



Bell Tower Property Owner Association's

BELL TOWER NOTES

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE GETS MOVING

By Suzanne Ferguson

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Immediately following our POA election in March, President Roger Brownell solicited owner participation in a new Landscape Committee, the first we have had since 2010. He comments, "I wanted to use the resources we have in the community to review how and when the landscape care is being done, the important changes that are required from time to time, and ensure that we address Bell Tower Park as a community, not a series of enclaves." Several residents immediately stepped forward: Alicia Shaw and Paula Castallo Eberhardt of Courtyard II, and Paul Niss, of Carriage Homes. With Roger chairing the committee, they have been meeting regularly with Luke Brothers Landscaping's manager for our property, Patrick Miles. Two additional members, Fritz Stadlmayer and Al Avitabile, round out the committee.

Paula belonged to the previous Landscape Committee. A resident on Cheshire Dr. since 2005, she came back to the committee because she felt there was "a need to make our landscape company aware of the needs and wishes of our community. As a member of this committee I can have input into some of the problems that we've experienced," such as the chronically poor condition of the plantings along the south side of Berkshire Drive and much of West Hyde Park Drive.

Coming to Bell Tower Park from Boston, Paul and his wife Wanda began as snowbirds in 2011 and settled permanently in 2014. He says, "I volunteered for the committee because I love the beautiful Florida landscape of water, trees, and flowers always in bloom; and I felt the overall landscape in the Park had begun to look somewhat shabby. I want to help address that." His priorities include "looking out for what may be missing in the overall landscaping and finding out what may need to be rectified."

Alicia moved to Ft. Myers from the Seattle area after retiring. She and her husband, David, watched as their home on Avon Park Circle was built in 2004. She has been especially diligent in addressing the deterioration of our lawns over the past late winter and spring. In addition to locating where the irrigation was not working, she has researched the Floratam grass and has been concerned with proper and timely fertilizing and mowing.



JOYCE LINDABURY

Full lakes and green lawns reflect the recent challenges overcome by our Landscape Committee and Luke Bros.

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NEWS FROM CARRIAGE HOMES AT BELL TOWER PARK

By Robert H. Garland, Board President

The Carriage Homes has finally filled its vacant Board position! Jeff Lund was appointed to the Board at the reconvened annual meeting on May 23 – yes, we finally got a quorum – and he has been elected to serve as the Board’s secretary. Welcome aboard Jeff!



We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that owners are responsible for providing regular inspection and maintenance on unit components that could pose a risk of damage to their units, neighboring units or common elements. These include:

- Water heaters
- Water lines serving toilets, sinks, dishwashers, and washing machines
- Air conditioning equipment
- Water supply hoses

Our documents (ref., Section 9.9.2.) also state that unit owners have the following minimum responsibilities:

- If the unit is to be unoccupied for more than one (1) week:
 - The main water shutoff valve serving the unit shall be turned off.
 - The thermostat must be set no higher than 80 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent mold and mildew.
 - The circuit breaker for the water heater shall be switched to “off” to minimize damage if there is a leak.
- If the unit is to be unoccupied for more than two (2) weeks, the unit shall be inspected by a responsible person on a weekly basis.
- Water heaters and air conditioning equipment shall be inspected and/or serviced on an annual basis.
- All hoses that deliver water to toilets and washing machines shall be replaced with wire braided mesh hoses.

Unit owners should notify Cardinal immediately if unit damage occurs from failure of any of the above components. The intent is to protect the investments of both you and your neighbors. Please contact Cardinal should you have questions or to obtain contact numbers for potential service companies. Thank you for helping to insure a safe and secure summer! ☐

POA BOARD REVISES BTP RULES & REGULATIONS

KEY NEW LANGUAGE ON VEHICLES AND PARKING VIOLATION ENFORCEMENT

By Richard Roux

A revision to the current BTP Rules and Regulations was approved at the POA Board's June Monthly Meeting. The revised Rules and Regulations clarified some of the former language and added some new sections regarding vehicles and parking violations and penalties.

