



Your CasaBlanca

February 2009

COMING UP: BOARD ELECTION

It's that time of the year again. In March we will be asked to elect members to three positions that expire this year. The only two board members not facing re-election are President, Gail Christiansen and Treasurer, Lindsey Griffith. The terms of Dorothy Soulner, Jim Laraby and Jerry Winer expire. If you would be interested in running for

our board of directors and contributing your time and expertise to our community, please contact our manager at J&W Management, Dick Stephan. You should have received a mailing containing a candidacy statement form on this subject by now. It should be returned to the management company no later than February 12. The term for a board member is for two years before facing reelection. If you have misplaced your form, the phone number is 568-0349. He will be glad to send you the necessary paperwork to become a candidate.

January Board Meeting

The January board meeting was held at the Downey Savings meeting room at 10:00 AM on January 20th. All board members were present and about 13 members in attendance. At the homeowners' forum, Kelly Blair wanted her concerns addressed about the replacement of a tree that had blown over about a year ago and planting by her patio

that has been removed but not replaced at their home on Aventine Court. The board tried to explain to her that the board's policy is to not replace to blown down trees and that the planting will be done by the end of February.

The **minutes** from the December meeting were approved as written. Lindsey Griffith presented the **financial statement**. We have \$399,000 in reserves and they are now fully funded. The painting account in the reserves now has \$164,00 in it. The operating account has \$11,500. We earned \$28,710 in interest on bank accounts this last year. Late assessments have been reduced from about \$14,000 to just about \$770. It looks like we may have one more foreclosure in the near future. Dick gave the **management report**. He indicated that the roof repairs are to be completed today. We also need to address the pool drain renovation to comply with new laws and liability in the near future. Dick also reminded us that crime in our area is on the rise. We need to be vigilant in our

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communities. Shut and secure gates and close your garage doors to eliminate some of the temptation.

Committee Reports:

The **Architectural Committee** reported an application for a door to open on a patio on a home on Aventine Ct. When all the information needed is complete, they intend to approve the remodeling plan.

Landscape Report:

You will notice some yellow areas in the grass. This is Bermuda grass which is going dormant. In those areas, the mower blades are being lowered to cut it shorter and allow the new rye grass to take hold and green up. Greenview is continuing to spray for weeds in the grass and fertilize the rye.

The citrus tree fruit is ripening. We encourage all homeowners to take advantage of the abundance. All citrus trees in the common areas of the complex are there for everyone to enjoy and make use of their fruit.

I have a set of the original planting plans of the CasaBlanca Development and have found some things of interest concerning the trees.

According to the original plans:

All of Colada Court was lined with 22 Brazilian Peppers of which three remain today.

All of Aventine Court south was lined with 20 Bottle Brush trees. None remain today.

Aventine Court north was lined with 11 pine trees. None remain today.

Navarre Court south was lined with 20 Bottle Brush trees. None remain today.

Navarre Court north was lined with 11 pine trees of which 9 remain today.

Armanac Court was lined with 22 Brazilian Pepper trees and 3 remain today.

According to the original landscape plans, there were approximately 122 Eucalyptus trees. Approximately 46 remain today.

Listed on the original plans are 58 Date Palm trees of which none remain today. However, the plans list 15 Fan Palms and we have about 170 of them today.

Many types of trees have been added through the years, these include:

All Queen Palms, Oak, Jacaranda, California Pepper, Acacia, and all 60 citrus trees, plus various odds and ends of trees.

Originally, there were approximately 585 trees. Our Landscape committee inventory of 2007/2008 shows 650 trees.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Butzer, Landscape committee chair

Communications Committee:

The meeting was held at pool #1 on Tuesday, January 13. Some of the issues brought up by the homeowners present follow:

Ruthie recognized that the planting in front of pool #4 has been completed but felt that it was a bit on the sparse side. She felt a few more plants would make it more aesthetic.

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Scott, who is a dog owner complained that some other dog owner's are not picking up messes from their dogs and that someone in our complex or possibly the gardeners had disposed of some marinated artichoke hearts on the grass of the common area. He was concerned not only by the garbage but that animals could get into it and become sick.

Some discussion was held over how to get our news letter to people who do not have computers. It seems some people have paid management to send it to them but it does not get sent. A system needs to be established in order to make copies available to them. It was felt this should be a board agenda item.

We have had some problem with leaks on some roofs after the rains this winter and there has been more than one problem it seems with coordination between Management and the roofing company (Al Miller). This is a serious problem and needs to be addressed by the board.

Rochelle reported that a motor scooter had been stolen out of their garage.

We are experiencing a major problem with a home owner on Aventine Ct. who is an absentee owner, wanting a tree replaced that had blown over in a wind storm last year. The board does not want to replace it because we have more than enough trees (over 600 on 33 acres) now. He is threatening to sue the association over this matter.

Jack turned in a drawing of his idea of how to make our phone kiosk at the entry way more aesthetic. The drawing was turned over to Jim Laraby. Jack also had the suggestion for tree trimming, that all trees of the same species be trimmed at the same time, just as we do with the palm trees. He also observed that the umbrella stand has not been removed yet

from pool #1 area (an item he had brought up before at our meetings.)

It was also suggested that the minutes of this committee be sent via e-mail to management in order that the items that were discussed could be placed on the board meeting agenda for the following week.

The meeting was adjourned by Syd at 10:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Syd Sonneborn,
Committee Chair

Old Business:

Fred Schwartz and Dana have tried to remove the irrigation pump motor in order to see if it can be rewound. they were unable to break it loose from the pipes and are having communication problems with a vender in Thermal who rewinds motors. Therefore the issue needs to be tabled once again.

New Business:

The Maintenance Committee has gone through the complex listing wrought iron painting and stucco and garage door frame problems in our association. Dana has bid on this large list of items and has submitted a bid of about \$10,500 to make these repairs. He would start work by March 1. The board accepted the proposal to make the repairs.

Jack Gerhardt's proposal to do something to change the aesthetics on the entry way phone kiosk was discussed. It was agreed to form a committee to look at the issue and submit plans to the Architectural Committee for approval hopefully by the next board meeting. The Committee is comprised of Evelyn Ferrier, Suzanne Shultz and Syd Sonneborn.

Help Control Expenses

Please help our Board of Directors keep our budget in balance by not wasting energy. We appreciate your watching for incidents where something is turned on but no one is currently using that facility. An example is that twice in early January, some people were playing tennis in the evening hours and had turned on the court lights. When they left for the evening, they did not turn off the electric timer switch and the lights burned all night until a home owner turned them off the next morning. The tennis court electric light timer switches seem to not automatically turn off the electricity when the time runs out in cold weather. Accumulated dirt in the mechanical clock works could be the cause. So, please manually turn them off as you or your guests leave the courts. We also face the waste of electricity at the swimming pool spas when the water pump is turned off and then the people leave the area without turning off the key switch.

Casablanca Neighborhood Watch

With all of the past emphasis this last year on the virtual Earthquake drill "The Great Southern California Shake Out" we have not mentioned much on the Neighborhood Watch side of emergency preparedness. We also experienced the theft of a motor scooter out of a garage on Calle Bisque in January.

In practice, every resident in Casablanca should be part of our Neighborhood Watch program. Keeping an eye out for anything happening in your cul-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. An example would be someone loading a truck with personal belongings without the owners present.

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.

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