



Bell Tower Property Owner Association's

BELL TOWER NOTES

PALM TREE PRUNING MEETING PLANNED

By Richard Roux



Clubhouse Palm Pruning

Special points of interest:

- New Long-term Shutter Regulations (P. 2)
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This year's community-wide palm pruning started in early July at the clubhouse. In total, approximately 1500 Bell Tower Park palm trees will need pruning.

Because of some controversy concerning this initial pruning effort, which appeared to remove significant quantities of healthy green fronds, resulting in the appearance of a typical contractor "hurricane cut," work was halted for further consultation.

According to the University of Florida's palm pruning video accessible from the BTP WEB site, a hurricane cut is not recommended, as such drastic pruning removes nutrients from the tree, narrows and weakens the crown of the tree, and leaves the tree subject to loss from high winds. A lost tree can cost the community approximately \$375 to remove and replace with a less mature tree.

In response to POA Board concerns, our landscape company, Mainscape, has promised to hold a town hall meeting prior to pruning our

residential palms. UF experts will be brought in to discuss proper pruning techniques so that our residents can better anticipate the pruning results they'll be seeing near their residences.

This town hall session is currently scheduled in conjunction with the August 19th monthly POA meeting. Watch for further announcements. Residents planning to attend this meeting should check out the WEBSITE video under Announcements on the BTP Home Page ("Palm Pruning Video Available"). □

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PLAYGROUND RENOVATION COMPLETED

The renovation of our playground was completed earlier this summer with the addition of a school bus "spring-rider" to the climbing equipment and bench installed earlier in the year.

Residents looking for more expansive near-by children's activities are reminded that Lakes Park, located about a

mile from BTP, has an extensive playground, water park, paddle boats, peddle cars, walking trails, model trains, and an ice cream parlor. Lakes Park was highlighted in the April 2012 edition of *Bell Tower Notes*, which is archived on the WEBSITE under the menu item "Newsletters". □



School Bus Spring-Rider

NEW LONG-TERM SHUTTER REGULATIONS ENACTED

By Richard Roux

At the July POA Board Meeting a new Rule and Regulation (R&R) was adopted addressing the competing interests that come into play from absentee members' desire to have their property protected against hurricane damage and the desire of those who live in the community full time to avoid a "shuttered up" or "abandoned" look in the neighborhood.

In summary, the developer-provided galvanized metal shutters for the earliest-developed, west end of BTP remain acceptable for short term use, as specified in the existing Rules and Regulations (8.19), but four other specific types of shutters have been approved for long-term use. Long-term use involves periods longer than the 10 day pre-storm and post-storm periods allowed for shutters by our declaration and covenants.

The new R&R includes detailed information on the types of shutters that are available and allowed. Final architectural standards (within the R&R's guidelines) and the architectural change approval authority both reside with the responsible sub-board. Residents wishing to install long-term shutters must file a timely request for variance with their sub-board, specifying the type of long-term protection they wish to install.



Long-Term Shutter Example

The accompanying photo of roll-down shutters is one of the acceptable types of shutters in the new R&R. Obviously, owners with high-impact hurricane glass rather than shutters, with units from Berkshire Drive east (including Kensington Loop, Cambridge, and Chelsey Ln.), are not impacted by this new R&R.

Implementation of the new R&R will start in 2014. The complete R&R can be obtained from the CAM Office and it is posted on the WEB site under menu item "POA Board." □

RESIDENTS TO ACCOMPANY GUESTS ON TENNIS COURTS

By Richard Roux

Because of unauthorized use of our tennis courts by outsiders falsely claiming to be guests, a new rule was adopted by the POA Board in June that residents must be present when their guests are using the courts. Not only were the courts being used by outsiders, but they were then being left in serious disrepair.

Entrance to BTP was attained because one individual had access on a resident's outdated guest list. It cannot be stressed enough that residents should check their access lists to be sure they are up to date; our courts are not "public" courts, but are meant for the enjoyment of our residents and their personal guests. With the new rule, residents should be present when their children and grandchildren may be on the courts, as well as outsiders.

To keep them in top condition, the courts get professional, commercial grooming three times per week. Between these groomings, all players need to maintain the courts each time they are used. This involves dragging the entire court surface and brushing the lines.



