and Verna Sharp purchased a home and were R.O. members on Oak Blvd. My father passed away and mother re-married a few years later to another long-term RO member. Peter Woodard and Verna Sharp Woodard were and are 30 plus year RO members at N Bobwhite and my mother still on Lazy Lane.

50 years later many of you know us, Steve and Beth as 5th year residents and RO members at 98 Big Oak Ln.

It looks like my brother Scott and sister Sally are getting ready to make similar retirement choices at CCC. The Sharp family has enjoyed many years at CCC now with 4th generation great grandchildren visiting every year.

Patrice and Richard Smith (PA.)

2012-Carol and Tom Hoesch (Seminole Path), graciously invited us to visit Continental Country Club in Wildwood, Fl. I remember thinking, where is this new place located? This quickly became an annual vacation.

2015-Rich and I started to consider and think, CCC would be an awesome place to purchase our winter home. Rich always wanted to play softball and Pat loving to swim and play this funny new game, pickle ball.

2017-Retirement came quickly, and we purchased our home on Robin Lane. We fell in love with ALL the beauty, restaurant, location, but most of all the PEOPLE!

2021-We became "snow birds" until July 2021 soaking in the warmth and sunshine during the cold winters up north. We sold our PA home and RV and started this new journey.

2022-We continue to LOVE this place, but now the PEOPLE have become forever FRIENDS. THANKS FOR MAKING THIS SPECIAL PLACE, HOME!!!! Pat & Rich

Rob & Ruth Hary  
CCC Homeowners at 160 Big Oak Lane  
December 12, 2022

Rob's parents bought here in 1983 after retirement, moving from St. Cloud, Minnesota. We visited them every year in the winter. In 2005, we purchased the house after they both had passed away. We are full time Florida residents now for the past 7 years. We spend 3-4 months in Minnesota during the summer where we visit our three daughters and 5 grandchildren. We moved to CCC from Bloomington, Minnesota.

My dad ``Bob Hary" was an excellent golfer winning the CCC Men's Club Championship and other CCC tournaments. My mom ``Vivian Hary" liked her bridge and ceramics.

I remember my parents taking us to see Spanish Springs, the only town square then. We then drove through Sumter Landing, which was just being built, nothing was open yet, just empty buildings.

Hwy 44 in front of CCC was a single lane. The closest grocery store was Winn-Dixie in Wildwood off highway 301 and highway 44, now of course closed.

The pool has a diving board, but no pool heater. It was a polar plunge all winter long if you went swimming.

Now we have The Villages Brownwood 2 miles away from our front door and CCC is surrounded by The Villages, we think it's a good thing because of all the amenities we have access to and resale value of our home.

We hope that the community will be kept up as it has aged significantly since 1983 and earlier. We love The Oaks Restaurant and the improvements on the golf course.

We enjoy CCC and have made some good friends.  
Rob & Ruth Hary  
160 Big Oak Lane  
952-239-9988

Jacque Weddle

Like a lot of residents, my sister's and I are 2nd generation Continental –we followed my parents here. In 1981, my dad was looking for a place to retire. He knew he wanted to be in Florida which is kind of funny because most of us kids were in Washington State - about as far as you could get from Florida. Dad knew he wanted to golf and fish which, in Florida, doesn't really narrow down the choices as much as you'd think. At one point, he actually bought a place at Barefoot Bay, but the interest rate on the house doubled between agreeing to buy and closing, so he backed out of buying it. Now they had to find another place to retire.

What made it tough is that my parents were living in S. Korea at the time, so my dad had to fly back to Florida while my mom stayed in Korea. He saw Continental advertised in a golf magazine and came to look. The agent was showing him a lot of different homes, and when looking at a house on West Quail, my dad told the agent he liked the house across the street. The agent explained that it was a model home across the street. My dad told him if he was going to buy here, that's the house he wanted - so that's the house they got! My mom never saw the house or Continental until she moved here in 1982 - she loved it here! I was living in Washington State but would come visit fairly often over the years. After my dad passed away in 1989, I'd come even more often than before. I'd fly in to help move the Wildwood library (where my mom volunteered), sell items for the annual 'Trash or Treasure' yard sale, and, of course, to do some work on the house. Luckily, mom had a great neighbor Marnie, who would take care of the majority of the maintenance for her! (Continental has a lot of great neighbors!)

When my mom started to need someone to help with more than the house, my sisters and I would alternate and each would come for a few months at a time to stay with her - I'm single and had a flexible job so I usually stayed the longest and filled in the gaps. In 2017, I got tired of going back and forth and just rented my place up north and started living here permanently. My mom passed in Sept 2020, and I'm living in her place now and three of my sisters are in Continental as well; Jean on the golf-course, Judi on the canal, and the snow-bird Janet on the pond. Mom was right-Continental is a great place to live.

Jeannine Lortie

My name is Jeannine Lortie. I've lived here since Dec 2, 2002. We were coming for six years before that and renting a month or two at a time. The first year we went all over Florida looking for places to live and deciding whether we should buy or lease. I never wanted to come here - I loved Massachusetts. I never minded the snow, but my husband Norman wanted to golf. I thought, and I still think, that Florida is too hot and humid. Norman loved it here though because he loved to play golf. We could play golf every day when we rented since we didn't have to work on the house so much.

When we decided to buy - I didn't want one of the older mobiles - I wanted something new. Luckily Phase 3 was just getting started. It was still a swamp and forest with paths. We'd walk there every day so we were very familiar with the area. We decided to buy a lot in Phase 3 and put a new house on it. We were the first buyers to get a golf course lot in Phase 3 so we got first pick. There were houses across the street, but we were the first ones on the golf course side. When we told my three kids we were buying in Continental, they along with their entire families decided to come down because they wanted to see it. We were still renting in a three bedroom in Phase 1 and everyone stayed there -it was a full house! They had just started clearing the lots so we showed them which one was ours. At first, Continental was going to build stick built homes in Phase 3, but they decided to stay with mobiles. When we started looking at mobiles, we went over to Palm harbor and found one we liked. We chose a 3 bedroom 2 bath Palm Harbor home with a living room and a family room. Very large.

In the early days we were always very busy. We played a lot of golf. Mary Lou Saemann and I and a couple of other ladies did the weeding and yard clean up all around Continental. We cleaned up around the gazebo, flower beds and even outside the front gate. For fun, we'd play cards with the neighbors. We'd go out and eat every Friday night. We were really active around CCC. Now that I'm close to 90, I've slowed down a bit but I still get out. Although I've never gotten used to the hot and humid weather, I like it here now.

## The Continental Country club Family History Zerrip, Lanning, Patton, Abram, and Keyser families 1/2

Gerald Zerrip was the first to find the place called, Continental Country Club. He fell in love with the beauty of community and was interested in owning a home and the land. He purchased his home at 33 Bobcat Trail on June 21, 1999.

Gerald Zerrip called his Sister, Barbara Lanning (Zerrip) and said, "You've got to see this place. You will love it." She did love it and purchased her home here at 34 South Bobwhite as she loved the color, yellow, and said, "I want the yellow one!" This was December 31, 1999. Gerald Zerrip and Barbara Lanning (Zerrip) called their brother, Charles Zerrip and told him and his wife Mary of the gold mine that they had found. Charles and Mary came to survey the land and purchased their home at 112 Sugar Maple Ave on April 17, 2000.

