

Vista Royale Computer Club
Meeting Minutes February 22, 2018

Members:

President Mike Johnson welcomed 33 members and guests this week and urged all owners to send in their Vista Royale ballots and proxies. The 'piping' project is moving along well and they are now at building 101. Vicky suggests earphones for those of you staying in your unit while they are working..... it can be a bit loud. There are no classes schedules for the next couple of weeks.

This week our guest speaker was Ro van Dright, the volunteer coordinator, at McKee Botanical Gardens just north on US 1 from us. The Garden was originally 80 acres purchased for a citrus grove. When they discovered so many unique species of plants, the owners decided to start a botanical garden which they opened to the public in 1932. It became the 3rd top tourist attraction in Florida with 100,000 visits a year. The Hall of Giants was built in 1941 and houses the largest table in the world which is made of Philippine mahogany. The Garden prospered until 1976 when it closed due to a number of changes in tourism and travel. It was purchased again in 1995 from developers and saved from becoming 300,000 square foot mall. It took until 2001 to clear and rehabilitate the property enough to re-open; now only 18 acres, but 10,000 types of plants. Over 140 volunteers help the staff keep things running smoothly.

The newest exhibit, *It's a Jungle Out There!*, now through April 29, 2018 is getting lots of good reviews, a great place to take your winter visitors. There are 24 recycled metal life-sized sculptures which were made in Nairobi, Kenya. They include a 16 ft. giraffe and most will become a permanent part of the landscape.

In addition to the tours and Garden Discovery Backpack self-guided walks for kids, the amenities of the Garden are a nice Garden Cafe & patio restaurant, "Sealanthro", conference center, a member horticulture lending library, various classes, plein air painting weekend, and gift shop. 2016 saw 60,000 visitors from 50 states and 38 counties and the membership grew to 2,900 people.

Some of the other special events and activities include:

Community Appreciation Day in October

Annual car show..... 2019 is Corvettes

Christmas in the Garden with decorations and miniature trains

A 3 day Garden & Antiques event with almost 30 vendors in March 2018

Fairy & Pirate Weekend with activities for the younger set

June Water Lily Festival with a photo contest

Coming in the spring of 2019 will be a 7.5 million dollar 'Children's Garden' complete with a pirate ship and lots of activities for children through interaction, education and exploration. It will be handicapped accessible as well.

Thank you, Ro, for giving us a thorough view and history of the garden, a look at some of the exhibits, classes and programs plus membership and volunteer opportunities. Check out their up to date website: <http://mckeegarden.org/> for more information about their fee structure, year-round activities and then plan your next visit.

Membership include such perks as 'member only' events, 10% off in the gift shop and on classes. It also includes free admission privileges or discounts at 300 gardens and arboreta

through the American Horticulture Society Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP)s
<http://www.ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap>.

FYI.... there will be **no** Genealogy session 3-5 pm in the Lab on Wednesday, February 28th.

Next week on March 1st, Jurgen Schwanitz of ACT Computers in the K-Mart Shopping Center and one of his techs will be here explaining what Virtual Reality is and what you need to use it. He will be bringing several sets of VR goggles for members to try out while the rest of us can watch on the screen. See what many users are raving about. As always, Jurgen will answer any of your computer, tablet or phone related questions while he is here. This will no doubt be another one of his really good presentations.

Sandy McKenny, sec.; Vista Royale Computer Club, Pine Arbor Clubhouse; Vero Beach, FL 32962