Courts Ready for Summer Winds

Residents are also reminded that they should not use the courts if they have any standing water on them or if they appear to be exceptionally damp. Use under such conditions can seriously damage the surface. □

WILD ENCOUNTERS SHOULD BE SHUNNED

By Suzanne Ferguson

On July 20th, we received an e-mail alert from our WEBmaster to the effect that a raccoon had attacked a dog being walked in our community, and that the animal also attempted to go after the dog's owner. The raccoon was not caught, and therefore could not be tested for rabies.

Our CAM, Dixie Cory, met with the dog's owner a week

or so later to find that the dog, which had been taken to a vet, was doing well and seemingly suffered no ill effects. Apparently lurking under a car in the owner's driveway, the raccoon was likely taken by surprise and frightened by the dog.

The episode underlines our community's susceptibility to incursions of wildlife and the importance of not encouraging wild animals by leaving pet food outside or leaving

edible trash unprotected.

New, critter-proof bins have been provided at the small swimming pool for both trash and recyclables, rectifying a situation in which animals often did open the plastic bins and strew garbage about the pool deck.

All walkers, whether with pets or not, should take special care in BTP when out near dawn or dusk, and avoid confrontations with our wild neighbors. □



Friend or foe?

EXCURSION TO ARTIS-NAPLES

By Susan Knutson

On Saturday, June 22nd, eleven of our friends and neighbors met at the Clubhouse and carpoled to Artis-Naples (formerly the Naples Museum of Art). We had a 1-hour private docent tour which highlighted both the current exhibitions as well as the permanent collection. For many of us, the Dale Chihuly Ceiling with its dazzling array of brilliant glass forms suspended above a third-floor hallway was a breathtaking vision to be savored again and again!

We then had an hour to tour on our own, enjoying an amazing art exhibit by school children ranging from 8 to 18 years of age. This was remarkable for the talent exhibited by these budding artists, which promises to blossom ever more brightly as they mature in skill and years.

At noon we ventured to nearby Buca di Beppo for a lovely luncheon in the "Pope Room" where we were feted with food and drink to our hearts content.

It was a truly great day and we will definitely be doing more such excursions again in the coming months. □



Chihuly Ceiling

COFFEE @ THE CLUBHOUSE CONTINUES

By Susan Knutson

We continue to hold our "Third Sunday – Coffee @ the Clubhouse" from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Each month we meet new people and catch up with many familiar faces. These coffee hours have become something that people look forward to, and in some cases, plan their day around! Be sure and stop by when you can – the next one is set for Sunday, August 18th, and we hope to see you there. □

BAR-BE-QUE BEATS THE RAIN

By Susan Knutson

July 13th dawned with dark sky and the premonition of a stormy day ahead. The Family Bar-Be-Que was scheduled to begin at noon, but Activities Committee members waited as long as possible before setting up the outdoor tables and preparing to get the party started.

The 88 residents who had signed up began to arrive as Mother Nature blessed us with a window of opportunity. Everyone brought a delicious dish to share and our chefs extraordinaire, John Newton and Dale Knutson, grilled 300 burgers and dogs.

We want to heartily thank resident Mike Moody for donating the huge ½ pound hamburgers and terrific hot dogs. What a fabulous neighbor!

BTP resident John Case generously provided delightful guitar music to dine by and we were also delighted when a marvelously talented young lady (I apologize but did not get her name) serenaded us with several songs.

We just had time for dessert before the sky darkened again and the storm clouds rolled in. Thanks to all our helpers providing assistance in putting away chairs and tables, we were able to clean up before the “monsoon” struck! (See *accompanying photos and also in “Photo Albums” on the BTP WEBSITE.*)

The Bar-Be-Que and our other events could never have been accomplished without the hardworking Activities Committee members. While many of our members are currently up North, we have a terrific group who have redoubled their efforts on site. Many, many thanks to Chris Merritt, Dolly Milik, Jeanne Newton, Kathy Gambino, and Ronnie Vaccaro, as well as our spouses who pitch in to help with the heavy lifting!

Thanks also to the POA Board for their continued support of our endeavor to provide events to our residents that enhance our social and cultural lives as well as truly bringing us together as a Bell Tower Park Family.

Keep on the lookout for upcoming events including Oktoberfest and a Sock Hop for the Fall. Anyone interested in joining the Activities Committee please call 239-561-0810 and leave your name and number. Many hands truly do make light work! □



Bar-Be-Que Fun



John Newton "Flipping"



Dotty Milik and Richard Roux
Choosing Desserts



More Fun!!

