

# NEWSLETTER#42

**Ladies and Gentlemen: We happily welcome the hot and rainy days of the rainy season and as time flies by more lots are sold as we know of about 40 people or companies now trying to buy Port LaBelle lots. If you have sold your lot please be kind enough to let me know the unit where your lot was located plus the price you received and whether you want to keep getting the newsletter or not. Please don't think that I'm doing something to harm you or benefit me but to be able to help the lot owners that still have their lot. Most of the advice I gave was sent to me from other lot owners that kept me informed so I could tell others what was being offered and by whom.**

**I talked with Kathy of CHL (the boss if Chuck is gone) and she told me they are almost out of lots in Units 1-9 and are then going to build houses on lots they own in Unit 102 with the hope that water lines will be installed in Units 10-13 or Banyan Village by then so they can without breaking stride start to build in Units 10-13. To most this sounds unrealistic but with about 20 houses under construction all the time it doesn't take very long to be about out of lots.**

**I had a lot owner stop by our home recently to ask if I could recommend a local contractor. I called CHL office (863-612-0551) to ask if Chuck had the time and wanted to be bothered with building one house. He asked if they subscribed to the newsletter and when I said yes he said to ask them to please stop by and talk with the sales staff and he would tell the sales staff the answer was yes.**

**I think I have said this before but in any event my meaning of a home is a house with love added. It is so sad to see people living in a house that is not a home.**

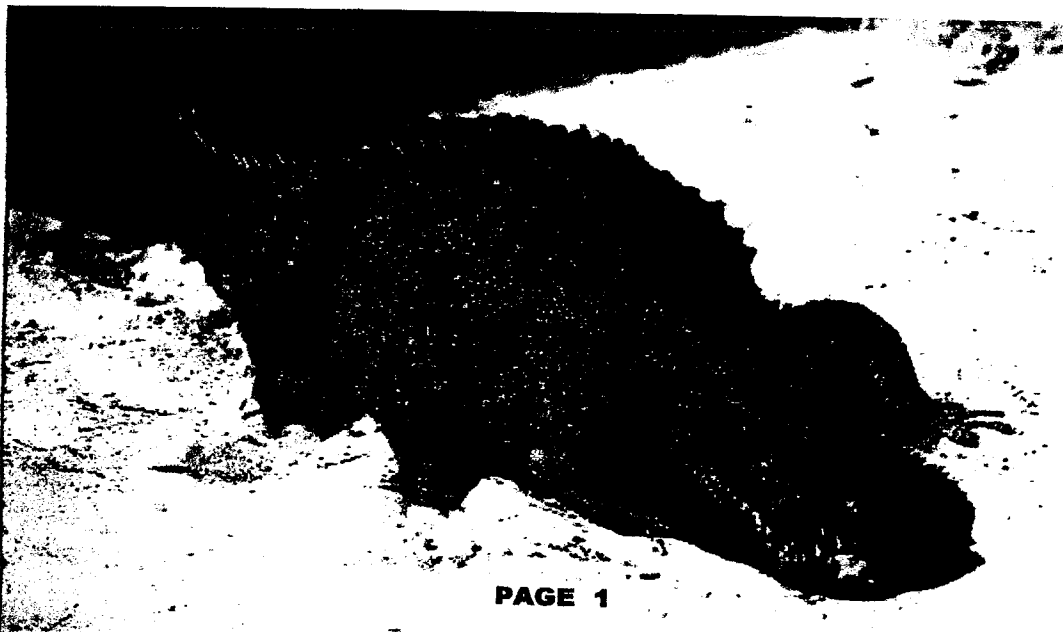
**Many of you are going to come to Florida, if not to Port LaBelle, then somewhere in Florida to get away from the snow and cold weather. So I will try to have something about the state in each and every newsletter. I'm sure you have all heard **DON'T FEED THE WILD ANIMALS** and yet almost every day we see or read in the paper about someone who breaks this rule or law.**

**ALLIGATORS**

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# **AMERICAN ALLIGATOR**

## **DESCRIPTION:**

**Broadly rounded snout distinguishes it from crocodiles. Fourth tooth on each side of lower jaw is hidden when mouth is closed. Young are black with yellowish cross-bars. Mature alligators are coal black when wet, dark grey when dry. Mature males are 11 to 12 feet long and weigh 450-550 pounds. Females are no longer than 9 feet and weigh about 180 pounds. Male record length 20 feet.**