Barbara Lanning (Zerrip) lived happily for many years at 34 South Bobwhite. She called her daughter, Mary Lanning (Palmer) and said, "You must join me here and enjoy the beautiful weather! Leave the blizzards of Michigan behind!" Mary began looking and found her home at 26 North Bobwhite Road and purchased it on April 28, 2004.

Mary lived there happily until she saw the home at 9 South Bobwhite Road was For Sale. Mary called her brother, Chris Lanning, also the son of Barbara Lanning (Zerrip), and said, "Leave the snow! I will sell you my home!" Barbara Lanning (Zerrip) also encouraged Chris Lanning to leave the snow behind and move to the wonderland of CCC. Chris Lanning packed up his things and made the journey. In the meantime, Mary Lanning (Palmer) purchased 9 South Bobwhite Road on January 1, 2006. Chris Lanning purchased 26 North Bobwhite Road on March 24, 2006.

Over in Phase 11, Larry and Linda Patton found the home of their dreams at 108 Sugar Maple Ave and purchased it on October 12, 2011. They invited Linda's cousin, Carl Abram, from Chicago, to visit in 2013 and consider retiring in CCC. Carl returned for another visit in September 2014. Back over in Phase I, in 2014, Mary Lanning(Palmer), called her sister, Lisa Arndt(Lanning) and said, "You're an empty nester now, come to Florida and help take care of your mother, Barbara Lanning (Zerrip)!" They shopped and shopped the houses, then got a call from realtor, Sharon Bacon, who said, "This one won't last long! It is underpriced and was just listed!" Mary and Lisa scrambled over to 88 Big Oak Lane. Mary said to

The Continental Country club Family History  
Zerrip, Lanning, Patton, Abram, and Keyser families 2/2

Lisa, "If you don't buy this house, I'm going to!" Lisa Arndt (Lanning) made the offer that night and purchased 88 Big Oak Lane on January 30, 2014.

Mary Lanning (Palmer) became friends with Larry and Linda Patton and was invited to a dinner party at 112 Sugar Maple, in September 2014. Linda Patton also invited Lisa Arndt (Lanning). At the dinner party, Lisa Arndt (Lanning) met visiting cousin, Carl Abram and they have been together ever since. Carl retired, sold his home in Chicago and relocated to Florida in July 2015. 104 Gator Court was purchased by Carl's mother, Fern Abram on May 8, 2015. Fern Abram relocated to Florida in August 2015. Carl and Lisa Abram were married on April 20, 2019 and reside at 88 Big Oak Lane.

In the meantime, Mary Lanning (Palmer) called her daughter, Holly Keyser (Palmer) and said, "You are nearing retirement! I'm willing my home to you, but I'm going to need it for many years to come! You must purchase one of your own!" Holly Keyser (Palmer) and her husband Keith began their search. They purchased a vacant lot at 64 Robin Road on February 3, 2022 with the intent to build. 32 Big Oak Lane was listed For Sale and they decided on that one instead and closed on April 29, 2022.

**IN SUMMARY**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Close Date</b>
Gerald Zerrip	33 Bobcat Trail	June 21, 1999
Barbara Lanning(Zerrip)	34 South Bobwhite Road	December 31, 1999
Charles and Mary Zerrip	112 Sugar Maple Ave	April 17, 2000
Mary Lanning(Palmer)	26 North Bobwhite Road	April 28, 2004
Mary Lanning(Palmer)	9 South Bobwhite Road	January 6, 2006
Chris Lanning	26 North Bobwhite Road	March 24, 2006
Larry and Linda Patton	108 Sugar Maple Ave	October 12, 2011
Lisa Arndt(Lanning)	88 Big Oak Lane	January 30, 2014
Carl & Fern Abram	104 Gator Court	May 8, 2015
Keith & Holly Keyser	64 Robin Road	February 3, 2022
Keith & Holly Keyser	32 Big Oak Lane	April 29, 2022

There will be many more children who become retiree from these families who will eventually call CCC their home

## HOW WE GOT TO CONTINENTAL COUNTRY CLUB

TOM & BECKY OLESH

### 100 GATOR COURT

In 2015 we were full-time Rvers traveling all over. While in Cody, Wyoming, we met a charming couple who lived in CCC, Marv & Elaine Gribble. They proceeded to tell us how nice CCC was, and we agreed to come visit them when we were camping in Wildwood. Well that didn't happen until the spring of 2018. We loved it as soon as we drove in. That summer we were in contact with Four Star, and got updates on homes that were for sale all thru the summer. When we returned to Florida the fall of 2018, we met with a realtor on Oct. 31st. We looked at 16 houses that day, and returned on Nov. 1st, and looked at 3 more houses, plus re-visited some we had seen the day before. We made our decision and bought 26 Bobcat Trail. We love our neighbors there. The Lord put us in the right place. Then in July of 2021, we decided to buy a newer home (and downsized as well) at 100 Gator Court. Now we have our neighbors from Bobcat Trail, as well as new neighbors that we love too. We are BLESSED to be here in Continental.

## Jeff and Deb Buford

How we found CCC. .

Was by accident.

We were from Illinois and took a month to come down here to find a Winter Home. Our search had taken us to many communities but we had not found the right one yet. We had seen CCC many times since we rented a place in 1\/, but thought it was just a golf course.

Our last Sunday in Florida, we drove around looking for a house we had seen advertised. The GPS took us the `back way' from Wildwood, down a gravel road to the back gate. (In 2013 the Villages had not built South of Rt44.) We followed instructions to go to the front gate and followed the road to the guard shack. Pulled up and said we wanted to drive around to look for houses for sale, The guard on duty told us, nope - that is not permitted that we would have to make an appointment with a real estate agent to get in .

We were disappointed we couldn't get in but thought it was a really nice if we were to purchase in here. Went to the 4 Star office, spoke to the agent and made an appointment for Monday to take a look. The 1 St day we saw about a 12+ houses, we both were completely lost driving around! Our agent asked us to pick 4 houses we wanted to see again, told us to go home and come back the next day.

Day 2 we looked again and before we left that day, we made an offer, it was accepted and we closed 2 days before we had to return to Illinois. Since the house we purchased had been a rental and was completely furnished, we got to spend 2 nights in our new to us little house in CCC!

The things that drew us here were: established area with beautiful mature trees with moss softly swaying with the wind, the old Florida feel, Resident Owned property not lot rent, a gated community, low property taxes, swimming pool, restaurant, lounge and other activities and clubs besides golf.

Jeff and Deb Buford

Jean Weddle

I guess my family's Continental story begins in 1981 when my father came to Florida to find the perfect retirement community. Continental was one of the places he discovered through Golf magazine. After visiting numerous places, he bought the model home for Continental's Phase 1 on West Quail.

I first visited my parents in their home in 1985 with two of my sisters. Hurricane Elena, parked in the Gulf for days, caused our visit to be less than a success, but my parents loved it here. We visited often-used the pool, the library, the restaurant; played Bingo and cards. Sometimes when I would come to visit, I would win at Bingo and feel guilty. We rode golf carts and bikes; hunted for gators and aningas; and met a lot of nice people. Mom and Dad had the best neighbors-the Popiels, the Moores, the Kings, lola Willoughby, and others. Mom would say that Continental was a great place to live.