SECURITY REMINDER: UPDATE ENVERA ACCESS LISTS

There have been recent occurrences where non-residents have accessed our property to use our amenities. They have been able to enter the property because their names were unintentionally left on our residents' **envera** access lists. Residents are reminded to periodically review their access list and eliminate individuals who no longer need access. Information on contacting **envera** is available at our CAM Office and on the BTP WEBSITE under menu item "Security Committee." □

MEET DAWN & RICK

By Jim Stewart

I recently had the pleasure to meet Dawn Mannina, who earlier this year purchased a Courtyard Home on Kensington Loop here in Bell Tower Park. Originally from Chicago, she has many athletic talents. Dawn has been a professional water skier at Sea World in Orlando, at Cypress Gardens in Winter Haven, FL, and also in the Tommy Bartlett show in the Wisconsin Dells. In addition, she was a professional ice skater at Cypress Gardens.

Now Dawn uses her athletic ability in the game of tennis, and has competed regularly in local tournaments. At present, her day job is as an independent personal trainer.

It was through tennis that Dawn met Rick Sanford. They played as tennis partners for a couple of years before Rick asked her out. Now they are planning for their wedding in November of this year.

Rick is from Maryland, where he graduated from the University of Maryland in Graphic Design after starting out in Mechanical Engineering. He is the Branch Manager for RoadSafe Traffic Systems in Ft. Myers. RoadSafe is the second largest provider of traffic safety services—signs, pavement lining, fences, etc.—in the United States, operating from 15 states throughout America.

Rick has a wonderful gift for art, a gift he discovered when he was in high school. When he worked up North, he had a booth at the New York International Hotel/Motel and Restaurant Show, which was awarded “Best of Show” in 2006.

Rick is really proud of the mural he has created on the inside wall of the Kensington Loop courtyard. The fish in the picture he handmade out of aluminum and attached to the wall so as to give a 3-D effect. He uses high quality paint, and when finished, he applies a clear coat to help to protect the work. Rick esti-



Dawn , Rick and their “1971 TOY”

mates he put at least 30 hours into the mural.

In addition to outdoor creations, Rick also does metal art and canvas paintings. Inside, the house is like an art gallery of Rick’s works. We are including some pictures of Rick’s art. If you would like to see his work, call Dawn at 239-989-4113 to set up a time to view the courtyard and/or meet with Rick.

Incidentally, if you see someone tooling around Bell Tower Park in a vintage red Karmann Ghia, that will be Rick and Dawn—apparently Rick’s interest in engineering never quite went away! □



Wall Sculpture



Courtyard Mural

POA LAUNCHES BENCH DONATION PROGRAM

By Richard Roux and Suzanne Ferguson

Ever go out for a walk and wish there were a tranquil place to sit and enjoy the beautiful vista? Or maybe just “rest a spell”? Responding to many owners’ comments recognizing the attractiveness of our grounds and the lack of any place to sit down while admiring them, the POA Board recently approved a community bench endowment program.

The program encourages members to donate a bench in honor of their spouse or family, to join together with neighbors to provide a bench in their vicinity, or possibly for an individual to memorialize or honor a loved one. Using our new playground bench as the model (see photo to right) the Board reviewed possible locations and designated five points throughout the community, which are shown with red stars on the map below.

The Buildings and Amenities Committee chose these locations first with regard to aesthetics: they all have an exceptional view. Other criteria were accessibility (i.e., where do people like to walk), preservation of adjacent owner privacy, and the ability to maintain the surrounding landscape.

The benches cost \$725 (includes freight and installation by the POA), and lifetime maintenance will be provided by the POA. A small plaque to recognize the donor(s) or honoree is also included; as with any gift to the Association, the benches remain the prop-



Prototype Bench on Display in Playground

erty of the POA.

To discuss your interest, or to order a bench, you can contact the CAM (454-4605) to set up a meeting with the Manager and a Board representative regarding your choice of location and the dedication. Order time for benches is approximately 8 weeks, after which it takes 2 weeks for installation: order soon and your bench can be in place before the “season” starts!

For those who wish, a bench dedication ceremony can be arranged. Be on the lookout for an e-mail flyer, which contains full details. □



Approximate Locations for Donation Benches Shown in Red.

HEAVY RAINS CREATE MIXED BLESSINGS



Rainy Season Growth



Bald Cypress and Great Blue Heron

By Richard Roux

Frequent rains in June and July have filled our lakes to near capacity, and have the property looking green and lush. The accompanying picture at left is an example of the current green look in the community, showing the last major new planting that was done on the east end of BTP Blvd. last year. As you can see, the plants continue to thrive. Specially note the far right tree in the photo: it is a bald cypress, the tree that we annually get winter month complaints about "being dead and needing removal." As a deciduous tree, it leafs out into beauty in the summer. Another photo of the bald cypress appears below, left.

