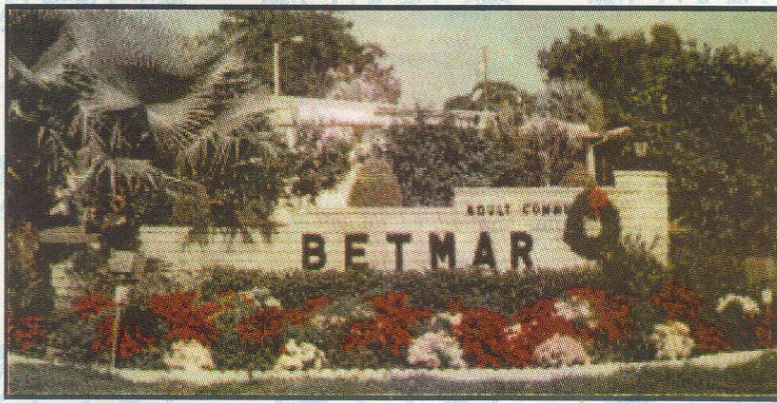




# **BETMAR HISTORY**

**MILLENIUM EDITION**

**1966-1999**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Contributors who make this project possible

Initial thanks to the staff of the Betmar History of 1984, who provided much of the information contained herein and which I borrowed shamelessly.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Sandy Lasko, Jane Bryan, Eunice Aubertine, Ruth Dierson, Mort and Millie Uhlman, Dick Goody and Keith O'Connor. My appreciation to all of them and others I may have missed.

Also thank you to Arlene Ayer in the office for her help in getting together the information that appears.

Mary Ongstad, Editor

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION

We would like to thank Bill and Linda LaForest and the Communication's staff for the reprinting of this book in the summer of 2003 and to Debbie Likins and Betmar Realty for their donations to Betmar Owners to pay for the printing materials.

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Developers—Melvin & Betty Meengs



Co-developers—  
George and Mary Sprinkle



Early ad for Betmar



A hayride through Betmar's  
woods was a treat.

With the purchase of 200 acres from Byron and Bessie Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Meengs started what would come to be known as Betmar Acres Park.

The land was a cattle ranch with a farmhouse occupied by the owners and later by the Meengs family until recent times. The only other building on the property was the home of the caretaker, which is now the Betmar Real Estate Office on 8th Ave.

Adjacent to the recently purchased 200 acres was a small farm of about 3 acres owned by a Mr. and Mrs. White, who threatened to turn it into a chicken farm. This was purchased to add to Mr. Meengs' holdings.

The lay of the land and access to Highway 54 prompted Mr. Meengs' interest in the property as an ideal spot for a mobile home park. He decided to sell the lots rather than rent them as there was only one other park in the area that had that attraction.

Mr. Meengs soon took good friend, George Sprinkle into partnership. The name "Betmar" was derived from the "BET" in Betty, Mr. Meengs wife, and "MAR" in Mary, George Sprinkle's wife.

The first plot was recorded March 15, 1966; with 69 lots known as Betmar Acres. Later in 1967, Betmar Acres Unit #1, consisting of 18 more lots, was added. Betmar Acres Unit #2 was recorded with 70 more lots ready for sale that same year.

Clubhouse No. 1 was built by Mr. Meengs and housed his office in what had been the library. Four shuffleboard courts behind the clubhouse were also constructed at that time. He also built the par-three nine hole golf course with much of the work being done by volunteer help of the residents.

In 1967, work was started to create the lakes and canals. Land was cleared for construction of the golf course and Clubhouse #2. Pasco County wanted the area for a public park due to the natural setting, but Mr. Meengs prevailed and the work continued.

The present location of #2 Clubhouse and surrounding area is thought to have been an Indian Settlement, possibly Seminole. During the construction and dredging of the area, many arrowheads were found.

This area was swampy, populated by snakes, alligators, foxes and raccoons and deer, and overgrown with palmettos that needed to be cleared.

At one time, the town swimming hole was in one of the bodies of water near what is now Lakewood Drive. There was also evidence of moonshine being made in the areas.

In 1969 additional acreage was purchased by Mr Meengs, Mr. Sprinkle, Mr. Quimby and their wives from Dean Dairy, Inc. It included the area from Allen Street to Dean Dairy Road, a total of 185 acres, and was know a Lake Betmar Estates.

Clubhouse #2, with kitchen facilities, was also built by Mr. Meengs in 1969 with the assistance of many Betmar residents.

When interviewed, Mr. Meengs was asked what he was happiest about in the development of the park. He replied, "The recreational area".

Originally, including the nine hole golf course, Betmar's common area occupied about 45 acres. The addition of an additional 9 holes added another 20 acres.

Then as now, most of the activities were of a social nature. Bingo, shuffleboard, and many special interest clubs kept Betmar residents as busy as they wanted to be.

Coffee Hour was started on a Tuesday morning in 1968, and was held each week. Beryl Mann started the program and continued as its chairman until 1974.

Since then, there have been numerous chairpersons. Coffee Hour is still held on Tuesday morning as a social get-together and to announce the coming week's activities, special events and bits of news. Visitors are introduced, new residents welcomed, and birthdays and anniversaries honored.

Pancake Suppers were held on Saturday night. This has since been changed to a Pancake Breakfast held the first Saturday of the month. Potluck dinners were held once a month.

In 1968, the first election of officers was held with Helen Alien as the park's first president.

A fire in the park, which resulted in a total loss of a mobile home due to lack of fire protection, prompted the creation of a fire district and each resident paid a fee of \$3.00 a year for fire protection. We are now covered under the Pasco county Fire District.

Harold Hoffman held classes to teach contract bridge to interested residents. This was a forerunner of bridge clubs. The game of horseshoes was popular as were picnics, hot dog or hamburger roasts and pot-lucks. These were held out of doors, weather permitting.

New officers were installed in January 1969. William Webster, incoming president requested that past presidents be automatically assigned as trustees for three years following their terms in office, making Helen Alien the first trustee. Trustees are now appointed by Betmar Acres Club, Inc.



Concert in Clubhouse #2 before stage and ceiling upgrades, 1977.

## THE SEVENTIES

Betmar Acres was growing rapidly and by 1970, there were 400 homes in the park.

The first meeting of 1970 was held January 1 in the newly built Clubhouse No. 2. It is not clear how complete the clubhouse was but many residents, anxious to have floor space for everyone, wanted to use the clubhouse for their first meeting of the year even though there were a few minor jobs to be completed, a roof being one of them.

