



December 2024

VIA INSIDER

Serving the Community since 1883

December Activities:

- Dec 5 Night of Wonder Volunteer
- Dec 7 GCS Holiday Parade 6 pm
- Dec 12 VIA Basket Raffle Drawing
- Dec 12 General Meeting 10:00 am

Visit GFWCVIA.com for the current calendar.

The women of the VIA focus on service to the community, as well as partnering with local schools to support education. We strive to impact lives through our actions, both large and small, and build lasting friendships along the way.

WWW.GFWCVIA.COM



viagcs@gmail.com

*VIA is a member of the
General Federation of Women's Clubs
(GFWC)*



*VIA Meetings are on the 2nd Thursday
of each month at the clubhouse,
17 N. Palmetto Ave, Green Cove Springs.*



President's Message

The holidays are upon us! I love this time of year. I hope you all do as well. I love the decorating, the food, and all the festivities. I am so excited for all the activities that we have planned for this holiday season.

Ladies, I cannot thank you enough for your love and support during this past month. November completely took me away from so many of our activities, and you all never missed a beat! I hate that I missed meetings and such a fascinating program, but I heard only great things about all of it. So many of you reached out to me with cards, and phone calls during this time, and each one encouraged me to continue putting my family first, and those words gave me so much strength and encouragement. Several of you brought food to my husband in my absence, and most days, there was dinner delivered when I got home as well. I knew you were all amazing, but I never expected such an outpouring of support as I received. Your generosity, and most of all your words and your hugs helped me get through such a very difficult time. You all knew I had to be strong for my daughter, and you were always there to lift me up and strengthen my faith. You are all so wonderful!

So now we have some celebrating to do! We are going to have a great holiday season, and I am so excited to be sharing so much of these next few weeks with you all. I am so grateful for each of you; for your involvement with the club, the community and most of all your friendship! What a wonderful holiday season this is going to be!

Larriane

l.stutts@aol.com





Christie Staton

August 22, 1950 – October 20, 2024

A memorial celebration of life was hosted by the VIA on November 11th to honor member, Christie Staton, who slipped the bonds of this Earth after a short battle with leukemia. Christie was welcomed into the Village Improvement Association, a women’s club where she put her organizational and sewing abilities to work for an entirely new circle of warm friends. As Chair of the Membership Committee Christie gave her best efforts to welcoming new members.

In her free time over the years, Christie refined her formidable sewing skills, became an adept painter and shared her quirky creativity with her family and friends. Many would say that she will best be remembered for her quick-witted, dry sense of humor, her incredible creativity and resourcefulness and for her knack for making the best of almost any situation. She was even cracking jokes in her last few days. Christie never failed to make every person she met feel cherished and included and she always seemed to know just what to say to perk up someone who was struggling. VIA member, Janey Fox, when recalling how Christie sent her a card when Janey lost her dog, appreciated Christie’s kindness. Christie will be missed by her VIA family

Christie is survived by her husband, Sam Staton, her daughters, Angela Chene and her husband Justin Chene, Amanda Staton and Kristen Staton as well as six grandchildren.



A Special Tribute: The table centerpieces from Christie’s memorial service were gathered by VIA member, Marnie Buchanan, and repurposed into arrangements distributed throughout the community to ensure Christie continued to brighten the day of so many....

- Isle Health & Rehabilitation Center
- Diamond Assisted Living & Memory Care
- DMV Green Cove Springs
- Pruitt Health Fleming Island
- Green Cove Springs Police Department, Public Library and Community Senior Center



VIA Joins Fight to End Alzheimer's

Walking for a Cure

VIA It Takes a Village Alzheimer's Fun Walk team of Cheryl Gonzalez, Deborah Page, Donna Shibley, Jackie Kujala and Jennifer Stubbs walked in between the raindrops on Saturday, November 9th at the UNF campus with over 1,500 attendees. The VIA's effort was coordinated by our Health & Wellness Committee. Most impressive where the many flowers people "planted" in the garden of HOPE or carried in the walk representing:

Blue: someone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia

Purple: those who lost someone to the disease

Yellow: someone who is currently supporting or living with someone with the disease

Orange: someone supporting the cause

We want to thank family, friends and VIA members who so generously contributed to raising \$1515.00 for this team. Funding allows the Alzheimer's Association to provide 24/7 care and support and advance research toward methods of prevention, treatment and, ultimately, a cure. There is still time to donate through the end of the year at act.alz.org or use this QR code.



VIA in the Community ...

