

2025
— HAPPY NEW YEAR —

BELLAIRE COMMUNITY GROUP

Keeping Quality of Life Our Priority!



January 2025

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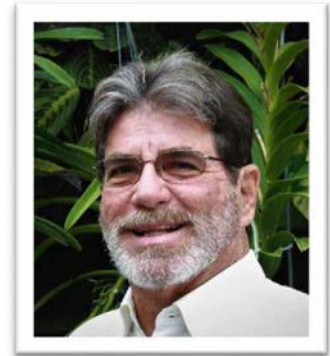
*Join us at the
Schnebly Center
1101 N Atlantic Ave
Thursday, January 16!
Meal at 600 p.m.
Meeting at 630 p.m.*

Dinner:

Pineapple Glazed Ham
Scalloped Potatoes
Green Beans
Warm rolls
Pineapple Upsidedown Cake

Greetings, friends and neighbors,
Happy New Year!

Last month's meeting was our Annual Holiday Party and Ticket Auction. Unfortunately, I was bit by the flu bug last month and missed our big event. From all reports it was a great turnout, and a good time was had by all. I want to thank Nancy for chairing the meeting and to tell you all how sorry I am that I missed it. I have asked Nancy to share her perspective this month.



The Bellaire Community Group celebrated our Annual Holiday Potluck Dinner Party and Ticket Auction last month. It was an evening filled with Christmas spirit and love. Thanks to all of YOU! Everyone stepped up this year to make it a huge success. To those who donated auction items, helped collect items and donations, sorted and organized items, decorated dinner tables, displayed auction items, played holiday music for us (along with amazing lighting), brought delicious dishes to share, Emceed the event, sold auction tickets, and everything in between...a huge THANK YOU! We did it together! AND we raised over \$1,000 for our BCG. For me, Christmas is a season for love and sharing and I wish you a Happy New Year! I am excited for January's meeting. Make it a choice to join us this year at one of our BCG meetings. Have dinner with your neighbors and make a new friend. I promise you; it is worth it. --- Nancy

I heard that our special friend and 50/50 raffle volunteer Frank Stein has been ill. Here is wishing Frank a full and rapid recovery.

Our guest next month will be Volusia County Council Chairman Jeff Brower.

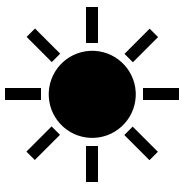
Paul

Bellaire Community Group

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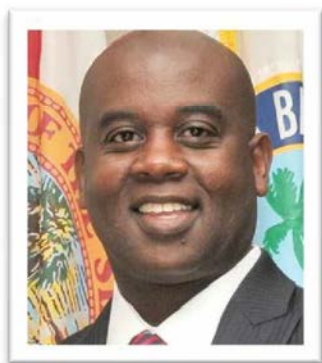
*In memoriam in aeternum
Steve Koenig*

AGENDA

1. Dinner with neighbors
 2. Call to Order and Pledge
 3. Crime and Safety Report: Captain Jeremy Nikolow
 4. Featured Guest: Jeff Brower, Volusia County Council Chair
 5. 50/50 drawing
 6. Put tables and chairs away
 7. Go home with a smile!
-



OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS



Derrick Henry
Mayor of Daytona Beach

Happy New Year from the Mayor's Office!



Mike Chitwood
Volusia County Sheriff

For this month's newsletter I just want to share another example of deputies' quick work that I hope will keep a prolific criminal off our streets for good.

Around 4:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14, deputies responded to the Motel 6 at 2992 W. International Speedway Blvd. after a woman showed up at the Daytona Beach Police Department to report she was sexually battered by an unknown male suspect.

Deputies had the suspect in custody in about 30 minutes.

They caught him quickly thanks to (1) a really good description from the victim and (2) a rapid deployment of resources to flood the area and find him.

The victim told our detectives she was alone in a vehicle outside the Motel 6 while her friends were in a motel room. She said the suspect approached the vehicle, pulled a handgun, and forced her into the back seat, where he attacked her. Afterward, the suspect stole the victim's cell phones and cash and took off on foot.

With a detailed description of the suspect and his clothing, the VSO watch commander on duty, Lt. Steven Bryan, spotted a suspect just before 5 a.m. at a nearby hotel, the Days Inn at 2904 W. International Speedway Blvd.

When shown the suspect's photo, the victim confirmed that's who attacked her.

During a search of the suspect's room at the Days Inn, detectives found the victim's stolen cell phones and a pellet gun.

The defendant is 42-year-old David Antonio Baker (DOB 9/9/1982). Incredibly, Baker's criminal history includes 30 prior felony arrests with 26 convictions, and 29 misdemeanor arrests with 15 convictions. He's been locked up over and over again, most recently released from a Florida prison in 2023 after serving about 4 years for aggravated assault and battery with a deadly weapon and possession of a weapon by a convicted felon.

