DEEP CREEK CIVIC ASSOCIATION

DEEP CREEK NEWS

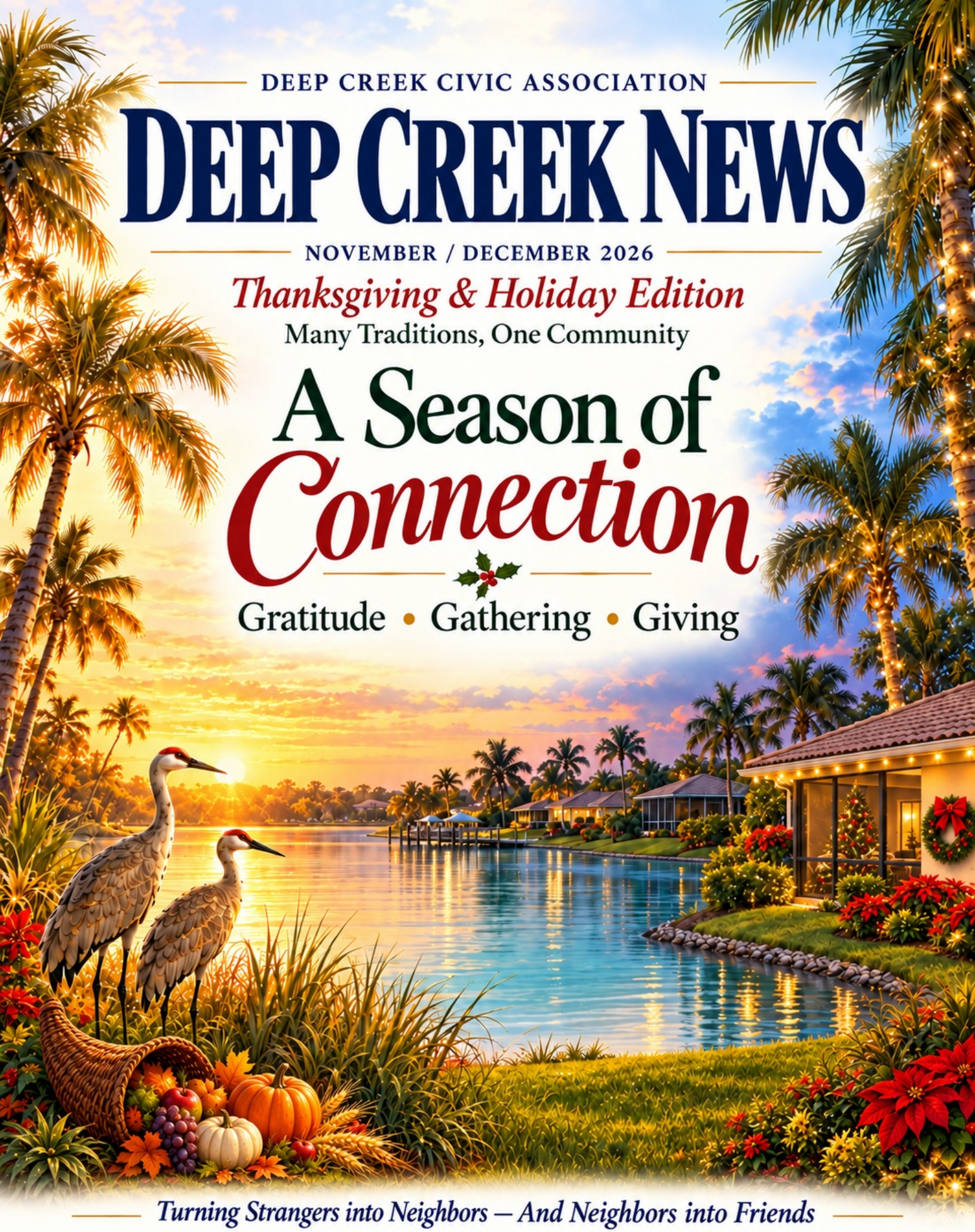
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026

Thanksgiving & Holiday Edition

Many Traditions, One Community

A Season of *Connection*

Gratitude • Gathering • Giving



Turning Strangers into Neighbors — And Neighbors into Friends

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026

A season of connection

Tap an article below to go directly to its page.

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READING ONLINE?

Click or tap underlined text, event titles, buttons, and business ads to open websites or contact details. Use the contents above to jump directly to an article.

The good in gathering

Thanksgiving & Holiday Edition • November–December 2026

As we move from Thanksgiving tables to holiday lights, this issue celebrates the people and traditions that make Deep Creek feel like home. Some neighbors are returning for the season. Others are settling in for the first time. There is room for all of us to take part.

Inside, neighbors share Christmas memories and treasured recipes, volunteers show what a small act of generosity can accomplish, and the calendar offers ways to spend time together. We also make room for different traditions, quieter celebrations, and the simple pleasure of knowing the people around us.

Thank you to everyone who sent a story, a photograph, an update, or a word of encouragement. Your contributions are the heart of Deep Creek News.

The newsletter team

Communications & Technology Director
Karrie Snider

Editors
Victoria Schmidt • Deb Bambrick
Laura Doerr • Rob Wilson

Advertising
Laura Doerr

Thank you to this issue’s contributors
Betty Ann Brunton, Betsy Musinski, Cindy Brown, Deb Bambrick, Debbie Bambrick, Debby Graves, Elaine Souliere, Margaret Tomassi Kang, Nancy Lomac, Sheri Burke, Steve Arnold, and our community partners and photographers.

SHARE SOMETHING FOR A FUTURE ISSUE

A memory, recipe, tradition, neighbor thank-you, or community project can be just 40–100 words.
Email stories and ideas • Send your photos

Details checked November 6, 2026. Confirm event information with organizers.

President’s Message

More Than an Address

Why connection matters in Deep Creek

An address tells someone where we live. It cannot tell them who waves when we walk past, who remembers that we have been away, or who makes room beside them at a gathering. Those small exchanges turn a collection of homes into a neighborhood.

Connection does not require a holiday party or a perfectly set table. It can begin with learning a name, inviting someone on a walk, or sitting together at a DCCA event.

Start with something small. “Would you like to join us?” can be enough. Offer a clear plan and an easy way to decline. A neighbor who cannot come today may still remember being asked.

Make room for different seasons of life. The holidays can bring excitement, but also distance from family or memories of someone we miss. A quiet conversation may be more welcome than a crowded celebration.

Let curiosity lead. Ask about a favorite recipe, a place someone once called home, or a tradition they would like to keep. Listen without assuming that everyone celebrates the same holidays in the same way.

Give people a way to contribute. One neighbor might bring cookies. Another might take photographs, set up chairs, or introduce a newcomer. Small jobs can fit busy schedules and still make a difference.

The stories in this issue show how ordinary moments can last. Pajamas become a family tradition. A handwritten recipe carries a grandmother’s memory. A neighborhood gathering becomes something friends want to repeat.

This season, consider one connection you would like to make. Learn a name. Offer a seat. Thank someone whose work often goes unnoticed. Follow up on a conversation you enjoyed.

We may not all celebrate alike, but we can all help create a place where people feel remembered. That is a good beginning—and a good reason to call Deep Creek home.



