FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026 EDITION

The Lakes

Lake of the Woods of Jacaranda Newsletter

News and Events

Spring Yard Sale

Spring 2026 Community Yard and Clubhouse sales are a great opportunity to re-home items you are ready to part with. Clear out your garage, cabinets, closets and shelves and participate in the neighborhood yard sales. The LOJ clubhouse will *also* be open for sales of used books, puzzles, crafts and smaller items.

Saturday March 28, 2026 from 9 am – 2 pm.

Mark your calendars!

UPCOMING EVENTS

General Community Events

3/6 and 4/3: LOJ Board Meeting (10 am)
3/12 and 4/9 Landscape Committee Meeting 2 pm to 3 pm at the Clubhouse
3/6 and 4/3: LOWOJ Board Meeting (11 am)
3/9,3/23, 4/13, 4/27: ARC Committee Meeting (10:00-11:00) at the LOJ Clubhouse
3/9 and 4/13: Wetlands Committee Meeting (11:30-12) at the LOJ Clubhouse

LOJ Upcoming LOJ Clubhouse Activities (LOJ only)

See "Upcoming LOJ Clubhouse Activities" at the end of this newsletter

LOJ Pickleball Resolution

In January, 2026, the LOJ Board of Directors approved a written resolution to close the Association's pickleball court. The decision follows a lawsuit from affected LOJ residents in nearby homes, claiming that the noise from the distinctive "pop" noise from the impact of the ball against pickleball paddles was excessive. The decision was not made easily, according to the LOJ Board.

One significant factor that was considered, in making the decision, was the pickleball courts' proximity to nearby residences — which was much closer than the recommended guidelines (best practices suggest a minimal separation of 350–600 feet between pickleball courts and the nearest residence to minimize the noise nuisance).

The Association's attorney advised that the current LOJ pickleball configuration posed significant and potentially costly legal risks, including potential liability claims. Following legal review and an assessment of the potential cost impacts to the community, the Board came to the conclusion that closure of the pickleball facility was the best decision to protect the community from further escalation of litigation, significant ongoing legal expenses, and continuing compliance costs in perpetuity which would likely have significant impact on homeowner annual dues assessments.

The full, written resolution, which describes all of the considerations in the decision can be viewed by clicking this link.

The LOJ Board recognizes that pickleball provided a fun and competitive exercise activity for our homeowners. However, the Board of Directors has a fiduciary responsibility to make the best decision for the entire community and chose to preserve peace and harmony for all LOJ residents, along with limiting the potential cost impact to homeowners, as their priority. The LOJ Board understands the regrettable impact this decision may have on our pickleball players, and that was a significant factor, which made the decision so difficult. The LOJ Board is currently exploring alternative recreation options that are a better fit for the LOJ recreational area, with its current constraints.

New Watering Restrictions in Sarasota County

Parts of Florida are facing the most severe drought in nearly a quarter-century, with virtually the entire state under dry conditions ranging from abnormally dry to extreme drought.

The parched conditions are making respiratory problems worse, straining local water resources. Although Springtime is normally the driest time of year, the past two months have been much drier than normal and many areas across south Florida have received less than 50 percent of the normal precipitation.

The last time it was this dry was in March of 2001. The Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board has voted to declare a Modified Phase II "Severe" Water Shortage due to dry conditions throughout the region.

That declaration requires all residents, including those on private wells in Sarasota County to follow one-day-per-week watering restrictions, effective February 8, 2026.

The restrictions were announced on February 5, 2026 and the directive applies to essentially all of southwest Florida.

The new limitation will be in effect from Feb. 8 through July 1. The declaration requires all residents, including those on private wells, in multiple cities and counties — Sarasota County among them — to follow one-day-per-week watering restrictions.

- Irrigation for sites with addresses that end in the numbers 0 or 1 may occur only on **Monday**
- Irrigation for sites with addresses that end in the numbers 2 or 3 may occur only on **Tuesday**
- Irrigation for sites with addresses that end in the numbers 4 or 5 may occur only on **Wednesday**
- Irrigation for sites with addresses that end in the numbers 6 or 7 may occur only on **Thursday**
- Irrigation for sites with addresses that end in the numbers 8 or 9 may occur only on **Friday**

Properties that are less than two acres in size are prohibited from irrigating between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on any allowable day.

Low-volume watering of plants and shrubs (micro-irrigation, soaker hoses, hand watering) is still allowed any day and any time.