He's now sitting in jail on charges of armed robbery, theft, and possession of cocaine, with additional charges for sexual battery pending the results of DNA testing. My hope is that this violent attack will be the last time he victimizes an innocent person, and for that, I want to acknowledge and commend the outstanding response from our deputies as well as the strength and resolve of the young woman who came forward to report what happened to her.

Remember, the better the information we get from victims and witnesses of crimes, the better we're able to bring the perpetrators to justice.

On a related note, I want to mention that we have a local couple right here in our area whose mission is to teach women how to avoid and escape an attack. Tracy and Charley Vega run Simple Self Defense for Women (www.simpleselfdefenseforwomen.com), which focuses mainly on how to get away from your attacker. The next workshop is 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, at

The Center at Deltona. You can register at the website or also contact Tracy and Charley for information about a future workshop.

Stay safe, and happy 2025 to you and your families!

-Sheriff Mike Chitwood



*Ken Strickland
City Commissioner Zone 2*

Hello neighbors,

The City of Daytona Beach had a well-attended Christmas parade. A good time was had by all.

The ACLU, on behalf of a few Daytona Beach residents, has filed a suit against our City challenging the way the Zone boundaries were redrawn. At the next meeting, we will be focused on how to move forward on this issue.

I attended the New Year's Eve celebration on Main Street. The inflatable attractions for the kids were a hit this year, helping to make the event more family friendly. This was overseen by Bobby and Sara Giudotti at Main Street Tattoo. World's Most Famous Brewery had a good crowd. 35 Bistro was packed-- all reservations were booked for the evening.

The street was quite crowded with adults and children. The DJ had a crowd for the evening with dancing in the street. The food vendors were quite busy as well. Al Smith and the Main Street Merchants Association did a great job with this year's event.

Until next month.

Ken Strickland

Zone 2 City Commissioner

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A NATIVE REMEMBERS

Paul Zimmerman

Chair, Bellaire Community Group

Continuing my memories of a surfing trip me and some friends took to the central Pacific Coast of Mexico in 1975.

After establishing our base camp, with the help of our new friend Nancy, an American who spoke fluent Spanish, at the El Delphin Motel in Playa Azul, we got up early on day 3 and headed to Petacalco to catch some waves. Between Playa Azul and Petacalco, there was a dam/bridge that had to be crossed. The Atoyac River served as the boundary between the Mexican states of Guerrero and Michoacan. These two states produced tons of marijuana annually and Mexican authorities made efforts to at least appear to be interdicting the flow of the pot. Crossing the river made for a perfect drug check point. On each end of the dam/bridge, the Federales had set up gates and stopped traffic. These Federales were well armed with automatic rifles. We were stopped, and I stumbled through communicating to these armed men that we were just American surfers heading to Peta, and we had no marijuana. The Federales seemed to enjoy making us sweat a little before letting us pass. Just to add to the warm and fuzzy experience after passing through the gate, set up in the middle of the bridge, there was a full-on machine gun nest pointing at us that we had to drive past. We were young and feeling invincible; besides, there were perfect waves to be ridden. At the time, it didn't seem like a big deal.

The next morning's waves were as perfect as they were the day before. The winds were offshore, and a good 10-foot swell was still coming through. Back then, one of the thrills of surfing was to travel and explore relatively unknown surf spots. This was before social media, Surfline, and computer wave models, so luck was a big factor. Well, the surf gods smiled on us because we were experiencing that dream: bright sunshine, deep blue sky, and water. There was no one in the water but us, and freight train barrels to ride. It couldn't have been better.

Well, it wasn't long before the surf god's smile turned into a frown. Phil was an artist photographer and had brought a camera and tripod. He set it up on the empty stone-covered beach, so that when he came in to take a break from surfing, he could take some shots of me and Lee riding waves. Marilyn, Lu, and Paul sat on the beach, watching us surf and exploring the coast. We



kept an eye on each other. After a few hours, we saw 4 or 5 Mexicans walking up the beach, and they stopped where the girls, Paul, and Phil's camera and tripod were set up. From the water, it looked like the Mexicans were unhappy about something. We immediately paddled in. The Mexicans spoke little English, and our Spanish was worse. Turned out that they thought we were from Surfer Magazine, and Phil was photographing their home break to publish, and they didn't like it. It was the old story of locals protecting their break from outsiders coming and crowding their waves. There were threats to smash Phil's camera and tripod and kick our asses. It got sketchy for a while. We were on their turf and clearly at a disadvantage. We were finally able to explain we were just some gringos trying to catch some waves. We were not working for any magazines. They insisted the camera be put away and no more shots be taken. These guys were the contingent of "locals only" enforcement committee. Their message was heard loud and clear. This was a real damper. We had surfed two perfect sessions at Peta and now we weren't so sure this was a safe place. Not because of the powerful surf, but because of the undeniable reality that we were trespassing on the locals' hallowed break, and clearly they intended to protect it.

