



# Your CasaBlanca

October 2009

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## California's Multi-year Drought Hits Home

The Association has received a request from the Coachella Valley Water Authority to trim our irrigation water consumption by 5% in the next physical year. After multi years of below average water run off from the mountains, the environmental pressures but on the Sacramento River Delta, and the new water sharing agreements made with the Metropolitan Water District over Colorado River water, the inevitable is finally hitting the Coachella Valley.

Annual reductions in consumption will indubitably become the SOP (standard operating procedure) for years to come. Some home owners in our community have been advocating the idea of developing a long range plan in or landscape theme promoting water conservation by planting native desert flora which flourish on much less water. We also need to recognize where in our complex that the changes can be made to make the biggest reduction in water and operating costs. Some suggestions that have been made are to convert the grass areas outside our perimeter wall to be more compatible in appearance to the water efficient planting that most other associations on Hovely Lane West have already implemented. Another idea is to take out the grass areas that are on steep hill sides within our community to convert to desert plants and decomposed granite ground cover. The idea would add color with flowering plants and at the same time reduce the expense of mowing and trimming the water hungry plants that grow much faster. At the present time, the

City of Palm Desert is paying home owners and associations \$2.00 per square foot of lawn that is removed. That would help a little with the cost. Finding the funds to implement a conversion is also an issue that needs to be addressed.

We need your input on these ideas and any other ones you might have. This will be the theme of our next Communications Committee meeting on November 10 at pool #1, starting at 10:00 AM.

### October Board Meeting held October 20

The Board met at the US Bank Community Room at 10:00 AM. All Board members were present. The meeting moved along fairly efficiently and ended a bit early. The Board approved the minutes from the September Board Meeting and Lindsey Griffith gave the Financial Report. We currently are in very good shape with a total of \$498,000 in all

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accounts. Of that amount, \$31,080 is in our Operating Account. We will be having some good sized expenses coming in shortly for the repair work being done in the irrigation pump area and the conversion of the pool and spa drains to meet new Federal Government regulations for safety. The plans for this modification have been submitted to the City for approval but some changes in the plans needed to be made. It looks like it will be an additional two weeks before work can begin.

**W**e have also been notified by the Coachella Valley Vector Control that they plan to be in our complex to spray for Fire Ants on Friday, November 20. Their Techs should arrive between 7:30 am -2:00pm

Our Landscapers will have to make sure that irrigation is shut off the evening before the day of treatment and it remains off till the following morning the day after treatment. And, also make sure that mowing is not done on the day of treatment.

JUST AN FYI:  
The control products that they use are made at a very low dosage, just enough to kill ants but not effect pets

### **Landscape Committee Report HOA Board Meeting 10-20-2009**

The annual flowers are scheduled to be planted this week. The short-cutting/scalping is finished and the re-seeding is scheduled for today or Wednesday. We're waiting for the installation of the new filter for the irrigation system.

Now that the temperatures are dropping, we will be trimming back the burnt tops of shrubs from the summer heat and removing and replacing others.

The Coachella Valley Water District has informed us that they are expecting a 5% reduction in our water usage in 2010. Our Landscape Company is proficient in managing irrigation systems and are, and will be doing everything necessary to accomplish this. Also, we are planning on converting some areas to desert-scape. This will involve removing some grass and converting the water to drip system and planting low water-using desert plants.

Again, I want to remind all homeowners:

Do not plant or change any landscaping outside your home. This is common area and is maintained by our landscape company. If you wish to add or change anything, you will need Association approval. Please contact Whitestar Management.

Please do not adjust sprinkler-heads or valves. Call Management if there is a problem.

Howard Butzer, Landscape Committee Chair

### **Casablanca Communications Committee Meeting October 13, 2009**

Syd called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM in the pool #4 area. Approximately 20 homeowners were in attendance. Many of our part-time residents are back for the season. Syd reminded all in attendance that the Great California Shake Out is October 15 at 10:15 AM. Everyone is encouraged to practice the "Drop, Cover & Hold" procedure. Also, Syd will call a meeting to following our next

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Communications Meeting on November 10, to answer any questions on the Synopsis of Search, Rescue Triage and Fire Fighting he sent to all Committee members.

