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**JUNE 2025**

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PUBLICATION**



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Lunch: 12pm to 1pm

## About DR. MICHELLE F. IRELAND



For over 20 years, Dr. Michelle F. Ireland has perfected the smiles of thousands of patients. Dr. Ireland graduated with her Doctorate of Medicine in Dentistry (D.M.D.) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in 1994 and became licensed to practice as a general dentist. Upon graduation, she completed additional educational requirements and specialized training at the UAB School of Dentistry to become a prosthodontist.

Dr. Ireland has served as a professor at UAB School of Dentistry in the Department of Prosthodontics, where she enjoyed teaching crown and bridge prosthodontics and

removable prosthodontics with an emphasis on esthetics, occlusion, and implant restoration.

Over the years, Dr. Ireland has counseled former students, general dentists and their patients, and continues to receive extensive training in the field of dentistry and prosthodontics. Dr. Ireland has built a reputation as a caring, compassionate, and competent dental practitioner. Her additional expertise is a blessing and is evident in the way patients are accepting of her recommendations.



# Volunteerism In Bent Tree

By Jim Pryor, General Manager

My parents live in a gated golf course community in Pinehurst, NC that operates similar to Bent Tree. Their community deals with many of the same issues we do. Every Friday, I forward my mom a copy of the Bent Tree Friday News. I would like to tell you that she reads it to make sure her son is doing a good job, but she really likes to read it to see all the great things we have happening in Bent Tree. When I talk to her, she always says “wow, there is a lot happening at Bent Tree, a lot of things for people to do. I wish my community had all the things to do that Bent Tree has”. That comment from someone looking in from the outside really says a lot about our community and what we have to offer.

The bottom line is that Bent Tree has a lot happening because of the volunteer work and involvement of our residents. It's dedication, hard work, countless hours, stress, and compassion by many residents. As I delve into this topic, I looked back on the last 12 months of my calendar to see the many Boards/Committees which meet regularly to keep the Bent Tree engine running. I am going to list them all (with apologies for any I might unintentionally leave out):

|                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Board of Directors                 | Habitat Conservation Plan       |
| 28 Acres Initiative                | Keep Bent Tree Beautiful (KBTB) |
| Activities Committee (BTAC)        | Lake & Wildlife (L&W)           |
| Amenities Initiative- Private Pass | Lake Tamarack Area Master Plan  |
| Animal Shelter Board               | Land & Development (LAD)        |
| Architectural Committee (AC)       | Learning Tree Committee         |
| Benevolence Fund Committee         | Library Committee               |
| Bent Tree Foundation               | Sharp Top Property Initiative   |
| Courts Committee                   | Stables Future Committee        |
| Economic Development               | Stables Renovation Committee    |
| Elections Committee                | Tamarack Treasures              |
| Golf & Greens (G&G)                | YouthFest                       |

For the hundreds of residents involved in one or many of these groups, THANK YOU!! Your involvement and expertise make a difference in Bent Tree. For those that want to be involved, simply reach out to the Board of Directors ([boardcomments@bent-tree.com](mailto:boardcomments@bent-tree.com)) with your interest and they will see if they can get you plugged in to a board/committee/initiative.

Through my life, I have always enjoyed leading and being a part of teams. Bent Tree is no different. From the residents, Board of Directors, Committee Members, and BTCI staff, we all work together to make Bent Tree a community.

**T-** Together

**E-** Each

**A-** Accomplishes

**M-** More



# Bent Tree Boat Policy Update

By Michael Koorey, Director of Safety and Emergency Management

The Boat Policy within the Bent Tree Rules and Regulations was amended at the Board Meeting on 4/22/25. The main goal of the update is to enhance the boat ramp storage area by promoting care and maintenance of the boats and trailers stored there. We also want to ensure clarity and reasonableness of registration requirements. Below is our new Boat Policy in its entirety.

## Q. BOAT POLICY

Lake Tamarack is designated as a no-wake lake. All State safety regulations for boat operations are the responsibility of the boat operator. Proper flotation devices for each occupant of the boat must be provided.

### 1. BOAT REGISTRATION

a. All boats used within Bent Tree must be registered annually through Bent Tree Administration. Any applicable registration fees shall be specified in the current Fee Schedule.

b. A current registration decal must be affixed to the left front of the vessel.

c. BTCI shall have the authority to dispose of any unregistered boat on common properties. Expenses for storage or removal of delinquent or abandoned boats from the common properties are the responsibility of the boat owner and shall be treated as an unpaid assessment in accordance with CC&Rs Article IV.

d. Registration is limited by the following Policy:

- 1) NO vessel rated for more than six adult passengers will be registered.
- 2) NO vessel with any form of internal combustion engine will be registered.
- 3) NO vessel exceeding 84 inches in width, at the widest part, will be registered.