Officers were elected on the first Thursday of January and their term was to run until the first Thursday of the following January. William Webster was elected president and served a second term.

By-laws from the club, which was to be known as "Betmar Acres Owners Association", were accepted March 20, 1970.

A voluntary contribution of \$1.00 was requested from each mobile home for club expenses. The early 1970's heralded the formation of the Hobby Club, Dance Club, Kitchen Band, Golf Club, Shuffleboard Club, Chorus, Singles Club and Dinner Club.



A group of residents financed a new public address system. Their funds were to be repaid by the club when finances permitted.

A request for a swimming pool was made and a parcel of land set aside for one which would be built when financial and legal provisions were met.

In April 1971, a new section to the park was added to be known as Lake Betmar Estates. Also that year, a roster of names and addresses of homeowners was compiled by Jennie Yadon, Bill Webster and Mildera Strain were originally typewritten

Sheets of paper, have since developed into a printed telephone directory for the park. The first issue was published in 1975.

A donation of \$50 was made to the Dade City Rescue Squad in 1971, the first of many donations which, more recently have gone to the Zephyrhills Fire Rescue Squad, and have increased in value over the years by our residents through their fund raising activities.

Ted Hess was elected president in 1972 but resigned in September. This office was assumed by the first vice-president Austin McGoon, who completed the term.

In 1972, the first Betmar Queens, Jennie Bell Yadon and Regina Kadow, were chosen. Their reign began with an elegant reception with a silver tea service, formal attire and beautifully decorated hall. These receptions have continued over the years in much the same tradition. The following year, a king and queen were chosen at Betmar and with the exception of 1978 this has continued. Sponsored by various organizations and clubs, our king and queen participate in Zephyrhills senior Citizen Day and Parade and act as host and hostess at many of the social functions at Betmar during their reigning year.

An Adult and Community Education Program, a program supported by federal, state and community funds was started in 1972 in Betmar. Over the years, various classes have been held in macramé, ceramics, Florida living, sewing,

art, physical education, book review, knitting, crafts, bridge, and others. Due to lack of financing and leadership this program is no longer active.

During 1973, John Weston served as president. The park was beginning to suffer growing pains as we had about 600 residents. The original constitution, which had been adopted in 1970, was deemed no longer adequate and in March, 1973 a motion was passed to delete the old constitution and adopt a new one.

With increased population, financial obligations also increased. Preliminary steps towards the use of a yearly budget to allocate the available funds was implemented. A policy of setting aside a limited amount to be used to encourage and assist new activity groups to get started was introduced.

During 1973, a total of \$2,400 was raised through pancake breakfasts, bingo, ham dinners, and Coffee Hour. Contrast that with 1999, when some \$60,000 flowed into the coffers from these activities.

Pancake breakfasts were reorganized with the cooking and serving being done by the men in designated block areas. The pancake breakfasts are well attended and quite often groups from other parks join us. John Weston served his second term as president during 1974. Changes were made in the term of office for elected officers. Election was to be held in March, and installation of new officers was to be held in April. Their terms run from April through March rather than January to the end of the year as previously done.

Betmar's first monthly bulletin was published during 1974, that consisted of one page with a schedule of events. This has grown to several pages and includes a schedule of events, club news, address and phone changes and other pertinent information. This has become a major project. The first issue is published each year in October and the final issue for the year in May.

During George Helm's presidency in 1975, incorporation of Betmar Owner's Association was discussed and in October 1975, a study group was appointed, headed by Sherman Gunderson.

In 1975, Ed Lake made a drawing of the park showing the streets and lot

numbers. This map was redone in 1977 and it has been updated several times to include park expansions and is in the display case in the office. A reduced version is published in our telephone directories.

Plans for a security program began in 1975. Break-ins and vandalism had occurred in Section 6, now Section E. This area had started as a travel trailer park and its location by the woods made it a frequent target. People were afraid to leave their homes unattended.

A house to house canvas showed that a majority of the residents favored a security program. A committee was selected with George Helm as chairman. As there was no money to begin the program, Mr. Helm and committee had to use ingenuity and hard work to get the program underway.

A Betmar resident knew of a sedan for sale for \$100 which he purchased himself. Residents contributed some funds to purchase "many" used car parts which were installed by dedicated and skilled Betmar men. The car was parked at a home as there was no other shelter. Many hours of work, including interior work, painting, lights, and proper signs to identify the car, were devoted to the project. There was a "CB" system at the base station in Clubhouse No.2 and one in the car. This true product of faith, hope and charity made its initial run October 5, 1975, and ran for four years. Security began on a shoestring budget, financed by voluntary donations. Car drivers sometimes took gasoline money from their own pockets so they could make the runs.

With the help of the Pasco County Sheriff's office, Betmar Security has been a success. Other law enforcement officers, communities and the press showed an interest and items have appeared in local publications/ Honors in the form of plaques have been awarded to Ward Bell and others on the commission by the Pasco County Sheriffs Association and the State of Florida. In fact, the Betmar Security Program was the first of its kind to be registered in the state archives.

The security commission has six members. Until 1999 , the nightly patrol had two people operating the patrol car each night and two working at the base station to contact the sheriff should the need arise. A scheduler is in charge of

the schedules for operating the patrols.

Security has assisted in needs of our people in many ways: As guides for lost person, pets and items; assist in times of trouble and sorrow; investigate complaints and dissatisfaction; as a source of information, make regular checks of homes during the summer; distribute vials of life to the residents; as well as having special patrols on New Year's Eve and Halloween. In addition, a sheriff's deputy is employed part time to patrol in the early morning hours.

Betmar's first birthday celebration was a bike ride around the park on January 9, 1976. This has become an annual event. Soon after dark, all bike riders assembled at Clubhouse No. 2 parking area. Many bikes and riders were gaily decorated and part of the fun is organizing the parade. The leader got all the bikes rolling and Betmar spectators cheered them off and away on the designated route around the park. In recent years, the bikes have been replaced by golf carts, but the party goes on anyway.

The brief program that follows the parade adds to and ends this annual tribute of gratitude to all who have made our Betmar Park a great community.

When Eugene Fields was serving as president, a census taken in October 1976, showed there were 803 homes in Betmar.

The original by-laws drawn up in 1970 and revised in 1973, had served the park well, but with increased population, new problems and activities, a revision was necessary. At a special meeting held in January, "Articles of Incorporation" and modified by-laws of Betmar Owner's were adopted.

