

Local Bagpiper Spreads Cheer To Neighbors With Nightly Concert

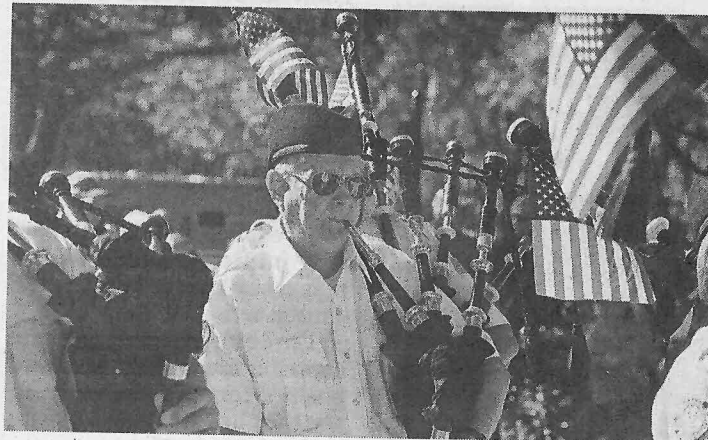
Paul McNeill ends every set with "Amazing Grace," "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America."

By JAMES DINAN
Daily Sun Senior Writer

A Village of Hemingway bagpiper is using his talents to keep neighbors in good spirits through the COVID-19 crisis.

Every day at sundown, Paul McNeill performs a short concert in his driveway to a crowd of a few dozen, all of whom are respecting social distancing guidelines.

"Neighbors start arriving 10 minutes ahead of time to get good parking spots, and everyone is diligent about



George Horsford | Daily Sun

Paul McNeill, of the Village of Hemingway, plays the bagpipes at a Veterans Day ceremony in 2019.

social distancing," he said. "Villagers toast each other to Happy Hour from about 10 feet apart. There's no problem

hearing bagpipes from up and down the street."

McNeill, who regularly

performs at events across The Villages, as well as St. Paul Parish in Belleview, works through 24 set lists, each one built around a theme.

Every set ends with "Amazing Grace," "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America."

"I tell people, if they know the words then sing loud," he said with a smile. "If they don't know the words, they can sing but not too loud."

McNeill plans to continue the performances until the lockdown is lifted.

"The music gives people hope, and the daily routine gives stability to their lives," he noted. "People want to get out of their houses for a meet and greet, as well as check on each other."