



**The Anatomy of a Whisper: How Neighborhood Gossip Destroys Community Peace**

**The Erosion of Personal Dignity**

Gossip is rarely just "idle talk"; it often functions as a subtle form of character assassination. Whether through detraction (revealing true but private faults) or calumny (spreading outright lies), it directly violates an individual's right to a good name. For the victim, the results are deeply personal, often manifesting as anxiety, social withdrawal, and a profound sense of isolation. This damage can be permanent, as rumors spread like a "wildfire" that is impossible to fully extinguish once the initial spark has taken hold.

**The Fracturing of the Social Fabric**

Beyond the individual, gossip acts as a tool for social control, used by established groups to stigmatize newcomers or those who don't fit a specific mold. This creates a "toxic environment" where residents live in fear of being the next subject of the neighborhood group chat. When suspicion replaces neighborly trust, it leads to social fragmentation, turning a collective space into a collection of wary, isolated households.

**Critical Distinctions**

**Rumor vs. Gossip:** Rumors generally concern **events or conditions** (e.g., "The company is closing"), whereas gossip is talk about individuals (e.g., "Did you hear what Kyle did?").

**Wedge-Driving Rumors:** Malicious rumors intended to divide groups or harm reputations of individuals.

In 2026, research and community management experts highlight how neighborhood gossip acts as a significant "barrier to entry" for new residents. While gossip can sometimes build bonds among long-term neighbors, it often functions as a tool for **social exclusion** that prevents newcomers from integrating into the community.

Gossip prevents neighborhood involvement through the following mechanisms:

Continued page on page 6

**Upcoming Meetings**  
*(subject to change)*

**Executive Board Meeting**

**March 3rd - 7pm**

**General Association**

**March 10th - 7pm**

Meetings will be held at Friendship Park under the Pavilion.

Minutes are posted on the website after all Board and Association meetings:  
[www.mwfpoa.com](http://www.mwfpoa.com)

**Inside this issue:**

President's Mes-	1&6
Association Info	2-5
Advertisements	9-10
Contributions	5-9
Membership Form - Join Now!*****	11



# ASSOCIATION INFORMATION

Page 2

*Thank You*

**Thank You to Mark Cooper for organizing the neighborhood clean up and Thank You all those who participated. The neighborhood looks great !**

\*\*\*\*\*

## OOPS—Corrections from the last Newsletter

### Misspellings:

**Page 2** worry to wary

**Page 9 ...** Chris Bank to Chris Banks

**Page 3 ...**Moving Forward Dates Only - no days & dates less chance of errors



## Officers of MWFPOA

<b>President</b>	Gena DeCamella	727-808-8918	<a href="mailto:president@mwfpoa.com">president@mwfpoa.com</a>
<b>Vice-President</b>	Mark Cooper	904-350-0253	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@mwfpoa.com">vicepresident@mwfpoa.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Karen Reade	352-622-2030	<a href="mailto:secretary@mwfpoa.com">secretary@mwfpoa.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Merry Lee Bain	352-547-9327	<a href="mailto:treasurer@mwfpoa.com">treasurer@mwfpoa.com</a>

### Committees

<b>Activities</b>	AVAILABLE	
<b>Maintenance</b>	AVAIABLE	
<b>Beautification</b>	Coralie Moutin	
<b>Control</b>	Chair: Robert Zachary	
<b>Website</b>	Jim Thomas	
<b>Membership</b>	Patricia and Dave Wagner Janice Eide	
<b>Newsletter</b>	Michele Shuler	<a href="mailto:newsletter@mwfpoa.com">newsletter@mwfpoa.com</a>
<b>Sunshine</b>	Chair: Lynn McGonagill	
<b>Welcome</b>	Dale Kennedy	
<b>Refreshments</b>	Holly Roberts Chris Banks	

**Community Matters**

**Calendar of Activities — March 2026**

**All events will be held at Friendship Park unless otherwise stated**

- ◆ **Executive Board Meeting** - March 3rd 7pm
- ◆ **Ladies Luncheon** - March 9th - Not In MWF
- ◆ **Food Truck** - March 10th 4:30pm - 7:00pm
- ◆ **General Association Meeting** March 10th 7pm
- ◆ **Bingo** - March 19th 7pm
- ◆ **Equestrian Club** - March 26nd 7pm
- ◆ **Trivia** - March 27th 7pm



If you would like to schedule an event in Friendship Park, please contact and coordinate with our Treasurer,