HEAD START

STILL IN NEED OF DIAPERS SIZES 4 & 5.

*VIA answers the call!** Lisette Fiannaca, Program Manager of Green Cove Springs Head Start accepts 776 diapers donated by VIA members. They are so grateful for our generosity and our partnership with Head Start.

** Given the ongoing need, we will continue collecting diapers size 4 and 5 at our monthly meetings.*

Thank you for supporting this worthy cause!



Pictured above VIA supports the Head Start Reading Program. Who had more fun...the VIA readers or the kids?

GFWC's Village Improvement Association, Inc. of Green Cove Springs' Health & Wellness Committee members donated a sweet lollipop bouquet made by VIA member Marnie Buchanan to the Allegro Senior Assisted Living Facility. A simple act of kindness brought big smiles!

Reprinted from the GFWC Newsletter





The VIA clubhouse was transformed into a haunted house for the club's first, *Ghosts of Green Coves' Past* event. The community was invited to a family friendly performance to learn a little about the history and 'haunts' of some of Green Coves's oldest structures.

Following is an excerpt from Clay Today's Oct 28, 2024 article by Don Cable don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS—In the spirit of Halloween and the city's 150th birthday, the Village Improvement Association Woman's Club mixed some history, a little humor and maybe some fiction to entertain.

In a presentation ... actors played founding women who claim to maintain residency at key historic buildings in the city. Four told "spooky tales" passed down for more than 140 years. The stories were whimsical, interesting and engaging...



"...last night was fun and informative. I thought ... the socializing was really nice. We ... enjoyed getting to know (other VIA members). I loved being able to do that. We need more activities where we get to visit like that. ... All in all it was a wonderful evening."



"Oh my gosh.....we definitely do have some very talented members - the decorations were AWESOME!!! Every place I looked I saw something different

Larianne, I loved that you did the research and wrote the scripts (speaking of being very talented) for each of the ladies, who did an awesome job in with their presentation's!!!

... was a very enjoyable evening learning more about the history of our beautiful little town!!!!!"



November Meeting Recap

Civics & Engagement Committee presents "Thankful"

Civics and Engagement hosted an awesome interactive meeting with the theme of being "Thankful". Members were provided an opportunity to note on tags what they are thankful for and all "blessings tags" were hung at the front of the clubhouse. The meeting featured a moving tribute to those missing service members (full write on following page).

Our presenter, retired Clay County Judge Tim Collins, shared about his recently established not-for-profit called *Empowered to Achieve*. Judge Collins created this 501c to help offenders. The monies are used to help drug and alcohol offenders who encounter an unusual economic need during their recovery and rehabilitation period. An example is a recent program participant who had car trouble that prevented him from being able to get to work and kept him from attending required court ordered rehab meetings. Empower to Achieve saw the need and came forward to fund the necessary car repairs. This program not only benefits the defendants (veteran, drug, mental health courts only) but also our community if they are successful. The program is currently seeking 100 sponsor organizations and or individuals who will commit to contributing \$500 a year.



Retired Clay County Judge Tim Collins



November Meeting Recap *Continued*

Missing Man Table

The Missing Man Table is a tradition that has been in place since the end of the Vietnam War. Thank you, Marnie Buchanan, for sharing this with us at the November meeting hosted by Civics Engagement.

Each item on the Missing Man Table represents the emotions and feelings reserved for those who did not come home.

The table is set for six representing the service members from each branch of service as well as the civilians who are missing, imprisoned or died in armed conflicts.

The table is **round**, to show our **everlasting concern for our missing men**.

The **cloth is white**, symbolizing the *purity of their motives when answering the call to serve*.

The **single red rose**; displayed in a vase, **reminds us of the lives of these Americans and their loved ones and friends who keep the faith while seeking answers**.

The **red ribbon** symbolizes our **continued determination to account for our missing**.

A **slice of lemon** reminds us of their **bitter fate; captured and missing in a foreign land**.

A **pinch of salt** symbolizes the **tears of our missing and their families who long for answers after decades of uncertainty**.

The **lighted candle** reflects our **hope for their return, alive or dead**.

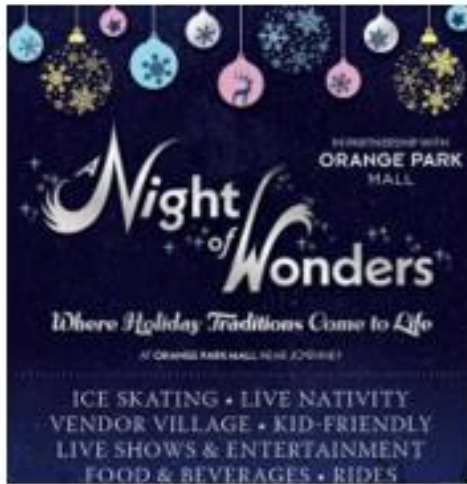
The **Bible** represents the **strength gained through faith to sustain us and those lost from our country, founded as one nation under God**.

