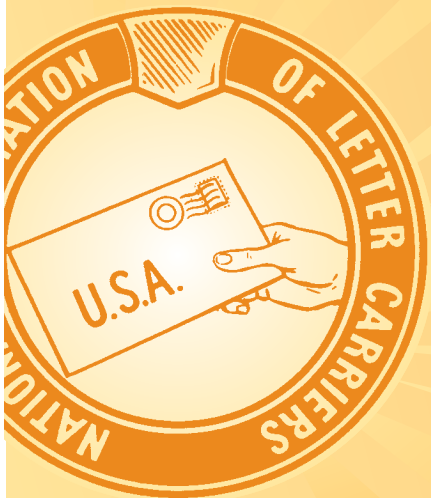
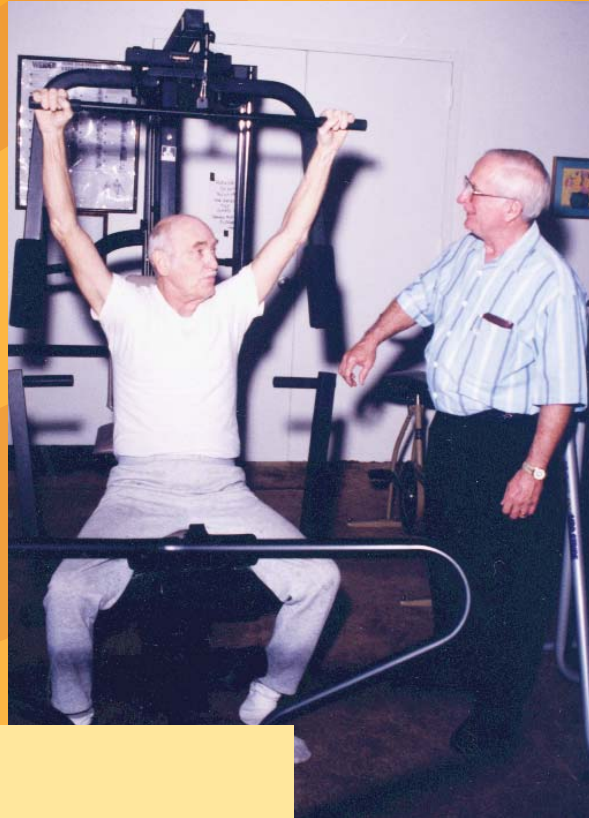




NALC's
*place in
the sun*

nalcrest





If you're one of the thousands of NALC members who endured this past winter's record cold spells and snowbound streets, you may want to talk to Jerry

Kane, general manager of NALC's retirement community in Florida.

While president of Jamaica, NY Branch 562 for 16 years, Kane experienced many a bitter winter. But in 1997 he moved to Florida to manage Nalcrest, and he hasn't looked back.

"This is paradise," he said. "The weather is great year-round and it's such a friendly community. After all, we have a common bond—most residents are retired letter carriers or married to NALC members."

Conceived and developed by the National Association of Letter Carriers in the early 1960s, Nalcrest paid off its mortgage last year and is now fully owned by the union. Because it is non-profit, operating costs are covered by Nalcrest's low rents—one-bedroom apartments currently lease for \$286 a month, efficiencies for \$271. (Rental fee does not include electric, phone and extended cable service.)

Surrounded by nature

Located in Central Florida about a 75-minute drive south of Orlando on State Route 60, Nalcrest is about midway between Tampa on the Gulf Coast and Vero Beach on the Atlantic Coast. Its 500 apartments are clustered in 66 one-story buildings spread over 153 acres around two large lagoons popular with residents who fish and boat.

Another 150 acres of undeveloped land and 15-square-mile Lake Weohyakapka (Walk-in-the-Water) adjoin Nalcrest. The impression is of a community set inside a nature preserve.

"Many times I sit in my office and watch the hawks circle," said Kane. "In the evening you see huge owls, the size of fire hydrants. And this being Florida, there's alligators and armadillos and I've never seen so many frogs."

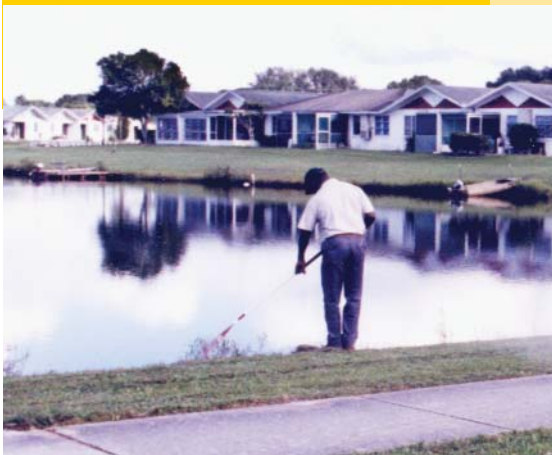
Fish abound in Lake Weohyakapka, which forms the backdrop of Nalcrest's recreation area and sports complex, named for NALC President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto. Residents enjoy the heated swimming pool and hot tub year-round, as well as aquarobics classes, shuffleboard, horseshoes, ▶

Above: Nalcrest General Manager Jerry Kane (r.) stops to chat with resident Bob Richmond in Nalcrest's fitness center, which sports the motto, "Don't quit—keep fit."

Left: One of 66 apartment buildings spread over 153 acres around two lagoons (opposite). Far left: Retirees look forward to the weekly visits of the produce vendor. A small market is also located in Nalcrest Town Center.