Here is a link to the complete directive, which includes information about all the details about the restrictions. Please click on this link or go to the Sarasota County Water Restrictions website for more information.

Fun Things to do in Venice

Are you looking for something fun to do in Venice this month? Here's a clickable link to a great source of information on fun things to do in the Venice area! → Fun things to do in Venice

Newsletter Team Additions

We are happy to announce that two new volunteer members have agreed to join the Newsletter team, homeowners Lisa Gold and Nancy Scott. We now have a larger group and we hope that future newsletters reflect more diverse and interesting content for all of our homeowners as a result of the new additions. Anyone interested in joining the Newsletter Team or submitting an article for a future newsletter, please contact newsletterteam@lowofj.com.

Messages from the Board

Don't Get Charged Late Fees/Interest Because of a Late Special Assessment Payment

We would like to remind all of our residents that the special assessment payment was due on September 11th. All homeowners were notified by USPS mail as well as via eblast, this newsletter, and Board meeting minutes. If the assessment was not paid by the deadline, homeowners are accruing late/interest charges. The easiest way to pay assessments is to make payments online at the Keys-Caldwell / Vantaca website. However, Keys-Caldwell also accepts personal checks.

Please check your account in Vantaca and make sure that your $175 special assessment has been paid. If not paid soon, those homeowners who have not paid the assessment may be referred to a collection agency.

LOWOJ Annual Meeting

The Association held it's annual meeting on February 10th. Board members and a fairly large number of homeowners participated in the meeting. During the course of the meeting, new Board members were elected and the LOWOJ and LOJ Boards of Directors provided a summary of what they have been working on in 2025 and what is planned in 2026.

The homeowners also approved a number of reserve account carry-overs from 2025 into 2026.

One topic of great discussion was the performance of our Association management company, Keys-Caldwell. Both Board members and homeowners discussed their concerns. The Board responded to homeowner concerns and will take their input into consideration. It is the goal of both Boards (LOWOJ and LOJ) to rectify the performance shortfall by whatever means necessary this year. The Board will take steps, as necessary, to ensure competent homeowner and Board of Director management support, including the HOA business software that the Board and homeowners use to manage their accounts, provide work requests, respond to violation notices and pay assessments. There is a lot of news forthcoming in this regard, which will be distributed to homeowners in the form of eblast messages and within the next issue of this newsletter.

Reminder about Your Pets and their Solid Waste

Each year at about this time, which tends to coincide with the return of our winter residents, the amount of scooped pet waste that is not collected tends to increase dramatically. HOA residents have reported seeing a significant amount of pet waste along the walking trail and on sidewalks that is not being picked up by pet owners.

Please remember that, as a pet owner, you are responsible for picking up after your pet. There are two problems that tend to occur: 1) Pet owners let their pets do their "business" without picking up after them and, 2) (even more concerning) they scoop up their pet's waste and put it in a bag, as they

should be doing, but then deposit the bag in a street drain. The street drains in our Association do not lead to a sanitary sewer system. Instead, they flow directly into the wet ponds. During the recent inspection of our catch basins, Association contractors reported significant amounts of pet waste bags clogging the catch basins. These bags of waste do not readily decompose. Worse yet, when there is a significant rainfall, the bags are washed out of the catch basins and flow directly into our wet ponds, which leads to a significant environmental problem.

It is against the Association covenants and Sarasota County ordinances to do either of these two things. Please remember your responsibility as a pet owner in our community. Homeowners are required to scoop up their pet's waste, deposit it in a plastic bag, and dispose of it properly. Please DO NOT ever put pet waste into the street drains!

Always bring bags along to pick up waste immediately to prevent it from being left in public areas, which is required by local, state, and county laws.

The proper way to take care of solid pet waste is to scoop it, bag it, and either throw it in the trash or flush the solid waste down the toilet, since municipal systems are equipped to handle it. Do not flush the plastic bag, as it will clog your pipes. This method prevents the release of pathogens and prevents water pollution. Homeowners should never compost pet waste, since home compost piles do not get hot enough to kill harmful bacteria and parasites, which can endanger people, plants, and water sources.

Please be responsible and help us keep our wet ponds, and our residents, healthy.

