



Your CasaBlanca

February 2010

Communication focus of Owner's Forum

Dear Homeowner's

I would like to take a moment to address the recent issues concerning our pools and the west gate and hopefully clear up any of the misinformation that may be going through our community.

It came to my attention just before the Christmas holiday that the west gate was not functioning properly. If you pulled up to it at precisely the right spot, it would open. But if you missed that spot, which most of us did, the gate would not open. I called Patrick at Management and reported the problem. At that time, no one else had called in. He made the call to our vendor and was told someone would go out. Patrick followed up on it and was told that it was fixed. Most companies were closed during the 4 days surrounding the holiday. During this time, I again called Patrick to check on the status of the gate as it was still not functioning properly. He said that he would call them back again. They came out again and again stated it was fixed. The following weekend, it was still not working correctly and so I called the owner of the gate company at home. We set up an appointment to meet at the gate and get to the bottom of the problem. Patrick met them at the appointment. They stated at that time, the only thing they could figure was that it was the

loops. They had to order them and then they would be installed.

Unbeknownst to Patrick and me, they sent out "Loop Detectors" and were told there was nothing wrong with the loops. When I finally found out about the newest chapter in this book, I again called the owner of the company. He acknowledged that his tech was not communicating properly with Patrick and/or me but did state that the Tech had been out to the property that afternoon and had fixed the problem which had been in the mother board.

Moving on to the pool situation, those problems started on the first bad rain that we had. All of our water run off goes into the irrigation canals and is directed to the area behind the tennis courts where there is a pump underground. When we had so much rain at one time, there was too much water for the pump to handle. As it turns out, there was also a corroded seal on the pump. At the same time, the drain in the utility area at pool 2

Your Casablanca February 2010

clogged from so much water and the entire pool area was flooded. The pumps were flooded and of course shut down. Initially pools 1 and 4 were going to be drained and worked on. The heat had been turned off of those pools. When pool 2 flooded, the pool guy decided that was more needful of work and so everything was switched very quickly. Other pools were reheated and this one was turned off. The rains kept coming and so nothing could be done in the rain, and until the pump was replaced behind the tennis courts. Once the rains finally stopped the owner of the pool company was out of town and his guys wouldn't start the work until he was back. We also, during this time, found that there were problems with the new drains that were installed as required by law. They are too sensitive and if anything, including a leaf, gets in them, it shuts down the pump which in turn shuts down the heat.

Also understand that in the middle of all of this, we had 11 roof and/or drain problems we were dealing with.

The long and short of this, is that there were many things going on at one time. There was a lack of communication from the vendors that were doing work in this complex. We, the Board and Patrick as our Property Manager, were not kept in the loop by our vendors. All of these things were out of our control. As frustrating as it was to all of the homeowners, it was much more so, to our Board and our Property Manager. We are the ones that are supposed to be in the know, and we were left with nothing to share. It was brought to my attention that one of the Board Members, at the Communications Committee meeting apologized for the Board's lack of communication to the homeowners. I have a problem with this. It gives the impression that we were somehow responsible for things that were really out of our control. Those of us that were trying to

handle the problems were as much in the dark as the homeowners. There are only some things that we can control and this was a situation that was by no means in control. We had pumps going out, flooding rain that has not been seen in the desert for years, gates malfunctioning, and roof and drain problems all at the same time. We did everything we could to fix the situations as soon as possible.

So, where we are now in this is the gate has in fact been fixed (hopefully with no further problems). The pump behind the tennis courts has been replaced. All pools have been drained and refilled. Currently pools 2 & 3 are heated. Pool 4 has had the heat turned on and should be warm by Saturday at which time pool 3 heat will be turned off. We are waiting for a detailed list of what work will be needed to be done on all pools. Most of the roof leaks have been fixed but we are still waiting for a couple to be completed.

Gail Christiansen

Board Meeting Feb. 16, 2010

Meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the January meeting were approved as printed.

Committee Reports:

Architectural Committee member Evelyn Ferrier, a member of the Committee wanted the Board to approve a patio cover and replacement windows at her home instead of the Architectural Committee to eliminate a possible conflict of interest.