Some of the important modifications are in Section 1.4, which defines curbside refuse container placement times, Section 2.1.2, which lists the motorized vehicles allowed on community roads, and Section 2.1.3, which more specifically lays out the steps taken when there is a parking violation. The latter section strengthens parking violation responses and identifies "24-hr notice" and "no notice" towing situations that can be used for parking violations.

The revised document has been posted on the Website as an announcement and also under menu item: POA BOARD. It is also available in printed form from the CAM office. Residents are requested to read and be familiar with the entire document. ☐

THIRD ANNUAL BLOCK PARTY HELD BY COURTYARD II

By Suzanne Ferguson and Jim Stewart

A warm, bright day was provided for the third Courtyard II Block Party, celebrated April 16 by about two dozen residents who brought lawn chairs and pot luck picnic provisions to the intersection of Avon Park Loop east and Cheshire Drive.

The volunteer committee of Bill and Mary Waldau, Jim and Betsy Stewart, and Richard and Michelle Keown set up tables and coolers in the shade, then watched as an array of salads, casseroles, and desserts began to assemble before their eyes around 11 a.m. People brought their own beverages and circulated from group to group catching up on the season just ending. While the later date for the event may have missed some of our snowbirds who had already returned north, the balmy weather proved relaxing and conducive to conversation. □



Courtyard II Socializes

FROM THE BTP SECURITY COMMITTEE: DRIVE AND BIKE SAFELY!

By David Shaw, for the Security Committee

Many articles have recently appeared concerning issues of road safety and the driving habits of Southwest Floridians. The rate of vehicle accidents and traffic fatalities is of significant concern to local safety officials. While the safety and security of all Bell Tower Park residents wherever they are is of concern, the Security Committee's focus is directed to those issues which impact safety and security on Bell Tower Park community property.

Recently several complaints have been received by the Security Committee of residents or guests of residents driving far in excess of the posted speed limits (max. 25 mph) and/or following too close to the vehicle in front of them. Even more distressingly, when some of these individuals were notified of their disregard of the posted limits, their response was crude and uncivil--examples of road rage within our community. We want to remind every resident that the posted speed limit on Bell Tower Park Blvd. is 25 mph. The residential feeder streets within the community have posted limits of 15 mph.

Besides speeding, one of the most frequent violations is failure to come to a complete stop at the posted STOP signs. Insofar as they can be identified, drivers consistently disregarding speed limits and/or rolling through STOP signs will be notified of their failure to operate their vehicle in a safe manner, with further actions such as fining to be considered.

Bicycle riders are also reminded that they are obligated to stop at STOP signs and ride in accordance with the motor vehicle laws of the State of Florida. Cyclists should also ride in a manner as to not impede automobiles using Bell Tower Park Blvd. by moving to the right if not travelling at the posted speed limit: some of our serious riders can exceed speeds of 25 mph on their bikes. Drivers should not be passing them!

In summary, your Security Committee urges you to SLOW DOWN, BE CAREFUL, BE COURTEOUS, BE SAFE! □

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE (continued from the first page)

The formation of the committee has been a “great thing for the community,” according to Patrick Miles. There is much more exchange of information between residents and the company. “I think we are making progress together.”

IRRIGATION NIGHTMARE

The most critical problem evident when the committee began meeting in March was the widespread lack of irrigation throughout the community and the consequent dying of lawns and shrubbery. Inspecting all the controllers and pumps for the nine irrigation zones, the committee found that only two were in working order. Others were broken or had been turned off during the January rainfall but never turned back on. This was the first priority: to get those pumps and clocks operating! Although progress has been made, we are still having problems in some areas: according to Patrick, the age of the system and the fact that much of it is obsolete, so that it is no longer possible to obtain parts from the vendors, have hampered efforts to get it all working. Asked what was the worst unanticipated challenge Luke Brothers encountered on taking over the property a year ago, Patrick says without hesitating: “Aside from the miserable wet weather, the irrigation system was in much worse shape than we could tell until we began physically digging into it.”