WARM REGARDS,

ROB WILSON, PRESIDENT

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

Our Community

Meet the neighbors and revisit the family traditions that make Deep Creek feel like home.

IN THESE PAGES

New members

Betty Ann Brunton’s neighbor story

Holiday traditions

Christmas memories from Sheri Burke and Margaret Tomassi Kang

“We have made some wonderful friendships with our neighbors”

— Betty Ann Brunton

One More Chair at the Table

A neighbor’s story

Betty Ann Brunton



Neighbors gather for a progressive New Year’s Eve party. Photo submitted by Betty Ann Brunton.

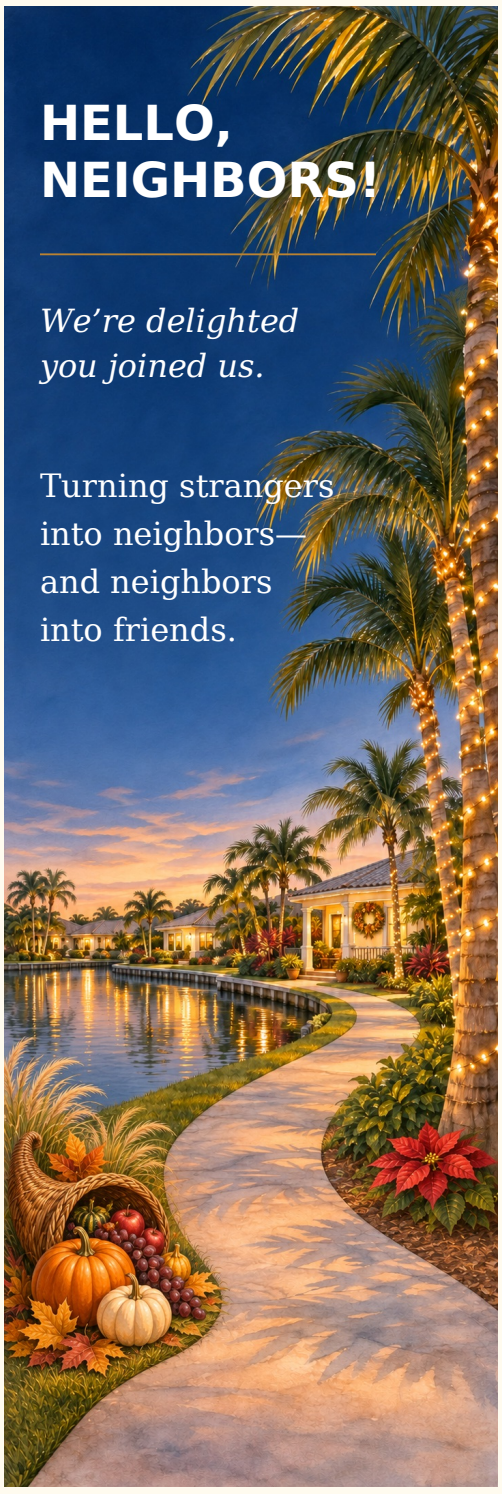
“My husband Jack and I moved into Deep Creek nine years ago. We have made some wonderful friendships with our neighbors and held a progressive New Year’s Eve party with them, an event we plan to make an annual tradition.”

MAKE A CONNECTION

Invite a neighbor for coffee, suggest a short walk, or bring someone along to a DCCA gathering. One shared plan can be the beginning of a tradition.

Welcome, New Members

We’re glad you’re part of the Deep Creek Civic Association.



PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING

OUR NEWEST DCCA MEMBERS

- Ceres Hernandez
- Craig D Jennings
- Juan Garcia
- Vergene Spangler-Braithwaite
- Brianne Burns
- Leo McNamara
- Cherye Wutz
- Sharon Olsommer
- Sue Barnhart
- Ross Erickson
- Karen Blecki
- Brigitta Zelasny
- Mark Highsmith
- Marilyn Stone
- Tony and Roberta Billing
- Michael Taubes
- Andy Rim
- Douglas Kelmar

YOUR NEXT HELLO COULD HAPPEN HERE

Find an event, introduce yourself, and enjoy the season together.
Explore the DCCA calendar

Many Traditions, One Community

Celebrate the season. Learn something new. Welcome a neighbor.

Our neighbors mark this season in many ways—through faith, family, gratitude, service, or rest. A thoughtful invitation leaves room for those differences.

A SEASON OF CELEBRATION

Diwali • November 8

This Hindu festival celebrates light, renewal, and the triumph of good. Practices and observance dates vary among communities. Learn more

Thanksgiving • November 26

A shared meal, a call to someone far away, or an act of service can offer a meaningful way to express gratitude.

Hanukkah • December 4–12

The Jewish Festival of Lights begins at sundown December 4 and ends after nightfall December 12. Traditions include lighting the menorah. Learn more

Christmas • December 25

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. Many families also share music, meals, decorations, and gifts. Neighbors' memories appear in this issue.

Kwanzaa • December 26–January 1

This African American and Pan-African cultural holiday celebrates seven principles, including unity, collective work, purpose, and creativity. Learn more

PLACES TO LEARN & CONNECT

Check current programs and visitor information before making plans.

Chabad of Charlotte County

Jewish community programs, learning, and holiday information. Visit website

Temple Shalom of Charlotte County

A Reform Jewish congregation in Port Charlotte. Visit website

Hindu Temple of Southwest Florida

Temple and cultural programs serving Southwest Florida. Visit website

Charlotte County Community Services

Libraries, recreation, parks, and public programs for all ages. Visit website

"Is there a tradition you enjoy at this time of year?"

Let each person decide how much to share. No one has to speak for an entire faith or culture.

AN INVITATION THAT MAKES ROOM

"You're welcome to join us." Ask about food preferences and timing, and give guests an easy way to say yes—or no.

The Shepard Family Christmas Tradition

By Sheri Burke

I was born to two very young parents who were still nearly children themselves. Without active parents of their own to guide them, they simply did the best they could, learning as they went.

Every Christmas Eve, my sisters and I were allowed to open one present—carefully chosen by our mother—from under the tree. By the time I was about eight, I had figured out that the gift was always pajamas, and I was always a little disappointed. Years later, as an adult, I finally asked my mother why. She told me that she wanted us to look nice for pictures when we woke up on Christmas morning. In that moment, I understood just how little money my parents had while raising us. Yet my sisters and I were so deeply loved and cherished that we never realized how little we had.

That simple gift became a tradition my sisters and I carried into our own families. Each Christmas Eve, our children were allowed to open one present—and, of course, it was always pajamas. Now that they are grown, I still send pajamas to them and to my grandchildren. What once seemed like an ordinary present has become a treasured reminder of our mother's love and the care woven through generations of our family.

"What once seemed like an ordinary present has become a treasured reminder of our mother's love."

Christmas with the Tomassi Family

By Margaret Tomassi Kang • Scranton, Pennsylvania, in the 1950s and ’60s

Christmas was a magical time of the year. We would enjoy the snow of the winter, build snowmen, and slide down Cherry St. sidewalks with makeshift sleds. When my dad was still alive, we would dig into the snow around the steps leading to his shoe repair shop on the corner of Cherry St. and Pittston Ave. to find coins dropped by customers on their way out of the store. The snow-covered backyard, bordered by dormant hedges, the Sullivans’ garden, and our garage, became a wonderland in which I would carve little paths meandering around toward the garage by dragging my boot-covered feet.

