

life



for the widowed
and their future

Volume 20 Issue 3

Make new friends but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold.



*This time honored advice has become our adopted "LIFE SLOGAN"
Make good use of this advice each and every day.*

1116 West Main Street
Leesburg, FL 34748 (352) 787-0403

January, February, March 2017

ANOTHER NEW YEAR – WHAT WILL WE MAKE IT?



As a writer I am familiar with new things. Each story begins the same way, with a blank sheet of paper or computer screen. I will remember the first story I ever wrote for a newspaper. It was a simple high school football preview for East Bay High School outside of Tampa. My instrument was an electric typewriter my mother-in-law loaned me. So there I was in the spare bedroom at my work station with the blank piece of paper staring at me. I'd already interviewed the coach and had my notes handy.

There are probably as many ways to begin a story as there are writers. Rarely do I use an outline though I do consider where I'll be going with my story. I don't think I used an outline that evening (that turned into early morn) but I should have. On the floor beside my chair were wadded up, crumpled up sheets of paper with one, two or three lines on them. Soon another one joined the group, some even making it into the waste can. But hours later the story began to take shape. And somewhere around 3 a.m., I had enough to turn in. I wasn't happy with it but I was done.

I never expected it to be so painful. I never expected to write again. But a few days later the story was published and I had a byline. Although I didn't expect much I was still anxious to read my final product IN PRINT. Surprisingly, it didn't seem half bad. In fact, I was pretty pleased with it and my byline.

I was ready to try again. The next story didn't take as long, though it still took hours. Eventually I learned to use a computer rather than the typewriter. I didn't like the transition but soon learned it made writing so much easier, cutting and pasting and moving things around without the need to start all over.

Soon I began covering games and facing deadlines. Like that first story I was terrified. But once again I became comfortable as something new became something familiar. I also branched out writing non-sports stories and found I had a flair for it, enough so that I made a nice livelihood doing it.

Now, 40 years later, I continue to enjoy creating with words. It's kind of like facing a New Year. Sometimes it can be scary but when we consider we are lifelong students we'll embrace the New Year looking forward to the new things we'll learn.

Blessings,

LIFE is going BOGO.

That's right bring a widow or widower who hasn't attended our meetings to the January LIFE Luncheon and you get a certificate good for a free lunch in February. Only one certificate per LIFE member.

Many of you have brought friends and family to our unique luncheons and we felt this was a good way to thank you and encourage you to continue helping to get the word out.

When you call (352) 787-0403 to make your reservations in January please make sure to let us know you'll be bringing a new guest when you give their name. We will give you your certificate when you sign in and pay for January. If you have any questions please call.

TRIPS

DAY TRIPS

Tuesday, January 10 -- Life's a Trip -- \$79.00 DAYTONA INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY TOUR

Start the day in Daytona Beach on the 90-minute All Access Tour at the Daytona International Speedway and explore the 2.5 mile Speedway from a variety of vantage points. Come face-to-face with the track and visit the well-known start/finish line and 31-degree high banks or ride down pit road to get a close-up view of the pit stalls. This tour provides unprecedented access, like a visit to the drivers' meeting room and photo in Gatorade Victory Lane. End the tour next to this year's DAYTONA 500 championship car, left in the same condition as the day of the race. Then enjoy lunch at Chef Papa's, a local favorite. Lunch choices are as follows: cobb salad; pastrami reuben with pasta or potato salad; or cup of soup with 1/2 turkey sandwich and pasta or potato salad. Plus, non-alcoholic drink and small dessert. **Please make lunch selection at time of reservation.**

Activity level = LOW

1st pick up: Leesburg (corner of Main and Lee, behind law office) at 8:30 a.m.

2nd pick up: Mount Dora Lowe at 9:00 a.m.
Return around 5:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 14 -- Life's a Trip -- \$89.00 MARIE SELBY BOTANICAL GARDENS

We begin our day with a visit to Tampa Electric's Manatee Viewing Station in Apollo Beach, FL. This is a state and federally designated manatee sanctuary that provides critical protection from the cold for these unique, gentle animals. Enjoy a family style lunch at Der Dutchman Restaurant. Lunch choices include: broasted chicken and roast beef, served with mashed potatoes, green beans and salad, plus, choice of homemade pie for dessert. After lunch we head over to the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Nestled on the shores of beautiful Sarasota Bay, the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens is a tropical urban oasis with something for everyone. Relax and allow the natural scenery to envelope you in its beautiful bliss. The gardens cover 15 acres, including 9 acres of display gardens and is the only botanical garden in the world dedicated to the display and study of epiphytes, especially orchids and bromeliads, and their canopy ecosystems. Take a "walk and talk" guided tour through the gardens and learn the local history, horticultural tidbits and the science of these beautiful grounds.