### 2. BOAT STORAGE

a. Boats stored at the boat ramp area are subject to a storage fee as specified in the current Fee Schedule. BTCI shall have the right to refuse to renew storage based on violations of the boat storage policy.

b. Multiple boats within one (1) storage rack space shall each incur the annual storage fee.

c. Boat storage spaces must be assigned through Bent Tree Administration. Boats must be stored in their assigned storage spaces.

d. Boats are stored at the owner's risk.

e. Boats stored on racks must be upside down and secured at both ends.

f. Damage to storage racks or other boats by improperly secured boats shall be the responsibility of the owner of the unsecured boat.

g. Boats too large to fit properly in a storage rack space may be stored on a trailer in the designated area. Only trailers manufactured for transporting boats may be used.

h. No utility trailers, homemade trailers, storage boxes, dollies, sawhorses, or makeshift apparatus are permitted.

i. All boats and trailers stored at the boat ramp must be maintained in a usable condition and stored in a manner that does not collect water.

j. Trash of any kind left on or in trailers and/or boats shall be considered littering.

k. No boat shall be docked overnight in the water except by express permission of the General Manager.

l. Boats not permitted for use in Bent Tree may be stored at the RV Storage Area, on a space available basis. Applicable storage fees shall be specified in the current Fee Schedule.

m. Boats stored on the owner's property must be stored in accordance with the CC&Rs Article V, Section 20, Paragraph (n).

# Public Safety Stats from 4/1/25 – 4/30/25

By Michael Koorey - Director,  
Donnie Arp - Fire Chief,  
John Hawkins - Assistant Director

## Call Responses

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Fire                     | 13  |
| Medical                  | 18  |
| Resident Complaints      | 3   |
| Resident Assists         | 10  |
| Property/Resident Checks | 7   |
| Animal Calls             | 10  |
| Public Safety Calls      | 36  |
| Total                    | 97  |
| 2025 Total               | 351 |

## Patrol Mileage

|                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Total Patrol Mileage (4/1 – 4/30) | 2,283 |
| 2025 Total                        | 7,481 |

## Violations

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Written Citations            | 32  |
| Warnings                     | 14  |
| Total (4/1 – 4/30)           | 46  |
| 2025 Total Written Citations | 116 |

40 Little Pine Mountain Road  
Jasper, GA 30143 • 770-893-2628  
publicsafety@bent-tree.com



## GPS Directions to Bent Tree

Please give your visitors the following address (1 Little Pine Mountain Rd, Jasper, GA) to gain access into the front gate on Bent Tree Drive, which will alleviate GPS systems from sending them to the back gate off Grandview Rd.



## We Want You...

...to email us short stories,  
interviews, poetry, and articles of  
general interest to our residents.  
...to tell us what articles you would  
like to see.

...to share with us some of your  
amazing Bent Tree related images.

**Thanks.**

**echo Editorial Committee**

## 2025 Board of Directors

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buddycreef@bent-tree.com

713-623-3444

**Michael Kahn – Vice President**

The Courts Committee Liaison

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*Contact the Editor of the echo at  
btecho@etcmail.com*

## On the cover...

The cover image was submitted by  
Lynn Conrad.

## Calling All Artists!

By Andrew Kidd, BTAC Arts  
Council

The Bent Tree Arts Council is looking for artists in our community to display their works at a free artist showcase on Sunday June 8th in the Rec Room at Club Tamarack. The display time will be 1:00pm - 3:30pm. The Art Showcase will feature all art media including, but not limited to quilting, woodworking, multi-media, photography, water color and oils. We ask that each artists show up to three pieces of work. (Unless the items are very small) This is a fun event that offers a platform to show and describe you own artwork. There is no fee to participate and no fee to enter the art exhibition. The set up will be on Sunday, June 8, from 11am to 1pm with the artist show case beginning at 1:00pm. Beautiful acoustic/electric guitar background music will be provided by Bent Tree musician, Paul Phillips. Registration forms are in the administration office. This event is co-chaired by Sulaine Sims 770-605-1467 and Andrew Kidd 386-290-6002.