When I decided to retire, I asked my sister Jacque to be on the lookout for a place for me in Continental. I gave her a list of requirements: Phase 1, three bedrooms, no one behind me, a porch (not a Florida room), an indoor laundry room, and a nice kitchen. Mostly she talked to people in the hot tub! But she found my home. She and Marnie Leopold toured the home and sent me pictures; she had it inspected. They seemed to think I should come down and check it out, but it was the middle of the 2019 school year. So I just said, "Yes, I'll buy it."

I saw the house for the first time in January of 2020 and moved in July of that year. Now when my sisters and I play Bingo, I don't feel guilty when I win. And, of course, Mom was right. Continental is a great place to live. Even when I lose at Bingo.

Gail and Barry Brooks

When Barry and I were thinking about retirement we lived in Ocala. We knew we wanted to live in an active adult community. So, we started looking around between Ocala and Orlando. We saw houses on lakes and with golf courses and beautiful community centers. We looked at a community the specialized in planning travel. Some accepted dogs but they had to be thirty pounds or smaller. Some you owned your land but most you didn't.

Eventually we saw an ad in the paper for Four Star Reality. We contacted Colleen and asked her to show us property in a few specific communities. Afterword she asked if we were ready to see Continental Country Club. We had never heard of it so we said OK.

When you drive in the front, you feel like you are home. The entry is so beautiful and peaceful. It has a calming effect. Then as you drive back into the community and see how the streets winded around a beautiful golf course you just can't help falling in love with the community. And better yet, they accept dogs of any size. Big plus as our sweet Cinnamon was sixty pounds!

We were looking for an active adult community and CCC offers many sporting and exercising opportunities such as golf, softball, billiards, swimming, tennis, pickle ball, various aerobic classes plus many others venues for us to choose from.

We bought a lovely lot on Forest Blvd that backs up onto a canal and we get to watch all the wildlife. We have lived here for six years and we can't imagine living anywhere else. Now our daughter has talked about moving up here from Lake Mary when they retire. There are a lot of related families living here!

### The Summers Dynasty at CCC

In the mid 80's, Bill, Sr. and his wife, Jackie, moved to Continental at the suggestion of their son, Jeff, because they had friends who lived here. They were snowbirds for 25 years, living on S. Timber and Robin Rd. here and in Garden City, MI, before passing away.

In 2004, their son Greg also became a snowbird and bought a house on N. Bobwhite, and to Saline, MI

Son Bill, Jr. and his wife, Gloria, retired and bought a house on S. Timber in 2018 They are full timers here.

Son Mark also bought a house on Magnolia in 2022, a snowbird to Westland, MI

Son Jeff and his wife, Cheryl, also live nearby in The Villages. Whew, quite the Dynasty! Three of the six brothers live in Continental and one close by. The Summers Family compound.

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### Don and Genny Smith

My husband worked at the Toledo Blade Co. in Toledo, Oh. He worked with Tom Stough, Joe Guardado and Vern Glen.

The Stough's invited us to see their place at CCC. So when we retired we came to visit there. We liked the place. So in 2012 we rented for 2 months from Bob Krawczyk and Richard Serri. Then in 2013 we rented for 2 months from the Komorny's.

We then bought our house on Deminole Path from the Cordes family. We became full time 2014.

Don & Genny Smith

Melinda Gorman and Joanne Crabb

2019 came to Florida from Colorado  
and my sister from Missouri.  
We started our search in the Villages  
spiraling out all around. We never even  
knew this community was here. My cousin  
found this house on Zillow. We had our  
Realtor to show us this house but  
not being informed of the area she  
had trouble getting us into community.  
We fell in love with house, after living  
here a while fell in love with the  
community - AND it being a true  
gated community feels very secure  
living here.

Melinda Gorman  
Joanne Crabb

## Joan Lodico CCC Story

I'm happy to say that my CCC journey started 30 years ago this past spring 1992, when my late husband William "Bill" Lodico and I were moving from Cape Coral, FL for his new sales position which spanned between Orlando and Ocala. Originally from Buffalo, NY and in our early 50's we were not familiar with retirement communities but CCC had a rental property that was perfect for our needs and we couldn't beat the location based on Bill's new responsibilities.

Unfortunately the sales position ended, but the timing could not have been more perfect as CCC was looking for a Golf Cart Repair Manager and with Bill's years of experience in the Industrial Forklift business and vast knowledge in the battery industry it was the perfect fit. Bill's big, joyful personality, honesty and excellent personable care he provided for the guests and residence of CCC, was able to quickly grow this department into more than just a Repair Shop which brought a good profit to CCC for 15 years where he proudly earned the title .Bill the Golf Cart Guru.

With Bill now being able to work and reside within CCC, this relationship allowed him to meet many residents who loved him dearly and we were able to build many lifelong friendships. So when he unfortunately passed away in 2011, I was comforted and Showered with love and a beautiful sense of community which is one of the many great things about living here in CCC.

There are so many wonderful amenities, activities, clubs and natural wonders to engage in here at CCC, and through these opportunities and friends I was fortunate enough to meet Robert "Bob" Zavesky whom I have enjoyed many years with and look forward to making many more memories with him here at CCC and beyond.

During my 30 years here I have seen many people come and go for many reasons and welcome new faces as well as seeing many changes and improvement within CCC but the thing that makes me so proud about being a resident of CCC are the people, their hearts and the true sense of community and family that I have experienced and enjoyed all these years. And because of the many memories me and my family have built here at CCC, I am happy to see another Lodico generation be able to experience what I have experienced now that my daughter Tamra "Tami" Lodico has recently relocated to CCC a few years ago.

Janet Weddle

My parents purchased their home in Continental in the early 80's. I started visiting with my son in 1985. I remember thinking "I could never live here! Everyone is so old!". Luckily, as time went by the people living in Continental got younger and younger.

By 2022 I had three sisters already living in the park, but I wasn't quite ready to retire so my partner, Matt, and I were casually looking at homes with the thought of... Someday. We really wanted to be on the water and saw some homes, but none of them were quite right and we weren't in a hurry. In April my sister called and said that she found our house on Golden Pond. She took pictures and did a video walk through. We really liked the house, and the view sealed the deal! We purchased our new home completely online and closed in May. But, we didn't step into it until June! We stayed for two weeks and returned to Washington until October. We decided to snowbird since I'm still working and can work from home.

Since we've been here, we've felt so welcome. Our neighbors are fantastic and the community is warm. So glad I took my mom's advice when she said, "This is really a great place to live"

Frank and Dorothy Champagne

In 1985, Frank and Dorothy Champagne did their research and settled into Continental Country Club. Our family was invited to come down to visit them. We really like the community and kept visiting them for a few years. Finally in 1999, we were old enough to buy a house. We purchased a house on South Timber Trail. We were both still working, so we would rent out the house for the snowbird season and come down to stay there after they left. This continued for several years. While we were visiting, our neighbors said they wanted to sell their house but wanted to continue to stay there as renters for about a year. Good deal, so we bought that house, too, in 2007. In 2008, we were finally able to come down for the snowbird season. When our neighbors were going back to Michigan, we moved there while still renting the first house. Eventually someone told us about another house on West Quail Run that was for sale, and we went to check it out. We purchased the house we are now living in in 2010. Eventually we did sell the two houses on Timber Trail and continue to do the snowbird season. Just cannot give up on our family in Wisconsin. Hope to have many more enjoyable seasons here.