Pickup Times TBA

Thursday, March 16 -- Life's a Trip -- \$89.00 EARLY BIRD DINNER THEATRE

Visit the Early Bird Dinner Theatre, an institution in the Tampa Bay area for over 20 years. Enjoy a delicious buffet-style lunch and the world premiere of the hilarious play *Ain't Retirement Grand!* A funny and delightful look at our retirement years with a cast of four singing twenty original songs. This is a hilarious musical for and about retirees, those who are about to retire, baby boomers and anyone who wants a fun time at the theater.

Activity level = LOW
Pickup Times TBA

Overnight Trip

"Cherry Blossom Tour in Macon, GA March 28-31, 2017.

Enjoy gracious southern hospitality and celebrate in grand style the magnificent beauty of over 300,000 flowering Yoshino cherry trees in the Cherry Blossom Capital of the World. Single: \$949.00, Double \$749.00.

To make day trip reservations, please contact Rick Reed at 352-787-0403. For overnight trips call Barbara at Life's a Trip Tours at 407-855-9732.

Payment is due at time of reservation. **Please make checks payable to Life's a Trip Tours and mail to. Life's a Trip Tours • PO Box 590066 • Orlando, FL 32859-0066 • Deadline for cancellation with a refund is 30 days prior to the trip.**

LUNCHEONS

*** Luncheons are \$10-\$11 ***

Entertainment subject to change

Please RSVP by calling 787-0403 or for more information.

JANUARY

January 12 – Thursday – 11:30 a.m.

Leesburg Community Center 109 East Dixie Ave., Leesburg - \$10
After a delicious buffet-style meal prepared by Miss Debbie's Catering we will be entertained by the musical talent of JP Perry, a local guitarist, vocalist and songwriter who comes highly recommended by a Life member. He will play popular, country and gospel tunes as he interacts with the audience.

January 18 – Wednesday – 11:30 a.m.

LAKE TECH - 2001 Kurt Street, Eustis- \$11

(About a mile north of US Highway 441 on Kurt Street)

Our lunch is prepared by Lake Tech's excellent Culinary Arts Program and is always a highlight of the afternoon. But stick around for our entertainment, the musical talent of JP Perry, a local guitarist, vocalist and songwriter who comes highly recommended by a Life member. He will play popular, country and gospel tunes as he interacts with the audience.

FEBRUARY

February 9 – Thursday – 11:30 a.m.

Leesburg Community Center 109 East Dixie Ave., Leesburg - \$10
After a delicious buffet-style lunch, we'll play Bingo with prizes galore, including Rick Reed's Speed Bingo, which is a much quicker version of the popular game. We will also play a variety of Bingo patterns. To supplement the cache of prizes, members are encouraged to bring a white elephant-type gift, new or used, funny or serious, but something you wouldn't mind taking home.

February 15 – Wednesday – 11:30 a.m.

LAKE TECH - 2001 Kurt Street, Eustis- \$11

(About a mile north of US Highway 441 on Kurt Street)

Our excellent lunch is prepared by Lake Tech's excellent Culinary Arts Program. Afterward we'll play Bingo with prizes galore, including Rick Reed's Speed Bingo, which is a much quicker version of the popular game. We will also play a variety of Bingo patterns. To supplement the cache of prizes, members are encouraged to bring a white elephant-type gift, new or used, funny or serious, but something you wouldn't mind taking home.

MARCH

March 9 – Thursday – 11:30 a.m.

Leesburg Community Center 109 East Dixie Ave., Leesburg - \$10

After a buffet-style lunch we will be entertained by the talented and popular Pennbrooke Singers from Pennbrooke Fairways. Back for an encore by popular demand, this group of about 40 singers will entertain with some old favorites.

March 15 – Wednesday – 11:30 a.m.

Osprey Lodge - 1761 Nightingale Lane in Tavares - \$10

(In back of medical plaza across US Highway 441 from Waterman Hospital)

We'll have a fine lunch prepared by the chefs of Osprey Lodge and then be entertained by a program to be announced.

U-HIKES

January 19 – Thursday – 10 a.m. – FREE

Hiking Palatlkaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve Park - Leesburg

For the more active LIFER, we continue our LIFE hikes. This month we tackle the Dr. S.J. (Joe) Stephany Memorial River Trail at the Palatlkaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve Park (PEAR) south of Leesburg. This natural footpath parallels the Palatlkaha River and should be a nice shady place to hike if memory serves me. It's obvious from the height of the bluffs this was once a significant river. But today it's lower—not just because of our drought, but because of development along its route dropping the level of the Florida aquifer. There are many well-interpreted native plants along the 3 mile round-trip. But don't worry, we will only walk as fast and as far at a comfortable pace set by the slowest hiker. We will figure a halfway point and turn back. It is basically level but natural terrain. Bring water and bug spray.

Directions: From US Highway 27: From downtown Leesburg, driving south on US 27 crossing SR 48. About .8 of a mile after the SR 48 intersection turn right and into the park. Park by the tennis courts where we will meet as group to begin our hike. If you come to the Paw Park, playground, and fitness area you need to turn back to the tennis courts to park.