Those were the days best described as big, fat, Italian Christmases. Besides the Christmas tree and door wreath, we always had a log with candles to represent the Italian Ceppo, and a beautiful Nativity scene (presepio).

We always had plenty of Italian holiday food around and much holiday dinner planning was done. However, the most important family event of the season was the Vigilia dinner on Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, at dusk. That dinner is, by tradition, totally meatless. Many families still make it a point of having seven fish or meatless entrées, in honor of the seven sacraments. Others have 13, in honor of the apostles and Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. Some of the special foods we would look forward to having were codfish stew (baccala), squid (calamari) in marinara sauce with risotto, stuffed squid, fried smelts, Nonna Antonia’s (Tomassi) deep-fried pieces of bread dough with raisins rolled in sugar (frittelle), and Nonna Margaret’s (Pagnani) biscotti (knot cookies). Stockings were usually stuffed with whole walnuts, tangerines, almond nougat (torrone) in small boxes, sugar-coated almonds (confetti), clear barley sugar toy candies from the Globe Store, and popcorn balls. Along with the cookies, Grandma always made two fruitcakes: one dark and the other white. After dinner, we would belt out a few holiday songs a cappella. Midnight Mass ensued after we became older. At our Italian American church, there was the custom after Mass of kissing the feet of a wooden figure of the Baby Jesus, making a donation, and then receiving some of the straw from his crib to take home and put in our wallets to ensure prosperity throughout the year.

Continued on the next page →

The Memories That Stay

By Margaret Tomassi Kang • Christmas with the Tomassi family • continued

On Christmas Day, we would go to visit our godparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, all of whom lived within a few blocks from each other. Every stop would include an exchange of presents, a toast of “salute” or “cent’anni” and “Buon Natale,” and lots of good cheer. We would invariably end our travels at one of our grandparents’ homes to have a midday dinner which always included homemade ravioli, a salad, roasted fowl or pork, and potatoes with enticing aromas of rosemary, olive oil, and garlic.

After my dad’s death, financial circumstances became more dire for us. My mom wanted to have us enjoy the holidays, but we had to cut a few corners. One thing we did to save a couple of dollars was to go to get our tree from Georgetti’s Nursery on Christmas Eve. By then, the only trees left were tall, scraggly spruces that were half dead. We would get the tree for 50 cents and then the four of us would drag it down the mile-long Pittston Ave. hill. We would set it up in the front bay window facing Pittston Ave. We’d have fun decorating the tree with huge oval bulbs, glass ornaments, shiny icicles, and garlands of paper loops. My mom always made sure we had plenty of presents: toys, games, books, and clothing. The Salvation Army would always provide a new toy for each of us along with a turkey.

One time, just before Christmas, in 1957, a year after my dad’s death, my mom saw an essay contest in the local newspaper. It was sponsored by Kresge Corp. (K-Mart) and was called “Why I Like to Shop at Kresge’s.” She wrote the essay that included the phrase, “It has lots of toys for girls and boys.” She put my name on the essay and submitted it. We won second prize! It was a large blonde-haired doll. And I still have it! Uncle Al took me and my mom to the local CBS TV studios and I appeared, along with the other prize winners, on a segment of a locally produced children’s program, Romper Room. It was my first and last foray into the television media.

As much at Christmas as throughout our lives, we were indeed blessed with a loving, child-centered family life, rich in abundant love and support.

From Margaret’s recollections written in Punta Gorda on December 14, 2006.

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

Getting Together

Choose a date, bring a neighbor, and enjoy the season together.

IN THESE PAGES

Christmas Party & Winter Craft Fair

Trunk or Treat: 400+ kids

Creativity at every trunk

Pet Parade: Costume Stars

Tap an activity for details and registration. Confirm plans on the live calendar before heading out.

Open the live DCCA calendar

DCCA Holiday Calendar

November & December 2026

November

MON 9 — **Garden Club**
4 p.m. • See calendar for location.

TUE 10 — **Board Meeting**
6 p.m. • Section 20 POA office.

TUE 17 — **DCCA Happy Hour**
5–7 p.m. • Deep Creek Golf Club.

THU 19 — **Mexican Train Dominoes**
5:30–7:30 p.m. • JB's Corner Cafe. Registration required.

SAT 21 — **Bingo Night**
5–7:30 p.m. • Pilgrim Church. $25; 5 cards, 12 games.

MON 23 — **Hand & Foot Game Day**
12:30–3 p.m. • Deep Creek Elks. Registration required.

December

MON 7 — **Christmas Party**
5–9 p.m. • Harborside Tiki Bar. Details on page 12.

TUE 8 — **Board Meeting**
6 p.m. • Section 20 POA office.

SAT 12 — **Winter Outdoor Craft Fair**
9 a.m.–2 p.m. • Pilgrim Church.

SUN 13 — **White Christmas**
Broadway Palm • SOLD OUT.

MON 14 — **Garden Club**
4 p.m. • See calendar for location.

TUE 15 — **DCCA Happy Hour**
5–7 p.m. • Deep Creek Golf Club.

THU 17 — **Mexican Train Dominoes**
5:30–7:30 p.m. • JB's Corner Cafe. Registration required.

Celebrate the Season



MONDAY, DECEMBER 7 • 5–9 P.M.

Harborside Tiki Bar at
Four Points by Sheraton
Cocktails at 5 p.m. • Dinner at 6 p.m.
Music by Simply Sixties
Silent auction

Bring an unwrapped toy or a small gift card for **Camelot Community Care** and help make the season brighter for a child.

Register for the Christmas Party →

Tickets are **$60 per person**, plus a **$2.50 online processing fee** when paying online. Drinks are purchased separately. Everyone must register online, including those paying by check.

Paying by check? Checks must be received by **November 16**. Mail to DCCA, c/o Gerri Wilson, 307 Barcelona St., Punta Gorda, FL 33983. Questions: 828-482-2065.

Winter Outdoor Craft Fair

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 • 9 A.M.–2 P.M.

Pilgrim Church • 24515 Rampart Boulevard
Browse local vendors and enjoy a holiday outing close to home.

Vendors: $30 for an approximately 12 × 10-foot space. Bring your own tables, chairs, and canopy. Contact Deb at 330-703-1133 or debrt94@yahoo.com.

Craft Fair details →



400+ Kids. One Great Night.

Trunk or Treat • October 25, 2026 • Pilgrim Church

More than 400 children joined DCCA's Trunk or Treat for colorful costumes, creative trunks, and plenty of treats! Debbie Bambrick reported enthusiastic feedback about the new location at Pilgrim Church. Thank you to our trunk hosts, volunteers, candy donors, participating businesses, and families for making this celebration all about the kids.

LITTLE COSTUMES. BIG SMILES. A COMMUNITY FULL OF FUN.

















Photos: Debbie Bambrick and community submissions.

Colorful Costumes. Shared Smiles.

Neighbors, families, and friends make the celebration.















A little imagination. A lot of neighborly spirit.

Creativity at Every Trunk

A gallery of the decorated displays and the neighbors behind them.



The Crazy Cat Ladies.



Ghosts, pumpkins, and family fun.



Toni Stacy’s friendly monster.



Sand Dollar’s sweet welcome.