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Tom and Carol Hoesch

In 2011 we were invited to our good friends from Pennsylvania, Ron and Patty Rhodes, for Ron's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday party. I thought August was not a good month to visit but my husband said, yes. Our week at CCC was awesome. So awesome in fact, my husband wanted to "just look" at what was available. Ugh, it was ungodly hot! After looking and looking, we found one we both could agree on.

We flew home all excited for our new adventure but had to help put our son's wedding in motion. The big reception was going to be at our farm. Then the glitch happened. The day after the reception, my husband fell ill. After surgery and a 7-day hospital stay we missed out on the home at CCC.

In 2012 we flew down to shop again. We were shown a place not on the market yet on Seminole Path. Our now friend and neighbors, Pam and John Lyman, came over to see who we were. That was the clincher! So, we made an offer that had to happen right away since I was invited to be at the birth of our grandson. To this day our grandson, his 2 brothers and our son and his wife come every year! They also love everything about CCC. Our friends and neighbors have watched the boys grow, which is kind of cool.

We bought our home on Seminole Path, fell in love with CCC, the location and the people. We have had other friends, Smiths, and Melchers, come visit and they too have bought in CCC. It's just a great place.

Thank you CCC for being our happy place! Tom and Carol Hoesch

From the  
ECHO

Meet your Neighbors

By Linda Salotto

## Lois Franklin

From the Echo (Nov 2021 ) By Linda Salotto

Do you know Lois Franklin? With more than 900 homes in Continental Country Club, there are so many folks to get to know! Each month we'll get to know someone new. Did you know that Lois volunteered for 10 years at a Disney Gold Tournament? She walked 18 holes, four days in a row as a walking scorekeeper. In 1986, Lois and her husband moved to Continental for the golf and because the lawn maintenance was done by Continental! At that time, the golf course was private. She said sometimes they would tee off with three groups per hole. Many golfers walked the course. If you had a golf cart, it had to be white or cream. Lois enjoys playing cards three times a week. She used to organize and play Bridge, play pickleball, golf, and enjoyed Continental's bus trips. The people are what makes Continental so special, she says. Lois is excited for 2022 as her daughter will be moving to Continental. Lois lives at 11 Bobcat Trail. Stop and say hi when you're out and about. Thanks for sharing, Lois.

## Russ Main

From the Echo (Dec 2021 ) By Linda Salotto

How appropriate that we get to know Russ Main this holiday season. Russ has a servant's heart for our community and the surrounding area. Russ and his wife Cathy were traveling in their motor home going to fairs selling antiques. They decided to check out Continental. They really liked the community's layout and have been here for 28 years. After moving here, Russ volunteered in the area for Meals on Wheels and offered to help do projects in Continental. Over the years, he has rebuilt and painted the water shacks on the golf course, helped build the shelves for the Food Pantry, restrung the pool furniture and painted tables, helped with the lounge renovation, and rebuilt the park benches. He has also helped clear the banks by Hidden Lake, cleared the many trails that are beyond the dog park, helped put up the Christmas decorations throughout the park, and he has been on the CCC Board, twice! Russ is a master craftsman. You should see the beautiful furniture, bowls, birds and so much more that he has crafted. He enjoys working with wood so it made sense for him to offer his services to the community. Stop by 65 Seminole Path in Phase 1 this holiday season and check out the beautiful Christmas decorations.

Lee Ford

From the Echo (January 2022) Linda Salotto

Happy New Year! Have you decided getting healthy is your New Year's resolution? Did you know that Lee Ford was born 101 years ago in Austria! She attributes a lot of her longevity to leading a healthy lifestyle. She spent her early years in Austria hiking and being outside. She still exercises at home and does Bend and Breathe twice a week. Lee believes you have to be engaged in your health. Her career is in the healthcare field where she strongly believes in the importance of taking responsibility for your health. She believes in looking at the whole person, and that we need to be aware of all areas of our health such as mental, dental, nutritional and exercise. Lee and her husband bought two properties in Continental 38 years ago. They traveled a lot and finally in 1994, they moved here full time. They were married for 67 years before his passing. Lee said he was "one of God's noblemen." Lee's daughter lives in Inverness. She comes and takes her to the Bend and Breathe classes twice a week. Lee wishes she had more time and was a little younger. She has had an interest in having a chapter of The National Aging in Place Council for Continental Country Club. It is a "network of support for older consumers, so they might continue to lead active, healthy lives while they are growing older." <https://Agelnplace.com>. Maybe you could be the person to bring a Chapter of this organization to Continental. Thank you, Lee, for your inspiration.

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Gene Underwood

From the Echo (February 2022) Linda Salotto

Retired Sergeant Major Gene Underwood served our country for 27 years in the United States Army. After enlisting at 18, he served in the far east, Europe and finished the last five years of his career at the Pentagon. At one point Gene's three sons and a daughter-in-law were all serving at the same time. Thank you for your service, Gene. While in the service, he was able to earn a double major degree of business and political science from the University of Maryland. After his career in the Army, he started his own construction company in Virginia. He brought his son into the business and when he was ready to retire, he gave the company to his son. In 1996 or 97, Gene and his wife were winter Rving in Claremont, with a couple of Army buddies. They scouted the area for good communities. All three couples agreed that Continental was a great choice. Gene wanted a golf course community and he also played softball. They all bought in CCC! Gene's house was in Phase 11 and they were snowbirds until they decided to move to Florida full time. In 2003 they bought a lot in Phase III, chose their house, and moved here full time. After moving to Continental, Gene served his community. He was a local handyman in CCC. He helped construct the softball field pavilion, shed, kitchen, and the announcer's area. You could also find Gene helping with cleanup after hurricanes and storms. Gene and his wife were very active with rotating dinner parties, golf cart parades and other clubs at Continental. Gene played softball for 15 years. You'll recognize Gene and his golf cart by the University of Tennessee flags, a team he has followed since his youth, growing up in Tennessee. He's also a fan of the University of Maryland and the Kansas City Chiefs. Say hi to Gene when you see him working around his house at 105 Forest Blvd. or on the golf course.

Jean Knolle

From the Echo (March 2022) By Linda Salotto

Many of you know Jean Knolle as a great golfer. But did you know she was a professional horse jumper in high school, or that she was a high school registrar in upstate New York for 22 years? Jean is still very active and plans on playing 18 holes of golf two or three times a week for the rest of her life! When Jean first got to Continental, you drove in on a dirt road, most people walked the golf course or you had to have a white or tan golf cart. Jean played six days a week and walked the course back then. She also walked in the community every morning and was a bowler! She attributes her longevity to staying active. Golf is what brought Jean and her husband, Chuck to Continental Country Club. They toured a home and played a round of golf. Then they walked off the course and headed right for the sales office! That was 36 years ago! Jean and her husband were part of the group that was able to make Continental a resident owned community. That group included Chuck Noll and Adrian Neil, the original Board of Directors! Jean found ten families that were willing to put in \$10,000 each to secure the \$100,000 down payment to get the mortgage. To celebrate Continental becoming a resident owned community, they had a Green and White Celebration. That is the same Green and White Celebration that is held each year! There is much more to this story! Ask Jean, or go to the Continental website and read about the history of our community. Jean lost her husband of 66 years in October of 2020. He was 97! Jean travels to North and South Carolina to visit their two sons, two step daughters and five grandchildren. Say hi to Jean when you see her at home at 30 Magnolia Lane or on the golf course!