## **GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE AND HABITAT:**

**They live from North Carolina to Florida Keys and west to central Texas. Alligators, lacking the salt-removing glands found in crocodiles, live only in fresh water swamps and waterways. When given protection, the alligator populations rebound and soon reoccupy areas where they have long been absent.**

## **DIET:**

**Large stomach, carnivorous they eat fish, snakes, frogs, turtles, birds and mammals such as muskrats, deer and smaller cows or calves. The bigger animals are dragged underwater and drowned and then torn to pieces. They are very efficient metabolically; even a large adult alligator can get by on about 50 pounds of food a year. Alligators eat little or nothing from early October to late March. Then they feed heavily during summer to store up fat for the time of not eating. Newborns start eating as soon as they are born eating small fishes and water insects.**

## **LIFE CYCLE/SOCIAL STRUCTURE:**

**Female builds nest of vegetable debris 4-7 feet in diameter and 2-3 feet high. Courtship begins in April and mating takes place in the water after male displays of courtship. One common display of courtship, is known as the "water dance" and is characterized by "fizzing" water around males torso which is produced by a loud subsonic call. After mating female lays about 45 hard-shelled white eggs slightly larger than hen's eggs, this mating takes place from late May through June. Female guards the nest against all kinds of predators until about nine weeks of incubation she hears the babies call. She then tears the nest open and cracks unhatched eggs open with her teeth. She then takes the young to water and often remains with them for the first few days. The young are about 9 inches in length and weigh about 2 ounces when hatched. Growth is rapid at about 1(one) foot a year for the first 6 years. Young alligators are preyed upon by all ages of their kind, also by larger fish, turtles, snakes, birds, raccoons, bears and if they survive to become adults the life expectance is 50 to 60 years.**

## **SPECIAL ADAPTIONS:**

**All alligators bask in the sun with smaller ones most frequently and they all hunt and feed mostly at night. In areas that get cold they bury themselves in mud, go into deep burrows or remain resting underwater with their nostrils above water. If indeed the weather gets cold enough to freeze they can stay underwater with their breath keeping an air hole in the ice. Alligators can withstand cold better than crocodiles, an example of this alligators survive when their internal temperature drops to 41 degrees F to 91 degrees F. Alligators are better vocalizers than crocodiles with adult alligators having a throaty, bellowing roar with great carrying power. When alligators congregate in breeding groups bellowing can last from ten minutes to a half an hour. Low growls are heard during aggressive interactions or breeding. All sizes hiss when approached by an intruder. The female grunts like a pig when calling her young. Hatchlings and juveniles use a variety of grunts and also vocalize with infrasound (below the range of human hearing).**

## **INTERPRETIVE INFORMATION:**

The name alligator comes from the Spanish el lagarto which means "the lizard". The muscles that close the jaws are very strong, measured to be about 3.5 metric tons but once closed shut a man can easily hold them closed with his bare hands. How high an alligator floats and how fast it swims act as social signals to others.

## **STATUS IN WILD:**

Crocodiles have had little competition in their niche as amphibious predator and have had 200 million years of success. However, over hunting by humans has caused some species to be in danger of extinction. The American alligator was once considered endangered but after protection populations have recovered and hunting is now permitted in some states where in 1989 this alligator was listed as "at present endangered". The U.S. Fish and Wildlife service has the alligator listed as threatened in its 1997 listing.

## **BITE FORCE COMPARISON**

In a 2 year study, University of Florida and Northern Arizona University scientists determined that an alligator's bite exerts more force than any animal yet tested.

Here is a comparison of bite forces from various animals:

### **BITE FORCES IN POUNDS PER SQUARE INCH**

<b>14 FT 8 INCH WILD ALLIGATOR</b>	<b>2,960</b>
<b>12 FT 6 INCH CAPTIVE ALLIGATOR</b>	<b>2,125</b>
<b>ADULT HYENA</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>LION</b>	<b>940</b>
<b>DUSKY SHARK</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>HUMAN</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>LABRADOR</b>	<b>125</b>

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**TOTAL KNOWN ALLIGATOR ATTACKS 1972-2004 WERE 342.**

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**Q. How many alligators are in Florida?**

**A. Hunting almost wiped out Florida's alligator population until in 1967 the alligator was listed as endangered. Today an estimated 1,000,000 (one million) alligators live in Florida.**