Treats for a costumed crew.



Celtics spirit meets Halloween.



Phillips Family AC keeps it cool.



Swift Electrical Repair.



The pool doctor is in!



Pirate spirit and plenty of treats.



Balloons and Halloween fun.

More Trunks. More Imagination.

A gallery of the decorated displays and the neighbors behind them.



Garden Club: a hive of creativity.



Black-cat magic and a spooky castle.



Pokémon comes to the party.



Batty for Halloween!



A witchy welcome.



Team Rocket and a ghostly crew.



All-out Halloween spirit.



A trunk full of Toy Story fun.



A starry, spooky celebration.



A rainbow of crayon creativity.



Charlotte High SGA.

Pet Parade: Costume Stars

Four-legged neighbors join the Halloween fun

Before Trunk or Treat, the Pet Costume Parade & Contest gave our four-legged neighbors their turn in the spotlight. Thank you to every pet and person who joined the fun, and congratulations to the costume-contest winners!

Contest categories: Small Dog • Medium Dog • Large Dog • Most Creative









Costumed participants from the day. Photos submitted by Debbie Bambrick.

THANK YOU TO OUR PET CONTEST PRIZE SPONSORS

BRIDLES & BISCUITS PET SUPPLIES SHOP

Sand Dollar Dog Spa & Pet Boutique

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

At Home and Outdoors

Take a closer look at a neighbor’s garden, the plants we grow, and the wildlife sharing our community.

IN THESE PAGES

Growing succulents with Cindy Brown

Gopher tortoises with Deb Bambrick

Recipes from our community

Then head to the kitchen for sausage dressing and two treasured holiday cookie recipes.

Landscape of the Month

Kathy and Robert Schoolcraft • Section 20

26570 Copiapo
Submitted by **Elaine Souliere**







Photos submitted by Elaine Souliere.

Elaine’s submission draws our attention to the Schoolcrafts’ landscape and its distinctive palm, which she describes as worth a walk or drive by.

Thank you to Kathy and Robert for adding to the beauty of our neighborhood.

Growing Succulents

Small plants, big beauty • By Cindy Brown

Kathy Kobrzycki from Dragonfly Succulents gave the Garden Club an informative talk on growing succulents at our October meeting. A summary of her talk follows.

Succulents are a wonderful way to bring color, charm, and a touch of nature into your home or garden. With their unique shapes, beautiful colors, and easy-care nature, these plants are perfect for beginners and experienced gardeners alike.





Scenes from the Garden Club's succulent program.

Sunlight and watering

Most succulents thrive in bright light, with several hours of sunlight each day. Place indoor plants near a sunny window, and gradually introduce outdoor plants to direct sunlight. When it comes to watering, less is more! Allow the soil to dry out completely between waterings to prevent root rot.

Choose the right soil

Succulents need well-draining soil to stay healthy. Use a cactus and succulent potting mix, and choose containers with drainage holes so excess water can escape.

Enjoy their beauty

From colorful echeverias to charming jade plants, succulents come in a wonderful variety of shapes and sizes. Group different varieties together for an eye-catching display, or grow them in decorative pots to brighten up any space.

A little care goes a long way

With plenty of light, well-draining soil, and careful watering, your succulents can flourish with minimal effort. Start with just one or two plants and discover the joy of growing these delightful, low-maintenance beauties!

DCCA GARDEN CLUB

Next meetings: **November 9** and **December 14** at **4 p.m.**
Check the DCCA calendar for details

Gopher Tortoises

Keystone Neighbors in Deep Creek • **By Deb Bambrick**

The gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) is an important part of Florida's natural landscape, and we are fortunate to have them right here in Deep Creek. These slow-moving, gentle reptiles play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and are considered a keystone species because their burrows provide homes for many other animals.

About the Gopher Tortoise

Adult gopher tortoises typically measure 9 to 15 inches in length and can live 40 to 60 years in the wild. They have thick, sturdy legs for digging and a hard, domed shell that varies from tan to brown. Gopher tortoises are herbivores, feeding mainly on grasses, leafy plants, and fruits.



Gopher tortoise

The Importance of Their Burrows

Gopher tortoises dig extensive burrow systems that can be more than 10 feet long and up to 6 feet deep. These burrows provide shelter not only for the tortoise but also for more than 350 other species, including:

- Eastern indigo snakes
- Rabbits
- Burrowing owls
- Gopher frogs
- Mice, lizards, insects, and many more



Gopher tortoise burrow

How You Can Help

Gopher tortoises are protected under Florida law, so it is illegal to harm, harass, or relocate them. You can help these important neighbors by:

- Keeping a safe distance
- Not blocking or disturbing their burrows
- Giving them right-of-way on roads
- Keeping pets from chasing or digging near burrows
- Maintaining natural vegetation on your property

By respecting gopher tortoises and their habitat, we help preserve the rich biodiversity that makes Deep Creek such a special place to live.

Fun Facts

- Gopher tortoises can live up to 60 years in the wild.
- Their burrows may be used by hundreds of different species.
- They help maintain open, sandy habitats that support many plants and animals.
- Gopher tortoises are found only in the southeastern United States.

Article and images submitted by Deb Bambrick.

FWC: Gopher tortoise information and guidance

How to identify a gopher tortoise burrow

Mom’s Sausage Dressing

Jane Ruckman’s recipe • Shared by Nancy Lomac

“I thought I’d share my mom’s sausage dressing recipe for the upcoming DCCA Newsletter. It was a family favorite she only made during the holidays.”

Ingredients

- 8 cups bread cubes, seasoned or not
- 1 stick butter
- 1½ cups diced yellow onion, about 1 large onion
- 1 cup diced celery, about 3 large stalks
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 pound sausage
- 2¾ cups chicken broth
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, or 1 teaspoon dried, or omit
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage, or 1 teaspoon dried, or omit
- ¼ cup fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 × 13-inch baking dish with butter. Place bread cubes in a large bowl.

2. Melt butter in a large pan. Add onion and celery; cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for approximately 8 minutes or until soft. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add vegetables to the bread cubes.

3. Wipe out the pan. Brown sausage over medium heat for 8–10 minutes, until cooked through. Break into small pieces, ¼ inch or less.

4. Add browned sausage and fat to the bread cubes and vegetables. Add broth, egg and seasonings. Mix until the bread is soft and moistened.

5. Transfer to the prepared baking dish. Bake uncovered for 65–75 minutes, until deep golden brown and crisp on top.

Vanilkové rohlíčky

Bohemian vanilla nut crescent cookies

Shared by Betsy Musinski

“We both grew up in the Chicago suburb of Berwyn, which was mostly Czech and Polish then, but my family came there in the early 1900s from Sweden. These are two recipes we both remember making as kids with our grandmothers at Christmas.”

Art’s Grandma Kubecka’s recipe • Makes about 3–4 dozen

Ingredients

- ½ pound butter, 2 sticks
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 cup ground pecans or almonds
- ½ cup powdered sugar, to dust after baking

Directions

1. Cream room-temperature butter well, adding powdered sugar until fluffy and well blended.

2. Add vanilla and nuts. Add flour until well blended.

3. Place in the refrigerator to chill for half an hour, or bake later at your leisure.

4. Line a cookie sheet with parchment to keep the bottoms from browning.

5. Use a tablespoon to measure dough into your palm. Roll into a cylinder and shape into a crescent.

6. Place fairly close together on the sheet; the dough does not spread. Continue until all dough is rolled. The recipe should make about 3–4 dozen.