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Rose, Debbie, Jeff Ashley

From the Echo (April 2022) By Linda Salotto

There are so many family stories about how people found Continental! This month we'll meet Rose Ashley, her son Jeff and daughter-in-law, Debbie. Rose and her husband Bob spent two months looking around Florida for their future home. They wanted to own their land and many of the communities they visited had only land leases. They found Continental, bought a lot and picked out their home for 116 Winterberry Lane. Phase 11 was dirt roads when they came in 1984, 37 years ago! Rose's husband played tennis and golf. They had wonderful neighbors and had so much fun. Rose loved her ten years of volunteering at Wildwood's Kindergarten classroom. Rose enjoys the resident ladies, playing cards and socializing. She feels she has had a blessed 92 years! Did you know that Rose went on a cruise to the Caribbean? On one of the islands, she did a zip line to celebrate her 80th birthday! In 1984, Debbie asked to be transferred to Florida. She moved in with Rose! Jeff joined her after he sold the farm in Michigan. They soon joined in on the Continental lifestyle. They live at 605 Robin Lane. Debbie is active with the craft club, resident ladies and enjoys the pool. Jeff played softball for 15 years, worked in the maintenance department for 10 years and is loved by everyone. He used to bake three layer cakes, cut them up and deliver them to the neighbors! Debbie and Jeff will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on April 7th.

Celia Wollner

From the Echo (May 2022) By Linda Salotto

Celia Wollner and her husband Allen took advantage of the campaign to lure northerners to Continental Country club. They had driven by Continental many times as they drove to visit their son in Altamonte Springs. In 1983 they were flown to Continental from Wisconsin, given free housing, golf, and free meals at the restaurant. It worked! They had already sold their home up north. They bought their lot at 108 Winterberry Lane in Phase 2 and picked out their home. It was the first home on Winterberry. They moved in the next April but stayed in their cottage up north for four months during the summer. Her son now owns the cottage, so she can still go up and enjoy the cooler weather. Celia has now been here 38 of her 98 years! You will find Celia most days at the pool doing her exercises. She says she has enjoyed the pool since the day they moved in! She also enjoys playing bridge and doing puzzles. Celia's son still lives in Florida. She has another son and a daughter who live up north. She is blessed to have seven grandchildren: four boys and three girls. She is also blessed to have seven great grandchildren: four boys and three girls! One of them is getting married in June, and she hopes to travel to Wisconsin to be there for the wedding. Celia let me read the Continental book seen above, which was published in 1994. It gives the early history of Continental: the good, the bad and the ugly! There are probably many copies of it in our community. It's an interesting read!

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Dennis Nantt

From the Echo (June 2022) By Linda Salotto

At 81, you would think Dennis Nantt would be slowing down a bit. But not Dennis. You'll probably see Dennis walking, biking, playing golf, or working out at the Fitness Center. He is now training for a 2023 trip to New Zealand for a hiking and kayaking trip. He will meet some of his wife's family from Australia. Dennis met his Australian wife when he was stationed in New Guinea. They were married for 48 years before her passing. He went to Australia almost every two years to visit the inlaws and go on new adventures. He has visited many National Parks both in Australia and the United States. He's been outback camping, mountain climbing, as well as spending time with his wife's family. One year they flew to London and then Paris. For one of the weeks, they rented a boat and traveled some of the French canals. Most summers, Dennis will travel to his home state of Wisconsin. From there he goes on to North Dakota and Washington seeing his family and our beautiful nation. One year he drove to Maryland and picked up his daughter. They traveled throughout New England and then made their way west to see family in Wisconsin and North Dakota. Like many people in Continental, Dennis and his wife came to visit friends. They bought a winter house on East Quail. Later, they chose their lot on 109 Forest Blvd and designed their new full-time home. They had looked at another location in the Panhandle but enjoyed the warmer weather in Central Florida. Dennis enjoys the people, many amenities and the safety that Continental provides. Most Thursdays, Dennis gets together with Rose Ashley, and Dottie and Ken Owens to go out for a meal and socializing. He has also served on the Board of Directors, the Golf Board and played softball for 19 years. What an inspiration!

Joanne Beebe

From the Echo (July 2022) By Linda Salotto

You may know Joanne Beebe from Resident Ladies, the President of Arts & Crafts, or at Karaoke. Joanne has only been at Continental for six years but, boy, has she been busy. She found CCC because it was close to Pembroke where her mother and aunt live. Joanne and her husband live at 26 Magnolia Lane in Phase 1. For their first two years, Joanne commuted two hours to work in Palatka, Florida. She jumped right in at Continental and helped with entertainment at our restaurant. Joanne's favorite Continental activity is Karaoke at the lounge with friends. After retiring, she did ceramics and loved it. She soon tried many other arts and crafts activities including stained glass and fused glass. You can see some of her pieces in her photo. You can also check out three pieces in her front yard of her house. She invites everyone to try pottery when it is going to be offered in September. Joanne is originally from Baltimore. Then her family moved to Maine. She worked many years for the Hodgdon Yacht company in Maine. You can see a photo of one of the yachts on the left side of her photo. In her free time Joanne is researching and writing books about her family's ancestry. She enjoys finding leads through different sources that give her names, articles, birth certificates and death certificates about her mother and father's families going back to the 1700s. Joanne will have been to Maine to visit her daughter, son and her three wonderful grandchildren by the time you read this article. Her wisdom on life is: "Have some fun! Life is too short!"

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Richard Burr

From the Echo (August 2022) By Linda Salotto

Richard Burr's home at 28 Seminole Path is also called "Gator Inlet". Richard's parents bought the 4-acre lot 40 years ago in 1982. Richard inherited the property two years ago after his father passed away. He lives near Miami where he is a wildlife rehabilitator. He comes to CCC two or three times a month to enjoy their "Florida paradise". There are now four generations who have or do enjoy Gator Inlet. Richard's passion is being able to preserve wildlife and habitats. Lisa Abrams let him know that the 8-acre parcel behind his house was for sale. He recently purchased that parcel to preserve the wildlife. Many species live and raise their families in that area. When Richard is at Gator Inlet, he spends most mornings and evenings being still by the canal. He enjoys watching the alligators, turtles, snakes, birds, and bobcats, just to name a few. Richard posts lots of pictures on the Continental Discussion Group's Facebook page. Recently he showed his new bat house that was installed in his back yard. He loves sharing and chatting with people. He will show you wildlife, maps, old paperwork and the construction of the home from 40 years ago. It truly is a piece of paradise right here at CCC. Get in touch with Richard. He will give you a tour and make your day!