# New Bent Tree Head Golf Professional, Rob Spiars

By Lyn Orletsky

We are thrilled to announce that Rob Spiars will be joining us as the new Head Golf Professional at Bent Tree, starting the first week of June! We are excited to welcome Rob to the team, and we know that his expertise and passion for the game will greatly benefit our golf program.

Rob is a Quarter Century Member of the PGA, with an extensive background in tournament management, merchandising, teaching, playing, and member engagement. He earned his BS degree at the University of Louisiana, where he played Division 1 golf on the team. His commitment to promoting the game of golf is matched only by his passion for providing excellent service, and we are fortunate to have him on board.

When he's not at the club, Rob enjoys hiking, fishing, and relaxing with a glass of Cabernet. Having grown up north of the border, he has a well-rounded athletic background, playing hockey, tennis, and of course, golf from a young age.

Please join us in welcoming Rob to Bent Tree – we look forward to seeing his positive impact on the course and the community!



# Bent Tree Ladies Golf Association

By Lyn Orletsky

Between rain, wind and cold temperatures, April weather is still challenging our lady golfers. April 8, was a low gross/ low net game.

1st Gross: Lynn Manni, 92

1st Net: Susan Carmichael, 83

2nd Gross: Karen Ballew, 96

2nd Net: Judy Crain, 83

The following Tuesday, the wind was still howling, but the scores improved with a repeat of the game of low net/ low gross.

1st Gross: Susan Carmichael, 85

1st Net: Faye Cole, 73

2nd Gross: Bonny Pearson, 91

2nd Net: Theresa Shattock, 79

On April 29, the weather was finally fine, making for a lovely day of golf. The game was Grandmothers and NAGs (Not A Grandmother). Grandmothers take an extra stroke off their total score for each grandchild they have, up to five grandchildren. NAGs compete in a separate flight.

Winners for Grandmothers

1st Gross: Bonny Pearson, 84

1st Net: Lynn Manni, 71

Winners for NAGs

1st Gross: Kendall Fowler, 99

1st Net: Wendy Kaplan, 75

You can still join the Bent Tree Ladies' Golf Association (BTLGA). All you need is an established handicap of 40 or less and a willingness to have fun. However, if you are 75 years old or older, plus a handicap of 32+, you may play from the yellow tees. The BTLGA plays every Tuesday through October at 9:00. Each week is a new game, some are straight golf, and others are wild and wacky, but all add to the excitement and camaraderie, which ultimately is what golf is all about.



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# Bent Tree Niners Swing into Spring

By Wendy Alpine

Spring is in the air, and the Bent Tree Niners are making the most of the season—when the weather cooperates, that is! April brought its fair share of showers, and early May followed suit, leading to two rainouts so far. But when the sun did shine, the Niners were ready to hit the links.

## April 10 – Low Putts Winners

The green was the place to be as players competed for the fewest putts:

- 🏆 1st Place: Janet Vardaman
- 🏆 2nd Place: Kathy Craig
- 🏆 3rd Place: Ursula Chapman

## April 17 – Even Holes Winners

Clear skies returned on April 17, just in time for our Even Holes game. Great play all around, with a close card playoff:

- 🏆 1st Place: Arlene Scott
- 🏆 2nd Place: Ellie Girard (card playoff with Laura Dutton)
- 🏆 3rd Place: Laura Dutton
- 🥈 4th Place: Kathy Craig

Congratulations to all our winners!

Unfortunately, the weather wasn't as cooperative for our scheduled Low Gross/Low Net and Best Ball games—they were rained out. But not to worry! There's more fun on the horizon.

## Upcoming Events:

- May 15 – Make Your Own Foursome: Pair up with your friends or meet new ones—your choice!
- May 22 – Member-Member & Luncheon: One of our favorite events of the season. Stay tuned for more details.

## Golf Tip of the Month

Keeping up the tradition started by our former articles editor Ellie Girard, here's a pace-of-play tip shared by fellow golfers:

🎵 **Tip:** After finishing a hole, don't delay at the green—wait until the next tee box to put your club(s) away. And while you're at the next hole, after teeing off, consider grabbing your next club(s) in advance. These small steps help keep the game moving smoothly.

Looking forward to more sunny days and great golf. See you on the course!



*Low Putts Winners: From left to right – Ursula Chapman, Kathy Craig, and Janet Vardaman.*



*Even Holes Winners: Laura Dutton (left) and Kathy Craig. Not pictured: Arlene Scott and Ellie Girard.*

**READ THIS BEFORE YOUR NEXT ROUND OF GOLF**  
@golfunpluggedhq

Don't aim for the pin—aim for the miss you want to live with. (Because dead centre is great, but you're not Rory. Manage your miss.)