Articles of Incorporation were filed and the park, Betmar Owners, Inc. was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in May 1976.

Eugene Fields served a second term as president in 1977. Also in 1977, a snow storm in Betmar gave convincing evidence that someone indeed, had left the door open to the north when they came down in January.

Unit #6 was platted in 1972. These lots were originally intended for recreational vehicles and were smaller than those in the rest of Betmar Park.

Because the streets were not up to county specifications, they were never accepted into the county road system. Therefore the home owners in this unit assess themselves a fee to pay for the upkeep of their roads.

Elsewhere in Betmar Park, the roads were built to county specifications and deeded to the county after 2 years, giving the responsibility to the county for their maintenance.

In 1977, the members of Betmar Owners, inc. were presented an offer by Mr. Meengs to purchase the recreation properties including No. 1 and No. 2 Clubhouses, the 9 hole golf course and support buildings, certain drainage ponds and adjacent lands with other lands, of approximately 40 acres at a probable cost of \$125,000. This would include Betmar Acres, Lake Betmar Estates and Betmar Estates Nos. 3,4 and 5(see map).

It was estimated the properties would pay for themselves over a period of years through the annual recreation fee that had been collected by Mr. Meengs and associates.

On November 3, 1977, the vote to purchase the park from Mr. Meengs was passed, however, the park did not come into the owners' possession until January 23, 1978, which explains Betmar's birthday celebration held in January. At this time Betmar Acres Club, Inc. was also formed. This entity was necessary to assure that Betmar Owners, Inc. would remain a not-for-profit organization. Any taxable income would flow through Betmar Acres Club, Inc. and authority to borrow money and pay bills would be part of their mandate. Although, the Betmar Owners, Inc. officers make up the membership of the Acres Club, their duties are different. Betmar Owners, Inc board members make policy and as Acres Club members, spend the money necessary to carry those policies out.

Assuming ownership of the park by residents entailed many legal problems that were tackled by Eugene Fields and Sherman Gunderson, who were appointed to work with a Florida attorney to finalize the transfer of the recreational facilities and deal with Pasco County to take over the lighting of the park from the developer.

The next big purchase was the acreage which became the back 9 of our golf course. This land cost \$185,000 but the house and lot on the property was sold for \$85,000 to help defray the cost of the land.

Sherman Gunderson was elected president for 1978.

In January 1978, an "Offer to Lend" program was instigated for the purchase of the properties and by January 11 there was cash and pledges totaling \$102,500.

During Sherman Gunderson's second term as president in 1979 a Board of Trustees was formed and a special committee on building and expansion and long term planning was created.

The expansion of Clubhouse No. 2 was proposed to owners and passed. Pledges of \$25,000 were received within six days to help defray the estimated cost of \$35,000.

A request for a volleyball program was approved in 1979. Location for a court beside West Lakewood Drive was selected and the court built. A lack of interest on the part of residents contributed to its demise.



The kitchen band on parade in Betmar.



## **THE EIGHTIES**

Harold Wadsworth served a second term as president in 1980.

Hospitality club started up in 1980 to welcome new residents into Betmar.

In 1981 the water and sewer facilities were sold to Mr Turco by Mr. Meengs and meters installed in the park.

Also, during 1981, a permit was granted to start a new golf course and I.D. cards were issued to residents for the first time.

The Organ Club was started in 1981 with a teacher and loaned organ, provided by a local music store. Little Theater was also started this year.

Willard Hamm was president during 1982 and it was a busy year.

In February 1982, there was an overwhelming endorsement by the residents of the Golf Club Land Acquisition Project. A house-to-house canvas was made to make certain every resident was informed and to solicit pledges. In about ten days \$132,000 had been pledged towards the goal of \$200,000. Gordon Baker was appointed Chairman of the Golf Development Committee. The golf construction committee was under Chairman Ken Barnes and the ground was broken for the new golf course January 13, 1983. It took almost two years of hard work by our employees and volunteers to get it ready for play.

The largest addition to the park took place next, consisted of the addition of Betmar Village, Phases #1, #2 and #3. When residents of the Village discovered that they were barred from using the golf course and swimming pool because they were not part of Betmar, the prices of the units there fell. Mr. Meengs, realizing this and for personal reasons, petitioned Betmar to accept the Village into Betmar. There was a general meeting January 4, 1983 that voted whether or not to accept this addition into Betmar Acres. Included in the deal was Clubhouse #3, six shuffleboard courts and about 6 acres of land around the clubhouse plus the two homes north of it and on the east side of Apache St. The sale stipulated that all of the unsold lots (at the time, some 200) would pay to Betmar Acres, the sum of \$1300 or 13% of the selling price of the lot, and the owners would have to observe the rules of Betmar Acres. Particulars of the merger stipulated that no more than 18 lots will be sold each year and a minimum of 10 will be offered for sale.

With a narrow 648 yeas to 494 nays, the new area was accepted. Incidentally, when Mr. Meengs transferred the remaining lots to Betmar, the state required that a water run-off basin be built. This accounts for the ditch just north of the park area on Apache St.

The next big purchase was the 12.5 acres which lies east of Apache Street and north of the front 9 of the golf course for the asking price or \$165,000. When the park recreation area was originally purchased by the residents, Mr. Meengs had set this acreage aside for a retirement home for his family, but when he became ill, he put this up for sale giving Betmar the right of first refusal. It was deemed proper to purchase this property because in the terms of the park sale, it was stipulated that Mr. Meengs could put an entrance to this property, extending Alan St (now Amanda St.) north to provide access to this parcel. By negotiating with Mr. Meengs, the property was finally bought for \$142,500.

During the summer months, the stage was remodeled, work on the ceiling and other improvements were made in Clubhouse No. 2, security moved from Clubhouse #2 when the new Security Building was built.

The "Outreach Program" was started under the direction of Neva Arthur.



Workers contacted the 1,123 homes in the park to obtain a profile of the residents and offer help where needed. The program was temporarily abandoned in 1999 for lack of a new chairperson.

Two memorial plaques were installed in Clubhouse #2. On one the names of Betmar presidents will be inscribed and on the other the names of residents who donated funds for memorials for our park betterment or beautification.

During the summer months, extensive remodeling and enlarging was done in the library. Librarians Doris Little and Ruth Dierson, with the help of volunteers, also introduced a system of control and order in the new library.

During 1984, Leonard Buske served as president.