7. Bake at 350°F for about 15–20 minutes, until slightly brown at the edges.

8. Remove and cool on a wire rack. When completely cool, roll each cookie in powdered sugar.

Store in an airtight container. These can be frozen, but dust with sugar after defrosting.

Mandelkakor

Swedish almond butter cookies

Shared by Betsy Musinski

Betsy’s Grandma Anderson’s recipe • Makes about 5 dozen

Ingredients & supplies

- 1 cup butter
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1½ teaspoons almond extract
- Pinch of salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- Assorted decorative sugars in Christmas colors and shapes
- Finely ground almonds for decorating
- Wax paper for shaping

Directions

1. Cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy.

2. Add a pinch of salt and almond extract. Mix in the flour until well blended.

3. Using wax paper, divide the dough into 4–5 logs. Roll the paper tightly around each log and twist the ends.

4. Chill until hard, or freeze ahead of time.

5. Remove the paper and cut into slices about ¼ inch thick with a sharp knife.

6. Dip the rounds in decorative sugars or roll the edges in ground almonds.

7. Place on unlined cookie sheets, 4–5 across.

8. Bake at 350°F for about 10–12 minutes. Watch closely because they burn easily.

Yield is approximately 5 dozen. Use this recipe all year with other sugar decorations.

A RECIPE FOR EVERY SEASON

Betsy notes that these cookies can be made throughout the year by changing the decorative sugars.

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

Community Connections

See what neighbors can accomplish together, and find a way to take part that fits your time and interests.

IN THESE PAGES

Thanksgiving support for school families

Blood drive appreciation

Pickleball and golf for a purpose

Volunteer with DCCA

POA news and local resources

Giving Back, Close to Home

A few practical ways to help this holiday season

Choose a cause that matters to you and check its current needs before shopping or dropping off donations. A requested item, a useful gift card, or a dependable hour of help can make a difference.

Charlotte CARE Center • Vincentian CARES

Support local neighbors through food and other essential donations. Call the center about current needs and drop-off arrangements: 941-627-4313. Details

C.A.R.E. of Charlotte County

The organization’s wish list includes new socks and underwear and gas or grocery gift cards. Check the current list and donation instructions before visiting. Details

Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity

Volunteer opportunities include construction, ReSale Store, and office support. Ask about roles, scheduling, and age requirements. Details

The Salvation Army • Port Charlotte

Contact the local corps about seasonal giving and holiday programs: 941-629-3170. Details

Jesus Loves You Ministry

The ministry supports neighbors experiencing homelessness and accepts donations through its local programs and thrift store. Check accepted items and hours first. Details

Helping Families Give Thanks

Deep Creek Elementary • Thanksgiving meals for families in need

DCCA delivered **four $75 gift cards, totaling $300**, to Deep Creek Elementary to help school families in need with Thanksgiving meals. During the visit, DCCA representatives met with **Noelle Olby** and **Chelsea Grzechowiak** and toured the school.



DCCA and school representatives during the visit.



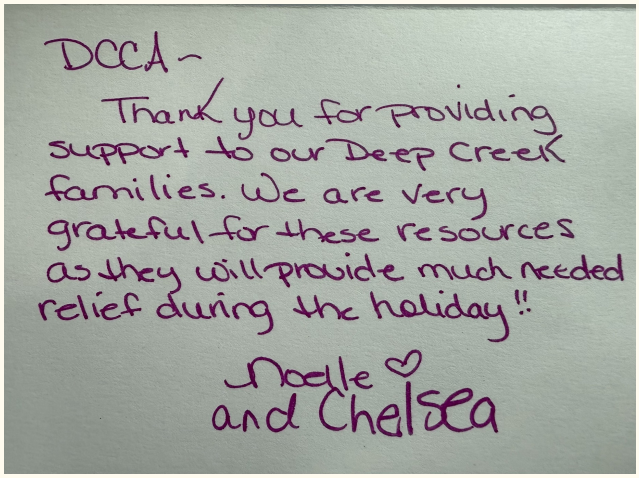
A GIFT STILL GIVING

The picnic table DCCA donated in 2019 is still in use today. The school tour offered a chance to see that lasting gift in action.

The group also discussed ways DCCA can support the school in the future, with plenty of ideas to explore together.

A THANK-YOU FROM THE SCHOOL





Story and photos submitted by Debbie Bambrick.

A Gift That Can Help Save Lives

October 25 DCCA blood drive • Shared by Debby Graves



OneBlood's 2026 recognition: **58 units collected • Up to 174 lives saved**

The **October 25 drive collected 16 units of blood**, which OneBlood says could benefit **up to 48 patients**. Thank you to our donors and coordinator Debby Graves, with a special shout-out to **Carl Doerr** for joining the donor list. Bring a friend to a future drive!

Thank you to our participants

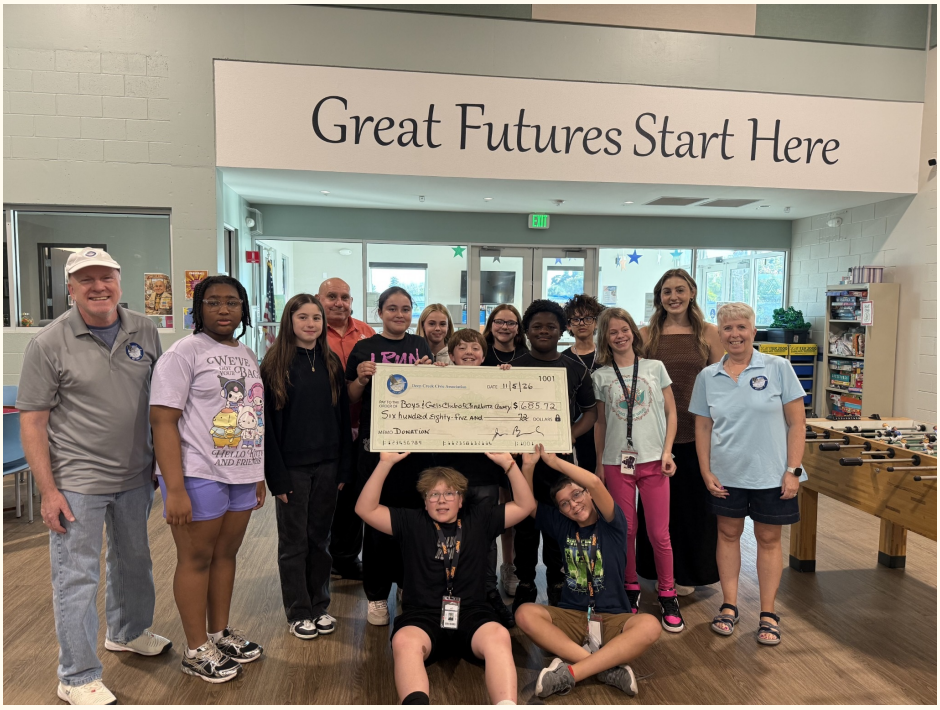
Amy Brandin
Ava Yelmokas
Carl Doerr
Chenoa Butler-Lingard
Heather Nelson
Jacob Yoder
Jesse Maize
Kaitlynn Wharton
Karen Lettko
Lanny Tippets
Margaret Ramsey
Michele Mansouri
Monika Teschke
Nancy Mercer
Natalie C. Orobello
Ricardo Cabello
Stephen Barrows
William Starks Jr.