The Compliance Process in the LOWOJ HOA

Our homeowners frequently ask about how our Compliance process works in LOWOJ. Upon the first violation, Keys-Caldwell will send the homeowner a violation notification notice. The violation notice will include a 30-day cure period, during which the owner can correct the violation without penalty. In the case of homeowners who have been cited in the past 2 years for a specific violation and then allow the violation to repeat, the violation notification grace period in the violation notice is reduced to 14 days, the minimum allowed by Florida statutes. If the violation is not corrected within the cure period, it is possible that the homeowner will be levied a fine of $100 per day with a maximum of $1,000 in aggregate. This can happen repetitively in the case of a continuing violation. The full compliance procedure can be found by clicking this link.

Mandatory No-Mow (Buffer) Zone Rule

The Board has verified that the buffer zones, which are required by permit, have now been established in most of the common areas. Therefore, homeowners on wet pond-adjacent properties must now comply with the new rule as well. The Board of Directors will begin enforcing the rule for all homeowners in the next month or two. The Wetlands Committee has created an educational resource flyer to the community with important information that you need to know about no-mow zones (see link below). The information packet provides helpful guidelines to assist homeowners and

contractors with proper maintenance practices to prevent further erosion and wet pond deterioration.

Click the following link to read the one-page informational flyer

Click the following link to read the full text of the LOWOJ no-mow Zone rule.

Establishing no-mow zones and letting wet pond shores “Go Wild” naturally stabilizes the shore, filters and cleans dirty runoff, maintains greater privacy, increases property value, enhances scenic beauty, prevents erosion and allows for healthy habitat for fish, birds, and other important species.

We ask homeowners to please understand that the Association is ***required*** under its wetlands permit to maintain these buffers. Compliance is mandatory to prevent the HOA from incurring potential fines, remediation costs and potential legal issues related to non-compliance.

If you want to learn even more about how these no-mow zones work, you can learn about why no-mow zones are important in southwest Florida by clicking on this link.

Wetlands Committee: The LOWOJ Catch Basin and Equalizer Pipe Cleaning

DonMar, Inc. arrived onsite during the week of February 16th to clean all of the Association catch basins, as well as the transfer and equalizer piping that connect all of the wet ponds throughout the HOA.

This work was a critical part of the work that will be conducted throughout 2026 as the Association prepares for its re-permitting inspection in the Spring of 2027.

The catch basins throughout the community had not been cleaned in many years. Going forward, the plan is to have this work done on a maintenance schedule, once every 5 years. Doing this will ensure that the catch basins remain relatively clean at all times and will reduce the cost of cleaning significantly, since only spot-cleaning will be necessary.

Landscape Committee

The Landscape Committee is off to a great start in 2026! We now have 7 active and talented new members tackling very needed projects to rejuvenate the landscaping in LOWOJ.

Initially, Twin Palm, our contract landscaper, will be given instructions to remove debris in front and

behind all the walls and monuments in LOWOJ. This will involve removing all plantings on HOA property/easements 3–4 feet in front of and behind the walls to prepare for a major repair project. In December, the LOWOJ Board approved significant resources for this long-overdue upgrade. Thus far, the Committee has inspected all the walls and monuments throughout LOWOJ and is completing a scope of work. We anticipate this being done in the next few weeks so that we can send out a Request for Quotes (RFQ) to two to three contractors. The project will commence as soon as the selected contractor can make it happen . . . likely this summer.

The Landscape Committee also selected Twin Palm for tree trimming, and 63 trees throughout LOWOJ have been pruned in recent weeks. We will be trimming more as we progress toward summer.

Twin Palm has also been contracted to plant a number of trees along Lake of the Woods Drive across from the LOJ Clubhouse to replace trees destroyed in various storms over the past 3–4 years. This will not happen until after the drought watering restriction is lifted.

Note: Our landscaper has already begun adjusting the irrigation system throughout LOWOJ to comply with the recently imposed County watering restrictions, so things are likely to be looking a little brown unless or until we start getting some rain.

There are a number of other exciting long-term projects, but we will save those for the next Newsletter

News for Homeowners

The Happy Thrifter

When most people think of SW Florida, their minds go straight to sandy beaches, fun in the sun, food eateries and entertainment venues. But tucked away between the Gulf waves and the sunsets lies another gem waiting to be discovered – The incredible world of thrift, consignment, and secondhand shopping in SW Florida.

Ten years ago, LOWOJ resident, Patti Clark, had an idea scribbled on a piece of paper — a dream that would one day turn into The Happy Thrifter LLC. That dream is now a thriving business that has reshaped thrift shopping in Florida, and has created a vibrant community of resale enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, and treasure hunters.