The new nine hole golf course, called the back nine, was opened during the spring and summer of 1984 for limited play. The grand opening for the golf course and Golf Clubhouse was held November 10, 1984. Many golfers participated in the scramble and afterwards enjoyed a lunch of sandwiches and cookies.

Also in 1984, Bingo was extended through the summer, to make it a year around activity.

In 1985, Mr. Meegns offered to sell Betmar Utilities water rights to the park but the offer was rejected.

Clubhouse #2 got its ceiling in 1984, along with air conditioners which made this building considerably more user friendly. A gateway and paved entrance from SR54 to Flint Street was provided by the bank for Betmar residents. This created some problems at first until the fence was extended to block off the houses close to the gate. The gate was attended by a bank employee initially but to extend the hours that the gate would be open, a permanent resident of the house next to the fence on Flint St. volunteered to be gatekeeper. Although the individual residents have changed, the arrangement still exists today.

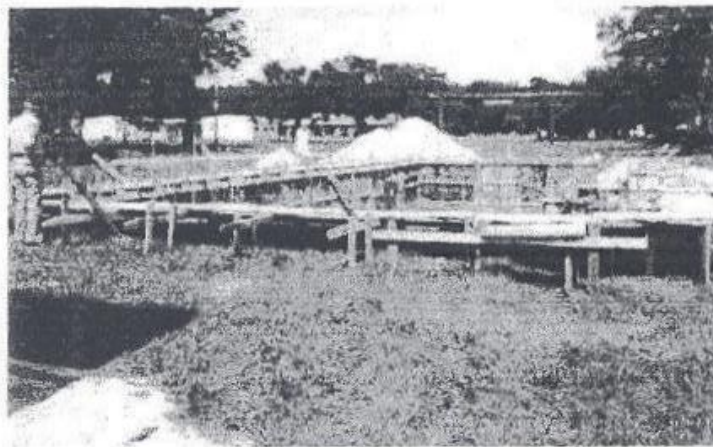
Many Betmar cars sport a front car plate which was designed by Ed Lake and made available from the office at a nominal fee.

In 1988, the Betmar king and Queen were joined by a Prince and Princess to stand in for the King and Queen when for some reason they were unable to perform their duties.

In 1989, the practice of enlisting donations for our security program was abandoned in favor of an assessment to be added to the yearly park dues. Originally \$18, it was raised to \$20 in 1992 and remains that amount today.



Betmarians gather for the annual Birthday parade.



Construction starts on long-awaited pool in January 1980.

## THE NINETIES

In late 1990 Betmar utilities hooked up to the Pasco county sewer system, finally eliminating the source of much irritation in the park and freeing up some lots for future development.

Extensive improvements were made to the golf course in the early nineties, bridges built, ponds deepened, paths built and a fence installed around the “back” nine.

Clubhouse #2 was remodeled and construction of the new restrooms added much needed space to the main meeting room. The covered walkway between the clubhouse and the restrooms was added the following year. Additional improvements to this building included enlarging the stage, improving the sound system and revamping the communications office.

Plans were formulated to deepen Lake Betmar to remove the silt that had accumulated over the years and money was budgeted to do this at a future time when there is less water in the lake.

In 1992, Larry Eaton became the new Betmar Bingo Chairman. At that time, Pasco County imposed new rules governing that activity and we were issued a license to operate. The snack bar was opened for business on bingo nights. Coffee, pop and sandwiches were for sale along with popcorn and desserts. This has proved to be a popular addition to the games and important source of revenue for the park.

The storage barn was enlarged and space was now available for our increased inventory of park equipment with the added benefit of providing room for the golf club’s annual “What-Not” sale.

Money was appropriated to build a miniature golf course and plans were made to design it and select a site for its construction.

The covered bridge near Clubhouse #3 was built. Mysteriously, it has been dubbed the “Kissing Bridge”.

A large fountain, donated by Nick and Dee Lichatz was installed in the lake in front of Clubhouse #2 in memory of their daughter.

New groups formed during 1994 included the Creative Writing Club, Line Dancing and Duplicate Bridge.

The summer of '94 also saw the beginning of a summer program, initiated and run by Marvin Matteson with the help of many volunteers. For summer residents and guest, there were weekly "Teeny Weenie" roasts, parades, chicken dinners and other fun activities to get together with friends and celebrate the season. In 1999 the leadership of this program was assumed by Fred Fletcher and members of the activities committee.

In 1996, with Lois Poole as president, upgrades continued in clubhouse #2 with a new floor and clubhouse #3 got a new air conditioner. Monitors were bought and installed in the Annex a new park directory map proposed to replace the ole one by the Library.

But the biggest project involved the resurfacing of all the county roads in Betmar. Pasco County conducted an election to determine the willingness of the residents to pay for this improvement. Upon gaining their approval, Dick Goody was named by the park to head up the project. The paving was actually completed the following summer.

This year saw a change in Betmar's voting procedure. The expressed purpose was to enfranchise all owners of homes in the park equally, and without regard to how many people lived in that home. To this end, one ballot was mailed to each home, or in case of absentee owners, to their other home address where their vote was marked, then returned by mail or by hand to the office.

Although the impact fees for homes on the few unimproved lots remaining in Betmar remained the same as previously impose, the fee for new homes in unincorporated developments was raised to \$4,000 per unit to help offset other developmental costs.

In 1996, President Lois Poole announced that seed money of \$5,000 was

received for the construction of a paved walkway around Lake Betmar. Donations of another \$5,000 made the project possible and under the guidance of Gene Coates, it became a reality the next year.

The Dessert Theater was organized and directed by Jim Trice in 1996. Two one-act plays are presented with a dessert served between the two plays. This along with the Little Theater production plus one or two professional offerings, sponsored by the golf club, contribute to a very busy winter and spring entertainment schedule.

The search for a new Security Chief began when Vic Bryan resigned after 5 years of service.

Bebb Jones assumed the presidency in 1997. This year a proposal was made and passed to deepen Lake Betmar to allow better pass-through for run-off from our neighbors on the north and west and to keep silt from building up in the lake. This involved installing a levee and pass-through tube to separate it into two areas. That work was completed in 1997.

Recognizing the need to improve and enlarge the golf course, the 35 acre Sprinkle property was considered as an alternative to purchasing the 16 acre Wilson property, which was discarded as too contentious. A program of information, including a slide show was held to inform residents how that purchase could be accomplished. The resulting vote on the acquisition was an overwhelming "yes".