Communications Committee: The Communications meeting was held at the pool # 4 area. Lindsey Griffith conducted the meeting with the absence of Syd Sonneborn who had been excused because he was summoned for jury duty.

A small turn out of owners was probable due to the cool rainy weather.

Your Casablanca February 2010

Mr. Randal Williams of Randal's Plumbing gave a presentation of Automatic Earthquake Gas Shut-off Valves. Randal brought two mock-ups to show us what can be installed. One, the home owner can reset themselves. Normal price is \$375., but if a lot of us have the job done it will come down to \$275. If the whole complex has the installation done he will knock off another 10%. We also really need to do the ones at the four pools. Patrick is checking with our insurance carrier to see what kind of discount we would receive if the whole complex is done.

A suggestion was made that the Assoc. have the project done and a special assessment be made to pay for it. A year was suggested for the assessment. Lindsey feels a year too long for that small of an amount.

Complaints about the west gate and the time it has taken to repair were made. Also only having one pool heated. Both problems were explained.

One board member said that he was sorry more communication was not forthcoming on the two problems.

The on going complaint by Julie Warren about the mud at her patio gate again surfaced. Howard said he would look at it again.

Many good comments about the gardeners. Everyone is very happy with them.

Respectfully submitted by Lindsey Griffith

Landscape Committee: Landscape Report for HOA Board Meeting on February 16, 2010

Since we have had Kirkpatrick Landscaping, we have had fewer problems

The grass looks good, blowing, edging, trimming and weeding are good, plus we have far less irrigation troubles now.

This past week the gardeners sprayed for weeds in the grass.

Lots of citrus fruit is available now and it is excellent. Please

remember that all fruit trees in the common area are for all homeowners. Please help yourself.

In making my landscape rounds throughout the complex, I have noticed that a number of people have not been picking up after their pets.

This poses a nasty problem not only for other homeowners, but especially for the gardeners who are working in the complex daily.

Homeowners who live at the end of cul-de-sacs where large grass spaces are available for walking their pets, need to be particularly mindful and courteous by keeping their animals on a leash and picking up after them.

Remember, if you have landscape issues, concerns or problems, call Patrick at Whitestar Management.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Butzer, Landscape Committee

Financial Report:

Lindsey Griffith, Treasurer, reported we have a total of \$464,000 available. Of this, \$420,000 is in Reserves. Currently we have \$215,000 in the painting account and \$97,000 in roofing. She has had to roll over two CDs at an interest rate of 1.75% and 1.33%. She is in the process of moving some of our accounts from the large mega banks to more responsive local banks. She gets much better response to our needs at the smaller banks. We will have two large expenses in the near future. They are the Tennis Court desert landscaping and the swimming pool drains and cleaning.

Currently we have two homeowner accounts that are far behind in paying their assessments, two more are growing and three are small.

Management Report:

Patrick reported that we have had problems with 11 roofs this rainy season. Some problems have been with seams around chimneys and pipes and others with down spout drains. None of these roofs are new roofs

The sump pump behind the tennis courts had a broken seal, therefore it did not work and delayed draining to swimming pools until it was fixed.

The Landscape crew's truck has had it's overnight parking spot changed from behind pool # 2 after complaints from homeowners.

The Annual Meeting for the Association will be March 13, at 10 AM, Hope Lutheran Church.

Repairs have been made to the West Entrance gate and it seems to be working properly.

The Architectural Committee has been working on setting the new exterior paint scheme. It still needs some fine tuning and they hope to be able to present it and a digital rendering of what it will look like at the Annual meeting.

Contract Proposals:

The Desert landscape proposal was modified and resubmitted for bidding. Three quotes were received. The Board voted to give the contract for the labor to our present landscape contractor, Kilpatrick Landscaping. The association will buy the plants and DG ground cover. The contract is for \$7882.

The Board approved the architectural changes proposed by Evelyn Ferrier.

Architectural Committee to do Prep Work Before Painting

As you are aware, our community is in the process of preparing to have the exterior of all our homes painted sometime this coming fall. It has been a long time since the painting was done, and the exterior walls are in need of stucco repair, priming, and paint.