For more information about the Happy Thrifter, click this link: http://www.thehappythriftershopper.com/.

The Happy Thrifter was officially launched as an LLC in 2016. In 2017 Clark started publishing *The Happy Thrifter Resale Guide Newspaper*, and launched the Mystery Resale Shopping Bus Tours.

In just nine years, the business has contributed an astounding $436,000 back into local communities. A significant portion of these funds has supported nonprofits dedicated to causes such as helping senior citizens, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence.

The Happy Thrifter has been featured in more than 25 publications, including being on the cover of *Goodwill Magazine* and *Antique Trader*. It has also been the subject of interviews on TV and radio stations, including PBS. In 2024 and again in 2025, The Happy Thrifter was also nominated for Business of the Year by Florida's Venice Area Chamber of Commerce.

But perhaps the greatest recognition comes from the thousands of happy shoppers who have participated in 108 bus tours, covering 26,784 miles and visiting 648 thrift and resale merchants. Each trip reinforces the mission of The Happy Thrifter: to bring joy, savings, and a sense of community to all who take part.

IMPORTANT: Register Your Contact Information with Keys-Caldwell!

The Board of Directors and Keys-Caldwell are continuing with an effort to obtain electronic contact information for all LOWOJ residents. Currently, we are down to about 90 homeowners who have not provided opt-in email information on the Keys-Caldwell website. In order to keep your annual assessments as low as possible, we request that ALL residents have an opt-in email and current contact information on-file with Keys-Caldwell. You can easily provide this information within Vantaca. Reducing the number of USPS mailings will reduce our costs and allow us to keep your annual assessments as low as possible. If the HOA is successful in moving to all-electronic notifications, we can save both time and money, and better use the funds that our homeowners have entrusted us with. This is especially important because of the importance of the participation by as many homeowners as possible. If you did not receive a link to this newsletter via email, you are NOT on the opt-in list.

Please consider submitting a valid opt-in email address and updating your contact information if you have not already done so. You can do this by logging into Vantaca at https://home.keys-caldwell.com/. Once you have logged in, click on "My Profile" and then select the tab "Contact Info". If you click on the pencil icon to the right of each field, you can update your account with the latest contact information.

Upcoming LOJ Clubhouse Activities (LOJ residents)

Every month there are several activities for LOJ residents in the Clubhouse. These include the Monthly Mixer, the Morning Coffee, and the Sip & Dip.

Also included in Clubhouse Activities are The Book Club, Crafts, Mah-Jongg, Men's Poker, Water Aerobics, Pilates, Chair Yoga and Tai-Chi. If you are interested in joining in on the fun, here is some contact information:

Water Aerobics

Weekly, Monday & Thursday 10-10:45 am. Bring a noodle. At the clubhouse pool. (Summer only, May-November: when water temp is greater than 78 degrees)

Contact: Helmine (helmine.junger@gmail.com)

Yoga /Pilates

Weekly, Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-9:30 am bring mat, strap and weight, if you have them. At the clubhouse.
Contact : Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

Tai-Chi

Weekly, Tuesday and Thursday 9:45 - 10:30 am at the clubhouse. Contact : Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

Book Club

First (1st) Thursday of the month 1 – 2 pm (October – May)
Contact: Linda Sullivan (lojbookclub@gmail.com)

LOJ Mixer

Second (2nd) Friday of the month, potluck & BYOB at the clubhouse 7 – 9pm.

Contact: Joyce (jkl770@comcast.net)

LOJ Morning Coffee

Third (3rd) Friday of the month, at the clubhouse 10:00-11:30 am, bring a mug. Coffee is provided; just show up with a breakfast dish to pass and enjoy!

Contact: Patti and Gary Gardwell (mgpgardwell@gmail.com)

LOJ Sip & Dip

Fourth (4th) Friday of the month, 5 -7 pm. Potluck and BYOB at clubhouse.

Contact: Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

Chair Yoga

Weekly, every Saturday from 9 am – 9:45 am at the LOJ Clubhouse. Bring a resistance band if you have one (optional). Teacher is Felicia Scherrer.

Contact: Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

Crafts

Third (3rd) Monday of the month, from 10 am -12 noon at the LOJ Clubhouse. Different crafts and projects monthly, or bring your own.

Contact: Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

Participating in the Clubhouse Activities is a great opportunity to meet your neighbors and make new friends.