A price of \$425,000 was negotiated with Mrs. Sprinkle and bids for the property's development were issued. Along with this land, Betmar was offered a 2 plus acre parcel by Mr. Amon for 27,800 to provide access to the new golf course from the back nine and allow for reconfiguring of that course. Both parcels now make up the new addition.

New clubs formed this year included the computer Club, Dart Club, Garden Club and jam Session.

Bebb Jones was elected to a second term in 1998.

Notes to finance the acquisition and development of the sprinkle property were sold to Betmar residents and plans for this project, including the new golf course were submitted to the engineering firm.

Many days of rain without letup brought flooding to low lying areas in Betmar. Compounding our problems, Silver Oaks added to the amount of water as they too, were flooded and Betmar lay in the path of their overflow. After considerable negotiation with Silver Oaks and the city of Zephyrhills, the matter was resolved without more damage being done.

The addition of paid advertizing in the Betmar bulleting and Business Referral booklet was instigated ofr the first time by Jim Trice, communications director. This added income helped to pay for a new copier and laser printer.

At the urging of new Security chief, Bob Johnson, the decision was made to leave Clubhouse #2 open after hours for our residents in case of threatening weather.

An initiation fee of \$500 was instituted for new residents who buy established homes in the park and enjoy its facilities without having contributed in any way to their development.

The terra forming of the former sprinkle property began with the clearing of much of the land in preparation for building new homes and the golf course. A ground breaking ceremony held at the site of hole #6 on the new golf course brought out hundreds of residents and friends to commemorate the event.

Douglas Brown was elected president in 1999.

Starting in October, the installation of a cellular phone in the security truck made the operation of the security office obsolete as only two people are required to "police" the park now as the phone provides a direct link to the sheriff's office without a need for a base station and someone to attend it while the patrol is out in the park.

In the fall, final authority was given by Pasco County to proceed with the sale of lots for homes on the former sprinkle property. The first house however,

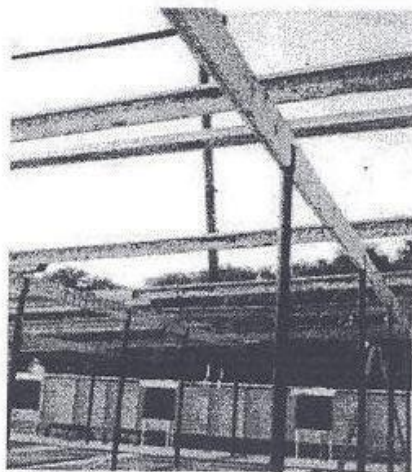
owned by Dean and Jean Baumgartner, was moved in in May. To date, all the lots have been sold and the final disposition of funds realized. Play on the new golf course, known as the Gold Nine, began in November and it was judged by our golfers to be very nice addition ot our facilities.

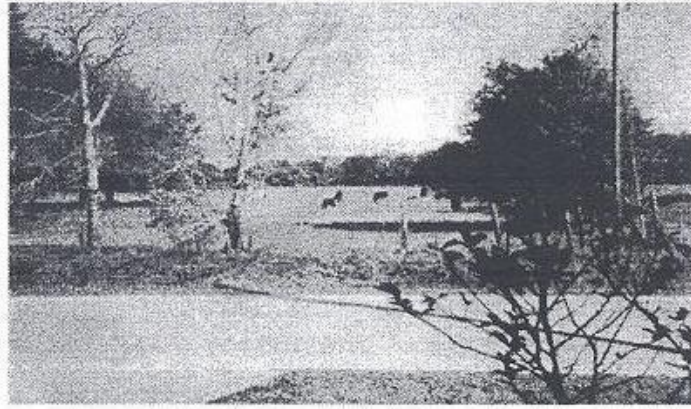
The Betmar bingo enterprise leadership passed into the capable hands of Reiny Stoskoph and Jeanne McNamara in 1999. a fire at the Lions Club shut down their bingo operation (a major competitor) in the spring and summer. Because of this event and good planning on the part of our commission, this year will see a substantial increase of bingo donations to Betmar Owners.

A new venue to recognize our volunteers, who contribute so much to the good life here in Betmar, was instigated in the form of a "Volunteer of the Month" award. Clubs are chosen at random to bestow this honor on one of their members. That person is introduced at the next general meeting and given a commemorative cup, certificate of achievement and a reserved parking space at Clubhouse #2 for the month. The first honoree, chosen by the Garden Club, was Elaine fellows.

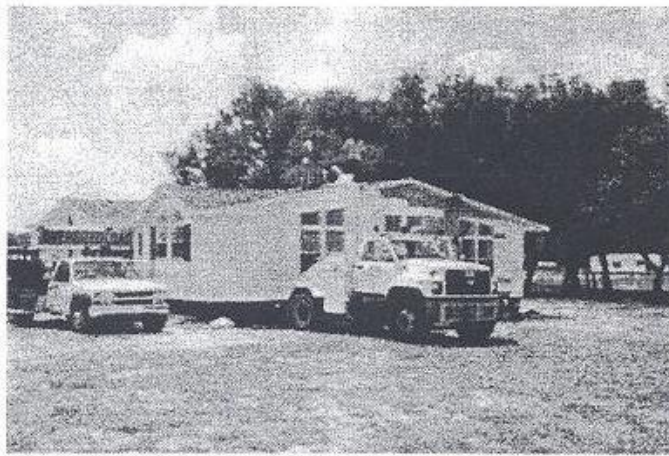
"Tops" group was organized in the fall of 1999.

As the old millennium passes, plans are underway to welcome the year 2000 with a big New Years bash, complete with a dance, food, time capsule burial and even a falling ball as the minutes tick away in 1999.