If you want to swing harder, first learn how to miss smaller. (Speed means nothing if your dispersion looks like shotgun spray.)

Your grip pressure should feel like you're holding a bird—not trying to crush your ex's hopes. (Tension kills tempo. Always has.)

Your warmup is not for fixing your swing. It's to find out what version of you showed up today. (Play the swing you brought, not the one you dream about.)

Walking off a shot you're not ready for is a power move, not a weakness. (Pulling the trigger out of pressure is how bad shots happen.)

Only apologise for a shot if it hits a person. Otherwise, it's part of the game. (Confidence includes owning your mistakes.)

Your worst shot teaches you more than your best. But only if you're paying attention. (Debrief, don't just despair.)

Work on putting like it's your job. It's the only club you'll use 30+ times. (Yep, drive for show, putt for dough.)

At the end of the day, no one cares about your score—they care if you were fun to play with. (So don't be the guy who blames the wind, the ball, the sun, and his childhood.)

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**JUNE 28**  
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## Scholarship/Teacher Grants Fundraising Golf Tournament

- Where:** Bent Tree Golf Club  
**Format:** 4 Person Scramble  
**When:** June 25, 2025; Shotgun start at 9:00 am.  
**Cost:** \*No cost to Bent Tree members who pay trail fee - donations needed  
\*Members who do not pay trail fee \$40.00 golf cart fee - plus donations  
\*Non-members \$40.00 cart fee - plus donations

**All cart fees are to be paid in the Pro Shop**

**Donations** are to be made payable to **Bent Tree Foundation, Inc.**, (a 501(c (3) organization). A Director of the Foundation will be accepting donations and Team Captain forms at 8:30 prior to the beginning of the tournament.

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| Player Name | GHIN Number |
| Player Name | GHIN Number |
| Player Name | GHIN Number |
| Player Name | GHIN Number |

Men play from white tees; Women play from red tees

Men - Age 70 plus index equals 84 - may play P-2 tees

Women - Age 72 plus index 32 may play yellow tees

**Entry Deadline: Monday, June 23, 2025**

Prizes for the eight winning teams will be rounds of golf at the following golf courses:

Old Toccoa Farm Golf Course  
Sanctuary Golf Course  
Achasta Golf Course  
Fairways of Canton Golf Course

Crystal Falls Golf Course  
Butternut Creek Golf Course  
Lake Arrowhead Golf Course  
Bent Tree Golf Course

If you have any questions, call Judy Crain 770-894-3122



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# 2025 Bent Tree Foundation Scholarship Awards

By Bruce Parker, Photography by Karen Parker

The evening of May 7 was a very exciting experience as I was fortunate to take part in the recognition of academic excellence at Pickens High School. Bob Coleman, representing the Bent Tree Courts Association, joined me in awarding scholarships to graduating students that have chosen to continue their education at a variety of post secondary institutions. Every resident of Bent Tree should stand tall with the realization that you had a part in helping these students continue to pursue their life goals.

The Bent Tree Foundation, in partnership with the Bent Tree Courts and Golf Communities, awarded \$32,000 in scholarships this year with funds raised through a variety of successful fundraising efforts and the many generous donations from Bent Tree residents and Pickens County community supporters. The Bent Tree Foundation wishes to congratulate all the scholarship recipients on their hard work and dedication to their educational aspirations and goals.

Bent Tree Foundation scholarships were awarded to the following graduates of Pickens High School: 1) Carlie Andrews (Kennesaw State University) funds donated by the Bent Tree Foundation; 2) Abigail Barber (University of North Georgia) funds donated by the Bent Tree Foundation; 3) Amanda Bramlett (Georgia College & State University) funds donated by the Bent Tree Foundation; 4) Emma Christensen (University of Georgia) funds donated by the Monte Davis Scholarship Fund; 5) Brylee Deering (Citadel) funds donated by the Mab Francis Scholarship Fund; 6) Ian Eagleson (University of North Georgia) funds donated by the Monte Davis Scholarship Fund; 7) Brianna Eggley (Kennesaw State University) funds donated by the Thurman Slone Scholarship Fund; 8) Lily Halko (Kennesaw State University) funds donated by Bent the Tree Foundation; 9) Alayna Hilton (University of Georgia) funds donated by the Bent Tree Foundation; 10) Diego Rivera (University of Georgia) funds donated by the Monte Davis Scholarship Fund; 11) Sara Smith (Jacksonville State University) funds donated by the Bent Tree Foundation; 12) Jeremy Westbrook (University of Georgia) funds donated by the Mark Atkins Scholarship Fund; 13) Sydney Wolfe (Messiah University) funds donated by the Bent Tree Foundation. A home school graduate



scholarship was awarded to Isabel Johns (Embry-Riddle University) funds donated by the Bent Tree Foundation. A third-year scholarship was awarded to Carter Smith (University of Alabama) from funds donated by the Monte Davis Scholarship Fund.