## Brian and Sue Horsman

From the Echo (Sept 2022) By Linda Salotto

Sue Horsman and her husband Brian have only been living at Continental for about two years. Sue has already been busy as the ladies 9 hole golf board rep; she's the chaplain on the Veterans committee, enjoys the resident ladies, water aerobics, the library, golf, and she recently joined AMVETS and the Elks club. Sue and Brian followed their friend and neighbor, Bob Carroll from rural Maine. They live at 118 Lyonia Lane in Phase 11. They love the Continental life, and Sue especially enjoys riding around in search of alligators. She is hopeful some of her seven siblings from the midwest will retire here in the future. Sue was inspired by her high school physics teacher and joined the Air Force as a 17 year old with her parents' permission. She was in command and control for nine years. She was in the military for 27 years and retired as a Major in the Army Reserves. Thank you for your service to our country. Sue met Brian when she was helping a good friend plan an anniversary party. Brian was her friend's cousin. They hit it off right away and have now been married for 27 years. They plan on traveling and cruising in their retirement. She retired from her job as an anesthesiologist after a stroke that almost took her life. Her colleagues worked diligently to help her live through the ordeal that left her with a pacemaker. Brian waited with her for three days before she came to and was told what happened. She is thankful to be alive and living her well-deserved retirement here at Continental.

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## Steve and Sharon Chapman

From the Echo (Oct 2022) By Linda Salotto

Steve Chapman came to Continental after a recommendation from a friend. His friend lived in the Villages, but he knew CCC would be a good fit for Steve and Sharon. He was right. They love their home and pool at 503 Oak Blvd in Phase 2. Steve loves to play golf, have lunch at the lounge, and volunteer within our community. He and some others have spent the summer helping to make wonderful improvements to our golf course. He is very proud of our workers and volunteers at CCC. Steve has lived the American dream. He was born in a dirt floor home in Georgia. He enlisted in the Navy and earned his degree through the GI bill. At one point he was working two jobs and going to college. (Sharon helped!) Steve served our country for 28 years. He spent eight and a half years in the Navy. On returning home, he was a DC policeman for nine years. Those were the years of the Vietnam War protests. He then spent ten years in the Secret Service at the White House. He retired at 45 with full disability because of an injury. We are so thankful for your service, Steve. Steve and Sharon spent a couple years traveling in their 32-foot Carver boat. Then, they decided to sell everything, and bought a 41-foot bus. They spent the next 15 years traveling to Mexico and 49 states in their RV. They also flew to Hawaii to complete the 50 states! Steve will tell you that he has had a wonderful life with his wife and best friend, Sharon.

Deb Egger

From the Echo (Dec 2022) By Linda Salotto

You may know Deb Egger because she is on the Board of Directors. But did you know that she has been on the board four times and was acting GM twice? Deb has served Continental Country Club for 25 years. Even when she moved here, she worked many jobs in the community. Deb came to visit her parents who lived at 13 Big Oak Lane. In 1996 Deb and her husband started looking for a retirement home in CCC. At that time, there were 268 homes for sale! They took their time looking around and finally decided on their home at 100 Big Oak Lane. They moved into CCC in 1997. Three years ago, they decided to pull out their manufactured home and build a stick home. It is the only one in Continental. The board had previously decided that stick-built homes could be constructed in CCC. Unfortunately, Deb's husband passed away before they could move into their new home. Deb loves our community. She loves the people, the golf course, exercise room, softball field as well as the lounge and restaurant. Deb was living in Leesburg when she was young. In 1995, she had her first legal drink in our lounge! Deb spent 25 years as the document control supervisor for the Zion Nuclear plant in Illinois. The maintenance supervisor said she looked like a nice Polish girl and called her "Stella". Deb laughed because she is Scottish. The nickname has stuck! Our community has been blessed to have such a dedicated, hard working servant. She truly has a servant's heart and works hard for our Continental "family". Thank you for your dedication to CCC. Deb's words of wisdom for us: "Live life to the fullest, because life is short!"

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Bonnie Miller

Meet Your Neighbors By Linda Salotto

Jan 2023

If you want to have some fun, get together with Bonnie Miller! Bonnie surprised her brother Ken with Mr. Big Foot at Christmas time. She had help from some fun-loving neighbors and friends. She came up with the idea, got it made by some friends and then she painted it. These helpers took it and assembled it at his house on Robin Road while she kept her brother busy! He found it the next morning and boy was he surprised! What fun. Bonnie came to us from Texas but she spent the first 13 years of her life living on the beach in Bermuda! Her father was a civil servant who worked for the military. Bonnie came to Continental 9 years ago. She worked for the VA for many years. She retired 2 years ago from being the volunteer coordinator in the Villages VA Clinic. Bonnie lives at 112 Lyonia Lane and she thinks she has the best neighbors in the whole community. She is very active in the community and with her new puppy! Bonnie is the treasurer of the Arts and Crafts club, works at Publix and she has home parties selling Ruby Ribbon support wear. Bonnie loves water aerobics, Resident Ladies, the library, book club, Arts and Crafts and feeling safe living in Continental. Also, she is lucky to have her sister, Donna Peterson and her brother, Ken Glanister living in Continental. In 2021, Bonnie was instrumental in organizing Christmas gifts for all of the staff that work in Continental. She loves to cook and makes extra to bring to her wonderful neighbors. Thanks for sharing your gifts with our community, Bonnie. Two of her favorite quotes... "Blessed to be a blessing". From Genesis  
That "Love Thy Neighbor" thing, I meant it. God

# From the ECHO

## Meet your Neighbors

Additional earlier Articles

by Georgia Marchbanks with photographs by Craig Marchbanks

## The Man Behind The Continental Country Club Veterans Association

by Georgia Marchbanks with photographs by Craig Marchbanks

When my husband and I relocated here, we were pleased to hear there was a very active veterans group here in the community. We were especially impressed with the commander of the organization, Billy Schools. His leadership style is nurturing, caring, but also commanding, necessary to lead a diverse group of veterans from the different military services and all military ranks. Billy is the face of the Association but I wanted to share with everyone who he is and what he does for our community and for those outside of Continental.

Billy Schools was born in Baltimore, Maryland, but he and his family moved to Orlando, Florida, when he was 12 years old. He was happily living his life in Orlando when he was drafted in October 1965 and sent to Boot Camp at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. From Ft Jackson, Billy was assigned to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, to receive training and work as a Army Transportation Specialist. After about a year at Redstone, Billy was sent to Vietnam and assigned to the 25 Division in Cuchi, Vietnam. After nine months there, his unit relocated to Pei Ku, Vietnam, where he spent his remaining time until he was released from active duty. While in Vietnam, Billy operated the M520 8-ton GOER (Government Operated Experimental Research) vehicle, the US Army's heavy amphibious tactical truck. "Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft can't supply everything" Billy said to a reporter from Orlando back in 1967, "these cargo carriers go where other vehicles can't go, especially in the mon-soon season." It was dangerous duty resupplying the Special Forces Camps and he was frequently subjected to enemy gunfire during these runs. Billy was fortunate to survive his tour in Vietnam and was glad to return to Orlando when he was released from active duty and rejoined his family who was still living there. In Orlando, Billy joined the Operating Engineers Union and began a four year apprenticeship that led to a long term career as a crane operator in construction engineering.

Billy met his lovely wife, Linda, 24 years ago at the American Legion in Orlando where she was working as a bartender. They married in 1996 in St Augustine, Florida, and, of note, just recently renewed their marriage vows at that same location.