The **glasses are inverted**, symbolizing their **inability to share a toast**.

The **chairs are empty**, the seats that remain **unclaimed at the table but they are here with us in spirit**.



All Americans should never forget the brave men and women who answered our nation's call to serve and fought for our freedom with honor.



December 5th from 5 pm to 10 pm
Calling All Volunteers to the Night of Wonder

VIA will be volunteering at "A Night of Wonders" Thursday, December 5th. We'll have a great time while earning a \$500 donation for VIA. Contact Marnie Buchanan to register. Details will be shared as they become available...standby by VIA Volunteer elves.

If interested, please contact Marnie Buchanan text/phone at (757) 560-5263.



Fundraising Opportunity
Basket Value \$800

Get Ready for the Holidays!

Civics Engagement will be offering opportunity tickets for a gift basket valued at \$800 including a \$50 gift card for Honey Baked Ham, a \$300 Car Detailing from Fields Cadillac Jacksonville and a \$30 Art Room gift card plus lots of other great items!

Be sure to get some tickets to secure your opportunity to win! \$5 per ticket or \$10 for 3 tickets.



Celebrating in December...

- 16 Eva Dion
- 19 Jayne Clark
- 27 Emily Lisska
- 31 Joan Jaffrey



Time for VIA Dues

All members are asked to pay their annual dues of \$50.00 payable to VIA. VIA Treasurer, Lucy Conrad, will be collecting dues at the next several meetings. Remember VIA is a 501C non-profit, so your dues are tax deductible. Thank you!



“The House That Built {Us}”

One of my favorite things about our clubhouse is how versatile she can be! At our October event, “The Ghosts of Green Cove’s Past”, our building played the part beautifully. She took on an eerie glow, and looked both haunted, but welcoming. It was so easy to imagine that spirits from years ago were gathered right there among us, just for one spooky and fun night.

I can’t wait to see her all dressed in red and green for the holidays! I know our talented ladies are working hard to have her ready for the Christmas Tour of Homes, and she will look so cheery and jolly to everyone that passes by. The creativity and talent of our members never ceases to amaze me!

I want to thank you and congratulate you all once again, on the hard work you have done over the past few years. It is your commitment to the club, as well as your welcoming and giving spirits that together, raised the funds to purchase our sign and repaint our building. Everywhere I go, someone comments on how beautiful our clubhouse looks and how excited they are about all the work we are doing in our community.

Larianne



History

Which is the REAL Clay County Courthouse?

In 1871, Green Cove Springs was chosen as the new seat for Clay County. The top photo features the first courthouse, a wooden structure built in 1878. This original courthouse stood just west of the current Senior Center, the site of the former Coca Cola bottling plant. This wooden structure was used for just two years until the brick structure currently featured at the Historical Triangle was ready. *We thought you’d like to know!*



Calling All History Lovers...

Ready to soak up some Christmas Cheer and stories about living in the 1800’s in Green Cove Springs, then plan on attending the **Historic House Tour, December 7 from 1-3 pm**. Sponsored by the newly formed Green Cove Springs Preservation Society, the tour is free and self-guided. Pick up the guide at 25 S Palmetto Ave. And plan to stop by our VIA clubhouse which will also be featured on the tour.



VIA Adventures...

GCS History Walking Tour

Members of the VIA were treated to the first History Tour of Green Cove Springs by Bob Scallon who currently provides tours of the Orange Park and Riverside communities.

It was a fun morning learning interesting facts about our community. Who knew GCS has a building with German made stained glass windows from pre-WWI? Who knew the original courthouse was wooden and stood on a site right near the old coca cola factory? Who knew alligator oil burned brightly or that the Spring in Green Cove won second place for purity in the 1904 World's Fair?





The BUZZ *with Environment*

Wildlife Conservation Day

Since 2012, **December 4** has been World Wildlife Conservation Day. The US State Department to protect wild animals by encouraging protection for species worldwide. World Wildlife Day is an opportunity to celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the multitude of benefits that their conservation provides to people. At the same time, the Day reminds us of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species, which have wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts.