Merry Lee Bain @treasurer@mwfpoa.com

**Meadow Wood Farms Communications**

Website: [www.mwfpoa.com](http://www.mwfpoa.com)

**What is available on our website?**

- ◆ Newsletter in Full Color
- ◆ Meeting Minutes
- ◆ Advertisers
  - They support our association, so please support them!
- ◆ Board Member Contact Info
- ◆ Committee Member Contact Info

***Become a Member for full-access which includes***

- ◆ Neighborhood Directory - with Names, addresses, and contact information of your neighbors
- ◆ Neighbor to Neighbor - A list of Agents & Contractors that are tried and tested by you Neighbors - eliminate some guesswork

\*\*\*\*\*

**eMail:** To join the Meadow Wood Farms email blasts and conversation, send a note to Meadowwoodfarms1@aol.com and ask the site master to add your email address. Please respect the rules... no politics, or religion, or any attachments or offensive material. This service is offered by a private member of the association. It is extremely useful, and we are grateful to them.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Neighborhood Facebook pages**

Ask to join our private groups on Facebook:

- ◆ Meadow Wood Farms
- ◆ Meadow Wood Farms Equestrian Club
- ◆ Meadow Wood Farms Garden Exchange
- ◆ MWF Ladies Luncheon

**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET REGISTERED AS A MEMBER/ USER ON OUR WEBSITE YOU ARE MISSING OUT! IT'S EASY, JUST CLICK ON REGISTER NOW AND IF YOU ARE A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR PASSWORD.**

Do you know of a Meadow Wood Farms neighbor in need? The Meadow Wood Farms Angels is a group of anonymous volunteers who are ready to help with those small, one-time projects that our neighbors cannot do by themselves by reason of age, illness, disability, or lack of funds.

To submit a request for assistance, email: [MWFAngels@gmail.com](mailto:MWFAngels@gmail.com) or call Jim Bain (352) 615-2572. The Angels will contact you and obtain additional information in order to evaluate the request.





A motion was made to amend the MWF By-law, Article 1, Section 1 item 4, which currently reads “For any new property owner or long term tenant/resident paying dues for the first time, on January 1<sup>st</sup> of any given year, the amount owed will be 1/2 the current annual dues. Said payment of dues will effect membership until the end of the current fiscal year, that being May 31, at which time, the member will be invoiced for the ensuing year at the full dues rate.” (As amended 11/12/2009). Per MWF By-law Article VI, item 1 reads “No amendments shall be made to these By-laws except at the regular business meeting of the MWFPOA and by two-thirds vote of the current membership present”. Karen Reade made a motion “that the association no longer breaks down dues, and the same dues are for the whole year (June 1 to May 31) regardless of when the new member joins” This motion will be voted on at the next general association meeting which is scheduled for March 10, 2026 at Friendship Park 7pm.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meadow Wood Farms Maintenance

February 5 2026  
Attn: Meadow Wood Farms Board

It has been an honor to serve our community over the past nine years. Throughout that time, I have always tried to give my best to our friends and neighbors and to address small concerns before they grew into larger problems or complaints. When I first stepped into this role, the focus was on rebuilding the entrances and updating park warning signage. Over the years, my efforts have included collecting litter, repairing neighbors’ fences, handling small repairs before they became bigger issues, regularly cleaning the park, donating tractor time for various projects, coordinating repairs, applying herbicides and pesticides when needed, pressure washing the pavilion, maintaining the security cameras (including battery replacement), creating and updating event signage, and promoting community events through social media. To the best of my recollection, I missed helping with event setup and tear down only three times in the past nine years. Most expenses were covered personally, without submitting them to the Property Owners Association.

I am especially grateful to Mark Cooper for his help, which has made the workload much more manageable. That said, I believe the time has come for me to step aside. Due to declining health and a desire to focus on personal matters, I respectfully submit my resignation, effective immediately upon receipt of this notice.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this community. It has truly meant a great deal to me.

Respectfully  
Ian Reade

## ASSOCIATION INFORMATION

Page 5



Please consider serving on the POA Board or a Committee

This May we will elect a new POA board, there are two board positions that are going to be vacated that need to be filled, along with all positions being available to run for. The president and secretary positions will both be vacant. Committee positions that are currently vacant are Activities and Maintenance. The Membership Committee is also being vacated in May.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

February's Birthday Celebration—good cake and fun had by all, with Jeff Rice being the big winner from the Florida lottery scratch off gift.



continued from the cover

## Marking "Outsider" Status

**A "Hallmark of Membership":** In sociologically established groups, the "right" to gossip is a privilege reserved for insiders. When established neighbors begin gossiping in front of a newcomer, it can be a deliberate signal that the stranger does not yet—or will not—belong to the group.