Relative to our landscaping,

Mainscape continues to work on improving their services. After their management team attended, presented, and received feedback at the May 2013 POA Board meeting, lawn maintenance appears to have improved.

Shrub care has continued to be a problem, with some owners dissatisfied with the looks of their plants after pruning. Because of this, residents who have concerns about shrub pruning have been asked to contact Mainscape directly and request a consultation. A Customer Service Request form (CSR) can be found on the Landscape News page of the WEBSITE.

Another very demanding and dynamic area for the community continues to be insect control. A serious

white fly infestation occurred across Lee County, and Mainscape has instituted a very aggressive treatment program to protect our shrubs, including our valuable ficus hedges.

Although very welcome, these summer rains also have a down side. Our watersheds are full, and Lake Okeechobee is at total capacity, causing the Army Corps of Engineers to release water into the Caloosahatchee River at record rates. This has upset the local marine environment, causing the water at local beaches to turn from blue to brown and raising the potential for months of algae bloom. These water levels could also have negative implications if we are hit by tropical storms or hurricanes this year. □

NEW STORE AROUND THE CORNER

By Jim Stewart & Suzanne Ferguson

Ever since Miss Lucy's House of Holidays closed last spring, people have been wondering what would take its place. Now we know: The Skinny Pantry Healthy Grocery and Wellness Center. According to store manager Gina Rosenberg, The Skinny Pantry has relocated from its "small and slightly obscure location" on Cleveland Ave. at Maple Drive to the more centrally located Park Shops at Andrea Lane, just outside Bell Tower Park, a couple of doors east of Tony Sacco's Pizza.

Rosenberg notes that the new store, which opened Monday, July 8, will be expanding their product lines, which cater to specialty diet needs such as Celiac Disease, Gluten Intolerance, Diabetes, and any type of food allergies or weight loss programs. The expanded location will also enable them to offer a variety of health screening and nutrition counseling services, fresh gluten-free baked goods, cooking and health and education classes.

Owner Terry Foster says the store's motto is "Let us show you what you can eat, rather than what you can't eat."

Their press release says:

The Skinny Pantry stocks packaged and frozen foods that include no and low carb, sugar free, diabetic friendly, Paleo-diet friendly, dairy free, gluten and wheat free and many non GMO products. Items include everything from baking ingredients to snacks and desserts to complete meals. In addition, shoppers can find high quality vitamins and supplements, local honey, plant-based products, a vast selection of low carb high protein nutrition bars and protein shakes, and many products for vegetarian and vegan diets.

The staff at The Skinny Pantry was pleased to hear that many of their former customers will be among their new neighbors at Bell Tower Park and are very excited to introduce the store and themselves to the rest of neighborhood. Stop in and say hello and see for yourself! □



DID YOU WANT TO KNOW?

By Jim Stewart

Q. Why didn't StormSmart get back to me after I attended the meeting where they explained the different types of hurricane storm shutters?

A. People completed a form with their names and phone numbers and someone put the forms into a StormSmart shopping bag. Then, the speaker passed out StormSmart shopping bags as a gift. One of the bags they gave away had the completed forms, and whoever got that bag must have tossed the forms away. So, if you are waiting for them to call, you better give them a call.

Q. Did you know The Sandy Butler and Shoals restaurant has changed ownership?

A. About a mile east of the north bridge of Ft. Myers Beach was the Sandy Butler, a gourmet grocery and gift store. On the other side of the building was Shoals Restaurant. The owners decided it was time to retire. So Skip One, the restaurant about a mile south of BTP on Hwy. 41, has taken over. They will keep the store, but will have fewer meat products and more fish along with the gift items. Good news is if you happen to have a gift certificate from the Sandy Butler or Shoals, the new owners will honor it.

Q. Jim, should I look before I leap?

A. I would recommend it. On June 6th, after the tropical storm moved by, I went to the "small" pool to get in a few laps. The pool always gets dirty after a big wind and it was no exception that day. I did notice there was a particularly large piece of trash that seemed to be moving faster than the pool pump would move it. Upon inspection, I discovered a 12-15 pound turtle. I chased it with the pool net for 15 minutes (I hope the camera was not on) until I finally caught it and lifted it over the fence. Last I saw of him, he was walking down the sidewalk like he had a date for a tennis game.