In order to accomplish this process efficiently and at the lowest cost to us as homeowners, the exterior of our homes need to be prepared to be spray painted. Home owners will be asked to remove decorative plaques, sculptures and tiles, etc. from their exterior walls and the patio fences. Any structures that have been installed in patio areas without the Architecture Committee's approval in the past, will need to be removed too. Items such as lattice grill work or other structures used for privacy or shade that have not been approved will need to be removed. For our seasonal residents, this will need to be accomplished before you leave for the summer months.

In the near future, the Architecture Committee will be canvassing the entire community looking for these types of problems. The owners of property that are not in compliance with our CC&Rs and Rules & Regulations, will be sent a notice in the mail informing them of the problems and requesting that these be removed.

Hovley W. Neighborhood Watch

On January 20th, an organizational meeting for the neighborhoods on Hovely Lane West was held at Temple Sinai. About 26 people attended the presentation given by Deputy Sheriff, Debbie Ellis. An increase in the number of break-ins most likely spurred on due to the down economy spurred on the meeting. Six break-ins have been recorded in our area so far this year. Syd Sonneborn was

the only Casablanca resident to attend this meeting.

In practice, every resident in Casablanca should be part of our Neighborhood Watch program. Keeping an eye out for anything happening in your cal-du-sac that may seem unusual and establishing a relationship with your neighbors at a minimum, to the extent that you at least know their names and how many people live in each home. The rest is simple, if you feel something is amiss, call the Palm Desert police department and explain what is alerting you to a potential problem. The non-emergency phone number is 760-836-3215. An example would be someone loading a truck with personal belongings without the owners present. If you know there is a real problem, call 911.

For your information it is very easy for you to keep up with what is going on crime wise in our “neck of the woods.” The Palm Desert Police Department maintains a web site (www.palmdesertpolice.org) On the home page in the upper right corner is a radio button titled “Police Bulletin”. Click on this area and the current police blotter will be displayed and you can see instantly when, where, and how incidents have occurred. You can also find out the name of the police officer assigned to our neighborhood. Click on the palm Desert map in Beat # 36 and you will have it.

Two Casablanca Members attend Emergency Preparedness meeting

Board Member, Jerry Winer, and Syd Sonneborn of the Communications Committee, attended a special meeting for Emergency Preparedness presented by the Palm Desert Presidents Council on February 11. The presenter was Mr. Gary Rosenblum, Risk Manager, for the City of Palm Desert.

Ms. Carol Fulton of LaBarre/Oksnee Insurance also presented on Insurance issues.

Mr. Rosenblum explained the geographic realities within which we live here in the Coachella Valley and the likely events that will occur when the “Big One” hits.

Basically, we have 3 periods of time to prepare for. 1. Before the Earthquake, 2. During the Earthquake and 3. After the Earthquake.

In the before period, (now) we need to prepare with supplies, equipment and planning on what we will do as individuals and a community. It will be at a minimum, a week that you must prepare to be “on your own” before any organized help will be able to reach us just as we have seen in New Orleans and Haiti. When the Earthquake hits, you need to know to Duck, Cover & Hold. After the quake, one needs to treat for any injuries, assist other survivors and organize our community into a team to survive until help can arrive. Decisions will have to be made on weather to stay or try to leave the area. Most likely no gasoline will be available and only one road, highway 86, will be open.

Currently, the City is working on funding for three million dollars to install an “early warning” earthquake warning system that will detect the first “P-waves” an earthquake makes. This is a vibration that is sent out as the rock underground breaks but before the second or “S-waves” start the shaking. It could give us up to 20 seconds lead time to allow people to duck, cover & hold, and emergency responders to open garage doors so emergency vehicles do not get trapped in buildings when the power goes off.

A good web site to get more information from is www.daretoprepare.org .

Syd Sonneborn is planning to hold a meeting for the community on this subject and to answer questions on Saturday, March 27, 10:00 AM at pool # 1. Please plan to attend.

EARTHQUAKE SURVIVAL

What do you need?

Where do I get it?

What will Happen?

Questions and Answers

Saturday, March 27

Pool #1

10AM

Casablanca Management

Board of Directors

Gail Christiansen, President

Jerry Winer, Vice President

Lindsey Griffith, Treasurer

Dorothy Saulnier, Secretary

Jim Laraby, Director

Whitestar Management, Inc.

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