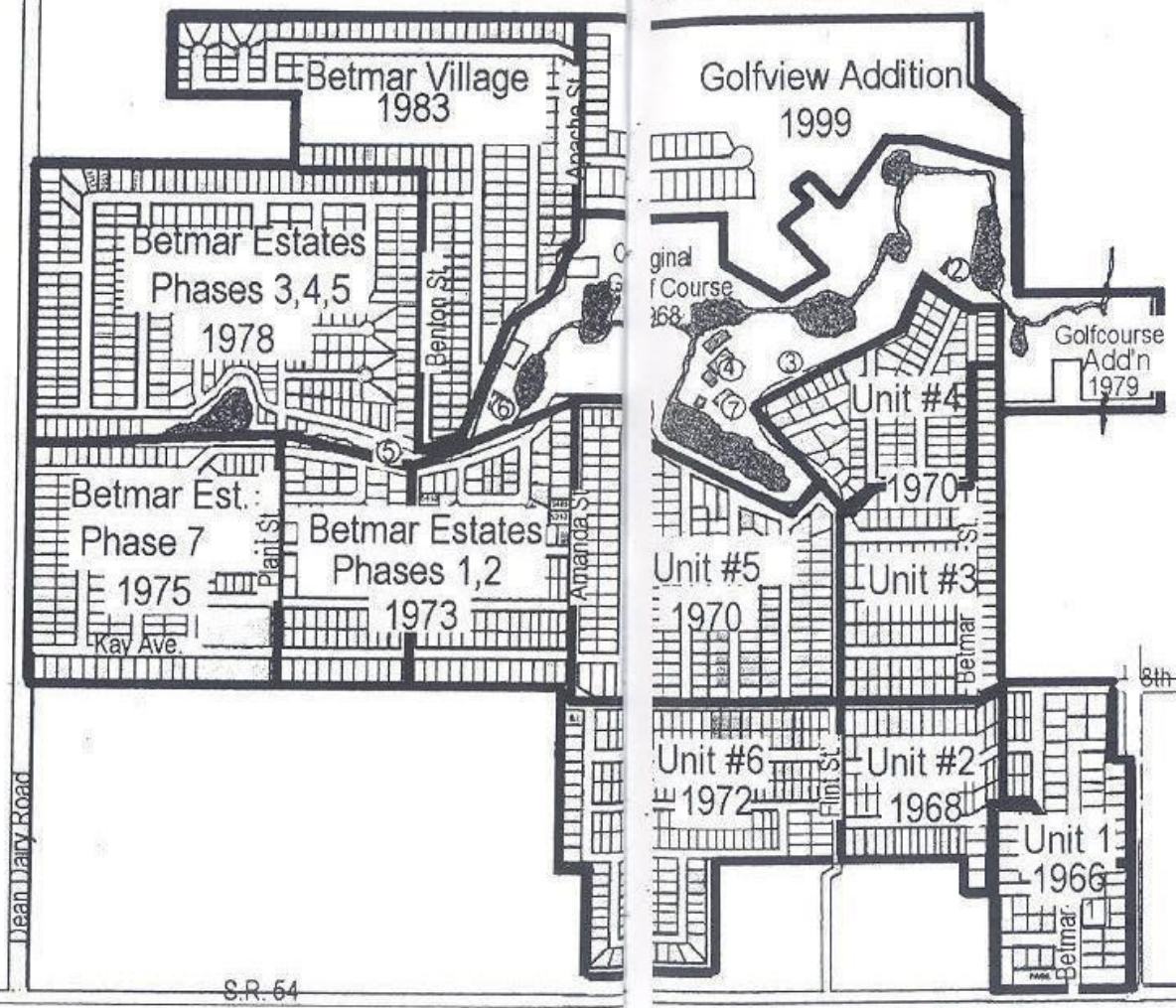
Golfview addition before it took on its new life as a golf course and home subdivision.



The first new home in Golfview, that of Dean and Jean Baumgartner, is moved into place in May of 1999.



# BETMAR ACRES PARK GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT-1966



- SCHEDULE
- 1. Libr
  - 2. Gol
  - 3. Off
  - 4. Clu
  - 5. Po
  - 6. Clu
  - 7. Shu

S.R. 54

## BETMAR CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

**Hobby Club** was organized in 1968 but it wasn't until 1973 that it was officially formed and officials elected. It originally met in Clubhouse No. 1, which is now the library. The purpose was to get ladies together to exchange ideas, enjoy each other's company and learn crafts.

Activities since 1973 have been very successful with one or two bazaars being held each year. Monies in various amounts have been donated to a number of causes such as the Rescue Squad, Betmar Security, Meals on Wheels, and Betmar Owners, Inc. During the Seventies much of the donations went to the Betmar Owners, Inc. toward improvements in Clubhouse #2 and Annex.

The Hobby Club maintains two beautiful scrap books, which are on file in the Annex, with a complete history of the Hobby Club. In 1982, they published "the Best of Betmar Recipes". A sequel to this book is slated to be available in early 2000.

The first **Dance Club** was organized in January 1970. Originally a Tuesday night dance, this has expanded to two nights a week for ballroom dancing plus Western Squared and Cued Round dancing on Wednesday and Friday respectively. Benefit dances for raising money for the Rescue Squad, for Meals on Wheels, and for equipment for the clubhouse are held. Several Saturday night "Table Dances" are held during the winter months, usually to celebrate a holiday or special event. A desire for fun and entertainment program prompted the start of Betmar's Kitchen Band in 1970. Their debut was at a picnic and they played again at the Christmas party the first year. Their rollicking rhythms, old time songs, jokes, skits, and dance steps became their send-off to years of cheer and fun for the band and their audiences. The band has a director and piano player and welcomes musicians. The majority of instruments are kitchen tools such as saws wash boards, tubs, hair combs; Just about anything that is loose is turned into band music and rhythms.

These artists wear colorful costumes showing originality style, and humor which contribute to fun and laughter. All action is fast. The skits, jokes, and mime are changed often but popular ones may be repeated.

A talented director and group of about 30 players continue the skills of those who organized the Kitchen Band.

Several awards, trophies, and letters of appreciation have been given this Kitchen Band.

The floats and the band have many first place awards for the floats and the action and music as they participated in the parades and celebrations. They jolly up such events as Zephyrhills' founders' Day Parades.

Betmar Band has accepted invitations to present programs at hospitals, nursing homes, parades, weddings, anniversary celebrations, clubs, state picnics, several other parks, and many shows here in Betmar.

The **Golf Club** recorded its first minutes October 15, 1970. In 1980, after a year of discussion, the Golf Club voted to have a Board of Directors instead of one chairman. The Constitution and Buy-Laws for the Golf Club were adopted in March, 1981. The purpose of the club was to provide an organized group of interested Betmar residents, to promote unity fun and fellowship among golf members, and to insure the continuous management and proper maintenance of the facility.

As the golf course grew, so did the expenses for maintaining it. To compensate, the governing board has raised the yearly fees periodically. Finally, the request was made in 1995, to charge an initiation fee for all new golfers to join, including renters. Even with the increased fees, pressure on the 18 hole course by our burgeoning population in the winter made playing it difficult and some cases, dangerous.