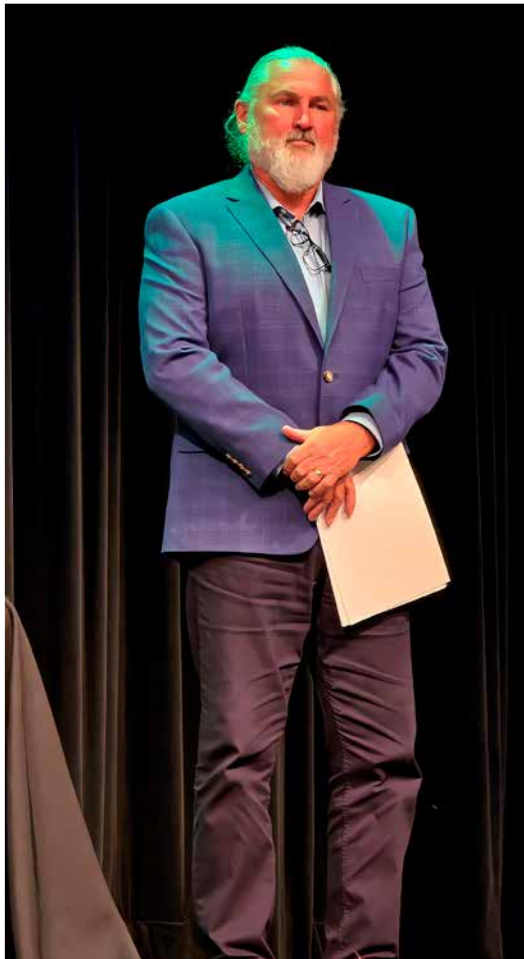
A designated scholarship requiring attendance to the University of North Georgia was awarded to Grayson Ludington sponsored and funded by Colin and Sheila Thompson in honor of their sons, Christopher C. Thompson and Stephen W. Thompson, both alumni of the University of North Georgia. Also, a University of North Georgia scholarship was awarded to Callie Hamby funded by Marty Stephens in honor of her sister, Linda Brown August (a past professor at the University of North Georgia). A designated scholarship requiring attendance to Georgia Institute of Technology was awarded to Larry Flores-Jaramillo sponsored and funded by Scott and Dudley Price. This scholarship is renewable for up to four years. The Price family continues to fund the education of past recipients Brett Menard and Jaiden Leach by awarding additional scholarships to both students.

The Bent Tree Courts Community, in partnership with the Foundation, awarded three scholarships to the following students: 1) Logan Berryman (University of North Georgia); 2) Evan Gibson (Georgia Southern University); 3) Ember Stiles (University of North Georgia). Second year scholarships will be given to Courtney Crowe and Isabella Lowe.

The Bent Tree Foundation was established in 2009 and with its partners has awarded over \$391,000 in student scholarships and teacher/school grants to our Pickens County students and schools. The Bent Tree Foundation Board members would like to thank all of the many volunteers and donors who have made these awards possible for the students of Pickens County. Those who wish to join us in this endeavor or to honor a loved one may do so by going



to our website, [www.benttreefoundation.org](http://www.benttreefoundation.org). to find information on tax-deductible donation opportunities. The Foundation has already started planning for this year's fund raisers. Look for information about the Foundation Golf Tournament in June, the Courts Tennis/ Pickleball Tournament and the Foundation's Wines of the World in September. As always, we continue to be grateful for your past support as well as seeking your future support to further the Foundation's mission regarding student scholarships and teacher/school grants.