**Stigmatization of the New:** Long-term residents often use "blame gossip" to reinforce a positive "we-image" for themselves while stigmatizing newcomers as outsiders. This generational or long-term transmission of stories helps maintain existing power relations and social rankings.

## Reputation Systems and Ostracism

**Preemptive Judging:** Gossip conveys reputational information—such as perceived warmth or competence—before a newcomer has even met their neighbors. In 2026, studies show people use this hearsay to make "social decisions" about who to ostracize or avoid, effectively blacklisting new residents before they have a chance to participate.

**Social Control:** Gossip acts as an informal judicial mechanism. If a newcomer unintentionally violates an unspoken local norm, gossip is used to punish this "deviance" through social exclusion, discouraging them from further attempts at involvement.

## Fear

**Reduced Volunteerism:** In neighborhoods governed by Homeowners Associations (HOAs), toxic gossip environments cause community morale to drop. New residents may shy away from volunteering for boards or committees to avoid becoming the target of the "grapevine".

## Psychological Barriers for Newcomers

**Erosion of Trust:** When new residents hear gossip circulating, it diminishes their trust in the entire community structure. This lack of trust makes them less likely to participate in community activities or follow local guidelines.

**Sense of Vulnerability:** Socially excluded individuals, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, are more likely to experience increased psychological distress and a reduced sense of control. This emotional toll often leads to withdrawal rather than active involvement in neighborhood life

## Breaking the Chain: Practical Solutions to Neighborhood Gossip

**Refuse to Engage with Disclaimers**

**Redirect Toward Solutions**

**Fact-Check the Source**

**Use Positive Counter-Gossip**

**In conclusion,** Neighborhood gossip may seem harmless on the surface, but it can quietly erode the trust and sense of belonging that healthy communities depend on. When rumors replace facts, members begin to feel judged, unsafe, or unwelcome, which discourages participation and weakens relationships. This atmosphere doesn't just affect current members—it directly impacts the willingness of new people to join activities or become involved at all. A culture of gossip signals that privacy won't be respected and that negativity may overshadow genuine connection, ultimately shrinking membership and limiting the growth and vibrancy of the community. Read that again

"Before you speak, ask yourself if what you are going to say is true, is kind, is necessary, is helpful. If the answer is no, maybe what you are about to say should be left unsaid." — Bernard Meltze

## In Memoriam

Sadly, I have just heard of the passing of Richard “Dick” Woodrome. Although he passed a few weeks ago in late January, his family chose not to “publish” the news. After these weeks, I am inclined to recognize and honor Dick as a friend, a valued neighbor in Meadow Wood Farms, and a true gentlemen.

Dick was among the first people I met after moving to MWF 20 years ago. He, Harry McCleod, Les Barker, and Gene Mealer made certain that we felt welcomed and included here. We played golf, had lunch, laughed, and shared some of the stories of our respective lives. We were all involved in one way or another with the MWFPOA and were “charter members” of the MWF Angels.

As President of the POA in those early years, I/we needed a new Treasurer. I asked Dick and he said “no.” Ok, I might have talked him into it, but it worked. Dick served our Association and your neighborhood for a decade. He moved us from paper records to the computerized accounting system we still use today. You would find Dick and Arlene at every event we produced. He volunteered for every task, from cleaning up the park, to replacing the tables and chairs at the park, to rebuilding the front fencing, to his favorite, collecting money. He guarded the POA funds as if they were his own. When the C.E.R.T. (Citizens Emergency Response Team) kicked off, Dick was there to help – to run a fundraiser, to purchase the needed supplies, and to participate as a member of the team.

Dick loved his wood shop, his beautiful property, his home, and his St. Louis Cardinals. He and his beloved Arlene hosted so many gatherings of friends and neighbors at their home. More than anything else, they wanted neighbors to know and care about each other. In his later years, as his energy and health began to decline, we saw less of him but always knew how much he cared. We played together, worked together, and laughed together. It doesn't get much better than that.

I've always been fond of an old saying I once saw on the wall at an Elks Club years ago. It is a toast to absent brothers and finishes with:

*So drink from the fountain of fellowship  
To the Brother who clasped your hand  
May your virtues be carved in the stones of earth  
And your faults upon the sand.*

You will be missed my friend. Rest in Peace.