So far this year, according to Treasurer Don Boreman, although we began extra spending on the aging irrigation system in 2015, and had budgeted an additional \$20,000 for 2016, we have already spent over \$25,000 this year on irrigation, and more will be needed as equipment continues to age out. Of the five clocks controlling the irrigation zones, we had to replace two control boards last year at a cost of \$14,224 for clock #3 and \$10,385 for clock #4. Replacement parts include a control board and 64 decoders. The control boards cost \$2,340 and the decoders are \$200 each. Since the original model of control board is no longer available, a newer version of the control board was purchased, but it would not operate the existing decoders. Therefore both the control board and all of the decoders had to be replaced. (We have recently found and purchased 3 more of the old style control boards for present and future replacements).



The Committee: Roger Brownell, Chair, Alicia Shaw, Paula Castallo Eberhardt, and Paul Niss. Not pictured, Al Avitabile, Fritz Stadlmayer.

BURGEONING COSTS

Another unanticipated cost overrun was for the extraordinary trimming of the large ficus hedges along the southern border of the property. After they were treated for a devastating gall infestation in 2014, we had to let them grow back undisturbed for a year, and consequently they became too high while the lower parts of the plants became thin from lack of light and air.

According to Treasurer Boreman, “The normal cost of trimming the hedge would have been \$12,000. But since we treated the gall problem, we let the hedge grow to 15 feet to lessen the stress on the plants. This year we reduced the height of the hedge back down to 12 feet at an additional cost of \$11,000, which put us over budget in that category.” The final shaping of the hedges and cleanup of all detritus will be completed within the next few weeks.

Roger Brownell concedes that “We will exceed the 2016 budget for expenses in the landscaping category. We have a number of issues which need to be addressed, however, and we have to make sure we provide for those in our future annual budgeting. In order to meet the expectations of our residents for the continuing fine appearance of their property in Bell Tower Park, we cannot skimp on landscaping expenses.”

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE (continued from page 4)

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Paul summarizes, “All of us on the committee have worked together to bring the irrigation and fertilization issues to the forefront and bring the lawns back to life. (A few dead spots remain to be addressed as the irrigation problems are solved.) Over the next year we hope to have the side entrance area spruced up by removing areas of dead grass and mulching, as well as removing the old, scraggly, stopper hedges against the walls.” With regard to mulch, he promises, “We will be having a discussion about the mulch throughout the entire community: what type of mulch, when applied, at what cost.” He reaffirms Roger’s commitment “to keep the community looking good not only for the aesthetic value but for the property values we all care about so much.”

Patrick Miles lists as his major goals for the community over the next year continuing to upgrade the turf, especially those areas that have had problems over time; he also wants to continue upgrading and replacing shrubbery.

“Some of the plants are reaching the end of their lifespan, and others are planted in the wrong places (such as the cardboard palms and the large xanadu splitleaf philodendrons).” Continuing the program of cleanup in the less conspicuous areas—between and behind the units—will go hand in hand with replacements. The Avon Park Pool area will be receiving continued attention. “We’d like to do things right, so that we don’t have to continue to revisit them.”

To have input into the committee’s agenda, Roger says, “Any resident can submit an issue to the CAM regarding landscaping by using the “CAM Action Request” form on the BTP Community Website; or by email or written memo. The committee will review the actions taken as a result of these inputs. Additionally, any resident can attend a committee meeting to raise an issue which he/she feels needs to be addressed.” But he warns that, “It is important to remember that the committee is looking at the community as a whole rather than individual residences.”

The issue of “individualized landscaping” is “one the committee will address during the summer,” Roger says, noting that some residents have undertaken landscape projects without going through the formal process for changes and additions required in our Rules and Regulations. “There are restrictions as to what an individual resident can do in common areas, which is everything outside their unit,” Roger says. “We intend to provide more specific guidelines to assist owners when they are contemplating individualizing landscaping.”