# PARTY!

**Date: SUNDAY JUNE 8TH, 2025**  
**Time: 1-3PM**  
**Location: BENT TREE UPPER POOL**  
**POOL GAMES, MUSIC AND SNACKS**  
**FREE EVENT SPONSORED BY BTAC**

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**STAHLMAN**  
[KIMBERLYNICOLESTAHLMAN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:kimberlynicolestahlman@gmail.com)



 **COMMITTEE**

**JUNE 29TH - JULY 4TH**

**YOUTH FEST**  
**2025**

**BENT TREE**

# “Pickling for Pups and Purrs” was a Purr-fect Event!

By Bob Coleman, Photography by Sheila Thompson and Kristy Coleman

April has been designated National Pickleball month. Recently, USA Pickleball reached out to their ambassadors (Kristy Coleman is our Pickens County Ambassador) requesting them to host an event to celebrate National Pickleball month. USA Pickleball sanctioned the event and provided paddles of various brands to be given away during the event. It was decided to do a fundraising event on April 19th to benefit the Animal Shelter here at Bent Tree - “Pickling for Pups and Purrs”. The format consisted of all “round robin” play. There was no need to secure a partner. All players were assigned various partners (male and female) throughout the day in order to play for the 3+ hours. At the end of the event, all scores were tallied. The players (5 males, 5 females) with the highest average of points were awarded paddles. We had 32 people register. Several others made donations without playing, as they simply wanted to support our furry friends. All in all, it was a fun day raising money to assist with the day-to-day operations of the Animal Shelter. We are grateful for your support.

Be on the lookout for similar events in the future, and we hope that you will join in the fun. Pickleball continues to be America’s fastest growing sport and has been for the past 4 years with 48.3 million players now in the US. The learning curve involved is a very short one. Almost anyone can learn to play. It’s been said “Pickleball is easy to learn, but hard to master”.

I invite you to come out to the courts at Bent Tree and allow me to introduce myself, Coach Bob. I would love to introduce you to the game of Pickleball and our Pickleball community. These folks know how to have fun all while staying active. Hope to see you on the courts soon.





# Cherished Memories, and an Invitation

by Bob Coleman

Allow me to introduce you to Carolyn June Coleman, my mother. She is passed now. But before she passed, we had some amazing adventures together. She and I would go to a nearby sporting goods store where she would try on batting helmets and some very cool bike/skateboard helmets. We often visited a local Bass Pro Shop where we would pose with the stuffed wildlife (bears, mountain goats, bobcats, etc). We walked along the dam here in Bent Tree. And even hiked down to the waterfall at the spillway (I got into a little trouble with that one).

I thought one day, I'll take her to play pickleball. I always say "It's never too late to learn, and mom's only 77". She told me she had never played before (I already knew that). But, like so many who try it, she learned quickly. Her hand/eye coordination became better with each time out. Now, please understand, she did not run for balls. And thank God she never dove to hit a return (that is very frowned upon since we were playing on asphalt courts). But to see her face light up with the first hit off her paddle, was incredible. She smiled, we both laughed... and then I chased down the balls to do it all over again, and again, and again. It was very gratifying to see her achieve something she felt unachievable. We made it a routine play whenever the weather permitted. We played both at Bent Tree and at Brookwood Park in Dalton GA. I'll always cherish the time we shared doing whatever, but just being together. Bent Tree offers tons to do, from hiking, golfing, swimming, dancing, kayaking, bocce ball, and of course, tennis, and pickleball. I implore you to take advantage of our lovely amenities. I welcome you and your family to stop by The Courts. I can show you how to get connected with our community of players. Hope to see you on the courts soon.



# Dinko de My...oh...my...o...

by Coach Bob

Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Mexican army's victory over the French Empire on May 5th, 1862. We celebrate it here at the Courts of Bent Tree by playing pickleball. Dinko rhymes Cinco and that's was all we needed...thus "Dinko de Mayo". This an annual tradition for us. 38 Peeps showed up with food and frolic to play and fellowship at this year's event. We have some wonderful cooks here that love to share a dish of their choice with neighbors and friends alike. It was great to see the courts full and buzzing with excitement. Please stay alert for more of these type social events with pickleball and tennis. We would love for you to join us on the courts.



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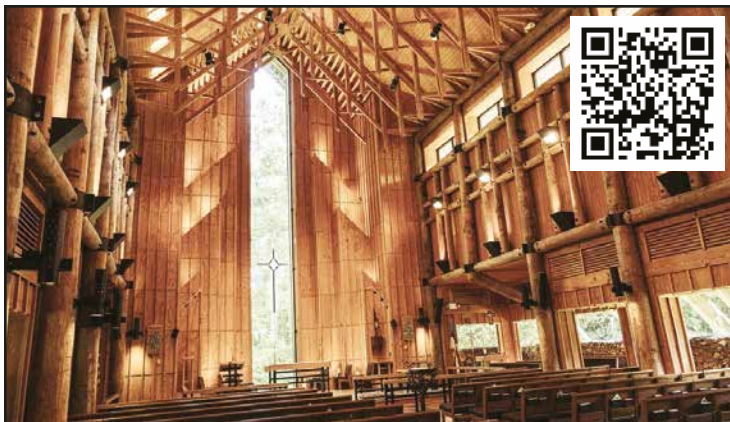
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# Invasive Species

By Miguel Rodriguez

**Definition:** invasive species are non-native insects, plants, and animals that have entered an environment where they would not normally exist. It is implied – by the qualification of ‘invasive’ – that they are not native, that they do not belong, and that they are not welcome.