NEXT DRIVE • MARCH 14, 2027 | Calendar & sign-up details

For donation requirements, consult OneBlood.

Playing for a Purpose

DCCA's Poker Run Pickleball Fun-Raiser • October 31, 2026



$685.72

DONATED TO LOCAL YOUTH

Pickleball, friendly competition, and laughter brought neighbors together to support the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County.

Congratulations to our poker-hand winners! Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and made this fun morning a success.

DCCA presents the event donation to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County.









Thank you for making a difference, one pickleball game at a time!

A Round for Our Student Golfers

DCCA & THE SANDTRAP BAR

3rd Annual Golf Classic • October 24, 2026 • Deep Creek Golf Club

By Steve Arnold, DCCA VP / Golf Chair

OVER $3,000 — **60 golfers supporting Charlotte High School's boys' and girls' golf program**





DCCA and the SandTrap Bar welcomed 60 golfers for the third annual charity tournament benefiting Charlotte High School's boys' and girls' golf program. Businesses, neighbors and friends helped make the day a success through sponsorships, donations and play. Raffles, contests and silent auction items helped raise more than $3,000.

TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS

Team Leppert: Dennis Leppert, Jeff, Kirk and Scott. Each won $100 and bragging rights!

CONTEST WINNERS • $50 EACH

Longest drive: Addy Fury, a Charlotte High School golfer, topped all men and women.
Closest to the pin: Bob Standfast and Sheri Burke.
Putting: Kirk Montgomery.







$100 STUDENT SPONSORS

Garrett Reifschneider – Edward Jones
Christine Straessle – Advanced Dermatology
Jim Bambrick • Tamara Lorf
Lori Burgess • Liz Durham

HOLE SPONSORS

Pinch-a-Penny: Deep Creek
Arlene C. Chase, P.A.
Port Charlotte Centennial Lions Club

Special thanks to our tournament partner, the SandTrap Bar, and owner Tamara Lorf. On behalf of the DCCA Board, thank you to all volunteers, participants and Deep Creek Golf Club staff for another great success. We hope to see you next year!

Volunteer with DCCA

Your time. Your talent. Your way.

Share a little time and help our community feel like home. Choose a role that fits your interests and schedule—one event, an occasional project, or a regular commitment.

ONE EVENT | ONCE A MONTH | 1–2 HOURS A WEEK | SHARE A SKILL

01 • CAPTURE THE CONNECTION

Event photographers

Choose events that fit your schedule. Capture welcoming moments with a phone or camera and send DCCA your best images. Help neighbors see themselves in Deep Creek News.

02 • KEEP NEIGHBORS INFORMED

Facebook moderators

Already active on Facebook? Help share DCCA updates and selected local events, family programs, charitable drives, and school opportunities. About 1–2 hours a week can help keep neighbors informed.

03 • SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW

Lead a class or seminar

Turn a hobby, craft, profession, or practical skill into a small class or seminar. Share what you know once or occasionally. Current professionals, retirees, and experienced volunteers are welcome.

04 • MAKE EVERYONE WELCOME

Help at an event

Greet guests, help with setup or registration, guide an activity, or lend a hand with cleanup. Join a monthly program or a once-a-year event. A short shift can make a big difference.

READY TO LEND A HAND?

Tell us what interests you and how much time works for you. Newsletter contributors and neighbors who enjoy welcoming newcomers are welcome, too.

communications@deepcreekcivic.org

Section 23 POA News

Updates, reminders, and opportunities to get involved

Welcome our board members
Congratulations to our newly elected directors, Stephen Arnold, Dan Frazier, Kevin Ivers, and Karrie Snider, and thank you to our returning directors and outgoing board members for their service to our community.

2026–2027 officers
President: Art Seymour
Vice President: Dan Frazier
Secretary: Mary Russo
Treasurer: Donna Linette

Annual assessment
Thank you to everyone who has paid their annual assessment. If you still need to make a payment or have a question about your account, please contact the POA office.

Keep your information current
Update your homeowner contact information with the office and register at deepcreek23.com for association updates.

Holiday office closures
November 11 and 26–27
December 24–25 and 31

Monthly board meetings
Meetings are held on the second Thursday at the Section 23 POA office and are open to Section 23 property owners. See the website for notices, agendas, and meeting materials.

Volunteer for a committee
Ask the office about Architecture, Communications, Deed Restrictions, Drainage and Engineering, and Nominations.

Fiber construction concerns
Contact David (Dave) Whidden, Charlotte County Public Works Engineering Inspector, at 941-575-3677. Have the property address, issue description, and photos ready.

Check provider-reported internet availability at broadbandmap.fcc.gov. Confirm installation timing with the provider.

CONTACT SECTION 23

26217 Rampart Blvd., Punta Gorda, FL 33983
941-764-6674 • admin@deepcreek23.com
Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. • deepcreek23.com

Helpful Community Connections

Know where to go for the information you need

Section 20 Property Owners Association

24710 Sandhill Boulevard, Unit 804
Punta Gorda, FL 33983
Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
941-627-6562 • Sec20poa@ciramail.com
deepcreekfl.com

Use the POA website for governing documents, permits, meeting schedules, and homeowner information. Contact your own POA for property and deed-restriction matters.

DCCA: activities and neighbor connections

The Deep Creek Civic Association provides community activities, social connections, and Deep Creek News. Questions about membership, events, or contributing to the newsletter can go to communications@deepcreekcivic.org.

Charlotte County resources

County departments and services
Find the correct department for utilities, public works, permits, and other county services.

Libraries, parks, and recreation
Explore public programs, facilities, and seasonal activities.

Food assistance and donation locations
Use the county's directory as a starting point; call providers for current hours and requirements.

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

Across Generations

Share a memory, try an act of kindness, and make something to keep together.

QUESTIONS TO PASS AROUND

- What holiday food reminds you of home?
- Who taught you to make it?
- What did your family do that seemed ordinary then?
- What tradition would you like us to keep?
- Is there a tradition you would like to start?

Pass the Stories with the Pie

A few questions can keep a family memory alive

The recipe may be written down, but the story behind it often is not. Who first made it? Why was it served only at the holidays? Who always asked for seconds? A familiar dish can be the easiest way into a conversation that lasts long after the plates are cleared.

This year, invite someone at your table—or someone joining by phone—to share one memory. Keep the invitation light. There is no need to turn dinner into an interview, and no one needs a perfect answer.

Begin with a detail. “What did your kitchen smell like at Thanksgiving?” may bring back more than “Tell me about your childhood.” Ask who was there, what made people laugh, and what changed as the years passed.

Let younger family members choose a question or draw a picture of what they hear. If someone prefers to write, leave a few cards and pencils on the table. A short memory in a person’s own handwriting can become a keepsake.

Ask permission before recording or sharing. Write down the storyteller’s name and the date, and label any photographs while someone still remembers who is in them. Keep room for different memories of the same event; families do not always remember a story in exactly the same way.