### Member Forum:

Questions were raised on when the foundation plants that have died or are dying due to the summer stress will be replaced. Also there was concern that plants will not be getting water over the period that reseeding is in progress this week. Also, leveling areas where the wind whips sand around was brought up. Howard was in attendance and assured everyone, that all will be OK.

Stucco is being repaired and some were concerned about the white paint being used. The paint is primer and will be covered with our normal beige color.

The idea of converting the outside perimeter landscape and some steep hillsides inside into a more desert friendly theme was brought up and in general got a good response from those in attendance. The City is currently giving a rebate of \$2.00 per square foot on the amount of grass that is removed.

The meeting concluded at 10:20 AM

Respectfully submitted by Syd Sonneborn,  
Committee Chair

## ShakeOut Was Held October 15 at 10:15

### What can we do here?

The Samoan earthquake and tsunami on 9/29 and the Indonesian earthquake on 9/30 remind us that earthquakes happen without warning, and can cause widespread destruction. Our goal in California is to develop a culture of

earthquake and tsunami readiness, so that losses will be minimized and we can recover quickly. What each of us does in our homes, schools, and offices, and what we do together as communities and as a state, will determine whether California's next major earthquake will be a natural disaster (from which we can recover quickly), or a major catastrophe that will affect our way of life for many years.

**T**he Great California ShakeOut is about more than just practicing "drop, cover, hold on." It's about getting us all to talk about earthquakes, think about preparedness, and to act now.

Great news! More than 6.8 million Californians were registered to participate in the ShakeOut drill at 10:15 a.m. on October 15. Use the interactive map on the ShakeOut home page to see how many were in our area- and review lists of who is participating. The 2009 ShakeOut is now officially larger than the 2008 ShakeOut! Long range planning calls for an annual earthquake practice ShakeOut to be held the third Thursday of October each year. Therefore, next year's ShakeOut will be on October 21, 2010.

Resources for your drill or for encouraging others to participate:

- \* Multi-level drill manuals for schools, businesses, non-profits and other organizations, and government agencies have also been added. These and other materials are listed on [ShakeOut.org/resources](http://ShakeOut.org/resources) and for each group at [ShakeOut.org/howtoparticipate](http://ShakeOut.org/howtoparticipate).

- \* New materials have also been added to the [ShakeOut.org/schools](http://ShakeOut.org/schools) page, including drill planning documents and checklists, take-home materials, and educational curricula.

- \* Our [www.dropcoverholdon.org](http://www.dropcoverholdon.org) site has also been updated. Be sure to play the "Beat the Quake" game to learn how to secure your space!

- \* You can also follow the ShakeOut on twitter and on Facebook



The above photo was taken while the new water filter was being installed by Southwest Pump on October 20. The Orange Cylinder atop the green pipe is the filter. The recycled water flows through the filter before going into the water pumps (the orange colored equipment resting on the ground just behind each electric motor). The filter is supposed to take fine sand and gravel that may be in our recycled water out of the flow going out to our sprinkler heads. The idea is that the sprinklers will last longer and not need replacement as often if the sand and gravel does not get stuck in the diaphragms in the sprinklers that turn on and off the individual sprinkler heads.

The other new addition to our system is the second motor and pump (the one on the left side). This motor & pump is redundant meaning that if a failure occurs in the main motor or pump, we can switch to this new one by flipping a few levers to redirect water flow to the new pump. We will then be able to continue to irrigate while the original pump or motor is repaired. Hopefully, we will not have as much damage to plants and grass in the Summer months because the whole system is down for repairs.

## **DECEMBER COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE?**

Are you interested in participating in a Casablanca Community wide garage sale in mid-December? You and your neighbors could combine items that you wish to dispose of and having other home owners participate at the same time, could attract more shoppers and spread out the expense for advertising and permits.

**If you are interested, please call our President, Gail Christiansen at 760-834-9286.** Leave a message on her answering machine if she is not at home.

**This issue of your Casablanca was produced by:**

Syd Sonneborn, Editor/Publisher

Gail Christiansen, President

Howard Butzer, Landscape

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### **Casablanca Management**

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