Globally, over 37,000 alien species have been introduced, and this number is rising at an unprecedented rate. There have been many (literally countless) publications at many levels of the News or Science Journaling spectra regarding this subject. Of those 37,000 cases, many were accidental (ignorance, carelessness, or negligence) and many more were initiated with the best of intentions. The results have generally been improvements and successes (usually written about in Science Journals), or devastating to ecosystems, people, and economies (both local and beyond), in which case their publicity is slightly wider.

So, what happens when a new species is introduced – intentionally or accidentally – to an environment where they were not in existence before? Well, they either deteriorate or thrive. If they deteriorate, they may struggle to survive for a length of time and then mutate and adapt to make better use of the environment, or they simply perish. If they thrive it is either by fitting well within the new ecosystem, or by shocking, overwhelming, and eventually transforming (or destroying) it with serious impact on biological diversity and/or human activities.

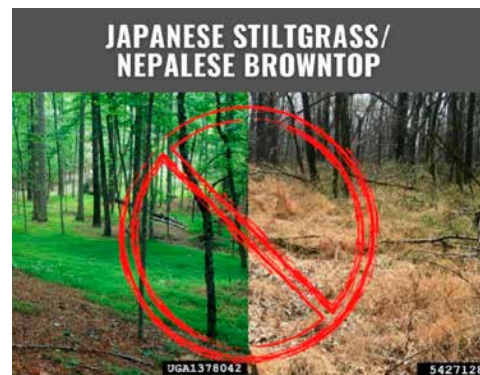
We very seldom hear of cases where new species have been introduced and the outcome has been positive, when the new species thrive by fitting in and making the ecosystem and environment better (for some ironic reason those cases are not qualified as invasive). We do hear about it when the results are different, and for good reasons: negative impact and devastation. There are some major cases known here in the USA such as the Burmese pythons and Brazilian Melaleucas in the Florida Everglades, the Japanese kudzu in 32 states, Northern Snakehead fish in the Eastern states, the Asian Carp throughout North America, the Brown Tree Snake in Guam and now Hawaii. Worldwide, there are notorious cases like the introduction of rabbits in Australia, minks in Argentina & Europe,

raccoons in Europe and Japan, and there are thousands more of documented cases like these.

Locally, we have some invasive species here in Bent Tree, and we are not immune from their negative consequences. Some cases are:

Feral hogs (wild boar, wild pigs) are a well-known local example. Their detrimental effects are clear to most residents, and many sound the alarm by contacting Public Safety or a L&W representative when they see these. Together with appropriate state and local agencies, BTCI works remove them from Bent Tree. To date the efforts have been relatively successful. Lake and Wildlife helps monitor and assist BTCI if requested.

Japanese stilt grass. This little is well established in Bent Tree and it is very detrimental because, unchecked, it forms a monoculture that shades out native plants. Deer do not eat stilt grass, and by shading other plants they DO eat, it truly limits their available food. You can do your part by minimizing stilt on your property. Get more information by searching BentTreeHabitat online.



Stinging insects are plentiful around us and, the native ones, are part of a balanced ecosystem. Invasive stinging insects bring a whole new level of angst to the conversation.

The Asian and European hornets lack natural predators and attack honeybee colonies. A new arrival, the Asian yellow legged hornet, is of particular concern and the Ga Dept of Agriculture is asking citizens to report sightings (<https://agr.georgia.gov/yellow-legged-hornet>). Lake & Wildlife and BTCI can address aggressive insect colonies on the main trails and common areas.



So, what's our role in all this? What can we do? How can we help? It all starts (and ends) with two key factors: knowledge and vigilance. We can acquire knowledge and become vigilant by accessing certified resources such as:

Georgia Department of Agriculture <https://agr.georgia.gov/> is a good place to start acquiring knowledge and, specifically, <https://agr.georgia.gov/pests> for invasive pests.