Jim Bain

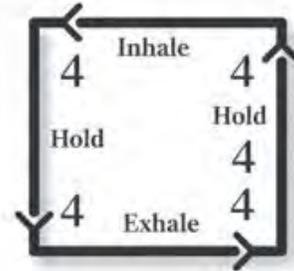
## METTA . . . . Metta is "loving kindness"

*Most simply, metta is the heartfelt wish for the well-being of oneself and others*

When the world feels fast, your breath is the anchor that brings you back to center. "Box Breathing" is a simple yet powerful technique used to recalibrate the nervous system. By controlling the rhythm of your breath, you signal to your brain that you are safe allowing your body to move from 'fight-or-flight' back into a state of 'rest-and-digest.'

### The 4-4-4-4 Method:

Inhale for 4 seconds. Hold for 4 seconds.  
 Exhale for 4 seconds. Hold for 4 seconds.  
 Repeat this cycle four times. It is a 60-second investment in your mental clarity and long-term vitality.



The 4-4-4-4 Breathing Method  
 Repeat 4 times for a complete mental reset.

## 5 SENSES FOR SELF-SOOTHING

SMELL	HEAR	TASTE	TOUCH	SIGHT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use essential oils</li> <li>• Enjoy bakery scents</li> <li>• Breathe in fresh air</li> <li>• Enjoy the aroma of fresh coffee</li> <li>• Light up a scented candle</li> <li>• Wear your favorite perfume</li> <li>• Smell fresh flowers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to your favorite music</li> <li>• Go to a park and notice the sounds around you</li> <li>• Sing to yourself</li> <li>• Listen to an audio book or a podcast</li> <li>• Make a feel-good playlist</li> <li>• Listen to guided meditation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat your favorite meal slowly and savor it</li> <li>• Drink tea with your eyes closed</li> <li>• Have an ice cream</li> <li>• Get some snacks or comfort food</li> <li>• Chew gum or eat some sweets</li> <li>• Eat some fresh fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pet an animal</li> <li>• Hug someone</li> <li>• Take a hot or cold shower</li> <li>• Wear cozy clothing</li> <li>• Wrap up-in a soft blanket</li> <li>• Run a bubble bath</li> <li>• Touch something fluffy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People watching</li> <li>• Admiring nature</li> <li>• Looking at photos of good memories, friends and loved ones</li> <li>• Watching a candle flame flicker</li> <li>• Going to a museum or gallery</li> <li>• Watching the clouds pass by</li> </ul>

### 5 Senses for Self-Soothing

When your nervous system feels overwhelmed, anxious, numb, or overstimulated — come back to your senses. These small practices activate your parasympathetic nervous system — the part responsible for rest, digestion, and emotional regulation. Healing doesn't have to be dramatic. Sometimes it starts with a cup of tea, a soft blanket, or watching the clouds move.

Submitted by . . . . . *Deborah Shahadey*

Looks like this workshop is full, but one has been arranged for MWF in Sept. They will not be able to offer the water testing, but they will have a resource list of certified labs. As soon as I get a confirmed date, I'll post. They do need at least 25 participants, so encourage your friends to participate.

Carolyn Camp

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**March 25, 2026**  
10 am - 12 pm

Rainbow Lakes Estates  
Community Center  
4000 SW Deepwater Ct  
Dunnellon

For information contact:  
jordan.brantley@marionfl.org  
(352) 438-2475





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## **Membership Information**

If you aren't a member, we would love for you to join us. The MWFPOA provides all kinds of services for your neighborhood (including this newsletter). Please use the form below to accompany your check.

**Need to find out if you've paid?** Contact Merry Lee Bain at 352-547-9327 or email her at [treasurer@mwfpoa.com](mailto:treasurer@mwfpoa.com).

*Your MWFPOA thanks you!*

## **Please Join - Renew your Membership**

**MEADOW WOOD FARMS PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

(Annual Dues Effective June 1, 2025, effective through May 2026)

Please send your check for \$95.00 with this form to:

Meadow Wood Farms Property Assoc., Inc., 73 Lake View Dr East, Ocala FL 34482

Please *print* to provide the information below :

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES**      \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**      Put my/our information in the directory.

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES**      \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**      Deliver my/our newsletter to my/our address.

(Otherwise, it is available on the website, which saves the Association printing and mailing costs.)

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES**      \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**      **I have a tube for the newsletter**

[mwfpoa.com](http://mwfpoa.com)

*Photos always look  
better in our online  
edition...*

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HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!