Above: Nalcrest's softball team gathers in dugout prior to game with a local retirement community. Residents take advantage of Nalcrest's many recreational facilities, including tennis courts and heated swimming pool. **Below:** Nalcrest's apartments are clustered in single-story buildings around two large lagoons.



basketball, bocce, miniature golf and tennis. The softball field and driving range are located farther from the lake.

"Everything is free," notes Kane, "even the golf balls and clubs."

Also free is use of the Nalcrest fitness center and its equipment.

"There are some residents recovering from a stroke or heart attack who use the equipment with their doctor's blessing to help build their strength," said Kane. "And because this is all flat land, many of our residents walk and bike around the grounds to keep fit."

Active social agenda

Clubs of every description bring like-minded residents together for project planning, instruction, community service or just socializing. Retired carriers meet as Branch 1A, an honorary branch of the NALC (residents must retain membership in their home branches) while their spouses in the Auxiliary hold dinners and breakfasts to raise money for the Lake Wales Care Center, greet newcomers, and celebrate major birthdays and anniversaries.

Nalcrest's Travel Club arranges excursions of various lengths at rock-bottom prices, from dinner theater outings to day trips and multi-day vacations.

The sports-minded compete in hole-in-one tournaments, the softball team or the shuffleboard club, and card players find like-minded folk for bridge and other games.

Creative residents find self-expression with the Palette Pals on Tuesday afternoons, the Happy Painters on Wednesday mornings, and in various crafts clubs; there's even a writers group that meets weekly.

Then there's the Nalcrest Literary Club, the jocular name for a group of men who sing and drink beer on Wednesday afternoons. The ladies countered with their own Wednesday gathering, the Silver Belles, featuring games, discussions and lots of laughter.

And it wouldn't be a retirement community without bingo, which attracts more than 200 residents every Monday evening.

"For \$5 you can play all night," explains Kane. "Prizes range from \$30 to \$250 and the profits are used for charitable works in the Nalcrest community."

Most groups meet year-round, even though more than half the residents are "snowbirds" who go north for the summer.

Tribute to founder

Bingo, dances and club meetings are among the activities held in the 500-seat William C. Doherty Auditorium, named for the NALC president who made Nalcrest a reality. Bill Doherty turned the first shovel of earth on July 1, 1962, and Nalcrest—it stands for National Association of Letter Carriers Retirement, Education, Security and Training—began to take shape in Central Florida.

After serving in NALC's top post from 1941 to 1962 and then as the first U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, Doherty moved into a Nalcrest apartment and stayed there until just before his death in 1987.

"Last year we dedicated a fountain in the lagoon just off the Town Center to commemorate what would have been Bill's 100th birthday," Kane said.

Town Center is home to Nalcrest's management office and a cluster of



conveniences, including a post office, laundromat, small market, restaurant, and hair salon, as well as a lending library for books and videos and a clubhouse for games, billiards and watching TV.

"Everything you need is right here or in Lake Wales," a town eight miles away, notes Kane. For a nominal fee a Nalcrest van transports residents there twice a day for shopping, doctor appointments and other errands.

Myth of waiting list

While there is a waiting list for vacant apartments, "It's a myth that you have to wait years and years," states Nalcrest General Manager Jerry Kane. "Yes, there are some people who've been on the list a long while, but when we've contacted them with a vacancy, they've declined to accept an apartment at that time, so they remain on the list.

"If someone is truly interested in coming here, they give us a cashier's check or money order representing two months' rent. When we have a vacancy, we call them," he explains. "We have put people into apartments within three months of receiving their checks."

Kane encourages interested members to see the community for themselves. Nalcrest has one guest apartment, which letter carriers can reserve up to six months in advance for a stay of up to two weeks, and six branches lease apartment so members can experience Nalcrest.

"When you see the interaction and friendliness of the community, you can't help but be impressed," says Kane. ☒

For further information, call the Nalcrest office at 863-696-1121. The office is open Monday through Friday 8:30-4:30 (closed for lunch 12-1 and closed on weekends and holidays).

See the inside back cover of this issue for a rental application form.

Young appoints Nalcrest trustees

Owned and operated by the National Association of Letter Carriers, Nalcrest is administered by a Board of Trustees that oversees the finances of the union's retirement community. Last month NALC President Bill Young appointed two new trustees: former NALC Vice President and Director of Retired Members Ron Brown and former National Business Agent James Dolan.

They join former Director of Retired Members James E. Worsham, who also is current president of Branch 11 in Chicago, on the community's Board of Trustees. Worsham was appointed by past NALC President Vince Sombrotto.

Brown and Dolan replace former trustees George Davis and Carl Gallo.

"NALC is grateful to George and Carl for their many years of service to Nalcrest," Young said. "The fact that Nalcrest is a thriving retirement community is a testament to their stewardship."

The two new trustees bring decades of leadership experience. Ron Brown retired from national office last December after a long NALC career that included serving as NBA for the K-I-M Region. Jim Dolan retired in 1998 after serving as NBA for the Philadelphia Region.

"Nalcrest is unique—few if any unions operate a retirement community for their members," noted Young. "I urge letter carriers to take advantage of this benefit."

Retirement Committee

Young also appointed Ron Brown to NALC's Standing Retirement Committee following the resignation of former Director of City Delivery Joseph Johnson.

In accepting Johnson's resignation, Young praised his lifelong dedication to helping letter carriers and the NALC.

"Joe Johnson exemplifies the highest qualities that can be found in a human being, both personally and professionally," Young said. "We at the NALC are deeply indebted to his years of service, not only as a national officer, but even in retirement as a valuable member of this important committee that oversees activities involving all retirees." ☒