A greater, and wider, array of information can be found at:

- **EDDMaps** - A web-based platform and mobile app for submitting and viewing reports of invasive species, helping to identify and map their distribution.
- **GBIF** - A global infrastructure for sharing biodiversity data, including records of invasive species occurrences.
- **NISIC** - A central resource for information on invasive species, offering a wide range of educational materials, fact sheets, and links to other resources.
- **USDA Forest Service** - Conducts research and provides resources on invasive species ecology, management, and control.
- **USGS** - Conducts research on invasive species and provides data, tools, and strategies for their management.
- **NOAA** - Provides information and resources on invasive species in marine environments.
- **Cooperative Extension Services** - Offers local expertise and guidance on identifying and managing invasive species.
- **INVASIVESNET** - A European initiative focused on monitoring and managing invasive alien species.
- **Global Invasive Species Database** - Lists a wide range of invasive species, including marine species.

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# FINDING HOME: Newcomers! Come On Down!

By Chris Rumble

How do I know I'm at home? I'm laughing with people I love... or people I'm learning to love. It's even better when combined with a large table of finger foods, friendly competition and standard social boundaries are peeled away!

That's exactly the kind of joyful chaos we embraced at our inaugural **Bent Tree Jeopardy Feud of Fortune**—a name that sounds like a legal battle in the making but was, in fact, a game show-themed welcome party for our new neighbors!



It was an evening filled with Bent Tree trivia, snacks, questionable headwear and enough laughter to scare off the wildlife for a little while. Newcomers became fast friends, and old-timers remembered what it felt like to be the new kid with a name tag and a plate full of pigs in blankets.

Because, truly, the essence of community is *knowing* and *being known*—preferably while wearing a Fred Flintstone Loyal Order of the Water Buffalos hat and buzzing in to answer the question, “True or False: To participate in the very popular Pickleball at The Courts at Bent Tree you have to bring your own pickle.”

At the end of the evening, we all knew a little more about Bent Tree, and a little more about each other. We also discovered that Newcomer **Krista Hanafey**, the Big Winner and Reigning Champion of Bent Tree Jeopardy Feud of Fortune, gets very happy when offered the opportunity to put on a Sasquatch suit.

But don't just take my word for it! Let's hear from contestant and honorary hat model, **Virginia Pate**:

*We enjoyed every part of the gathering!*

*The nice spread of food, the very welcoming atmosphere, and the games were so well thought out. I think that the choices of hats and costumes were the highlights of the evening. The gameshow music was so well done appropriately for each part of the Jeopardy game. All in all, it was a very enjoyable evening getting to know you and your wife as well as our new neighbors.*

*Thanks again for all of the hard work and creativity you all put into the evening!!*

~ Virginia Pate

These moments remind us of a simple truth: life is better when we show up for one another—not just with name tags and novelty wigs, but with open hearts and shared stories.

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# Adopt, Don't Shop!

By Veda L. Wohlford, Photos by Veda L. Wohlford

Happy June from the Bent-Tree Animal Shelter! If you're considering adding a fur-baby to your family, we would ask you to Adopt, Don't Shop. We have so many beautiful cats at the shelter, and all of them would love to come home with you and become part of your family.

When you choose to adopt from a shelter, rather than buy from a breeder, you are giving a homeless animal a desperately needed home. As they say on the National Humane Society website ([www.nationalhumaneociety.org](http://www.nationalhumaneociety.org)), "Every puppy or kitten purchased from a breeder means one less opportunity for a shelter animal to find a forever home"\*. By adopting instead of buying, you are helping to combat the "overwhelming problem of pet overpopulation"\*.

We have an abundance of "cattitude" at our shelter, and if you are considering adopting a cat, we can introduce you to each and every one of them, describe their personalities, and we are sure you will find one that will be the perfect fit!

Remember, all our cats and dogs are fully vetted medically and spayed or neutered before being eligible for adoption. Ready to come by and meet these Kittie Cuties? Bent-Tree's Animal Shelter has so many kitties available for adoption, kitties of all personalities, shapes, and sizes, and all of them just want a fur-ever home with you and your family! If you would like to visit any of our kitties to see if you're a match made in heaven, please contact LuAnn Chambers at 678.414.1047.

*\*Excerpts from: [www.nationalhumaneociety.org/post/adopt-dont-shop-choosing-compassion-over-convenience](http://www.nationalhumaneociety.org/post/adopt-dont-shop-choosing-compassion-over-convenience)*



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