Billy retired in 2006 and they moved to the Continental Country Club. He joined the Continental Country Club Veterans Association in 2008 and participated as a ceremonial shooter in the Honor Guard. In 2014, he was asked to be the Commander of the Unit and has been acting in that capacity ever since. "In 2004, a handful of veterans founded the Veterans Club," Billy explained, "and the club had to rely on other organizations to help our programs and ceremonies, with a marine rifle squad and an honor guard coming from the American Legion from Orlando." Billy said that in time they were able to put together their own programs, build the Veterans Memorial, and buy uniforms for the Honor Guard and Color Guard. "The original membership was the ones who laid the foundation for our memorial as well as the foundation for what our club is today," Billy explained.

Billy is very proud of all the many projects he and the organization are involved in. Their ceremonial services are sought out for funerals and memorials that take place at Bushnell National Cemetery to honor veterans who have died. Billy coordinated and established three permanent POW displays in the local area, at the new VA Outpatient Clinic, Bushnell National Cemetery, and in the Clubhouse here at Continental Country Club. The veterans in our community who are not able to help themselves are always at the forefront of Billy's attention and he receives calls all the time from those in need of assistance. He has led efforts to repair their homes, help them with needed yard work, provide transportation for doctor's visits, and work with management to ensure that they are not evicted from

their homes. Billy coordinates and leads the annual Veterans Day and Memorial Day Programs in our Community and the Armistice Anniversary Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park in Leesburg, Florida. Billy also leads the Continental Country Club Veterans Association's many charitable endeavors. In order to raise the funds, and in addition to collecting membership dues, he must conduct two hot dog fund raising events per year and also sell the memorial bricks which forever become part of the Veterans Memorial. Billy is proud that he and the membership are helping the homeless veteran population and their families in Ocala National Forest by working with the Organization of Resource and Recovery for the Homeless by donating cash contributions and clothing. Billy's wife, Linda, is always at his side and participates in the charity and fund raising activities as well. She is also a member of the Color Guard and carries a flag in all of the Association's ceremonial programs.

Billy Schools informed me that he is stepping down from his position as Commander of the Association in January 2020. He said he plans to spend more time traveling with his wife which his current responsibilities preclude him from doing. He said that he will still be highly involved in the organization, just not the leader. We can't thank Billy and Linda enough for all they have done over the years for the residents of Continental Country Club and especially for its veteran residents. We salute you, Billy Schools, and we are most fortunate to have benefitted from your leadership.



DR LORETTA "LEE" FORD, WOW!!  
John Miller

Jan 2019 Echo

We are so lucky to have Lee in our presence!!

Dr Ford is co-founder of the first nurse practitioner program. Along with pediatrician Henry Silver, Dr. Ford started the pediatric nurse practitioner program at the University of Colorado in 1965. At this time there are over 248,000 Practitioners in the United States. What a fantastic addition to the medical community. Lee has traveled to over 25 countries, furthering the cause for Nurse Practitioner.

On December 8, 2018 many of her profession gathered to honor and pay tribute to the amazing lady and also celebrate her 98 birthday. The 9 hole scramble was a huge success followed by a Luncheon at Continental. Prizes, laughter, food, and accolades were in abundance. Can you imagine she's still taking golf lessons to improve her game?

Proceeds from the event and contributions are still coming in to support her Scholarship program at the University of Colorado, School of Nursing and the University of Rochester School Of Nursing.

Wow! We are so blessed to have this amazing lady living with us here at Continental.

To learn more about this fantastic woman...just Google her!



Tony Mazzeo Another Hero in Our Midst  
Echo July 2019

By Georgia Marchbanks with photographs by Craig Marchbanks

When I arrived to talk to Tony Mazzeo at his house, I found him reading the book, *The Jersey Brothers* by Sally Mott Freeman. Tony told me that some things in the book paralleled his experiences during World War II. Tony had been living a normal, happy life in New Jersey, until that life drastically changed when he was drafted in 1942 and sent to Ft Dix and then on to Miami Beach for field training on that famous beach. After some months, Tony was transferred to Scott Field Army Air Force Base. After eight months there, Tony was on the move again, this time on his way to Yu-ma, Arizona, for training to become a tactical communications specialist. However, he wasn't there more than a month before he and his whole unit were sent to San Francisco and shipped out on the USS President Polk for a zig-zagging thirty one day journey to Port Darwin, Australia. From there, Tony and his unit were on the move again, this time to Port Moresby, New Guinea, where they encountered their first small arms fire while they were tasked with laying out metal runways for aircraft landing strips. Never to remain anywhere very long, Tony and his unit were sent to Morotai, a small island in the Netherlands East Indies, to join forces with the Australians there. The Allies needed Morotai as a base to support the eventual liberation of the Philippines. The Japanese were determined to maintain their stronghold on the island and Tony said the Japanese were bombing them continuously. They were small contingents of two or three at a time that would return almost every night. Tony recalls that one time a Japanese contingent dropped incendiary bombs that wiped out an entire squadron of Australian planes. Tony said that they hadn't received all of their guns yet so he grabbed a machete and jumped into a foxhole where he spent the night and waited until he knew the Japanese weren't returning.

The invasion of the Philippines by Japanese forces had begun on December 8, 1941, ten hours after their attack on Pearl Harbor. As a result of that action, Tony and his unit were sent to the Philippines, where his unit was reorganized and renamed the 7th Tactical Aircraft Communications Squadron. Their mission was to communicate with the fighter aircraft and relay their bombing targets. Tony said that they did this by using Morse code with the fighters. Tony said that he and his squadron were constantly moving. While in the Philippines, they traveled as far south as Zamboanga, and as far north as Luzon. Tony was soon to be involved in the Battle of Leyte, the amphibious invasion of the island of Leyte in the Philippines by American forces and Filipino guerrilla fighters under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. Tony said he and his unit traveled to Leyte on a Liberty ship, a class of cargo ship built in the United States during World War II. When they moored, they had to descend the ship via rope ladders onto small boats that would take them ashore. It was at this time during the Pacific campaign against the Imperial Japanese Army that Tony had the opportunity to meet General MacArthur.

When Tony was sent to Luzon, he learned that it was to become a staging area for the United States to conduct a land and sea battle in the Pacific Theater of Operations with its allies against the Empire of Japan. Tony saw hundreds of US ships in the harbor preparing for the attack against Japan. During the battle preparations, Tony said that they were attacked continuously by Japanese Kamikaze aircraft, planes loaded with explosives making deliberate suicidal crash missions on their enemy targets. While Tony was in Luzon, he heard that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Japan. Soon after, he heard that a second bomb had been dropped on Nagasaki and that Japan had finally surrendered.

Tony and his unit were sent to Tachikawa Airfield in the western part of Tokyo, Japan. Tachikawa had received in-tense bombing by the US Army Air Force's B-29 Superfortress. Tony recalled seeing that the entire area had been bombed and was in complete darkness. However, the war had ended and the celebrations were lighting up the night sky and Tony recalled a feeling of joy knowing that the fighting had ended and he would be going home soon. He left the Pacific theater via the USS Long Island on his way back to San Francisco. From San Francisco, he was sent to March Field where he saw his first jet propelled aircraft. Tony took a very long cross country train ride from California back to his beloved state, New Jersey. After the war, Tony returned to his old job in air conditioning. Within a very short time, he was promoted to Sales Manager for York Air Conditioning Company. He was so successful that he purchased three separate businesses of his own. One of his businesses employed a sandwich chef named Ann who he eventually married. They have been happily married ever since then and have a large extended family.