**Q. Where can alligators be found in Florida?**

**A. Virtually any body of non-salt water.**

**Q. How fast can they run?**

**A. It has never been measured but 10.5 mph estimated.**

**Q. Will an alligator run after humans to eat them?**

**A. This has never been recorded.**

**Q. What should I do if one attacks me?**

**A. Fight the alligator by causing as much noise and confusion as possible on the assumption the alligator will realize it has made a mistake by attacking a large animal it can't easily overpower.**

**Q. Isn't it true that even very large alligators are naturally afraid of humans and only alligators that have been fed by humans are dangerous?**

**A. No. While a fed one of any size can be dangerous any alligator larger than 9 feet even one that has not been fed might attack a human. Alligators are predators and under the right conditions might attack a human as a prey item.**

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**About water to Banyan Village and the Escrow money.**

**I am now Chairman of the Advisory Board which is made up of 5 Port LaBelle home owners. Four of the Five have been on this board since the County bought the Utility in 1996. Terry Kester was on this board from 1996 until a few years ago when he was asked to come to Tallahassee to work in the State Headquarters of his political party. Another homeowner took his place on the board and about the same time I became Chairman. We are only an advisory**

board with all our actions going to the County Commission for approval. To our credit they have always passed the **ADVISORY BOARD'S** recommendations. This is not to say that John Capece and I are always on the winning side. From the very start of the **PLUS (Port LaBelle Utility System) Board** the County Attorney, Dan Stevens, has been in charge of PLUS and George Davis has been the Chairman of the Board of PLUS. **I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AGAINST THESE TWO** for different reasons. In 1995-1996 the bickering was going on with GDU (General Development Utilities) to establish a price and to determine just what was included. The President (Gene Shriner) of Craig A. Smith & Associates, consulting engineers-planners-surveyors (with offices on the east coast of Florida in Pompano Beach) attended many of these meetings because CAS wanted to be the counties engineers on the upcoming water projects. Dan Stevens asked Gene at the last meeting what he thought the Utility was worth and Gene said that would take some time but he would have an answer in time for the next meeting. At this meeting he gave his answer which was \$3 million. That was the price used by the County and GDU said they couldn't sell for less than \$4,500,000 and that was the difference for several bargaining sessions over several months. Gene was sitting beside me at this particular meeting when Dan announced that he had agreed to the \$4,500,000 asking price of GDU and asked Gene if he could justify \$4,500,000 for the Utility. Gene was as shocked as most everybody was and Dan said to come up front to the microphone so everybody could hear his answer. In the few seconds it took Gene to get up to the front where he was met by Dan and they shook hands and then Gene was at the microphone where he said yes he could justify the \$4,500,000. I have always wondered what was said or promised to Gene during that handshake. I have asked both and they both say nothing was said and my answer to that was then why were your lips moving? This became the sale price and the residents of Port LaBelle, through their Water and Sewer payments, are obligated to the bonding company for the next 40 years starting with the sale date of February 29, 1996.

You should be able to determine why I don't care for Dan (who is no longer active in the Utility or LaBelle). As to George Davis who lives across the street and two doors down and was born on the same day and year as I was and never have been able to find out what he has on Dan who fired George about ten years ago from the county for stealing construction materials from the county and taking them home to use.

Now to the letter each of you got from HENDRY COUNTY telling you the cost per lot (\$1,640) to install water to your lot and if an escrow account exists the amount in escrow funds to be deducted from the cost per lot of \$1,640 and you would owe the balance. An example:

The cost of getting water to each lot	\$1640
The amount in escrow subtracted from the cost	<u>\$0000</u> your escrow here.
Balance is what you owe to get water to your lot	\$

You can pay this amount by check or as the letter tells you this amount can be spread over 20 annual payments at 8% interest. Do whichever is best for you because it's all the same to the county because all the money goes into the construction fund to get water to your lot.

Just got a fax from Bryan Keene with Real Estate Corporation of America, Inc. of Ft. Meyers phone 239-418-1313 or toll free 888-454-8808. His fax was in answer to my request for prices for this letter.

Units 1 thru 9	\$25,000 up to \$30,000
UNIT 102	28,500 up to 30,000
Units 10 thru 13	22,500 up to 25,000

Variables in price are due to lot size, location of greenbelt, location of lot as to sun exposure or N, S, E or W, location of lot in unit, the amount of clearing to build are all taken into consideration when determining the value.

CHL (888-568-2897) is still my first choice but get the most for your lot.

*Harold*