Read more on the regulations by visiting belltowerparkcommunity.com and searching “Documents” > “Restated POA R &R” of June 2016. If unclear on the concept, please consult the Administrative Assistant in the CAM Office. Forms for requesting landscape alterations are available in the Office or in the eForms area of our Website. □



Front yards on Kensington Loop in June

BELL TOWER SUMMER GOLF LEAGUE IS ROLLING!

By Jim Stewart

Every Thursday morning in the summer months, residents from Bell Tower Park meet at The Hideaway Golf Club located near Page Field. Normally we have between 6 and 12 golfers and tee off around 8:15 a.m. Having fun and getting to know our neighbors take precedence over golfing skills. The golf fee is \$39.00 for one of the best courses in South Florida. Once a month, The Hideaway closes for a week for maintenance, and we take our group to one of many gated golf courses in the area. It’s a neat way to see communities you otherwise cannot get in to see. Anyone interested in playing should email Mike Powell at Mike@MikePowellRealtor.com by Tuesday night to let him know you are planning to play on the next Thursday. □

MORE LANDSCAPE PHOTOS:



Ficus hedges await final shaping



Trees and seasonal color along Bell Tower Park Blvd.

JOYCE LINDABURY

CURRENT POA BOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

BTP COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AS OF APRIL 2016				
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>POA LIAISON</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>CONTRACTS</u>
Activities	Kathy Gambino; Ronnie Vaccarino	John Davenport	Community social activities	
Buildings & Amenities	Richard Roux	Same	Building interiors (cosmetics) and amenities including: club house, annex, pools, tennis courts, playground, sports court, fitness equipment, park benches and guard house.	Tennis courts; pools
Communication	Suzanne Ferguson	Richard Roux	BTP newsletter, Website, Telephone Directory	
Finance	Susan Kehoe	Don Boreman	Prepare budget, review financial results, review large contracts; review reserves study	Reserves study
Landscaping	Roger Brownell	Same	All landscape related issues including lakes, preserves and preserve walking path	All landscaping, lakes and preserves; storm recovery contract
Maintenance	Tim Kidd	Same	Maintaining and repairing all BTP facilities except landscape and refurbishing projects to include roads, utilities and Preventative Maintenance Master Planning	Repair; master electrical; landscape lighting
Security	John Davenport	Same	All gates, Comcast, telephone, cameras, violations, Insurance coverage; Police & Fire Dept liaison; emergency planning	Comcast, Envera, Insurances, storm shutter contract, storm recovery contract

Take a Day Trip to Gatorama!

By Nancy Sanders

Just southeast of Palmdale on U.S. 27, Gatorama features some of the largest crocodiles and alligators in Florida. When you hear their distinctive “jaw pop” while eating, get ready to take some amazing photos displaying natural feeding behaviors during the “Big Gator and Croc Feeding Show.” You can tour the facilities and see gators of every age and size, including Goliath, the 15-foot giant gator. After you’ve taken the tour, you may feel like you’re ready to give “Gator Wranglin” a try. In one area you will get the chance to catch juvenile gators (about 2-3 footers) with your bare hands, and for those of you who are brave enough you can sit on the back of a 7-8 foot alligator. In August, thousands of the gators’ eggs will be hatching: this is truly a sight to see!

Gatorama is more than just gators. You can also see panthers, macaws, peacocks, bobcats, kinkajous and pythons. A nice gift shop (where you can buy gator “treats” to bring home), a fishing hole, and a new attraction called the “Big Bone Fossil Dig” will keep everyone busy.