Q. Why do we have a "rainy season"?

A. According to Meteorologist Jonathan Erdman, "You may not realize it when you hear the nickname 'The Sunshine State,' but Florida has distinct wet and dry seasons." Simple geography, right? The state is, after all, a peninsula bordered on three sides by water.

How sharp is the seasonal difference? Miami, for example, receives over 73% of its average rain in just a six-month period from May through October. Why is this the case? From late fall through early spring, cold fronts frequently plunge southeastward through the state, sweeping away any warm and humid air. Cool, dry air near the surface stabilizes the atmosphere, suppressing any showers and thunderstorms.

Any rain associated with these frontal passages is usually in the form of thin lines that sweep quickly through before they can dump significant rainfall. From late spring through early fall, Florida's wet season sets in. Cold fronts can no longer penetrate that far south, so warmth and humidity simply build.

In summer, as cooler air glides inland from the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean, thunderstorms can erupt along the so-called sea-breeze fronts in the hot interior of the state. At times, these thunderstorms can be virtually a daily occurrence. Sometimes these storms may move very slowly, quickly dumping several inches of rain, which our plants welcome.

Q. Why do computer keyboards have the same strange pattern of letters as old typewriters?

A. According to Wikipedia, in 1874 Remington & Sons manufactured the first commercial typewriter, called the Remington Number 1. This typewriter was designed by Christopher Sholes and used the "QWERTY" keyboard we are all familiar with.

This early typewriter used a mechanism with characters on the end of a bar. When a key was struck, a linkage would swing the bar into a tape coated with ink. When the character struck the tape, the impression of the character was transferred onto the paper, which was positioned behind the tape.

Sholes' original prototypes had a problem with the bars colliding with each other and jamming. So the story goes that he arranged the keys with the most common letters in hard to reach spots, to slow typists down and try to avoid this problem. The use and adoption of the QWERTY keyboard is often viewed as one of the most important case studies in open standards because of the widespread, collective adoption and use of the product. □



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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings from the steam bath that is southwest Florida in the summer! In this issue of *Bell Tower Notes* we're happy to bring you news concerning some of the POA's recently completed projects, from new rules on long-term shutters and guests at the tennis courts to completion of the playground and plans for a town meeting on pruning our palm trees. There's also news of a bench endowment program to grace our walking routes.

The Activities Committee has continued its events undiminished by heat or absence of our snowbird neighbors. The June excursion to the (former) Naples Museum of Art and the enormously successful Family Bar-Be-Que July 19th have brought new sizzle to our summer social calendar. And, of course, the third-Sunday Coffee Hours can now be called an "institution."

And there's more: Jim Stewart tells us what to do if we find a turtle in the swimming pool (maybe we should just call Jim, since he knows).

The *Bell Tower Notes* Staff has been having fun getting this issue together; but we'd love to know what you would like to see as we begin Volume 3 in the Fall. Write me at scf@case.edu with suggestions.

Meanwhile, keep abreast by watching the Announcements on the WEBSITE; and—if you are in residence—checking Channel 195 for updates.

Suzanne Ferguson, Editor □

**REMEMBER: WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.BELLTOWERPARKCOMMUNITY.COM**

OP ED

THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN . . .

By Richard Roux

Yes, it's that time of year again. In Southwest Florida, hurricane season lasts 6 full months, starting on June 1st. While hurricanes can't be predicted, statistically, September 7-13 is the period of most likely occurrence here in Ft Myers. We are now three years "overdue" for a hurricane brush or hit.

So, hopefully you have completed your preparations for protecting both your family and your property. Toward that end, in early June the POA Board made a video on using the garage door stiffeners that came with our double garage

homes. In mid-June the POA committed to purchase some improved hurricane window protection for both our guard house and clubhouse cupolas, and this has already been installed.

Shortly thereafter, heavy late June rains filled our lakes. Tropical storms Chantal and Dorian, which both fizzled, caused only a mild stir here. Can something more serious be coming to Bell Tower Park this year?

Not to be unduly repetitive, hurricane protection has been one of the main focuses of our emergency planning efforts over the last 18 months. Much of the information generated is archived on

our WEBSITE. If you are a new resident (or need a reminder) you can look under the following menu item topics on the BTP WEB site:

> **Emergency planning**, which includes sub-topics on preparing a family emergency plan, three major articles on hurricane preparedness, and the garage door video.

> **Risk Management (Insurance)**, which includes several sub-topics involving insurance.

We certainly hope you have a boring and safe 2013 hurricane season. □