If you are headed north on US 27 you will pass another entrance into the park at University Drive. Go past that to the northern entrance.

Lunch at Beef O'Brady's 27405 US-27, Leesburg, (352) 728-3233 (on the participant).

Lunch at Beef O'Brady's 27405 US-27, Leesburg, (352) 728-3233 (on the participant).

February 15 – Thursday – 10 a.m. – FREE **Hiking Sarah Maude Mason Nature Trail & Preserve – Howey-in-the-Hills**

The nature trail at Sarah Maude Mason Nature Preserve in Howey only stretches about a mile, but it's a beautiful walk. About 2/3s of the trail is a boardwalk over marshy area and also an observation post on Little Lake Harris. The final loop is a land trail. This hike could afford some amazing birding opportunities. But don't count on me to point out our feathery friends. This should be a fairly easy hike and much of it is shaded. As always, bring water and bug spray and maybe a hiking stick.

Directions: Heading south on State Road 19 drive through Howey-in-the-Hills, to East Lakeview Ave, the last residential street on the left and turn right. If you pass the Lake County School Board Offices you have gone too far. Turn right at South Lakeshore Blvd. until you hit Buckhill Road, a clay road and you will see the "Nature Preserve" sign; follow the red clay road 0.2 mile to the trailhead parking area on the left.

LUNCH at: JB Boondock's Bar & Grill, 704 S. Lakeshore Blvd. 324-3600.

March 15 – Thursday – 10 a.m. – FREE **Venetian Gardens Walk and Talk – Leesburg**

This year we will do more walking and a little less talking as we stroll some of the islands and then head to the area by the Marina and around the ballpark. Come walk and learn about the heart of Leesburg, Venetian Gardens, its beautiful, 64-acre park on the west shore of Lake Harris and an access point to Central Florida's Harris Chain of Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean. Venetian Gardens includes several landscaped islands separated by tranquil, meandering canals. Sidewalks, pavilion, benches and seven wooden bridges are very popular to the runners, cyclists and nature-lovers who visit. Ski Beach has picnic tables, outdoor grills, sand volleyball courts and a beautiful waterfront popular among fishing enthusiasts. Rick will talk about its history, with its beginning in the 1880s with the Lake Harris Canal.

DIRECTIONS

FROM THE EAST: From the intersection of U.S. Highway 441 and State Road 19, in Tavares, travel north on U.S. Highway 441 for 8 miles. Turn left on E. Dixie Ave (lighted). Continue for 1.4 miles. Venetian Gardens will be on the left. Parking is available in the fields across Dixie along S. Canal St.

FROM THE WEST/SOUTH: (Clermont / Florida Turnpike / Highway 27) Travel north on Highway 27 for 13.1 miles. Turn right onto W. Dixie Ave. and continue for 0.8 miles. Venetian Gardens will be on the right. Parking is available across the Dixie Ave in the ball fields along S. Canal St. on the left.

Lunch after at Taki's Restaurant; 1205 N 14th St. Leesburg (Intersection 441/27).

**To make a reservation please contact Rick @ 352-787-0403
or email him at ricoh007@aol.com.**



(352) 787-0403
1116 West Main Street
Leesburg, FL 34748
rreed@beyersfhc.com

Thoughts
FOR YOUR DAY
Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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U-DRIVE TRIPS

FEBRUARY 23 – THURSDAY, 10 A.M.
TAVARES MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR

Our adventure begins at the Lake County Historical Museum, located in the beautiful Lake County Historic Count House, circa 1924 at 317 West Main Street in the heart of downtown Tavares.

The entire 1st floor of the building is utilized by the museum. It contains 4 galleries which focus on different themes. There is something for everyone here at the Lake County Historical Museum. Military history, transportation history, hotel history, Native American history, citrus industry history, Walt Disney history, and much more! We have been busy updating the museum and we have new exhibits up now for you to view. If you have never been to the museum we encourage you to stop by and visit! There is no cost to come, though we do have a donations box if you are feeling generous! Come out to the Lake County Historical Museum, you won't be disappointed!

We will also stop in next store at the Administration Building, formerly known as the Round Court House. There are many interesting panels on display that tell of our county's colorful history.

We will eat lunch at O'Kefe's Irish Pub & Restaurant on the east end of Main Street at 115 S. Rockingham Ave., across from Tavares City Hall.

If you are interested in this trip, please contact Rick @ 352-787-0403 or email him at ricoh007@aol.com. Checks for U-Drive trips should be made out to life.

LIFE Mission Statement

"The goal of the LIFE Program is to create an environment of comfort and support for those who have experienced the loss of a spouse. By helping members redirect their grief to more positive avenues, the program instills a sense of self-confidence and purpose to those who may otherwise be feeling lost and alone. LIFE provides opportunities for enhancing the quality of life by encouraging members to learn, share, and reach out to one another."

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