We left Peta a little stunned considering that we might just need to do some exploring to find a different surf break. On the way back to Playa Azul, we passed through the drug checkpoint, had automatic rifles pointed at us, and were asked to get out of the car. We watched as the Federales used their fingers to spread the carpet out on our rental car, looking for evidence of marijuana. We had no idea what to expect, no idea who had rented the car before us or what they used it for. Ah, the gods decided to smile at us again; the Federales found nothing and told us to vamoose. We headed back to Playa Azul not discouraged but happy and undeterred; we had averted two potential catastrophes. We told ourselves that Mexico's coast offered multiple opportunities for exploration to find good surf, and we were sure we would find more good waves, rightfully so, but not without incident ...to be continued.

'til next time,
Paul

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVIST

Dear Bellaire Friends and Neighbors:

First and foremost, I want to extend my best wishes for 2025 to each one of you. Not certain my 2024 wishes worked out for as many as I wanted, but here we are and I am grateful for that so we can try again.

I am starting a wish list for 2025 which involves hopeful changes. These are in no particular order. I wish that by the end of 2025 or before:

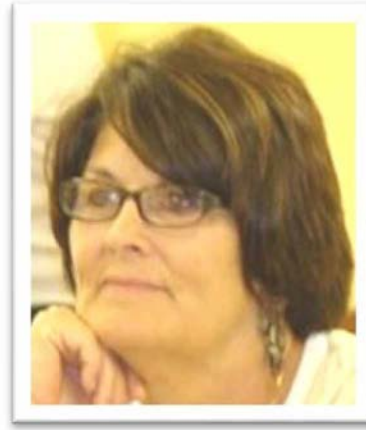
- the new weather patterns will be kinder to us, and everyone affected will be made whole again - or at least able to move forward.

- we start to get monthly public reports from every local government department, including, planning and zoning, explaining their efforts to harden what we need to in order to prepare for the next weather event and ameliorate the repercussions from them

- we hear from elected officials each and every time a development is brought forward that they face the issues and have a real discussion about the adequacy of all our infrastructure, including the effects of clear-cutting, filling in wetlands, the need for moratoriums, the condition of our coastline housing, etc. I don't believe we have the luxury of relying on developers and their attorneys for that information. They don't have a great track record - for preventing flooding or even traffic overloads.

- the government residential surveys and the expensive, time-consuming government staff "studies" stop being used as a ruse to put off actions. Unfortunately, I believe that most of this is designed as busy work and allows for argumentative interpretation of results. It puts off action. We don't have the luxury of time. Staff and others have known for years (25 +) what needs to be done - or even what residents think needs to be done. How many studies and Committees have we had? Of course, if residents haven't weighed in on issues, they should probably fill in the surveys, but more effective would be speaking out, emailing, or calling your representatives. Then in every new election, vote out the ones who turn a disrespectful deaf ear to our quality of life issues and the life-threatening situations that residents are left to deal with.

- in Daytona Beach and elsewhere across the County we start to get regular staff reports about water quality and consumption. One thing that most interests me is the increase in the number of days over the years we need to treat our water with free chlorine (vs



chloramine). Commissioner Strickland asked staff very recently to find this out. They said they would. I would also like to see exactly what the city tests its water for and how often. Public discussion may be very useful as we get more and more information about what the condition of our water pipes really is. Are they leaking lead or even asbestos? What are we doing about PFA's?

I believe we can't improve issues if we don't talk about them publicly - and I am not only speaking of residents, but of staff and the Commission.

My list is a lot longer and next I want to talk about Beachside Malaise which I am witnessing.

Until then, thanks for the opportunity and Happy New Year.

Weegie Kuendig
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dkuendig@aol.com

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FROM THE CHIEF OF POLICE

*Jakari Young,
Chief of Police of Daytona Beach*

Holiday Highlights from the Daytona Beach Police Department

The holiday season is always a special time for our department, as it provides opportunities to connect with the community in meaningful and heartwarming ways. This December, we were proud to spread cheer and joy to families and children in Daytona Beach through a variety of events that emphasized the spirit of giving and togetherness.

Shop with a Cop – December 15th

On December 15th, we hosted our annual *Shop with a Cop* event, a cherished tradition that allows our officers to make lasting memories with children and their families. This year, we had the privilege of taking children from 31 families on a shopping adventure, ensuring their holiday season was a little brighter. The smiles on their faces as they picked out toys, clothes, and gifts will stay with us for a long time. Events like this would not be possible without the incredible support of Walmart and our generous sponsors, whose contributions made this experience unforgettable. We are deeply grateful for their partnership in making a difference in the lives of these families.