In the late eighties and early nineties, efforts enlarge the "back" nine by buying property adjacent to it were unsuccessful. Then in 1995, another proposal to acquire additional property for enlarging and enhancing the course was presented by incorporating the Sprinkle and Amon acreage into a new nine hole course, making a total of 27 holes. Two years later, this last plan was accepted by the residents and preparations made to carry it out. Persistent efforts by the land committee finally paid off and play started on the new course in September of 1999. The increased area had other benefits as well, by redesigning the original 18 holes, the golf board and properties chairman have made them safer to play.

In 1998 the Golf clubhouse was remodeled and a "tuck" shop added to sell clothing and eventually, other golf related goods.

**SHUFFLEBOARD** had been enjoyed by the residents on the four courts built behind the original Clubhouse No. 1 and the six built adjacent to Clubhouse No. 2 and in January 1971 the Shuffleboard Club was organized.

Courts were added as the club grew and we now have 24 at Clubhouse No. 2, twelve under cover in 1983 and the other 12 in 1997. a building for storing cues was erected in the mid eighties.

Members participate in state and local tournaments and it continues as one of the most active organizations in the park. Many of the players have reached professional status.

When the club hosts large tournaments, the ladies of the club serve lunch to the shufflers and spectators as well as our hungry residents.

In 1999 a glass enclosure for the courts was added making it acceptable as a site for area tournaments no matter what the weather.

The courts and buildings are maintained by club members, who raise building and remodeling funds in various innovative ways.

**CHORUS** was organized in 1972. Mrs. Lillian White reported enough vocal interest in the park to form a mixed chorus and approached William B. Jones who had recently retired as a music director in the public schools. He agreed to serve as director for the newly formed chorus which consisted of about twenty-five persons.

Today the Chorus averages about sixty enthusiastic and loyal members, under the direction of Mary Margaret Trice, daughter of Mr. Jones a former chorus director herself.

The Chorus has become a vital group in Betmar activities. They present a concert at Christmas and musical program in the spring. They are an added attraction at the yearly King and Queen Reception. They have also presented several concerts at the Zephyr Haven Nursing Home in addition to the Coffee Hour for Betmar residents.

The Chorus concludes its season with a potluck dinner for the members.

The **SINGLES CLUB** WAS FORMED ON February 2, 1978 and had twelve charter members. It still meets on Tuesday night. It was organized for and still is primarily a social

group and all singles are welcome. Card playing and conversation provide the chief entertainment and several get-together dinners a year are held outside the park.

The **SWIM CLUB** IS A "SUB-GROUP" OF Betmar Owners, Inc. and is completely self-supporting, with maintenance, monitoring, etc. all done by volunteer Swim Club members.

Around 1970, the first request for a swimming pool had been made and had been brought up several times over the ensuing years. In the fall of 1979, through tireless effort and determination a group of residents, with a shared enthusiasm for a swimming pool drew up plans for a pool and submitted it to Betmar owners, Inc. for approval.

Officers were elected to head the group. A preliminary canvassing of residents indicated general approval of the project which was presented to the board in December. The board agreed to name a committee to work with the swimming pool group. At the next meeting, the committee reported a site had been selected and also a tentative financing plan drawn up.

The board offered support and named a committee to choose a site and decide on a financing plan. This plan was based on a fee of \$50 per family per year (or advance payment plan of \$250 for a six year period) to provide immediate money for the construction of the pool. Each home in the park was visited by a block representative and acquainted with the pool project. By January 23, 251 pledges had been received totaling \$32,000. By March, a total of over \$42,000 had been pledged by a membership of 323 and the long awaited pool was to become a reality.

On July 4, 1980, the pool was formally opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Membership continued to increase and additions were made at the site including installation of solar heating panels, canvas windbreak, bulletin board, landscaping and furniture. In June, 1982 a whirlpool was installed. It is visited daily by many and reportedly alleviates most anything but financial needs.

A "Hot Line" telephone communications system from pool to Rescue Squad Headquarters was installed in 1981.

Despite the improvements, the pool has been criticized as too small. Proposals to add a new pool to the complex or replace the present one with a larger pool were made in 1995 to be financed by increased membership fees and donations. By the end of 1999, no firm plan has been put forth, but the commitment has been made by the Swim Club to build a new pool in the near future.

The **ORGAN CLUB** was organized in November 1991. It was held after coffee Hour in the annex with classes and instructor from a nearby music company. In 1982, classes and meetings continued and were held each Friday at Clubhouse No. 1 with a social hour following.

In February 1983, the club moved to Clubhouse No. 3. An “evening of Entertainment” was started the last Friday of each month with members or concert artists performing, drawing an audience of 100 to 200 Betmar residents and guests. Refreshments and door prizes have been a part of the program. Donations at the door have helped the treasury grow and the club hopes to replace their used organ with a new one.

The **FRIENDSHIP CLUB** held their first meeting in Clubhouse No. 3 on February 15, 1984. a slate of officers was elected and draft of by-laws agreed upon. In addition to potlucks and coffee hours through the winter, the club sponsors an ice-cream social and art exhibit in February.

The **HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE** was organized in the fall of 1980. The object was to make new Betmar residents feel welcome. Members visit new residents giving them information about Betmar and help in finding places and services that might be needed by them while they are here. In the spring, Hospitality presents a style show and luncheon for our residents.

**LITTLE THEATER GROUP** held their first meeting in April 1981. Their first production was a musical “a Trip Through Nostalgia Land”, in 1982. Written and produced by the members, it was a huge success. They performed to sellout crowds both evenings at Betmar and were invited to appear at the Municipal Auditorium for the Senior Citizen Festival.

The yearly production has become an entrenched part of Betmar’s March festivities. Artist, musicians and actors with their support staff spend many hours through the summer and fall, geeting ready for the presentation. It is an exciting time for everyone involved in the actual production and certainly for the crowds that attend.

The Little Theater Group has purchased its own light, sound equipment and recently, a video camera and monitors plus contributing generously to the park for improvements.

**DINNER CLUB** was started in October 1975 with five or six dinners slated each year.

The purpose was to gain funds for improvements and programs for the association. These dinners have continued. The food is catered but all other work involved is volunteered by park residents. Funds derived from these dinners have helped greatly in park improvements.

These Betmar dinners are given each month, October through May.

