

## Indian River Colony Club home to four top conductors

BY GEORGE WHITE

Indian River Colony Club is where four of the top military band conductors in the world call home.

The first notable bandleader, retired Col. Hal Gibson, moved to IRCC 17 years ago. Gibson held positions at the highest levels of the Army's band program including bandleader at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he also conducted the Cadet Glee Club.

He was selected from bandleaders of all services to form and conduct the Armed Forces Bicentennial Band and Chorus and in 2004, he was inducted into the National Hall of Fame

for Distinguished Band Conductors.

Conductors at the top levels often go to conferences where they see their peers. Gibson said he would promote all of them to come to Brevard County, and especially IRCC, for the weather and the camaraderie. With some it worked, and there are others still being recruited who may make the move as they get older, he said.

Next to move to IRCC, at the urging of Gibson 10 years ago, was U.S. Navy Band Director Allen Beck, who stays active in music by taking high school music groups on instructional

cruises.

"It took about four years to convince my wife to move here, but we love it now. Derek [Stannard] and I had met in Canada in the 1970s when doing the Bicentennial and were reacquainted in 2000. Every one of us have much the same background," Beck said.

Seven years ago came Derek Stannard, director of the National Band of the Canadian Armed Forces. He also has directed the Space Coast Pops.



VIERA VOICE George White

Top conductors living at Indian River Colony Club gathered Oct. 9 at the At Ease Club. From left are Allen Beck, Dan Bolin, Derek Stannard and Hal Gibson.

"The situation is very unique here because we have had [similar] resources. The main military bands are the best in the world," Stannard said.

Two years ago, Dan Bolin joined the group but commutes to his job in Indiana. Bolin is still active as a director at Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., where he also directs the Indianapolis Municipal Band. He was visiting Oct. 10 and gathered with the group at the At Ease Club at IRCC.

Band directors learn how to play every instrument during musical training, but each started with a single instrument and branched out from there.

All that musical talent does not go to waste, with all four having participated with the Melbourne Municipal Band, where Gibson now directs the symphonic wind ensemble. *GW*