Spreading Cheer at Halifax Hospital – December 16th

The following day, December 16th, our team visited the Speediatrics Unit at Halifax Hospital to bring some holiday cheer to children receiving care during the holidays. Over 110 toys were gathered, wrapped, and lovingly distributed to the children in the unit. The event was brought to life by special appearances from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, the Grinch, and several members of our Command Staff. Koda the Fluff, our beloved furry friend, also joined the festivities, bringing smiles to the



faces of children and their families alike. Moments like these remind us of the importance of giving back and creating joy, even during challenging times.

Christmas Eve Toy Distribution

On Christmas Eve, our officers and detectives took to local neighborhoods to deliver toys directly to children in the community. This tradition of surprise visits allows us to connect with families in a personal and impactful way, ensuring that no child goes without a little holiday magic. Seeing the excitement and gratitude in the eyes of the children is a reward in itself and reinforces why we are committed to serving this incredible community.

Happy New Year!

As we reflect on these special moments, we want to thank our community for their unwavering support throughout the year. Your encouragement and partnership fuel our mission to serve and protect with compassion and dedication. We look forward to 2025 with optimism and resolve, ready to continue building a safer, stronger Daytona Beach.

From all of us at the Daytona Beach Police Department, Happy New Year! May 2025 bring health, happiness, and prosperity to you and your loved ones.

*****SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POLICE*****

 A graphic consisting of the text "***SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POLICE***" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below the text is a stylized representation of the American flag, featuring horizontal red and white stripes and a blue field with white stars.

LEAVING LOCKDOWN

Happy New Year, friends!

What a year. In review, more good things than bad have happened, which I will take a good sign for the upcoming year. Right? We have to think positive.

Last year, I got a long-awaited promotion. I published a book. I made it through my 60th year without getting sick. (I still haven't had COVID, for anyone who's keeping track!) I lost several good friends, including Steve Koenig and my brother-in-law, but their memories are strong and good and will ease the loss. Grief comes in waves, doesn't it?

This year, I'll be ever closer to retirement. I will turn 61. My Dad will turn 93. My sweet cat, Peter, will turn 25. (Yes, I know!) And I will pick up my grandmother's "life list" of birds she identified here in Florida and add to it. She had an ancient Audobon book of North American birds, with dozens of sightings checked off. Most of her birds were from southeast Florida, particularly Sanibel and Captiva, so I think I'll be able to add a few dozen from up around our parts here. After all, I just realized that not only do I have regular crows in my neighborhood—I also have fish crows, tufted titmice, and some kind of warbler with a yellow breast. It's a richness of birds!

And this year, as I grow weary of working and have the privilege to finally stop working to live, I can start thinking about my retirement plans. I've spent my entire life in classrooms, on one side of the desk or another, and I've never done anything else. I never really wanted to, to be honest—being an academic was my calling and my avocation.

But I must say, I'm puzzled about what to do with my free time. I've fallen prey to the academic world's tendency to pull in 100% of my life rather than keeping some of it for me. Well, that will stop. Now my focus is, who am I now?

I'd be interested to know what others do with their retirement time. I've promised myself a year to adjust and explore new ways of being. One friend retired after 25 years at Red Lobster—she lasted four months before returning to work because she was bored. I don't want that to happen to me! Another friend retired and has happily settled into her routine, and she is my role model.

I keep getting good advice. The best so far: set a routine. Make sure you get out of the house every day.

Have something to do during the afternoons. Socialize. And—my favorite!—get creative. I stopped using my creative strengths, such as they are, about 20 years ago. So I'm going to take up some art classes: painting, maybe. Photography, perhaps.

I also know I'm going to get more involved with the public library, because I have the feeling that they'll need more support than ever before. I can volunteer to check in books! That would be kind of cool.

And I will definitely spend more time with friends and family. My bereaved sister needs her family, and my niece, who lost her stepfather, probably needs some additional support.

Actually, now that I look back at this list, I can start a number of these NOW. And why not?

Whatever you do with your 2025, I hope it is healthy and happy and brings you peace in your heart and in your home.

Here is a picture of my sweet PeterPaws, one of two cats I brought home from my mother's house after she died. Charlie Stuart died three years ago. But Peter is 24. He has chronic kidney disease and gets subQ fluids to assist his kidneys. My husband and I pay worship to him every day as he gets older and weaker. His personality is the same...but he is so tired. He loves to sit on the pool deck in the sunshine. I know he won't live forever. But no other cat has had this place in my heart.



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N. Halifax: Nancy Koenig and Nikolai Hargreaves
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Woodland: Don Hietala
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Special thanks to all our volunteers!