6 Eco-Friendly Gift-Wrapping Ideas for a More Thoughtful Festive Season

1. **Fabric wrapping:** Use linen napkins or placemats as they will also double as a much-loved gift.
2. **Holiday gift sacks:** A low-waste, low-effort option for holiday gift-giving, and one your giftee can reuse season after season.
3. **Kraft paper:** Opt for kraft paper as it's biodegradable and can be recycled. It will also give your gifts a lovely rustic look. Add some twine and a pine tree sprig for an extra festive touch.
4. **Magazines/newspapers:** Now is your chance to give another use to that pile of old magazines or newspapers you may have lying around!
5. **Baskets/boxes:** A perfect time to re-use any boxes or baskets sitting around e.g. cardboard delivery boxes from all those shopping purchases. If they look particularly shabby you can wrap them in kraft paper. Remember to keep any boxes you receive in the lead-up to Christmas.
6. **Natural decorative elements:** Try opting for dried citrus fruit or sprigs of thyme/leaves rather than bows and ribbons to elevate your gift's aesthetic, and they can be easily composted or put in the garden after use.

Questions about the Environmental Committee, please contact Christina Treadway at teacherckt@gmail.com

Healthy Tidbits *with Health & Wellness*

12/1/2024 ~ World AIDS Day

The threat of HIV/AIDS is far from over. 1.5 million children are still living with HIV, and only 57% are getting the life-saving treatment they need. The 2024 theme is Collective Action: Sustain and Accelerate HIV Progress.

12/3/2024 ~ International Person of Disabilities Day

"Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future" is the focus for 2024. These individuals play a critical role in creating a more inclusive and sustainable world for all and need to be able to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Grief during the holidays:

"Holidays are times spent with our loved ones" is imprinted on our psyche from a young age. Your world lacks its celebratory qualities when you lose someone special. Holidays magnify that loss. Pretending all is ok is just not the truth for you. But you can get through the holidays. By leaning into feelings of grief. No one can remove that pain, but **grief is not just pain, grief is love.**

Excerpt from: <https://grief.com/grief-the-holidays/>

SAVE the DATE: Feb 13th

Social and Puzzle Making Competition

A Piece of Our Heart Fundraiser

Register now Contact/text Donna (413) 519.1845

Entry fees will be collected in January.

Celebrate **Heart** Month in February, with our

Social and Puzzle Making Competition

Set Up: Teams of 5, Singles will be matched to a team
Awards for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place

Questions about the Health & Wellness Committee, please contact Donna Shibley at dmsibley@gmail.com



Have a special occasion such as a Birthday Party, Anniversary Celebration, Wedding or Baby Shower?

Our historic 1914 cottage is available to rent for YOUR next party.

*For more information, please email:
Terry Abbott at viags@gmail.com*



Village Improvement Association

President: Larianne Stutts

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Vice President: Cheri Starnes

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Secretary: Joyce Engelken

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Historians: Clara Freeman and Theresa Crockett

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Arts & Culture Committee:

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Building Rental Committee:

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Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and

Prevention: Janey Fox

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Newsletter articles are due by the 17th of each month.

Please email them to: l.stutts@aol.com

Photo submissions must represent VIA supported events and activities.

Larianne Stutts, Newsletter Editor

Jennifer Stubbs, Newsletter Contributor Coordinator

Deborah Page, Newsletter Design & Layout



VIA Member Services Directory

Accounting/Tax Services

Susan Hess CPA, P.A.

Susan Hess

(904) 500-2100

Auto Body Shop

Darren's Custom & Restoration Body Shop

Darren Stutts

(904) 509-2420

Beauty

Rodan & Fields Skin Care Consultant

Larianne Stutts

(904) 251-4995

Financial Advisor

Hess Financial Group

VyStar Investment Services

John Hess

(904) 269-8772

Raeanne McCarty

(904) 908-2495

Home Care

Assisting Hands Home Care

Tracy Hardy

(904) 746-1036

Pet Services

Jen's Pet Sitting Service

Jenifer Dunnavant

(904) 657-4460

Realtor

Davidson Realty, Inc.

Christina Treadway

(904) 548-7775

Restaurant

Corner Pocket

Cheri Starnes

(904) 284-1992

Scents

SCENTSY

Jo Potter

(541) 279-0595

Web Development & Photos

Unicorn Web Development /FotoFusion Photo

Bobbi Nagle

(904) 891-4538

Women's Clothing

One Swanky Chic Boutique

Kristina Byrd

(904) 671-3819

Let's support the businesses of our members and their spouses!