You do not have to preserve everything. One recipe, one photograph, or one small story is a good place to begin. Pass the pie—and give the memories a little room at the table.

Generations Together

Kindness & Thanks • Small projects for every age

Choose a project and invite a family member, friend, or neighbor to join in. These age guides are flexible—everyone can help, learn, and share.

Little Florida Explorers

YOUNGER CHILDREN • AGES 4–7

I am thankful for…

Draw or write about a person, place, or moment.

My kindness plan

This week, I can help someone by…

Florida Trailblazers

OLDER CHILDREN • AGES 8–12

Create a recipe keepsake

Ask for a favorite family recipe. Write the ingredients, steps, storyteller’s name, and why the dish matters. Make it together and add a photo of the finished dish.

Tell a Florida photo story

Photograph three details that say “holiday season in Florida.” Add captions. Ask before photographing people; keep house numbers and private information out of shared pictures.

Next Gen

TEENS • AGES 13–18

Give a technology gift

Help a relative organize photos, enlarge device text, or find the DCCA calendar. Ask what would be useful. Let them keep control of their passwords and accounts.

Plan an act of service

With an adult, check a local group’s wish list or volunteer page. Find out what is needed, which ages can help, and how to participate. Make a simple plan together.

Share afterward: What did I learn? Who helped me? What would I try next? Keep a drawing, a photo, or a few sentences as your family’s holiday memory.

Generations Together

A Keepsake Conversation Page

Gather children, teens, and adults around a table—or connect by phone. Take turns asking and telling. One person can write while younger children draw. Keep only what everyone is comfortable sharing.

ASK • LISTEN • WRITE OR DRAW • KEEP THE MEMORY

I am talking with…

A place they remember from childhood…

A holiday tradition they loved…

A person who made them feel welcome…

A piece of advice they would like to pass along…

A new tradition we could try together…

Story shared on: _____ Recorded by: _____

Ask permission before recording, photographing, or publishing someone’s story.

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

Around the Area

Head beyond the DCCA calendar for markets, waterfront lights, and seasonal outings nearby.

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

November 27–30

Fishermen’s Village Black Friday Weekend

Local shopping, waterfront dining, a free Village Passport, and a children’s treasure hunt. Details and event rules

November: Gather & Explore

Community happenings beyond the DCCA calendar

NOVEMBER 8 • TARGET OPENING

Deep Creek Elks Farmers Market

The lodge announced a target opening of Sunday, November 8, with a weekly Sunday market from 8 a.m. to noon at 1133 Capricorn Boulevard. Look for produce, vendors, and handmade goods. Confirm the opening with the lodge before visiting. Event details

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14 • 5–10 P.M.

Holiday Lighting of the Village

Fishermen’s Village, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda. Santa and Mrs. Claus are scheduled to arrive at 5:45 p.m., with the lighting at 6:15 p.m. Enjoy music, lights, and waterfront strolling. Free event and parking. Event details

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15 • 8–11 A.M.

Cars for C.A.R.E.

Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda. Free for spectators; vehicle entry is $20. Proceeds benefit C.A.R.E.’s child care center. Event details

NOVEMBER 21–22 • 10 A.M.–3 P.M.

Christmas Countdown Arts & Craft Show

Browse seasonal arts and crafts at the Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center. Check the venue calendar for admission and current event information. Event details

December: Lights & Celebrations

A few ways to enjoy the season nearby

THROUGH DECEMBER 31

Festival of Lights at Fishermen’s Village

The village lists its Holiday Festival of Lights from November 15 through December 31, with lighted canal cruises during December. Enjoy the waterfront displays or check cruise operators for schedules and tickets. Plan your visit

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

Charlotte County Chamber Christmas Parade

The 48th annual parade returns with the theme “Sleigh Bells & Seashells.” Check the Chamber’s announcement and updates for the route and arrival plans. Plan your visit

DECEMBER 4–6 & 11–27

Enchanted Holiday Trail of Lights

Charlotte County Fairgrounds, 2333 El Jobean Road, Port Charlotte. The drive-through trail lists admission at $20 per car plus fees. Check the organizer’s site for nightly hours, tickets, and weather updates. Plan your visit

PLAN AHEAD

A quieter holiday outing

Choose an early visit, a weekday when possible, or a short walk to see neighborhood decorations. Check parking and accessibility before you go, and make a plan that feels comfortable for everyone in your group.

> **KEEP THE CURRENT CALENDAR HANDY**
>
> Event details can change. Follow each organizer’s link before leaving home, especially for outdoor events and ticketed activities.

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

Stay Connected

Meet the neighbors behind DCCA, find a local business, and keep in touch throughout the season.

BOARD MEETINGS

Second Tuesday of each month • 6 p.m.
Section 20 POA office

Members wishing to address the board or request an agenda item should contact the secretary in advance.

IN THESE PAGES

Business supporters

Business Excelerators directory

Membership and ways to keep in touch

DCCA Board & Community Leadership

The neighbors who help keep DCCA moving forward

President • Rob Wilson
president@deepcreekcivic.org

Vice President • Steve Arnold
vicepresident@deepcreekcivic.org

Secretary • Victoria Schmidt
secretary@deepcreekcivic.org

Treasurer • James Bambrick
treasurer@deepcreekcivic.org

Special Events • Debbie Bambrick
specialevents@deepcreekcivic.org

Advertising • Laura Doerr
advertising@deepcreekcivic.org

Communications & Technology • Karrie Snider
communications@deepcreekcivic.org

Director at Large • Robert Holden

Membership • Sheri Burke
membership@deepcreekcivic.org

Garden Club • Sylvia Kelsey

POA liaisons
Section 20: Clyde Sweatt
Section 23: Jennifer Smith

Thank You, Business Supporters







Thank you to **Duck Dumpsters** for donating a dumpster for our neighborhood cleanup.

Community Business Partners

PINCH·A·PENNY
POOL·PATIO·SPA®

LET US TAKE CARE OF YOUR POOL

✓ Pool Service
✓ Equipment Install & Repair
✓ Retail Store
✓ Free Water Test
✓ Expert Advice

Lic.# CPC1460258

DEEP CREEK | 1544 RIO DE JANEIRO AVE. | 941-273-3106

Deep Creek Pizzeria
Est. 2025
2000 Rio de Janeiro Ave
Punta Gorda, FL
941-625-6989
DINE IN | PICK UP | FREE DELIVERY
Order Online: deepcreekpizzeria.com

Sand Dollar
Dog Spa & Pet Boutique
Our Number One Priority Is Your Dog!
Your dog's health, safety and comfort always come first. From our cage free space to their individual spa experience, it's all about them. **Spoil your dog today!**
(941) 273-9001
sanddollardogspa.com
Contact Us!

Wicked Good Trips
DCCA Member
We make your dreams comes true!
Cathleen Cormier
Independent Travel Consultant
Cell: 603-566-6479
magicaladventur@aol.com/www.wickedgoodtrips.com

Please tell our partners you saw their ad in **Deep Creek News.**

Ask about newsletter advertising →

Business Excelerators

Southwest Florida directory • 1 of 3

49 businesses and organizations • Roster shared by Steve Arnold, DCCA Vice President and liaison to BESWFL. Contact businesses directly about services and availability.