**COMPUTER CLUB** was organized in 1997 after meeting for a year in a member's home. From the original 8 members, the club has grown to more than 200 members in 1999, reflecting the upsurge in computer ownership of residents and interest in purchasing one by those who want to join the computer-literate age. The driving force and first president, Pat Herndon was instrumental in the club's purchase of its own computer. A monitor was donated by the Chorus and when the club moved to Clubhouse #3, internet access was possible. Classes for beginners and those with special interest in selected applications are held each week with the idea to promote computer literacy to members.

**JAM SESSION CLUB** was organized by Charlie Drew in 1997 to bring music and dancing to the park. A pick-up band made up of those who show up provide the music and residents are encouraged to dance or just sit and listen to the live music generated by these talented people. In 1999, the club was moved to the Annex from clubhouse #3 to accommodate its many admirers.

**DART LEAGUE** was organized in 1997 by George and Marge Broadbent who drew on their experience in another park to get it started. At first, the league met in Clubhouse #1 but its popularity forced it out of the small space and into the Annex. Targets were designed and built to hang on the walls where they are unobtrusive when not in use. This has proved to be a very popular activity among many residents who buy their own darts and compete with good natured laughter.

**DESSERT THEATER** was started by Jim Trice in 1995, presenting 2 one-act plays for the entertainment of park residents (and others) along with a dessert between plays. The plays are purchased commercially but the actors are our own residents and the staging of the plays is strictly a Betmar project. The popularity of the productions has encouraged their continued presentations each February since then.

The Garden Club was organized in 1997 with Lois Kelly as the first president. Their purpose is to learn about gardening in Florida and, not incidentally, to bring beauty to Betmar in the form of flowers and plants. The latter purpose they have carried out with great success. The flower beds scattered around the park and decorative plants around Lake Betmar have added immeasurably to the enjoyment of all who see them.



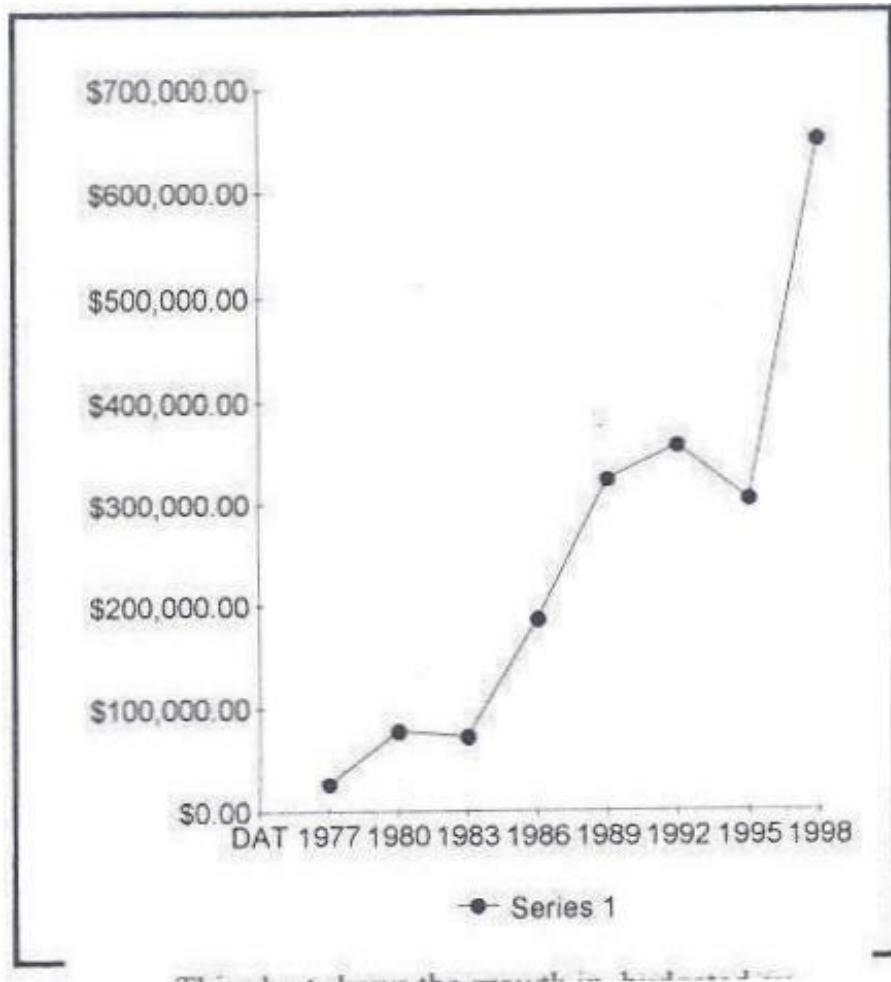
The Betmar Ballet Troupe join with other actors in the Little Theater production of 1997.





Betmar Owners and Acres Club are an "umbrella" group, elected by the owners and responsible for the continued good management of the common areas of the park and enforcement of the rules that allow us to live together in harmony and fellowship.

The officers, president, vice president, secretary and treasurer are joined by directors of communications, properties, finance and activities in formulating policy and carrying out the directives of the residents.



This chart shows the growth in budgeted expenses since 1977 to the present. As our park grew, so did the cost of keeping it running, from \$27,000 in 1977 to over a half million dollars this year. Yet the base cost of living here has only doubled in the same period.

So where does the rest of the money come from? Look around you. Those volunteers who work at dinners, breakfasts, bingo, club activities and sales provide the contributions that make up the difference. They deserve our most hearty thanks.



Gene and Ginny Coates show off the new directory sign for Betmar. This is one of many that identify our buildings around the park and were installed in the mid nineties.

Where do we go now?

In retrospect, the 32 years of live of Betmar Acres Park has been filled with phenomenal growth and development. We are now the largest mobile home park in the area, occupying some 400 acres with 123 of that being the common area.

This has come about in large part through our policy of volunteerism. Not only do our volunteers provide the muscle and the time to contribute to the welfare of all of us, but they make new friends for themselves along the way. Not incidentally, they also make it possible to live here while keeping our annual dues low, compared to other parks.

The past has shown us what is possible to do and the future holds as much promise.

As we enter the new millennium, plans are being made to add a new swimming pool. The swim club has worked hard to raise funds to accomplish this and the Owners' board has vowed to assist them.

The By-laws, last updated many years ago are in need of revision to accommodate the anticipated changes to our park in future years. A new committee has been empowered to do just that. The plan is to have a new set for review by spring of 2000.

The planning committee, headed by Nick Klak, has been meeting to formulate long range plans that will give guidance in tackling new demands by our residents and offering solutions for problems that have come to light in the past.