Gatorama is located about one hour east of us, out SR 80 (Palm Beach Blvd., exit 141 from I-75) to LaBelle, where you turn north a few miles on SR 29, then southeast on U.S. 27. General admission is \$14.95. Children are only \$8.95. There is a discount for seniors. “Wranglin” does cost extra. Gatorama is open 7 days a week, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Thanksgiving and Christmas. Ted and I had a wonderful time there and we highly recommend going. For more information go to Gatorama.com. □



Gator jumps for a treat



Nancy holds a new friend



Ted wrangles a gator

TED & NANCY SANDERS

NEW PUBLIC PICKLEBALL COURTS AVAILABLE

LOCATION OPENS SOUTH OF PAGE AIRFIELD

By Richard Roux

Pickleball continues to grow in this area. Lee County Parks and Recreation has just refurbished four outdoor tennis courts off South Airport Rd., adjacent to Page Airfield on U.S. 41, to accommodate pickleball players. The courts are in Brooks Park, located behind the Shell Gas Station just south of the airfield. The courts are open to the public, free, and available on a first-come basis.

Through the renovation, two of the four Brooks Park tennis courts were converted to six permanent pickleball courts. One of the special features of this facility that could make them attractive to our pickleball players is that both the pickleball and the remaining asphalt-surfaced tennis courts are lighted at night. The lights are free and remain on until 9:30 p.m. Parking for court use is a gravel lot on the vacated road immediately adjacent to the courts. A new parking area is planned for the future.

Bell Tower Park is located midway between the County's two public pickleball centers. The other one is at the Wa-Ke Hatchee Recreation Center. Those outdoor courts are not lighted, but their use is also free and available on a first-come basis. Wa-ke Hatchee Rec also has an indoor gymnasium, where pickleball play is offered during free play periods. The gym is air-conditioned. Membership is required for use of the gym, available at a cost of \$10 for life-time use. □



RICHARD ROUX

New pickleball courts at Brooks Park

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE TAKES A SUMMER BREAK

Our Activities Committee's next event will be the September Third Sunday coffee. About that time a listing of our remaining fall-winter 2016 events will be published on our Website.

SPRING TEA AND FASHION EVENT AT BELL TOWER PARK

By Joyce Berrian-Ferrari

On Saturday, April 23, the Bell Tower Park Clubhouse was transformed into an English tea room, all dressed up in pink roses and matching table settings. A variety of delicate china teapots and cups adorned each table. Delicious tea sandwiches from Publix and petite desserts made by committee members were served to the sixty-five guests.

Lovely spring and summer fashions from A Tu, a new boutique at Bell Tower Shops, were modeled by six of our residents: Joan Anzelone, Joyce Berrian-Ferrari, Cathy Davenport, Susan Knutson, Mary Lekan and Sheila Veschusio. To close this enjoyable afternoon, a prize of a china teapot and cups was awarded to Bea Horner for the best-decorated hat. Two ten-dollar gift certificates to Bahama Breeze were door prizes. A Tu generously offered twenty percent discounts to models and fifteen percent discounts to guests for purchases made within three days of the show.

Thank you to all who helped to make this a delightful springtime afternoon. Be sure to check out all the photos taken by Joyce Lindabury and posted in the Photo Albums space on our community Website: belltowerparkcommunity.com. □



JOYCE LINDABURY

Top of the page, left: Four models: Sheila Veschusio, Cathy Davenport, Joan Anzelone, Mary Lekan; Right, Bee Horner wins Best Hat Contest. Bottom of the page, left, model Joyce Berrian-Ferrari; right, model Susan Knutson, and greeters Jeanne Newton and Joy Porter

DID YOU WANT TO KNOW?

By Jim Stewart



Q. Did you know the Springs at Six Mile Cypress apartments will open soon?

A. These units might be accepting residents by the time this newsletter is published. They did not have an office open when I wrote this article, so I obtained my information off the Internet. There will be 288 units with studio (525-623 sq. ft. & \$885 rent), 1-bedroom (768-909 sq. ft. & \$1075 rent), 2-bedroom (1062-1185 sq. ft. & \$1205 rent) and 3-bedroom units (1334-1430 sq. ft. & \$1500 rent). I also heard a rumor that there might be some more apartments built across from the Springs adjacent to Walmart—just a rumor!