In March of 2013, Tony was selected to participate in the Villages Honor Flight, a program that honors veterans by flying them to Washington DC to tour our national military monuments. While on this flight, he met one of the organization sponsors, who coincidentally had been General MacArthur's secretary during the war. They enjoyed sharing their memories of the General and of a time so very long ago.

Tony is now 96 years old and he and Ann have decided not to travel anymore so their family travels here to gather for their family reunions. If you look at the maps on their wall, Tony has pins identifying all the places that he has been. It is readily apparent that Tony really doesn't need to go anywhere because he has already sent most of the world. Tony and Ann are avid walkers in the neighborhood so if you see them out and about, be sure to say hello and realize that you are in the presence of a true hero and his leading lady.



Ken Owens

ANOTHER CONTINENTAL COUNTRY CLUB HERO

Echo August 2019

by Georgia Marchbanks with photographs by Craig Marchbanks

When I first heard that there was a World War II veteran living at Continental Country Club that had flown the B-29 Superfortress out of Tinian in the Pacific Theater, I knew that I wanted to interview him. The B-29s played a pivotal role in the ending of World War II and to get to meet one of those pilots was indeed a great honor. Ken Owens and his lovely wife, Dottie, agreed to meet with me and my husband to tell us about their lives before, during, and after the war.

Ken volunteered to join the Air Force right after his 18 birthday in 1942. The Air Force recognized that Ken had the skills they were looking for in a future pilot and after he attended Basic Officer Training at Maxwell Field in Alabama, he was sent to a flying school in Avon Park, Florida. After learning how to fly in a Piper Cub airplane, Ken was sent back to Maxwell Field, Alabama, to further develop his aviation skills. There he flew a single wing, single engine plane learning aerobatics, which proved useful training for his later real world combat missions. Ken became highly proficient at performing loops, rolls, wing-overs, and all the other evasive tactics used in flying. His last training as a cadet was an assignment to Moody Field, Georgia, for advanced flight training, flying a AT-17/UC-78B Bobcat "bamboo bomber", a two-engine plane with two pilots. These planes were dubbed the "bamboo bombers" by the pilots who flew them because they looked like they were made of bamboo and glue. Ken flew in formations across the South in these aircraft but these planes were not actually ever used to perform bombing missions. The "bamboo bombers" were used during World War II to bridge the gap between single-engine training aircraft and twin-engine combat aircraft. After graduating from advanced flight training, Ken received the coveted rank of Second Lieutenant and once again was assigned back to Maxwell Field, Alabama, in the fall of 1944, this time to fly the B-24 Liberator. The B-24 Liberator was a long range heavy bomber used during World War II by both the U.S. and British Air Forces. The planes were powered by four engines and had a spacious boxlike fuselage with the cockpit about 18 feet above the ground. Ken recalls, "The first time I tried to steer a B-24 on the ground, I ran off the runway into the mud and almost got stuck. Steering a big thing like that plane with four engine throttles took getting used to." Ken said that he finally did get the plane out of the mud by using all the engines at full throttle.

After Ken Owens successfully completed his B-24 training within about three months, he was assigned to Kirkland Field, New Mexico, to begin his training to fly the B-29 Superfortress. He was assigned a full flight crew and they began training with their ultimate destination being the South Pacific. "The B-29 was a bigger, faster more maneuverable plane than the B-24", Ken said, "We learned to navigate and fly long distances in the newest bomber in the Air Force." Ken said that to get from the front to the back of the aircraft you had to crawl through a 20 foot "tunnel" above the bomb bay. He was also impressed that this plane could fly 15 to 20 hours without stopping to refuel which was new technology back then. Ken completed his intensive flight training in New Mexico after four months and headed for the South Pacific. During the war the U.S. had seized Guam, and the Mariana Islands from Japan which put the B-29s within flying range of Tokyo. Ken was assigned to the 20 Air Force Command and given orders to fly to Tinian, an island in the Northern Mariana Islands. Ken and his crew flew a brand new B-29 from Santa Barbara, California, to Tinian only stopping at Kwajalein, a small island 1,500 miles from the west coast of the U.S. before landing at Tinian. They finally arrived late at night in the dark with only some glowing fires near the runway to light their way. Ken remembers, "There were still Japanese soldiers hiding on the island and every few days, we'd hear gun fire as a hiding place was discovered by the Americans." Tinian was of key strategic importance because it served as the forward

operational base from which the B-29 Bombers flew to Japan. Because the round trip to Japan was close to 3,000 miles, all bombers that took off from Tinian had to be overloaded with fuel. With its proximity to Japan and infrastructure in place, Tinian was chosen as the base of operations for an atomic attack against Japan in August of 1945. However, just before Lt Col Tibbitts and the Enola Gay arrived at Tinian from Guam to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, Ken and his crew were sent to Guam. It was there that they learned that the atomic bomb attacks on Japan had occurred and the war was ending. Ken began thinking of going home but he had one last very important mission to complete. On September 2, 1945, he flew in a formation of over 400 bombers over the USS Missouri in Tokyo Harbor as the peace treaty was being signed in the presence of General Douglas MacArthur. "The hundreds of U.S. planes that roared overhead were so low, about 200 feet above the deck, that they must have shaken the teeth of those on deck," Ken recalls, "The leader of the formation, a veteran pilot, said let's let them know the Air Force was in the war!"

With the war now over Ken and about 20 other pilots had to fly the B-29s from Guam to Hawaii. Pilots from West Point then picked up the planes in Hawaii and flew them to the U.S. With the planes safely back in U'S territory, Ken was released from the military after 3 years of being away and it was finally time to go home. Ken returned to Waukegan, Illinois, where he grew up and was soon met his lovely wife Dot-tie. Dottie is a former USO dancer although Ken and Dottie's paths never crossed during the war. Ken went back to college and graduated from the Milwaukee School of Engineering with an Electrical Engineer-ing Degree. His career choices took him to jobs with increased responsibilities in Boston, Massachusetts, Windsor, Connecticut, and finally to Stamford, Connecticut, where he ultimately retired from his position of Director of Communications for a Combustion Engineering Company. Ken and Dottie relocated to Continental Country Club in 1988 and continue to enjoy their Florida lifestyle. Ken is the former Editor of "The Echo" newsletter and plays golf at least once a week. Dottie does yoga regularly and is considered a "superstar" in her class. During their 73 years of marriage, they have enjoyed seeing much of the world together traveling to China, Egypt, France, and Austria. They have ended their overseas travel of late to focus on visiting their five children, located in Massachusetts, Tennessee, and southern Florida. So when you encounter Ken and Dottie out and about, I hope you now realize that you are in the presence of a true hero and his lifelong heroine.



**Ken Owens, top row, second from right, with his B-29 crew**



**Ken and Dottie Owens**



**Lieutenant Ken Owens**



**Georgia Marchbanks and Ken and Dottie Owens**