American Pest Pro Services
Bill Logsdon
Direct: 941-763-5848; Office: 239-645-4448 Ext. 6
sales@americanpestpro.com
www.americanpestpro.com

Animal Welfare League
Dawn Fitzner
941-625-6720
dfitzner@awlshelter.org
www.awlshelter.org

Charlotte Harbor Boat Excursions
Eric Spatola
774-473-7106
chboatexcursions@gmail.com
www.chboatexcursions.com

Charlotte Harbor Trust Wealth Management
Samuel Kiburz
Office: 941-637-7748; Mobile: 239-464-2971
Samuel@charlotteharbortrust.com

Charlotte Players
Lori Wagner
941-255-1022; Cell: 407-361-5223
lori.wagner@charlotteplayers.org
www.charlotteplayers.org

CMCK Business Solutions
Michele Dennis
941-549-8762
Michele@cmckbusiness.com
cmckbusiness.com

Community Pools LLC
Michael Fusi / Frank Minniti
Office: 941-258-7529
communitypoolsllc@yahoo.com

Dancing Moon Travel
Pat Hand
404-735-5774
Pat@DancingMoonTravel.com
www.DancingMoonTravel.com

Decker Plumbing & Drains
Brian Decker
941-979-0896
Service@deckersquad.com

Deep Creek Civic Association
Steve Arnold
603-231-1606
sjarnoldsr@gmail.com

Dog Gone Dapper Grooming
Richard Marlet
941-343-7387
DGDGroomingPG@gmail.com

Donatelle Claim Advisors, LLC
Chris Morales
941-592-6131
adam@donatelleclaimadvisors.com
donatelleclaimadvisors.com

Duck Dumpsters
Marc Cheney
941-456-6082
duckdumpstersllc@gmail.com
duckdumpstersllc.com

Essential Home Quality
Joshua Pulley
941-564-7773
joshuapulley@essentialhomequality.com;
essentialhomequality@gmail.com

Evolution Home Services LLC / Handyman
Gay Barry
941-288-3210
jason@evolutionhomeservicesllc.com

Florida Clean Energy Today / Solar + AKM Roofing
Michael Newsome
941-221-1039
Michael@floridacleanenergytoday.com;
Mike.estimatorakmroofing@gmail.com
Akm941roofing.com

Business Excelerators

Southwest Florida directory • 2 of 3

Contacts and details as supplied in the October 15 roster.

Florida Fingerprinting Services and More
Ime Umana
941-280-0980
info@floridafingerprintingservicesandmore.com

HR Butler
Matthew Hickey
614-961-4358; Cell: 614-668-5209
mhickey@hrbutler.com

Hughes Family Insurance
Leonard Hughes
941-258-4373
hughessalessolutions@gmail.com

Illusions Salon & Spa
Brett Hawker
941-505-5777
guestservices@illusionsofpg.com
www.illusionsofpg.com

Khan CPA
M Ali Khan
Cell: 239-671-5941; Office: 941-208-6855
Ali@MAKhanCPA.com

Lake Michigan Credit Union
Natalie Proctor
941-258-3055; Cell: 941-623-3387
Natalie.proctor@lmcu.org

Lake Michigan Credit Union Mortgages
Michelle D'Amico
941-249-6196; Cell: 859-655-5698
Michelle.damico@lmcu.org

MD Pressure Cleaning and Softwash
Mark Dumser
941-268-8676
info@mdpressurecleaning.com

Mold, M.D.
Matthew Battaglia
941-214-0854
moldmdllc@gmail.com
www.moldmdllc.com

Nuskin
Tom Palmer
302-293-2235
tompalmer@comcast.net
www.tompalmer.mynuskin.com

One Life Insurance
Cleveland Bloomfield
754-757-4524
Bcbloom3865@gmail.com
www.retirementincomelife.com

Organic Home Cleaning Services
Colleen Stewart / Cheryl Green
941-275-9685
info@organic-home.net

Patriotic Air
Eric Davis
941-882-2653
patrioticair@gmail.com
PATRIOTICAIR.COM

PC Tech Doctor
Dave Weissinger
941-286-0052
DaveW@PCTechDr.com
www.PCTechDr.com

Peace River Wildlife Center
Beth Marcino
Office: 941-637-3830; Cell: 941-204-2169
Beth@prwildlife.org

Pelican Patrol Pet Care & Home Watch
Lisa Gallucci
239-221-0526; Cell: 206-250-6104
Lisa@pelicanpatrolhomewatch.com

PG Goodman Inspections LLC
Isaiah Shaw
941-875-3980
22isaiah.shaw@gmail.com
Pggoodmaninspections.com

Business Excelerators

Southwest Florida directory • 3 of 3

Contacts and details as supplied in the October 15 roster.

Port Charlotte Auto Repair & Fleet Services LLC
Paul Newman
941-524-2448 / Cell
paul@portcharlotte-auto-repair.com

Posadas Lawn Services
Rosa & Jose Posadas
863-303-3054
Posadaslawnservice863@gmail.com

Rhonda Gustitus Team
Rhonda Gustitus
941-426-4394
RhondaGustitusTeam.com

Rob Hurth Photography
Rob Hurth
941-235-8149
rob@robhurthphoto.com
www.robhurthphoto.com

She Designs Kitchen and Baths
Brooke Bishop
941-626-0426
Brooke@shedesignskitchensandbaths.com
www.shedesignskitchensandbaths.com

Show Me Your Junk
Ian Banda
941-585-6288
www.show-me-your-junk.com

Soul Dental
Christa Cabrera / Dr. Brock Reichardt
941-629-7779
Office@souldentalpc.com
www.souldentalpc.com

Southwest Pro Aluminum
Lennox Reid
941-267-9075 or 941-264-7648
swgutterpro@gmail.com

Straight2U Medical & Beauty Institute
Justin Cruz
Office: 941-340-3636; Mobile: 941-699-7005
office@straight2uhealth.com

Superior Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning
Bill Comber
941-575-9818
Bill@Superiorcc.net
www.superiorcarpetcleaninginc.com

The Rock Doctor Inc.
E.J. Simoes
941-586-1055
therockdocinc@gmail.com
www.therockdoctorinc.com

TLC Mobile Detailing
Trey Conner
484-639-1829
trey99@comcast.net

True Fence
Keilly Trujillo
941-237-0795
info@truefenceflorida.com
truefenceflorida.com

Whitco Insurance
Renee Ray
941-257-0692
renee.ray@whitcoinsurance.com
www.whitcoinsurancepg.com

Wilhelm Commercial Painting
Chris Wilhelm
301-529-7257
wilhelmpaintingservices@gmail.com
wilhelmcommercialpaintingservices.com

9E Designs
Nicole Evans
563-650-2574

Keep the Connection Going

Turning strangers into neighbors—and neighbors into friends



Read & explore

Find Deep Creek News, current events, and useful community information. Visit deepcreekcivic.org

Join & participate

Membership supports DCCA programs, activities, and the connections that make a neighborhood feel like home. Join or renew your membership

Share & support

Send a memory, recipe, tradition, neighbor thank-you, or community project. A 40–100-word contribution is welcome. Send a newsletter contribution

Facebook • **Nextdoor** • **Event calendar** • **Advertising**

Wishing our Deep Creek neighbors a season of gratitude, gathering, and giving.