Q. Do you know the difference between cement and concrete?

A. I was with a construction executive recently when someone improperly used the term cement and the exec jumped on him. There are many different types of cement, but the type most commonly used in construction is Portland cement, a substance made of calcined (roasted) limestone and clay. Portland cement is a type of hydraulic cement (often marketed under brand names like Sakrete or Quikrete), which means that when water is added, it starts a chemical reaction that is not dependent on how much water there is. This allows the cement to harden underwater and remain strong even in wet conditions.

Concrete, in contrast, is a masonry material that uses cement to bind together crushed stone, rock, and sand, also called aggregate. Cement makes up from 10% to 15% of the total mass of concrete; the exact proportions vary depending on the type of concrete being made. The aggregate and cement are mixed thoroughly with water, which starts the chemical reaction causing the cement to harden and set. Before this happens, the concrete mix can be poured into a mold so that it will harden in a specific shape, be it a block or a slab.

Q. Did you ever drive a rental car or an auto new to you up to the wrong side of a gas pump?

A. Last week while driving a rental car, I pulled up at a gas station and experienced the “Oh no” moment: I had no idea on which side of my car the gas cap was located. If you’re like me, the initial “Oh no” is followed by a few moments of awkwardly craning your neck out the window in hopes of seeing (or not seeing) the gas tank cover on the driver’s side. More often than not, however, I guess and just pull up to the pump—only to back up and circle around when my guess is wrong.

Mistaking the gas cap location may seem like a minor inconvenience. But, what if there were a way to always know on which side it was located, without ever exiting the vehicle? Good news: the secret to the gas cap location has been on our dashboards all along. If you are driving a newer car, take a look at the arrow on the gas pump icon on your dashboard display. Depending on your car, it may look like a triangle pointing to the left or right. A lot of people have been driving their car for years and have this feature, but never paid any attention to it.

Q. Why do you shrink as you get older?

A. Some of us don’t have a lot of inches to lose, in height, that is. Unfortunately, we will get a little shorter as we age. This takes place over many years, and ultimately we all lose an inch or so. Gravity is responsible for some of this height loss. You lose muscle and fat as you age, and gravity weighs down especially on the bones in your spine and may cause compression. This explains why all those senior drivers in Florida can barely see over the dashboard. □



ARE YOU AWARE OF THE 24-HOUR AND “NO-WARNING” TOWING SPELLED OUT WITHIN OUR AMENDED RULES AND REGULATIONS?





EDITOR'S NOTE

There has been no slowdown in committee and board activity this summer. The winter rains that disrupted our waterways and beaches with runoff also delayed improvements to our landscape, getting everything off schedule and everyone running to play catch up. The new Landscape Committee has been meeting as often as weekly and biweekly with Luke Brothers' representatives, and at last the results are beginning to show; I hope you will find our report on this critical aspect of our community of interest.

Regular summer activities continue—summer pickleball, summer tennis, summer golf, regular water aerobics, people walking, running, and cycling around the Park. We've had red-bellied woodpeckers nesting down near the Avon Park Pool, and early swimmers there are beginning to find the wayward little (really little) frogs waiting to be rescued from the water in the morning.

Besides the Landscape Committee, Security, Finance, Communications, and Buildings and Amenities committees have continued to meet to address various issues. Responding to the perennial problem of parking violations, the POA Board made some changes to our Rules and Regulations at its June meeting.

As you read this newsletter, remember that we are always looking out for interesting items about our residents and our neighborhood. Let us know your ideas; give us your reviews! ☐

Suzanne Ferguson, Editor

BELL TOWER NOTES

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

CAUTION: DON'T TRY THIS AT BELL TOWER PARK...



Nancy Sanders wrassles an alligator.