



# Your CasaBlanca

January 2012

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## Casablanca Social Seasons Starts

**T**he first of our new season social events will be a pot-luck brunch at pool #4. The theme is **Mardi Gras**, and will start at 11:00 AM on **February 18**. A flyer will be distributed to all homeowners giving more details on who to contact to let **Velva Stern & Gail Christiansen** know how many are planning to attend and what kind of food you plan to bring.

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### January Board Meeting

**T**he January meeting was held at the US Bank Community room on January 17. the meeting started at 10:30 AM. All board members were present. About 11 homeowners attended as well. The meeting started with the Open Forum. Only one question relating to architectural requests and our CC&R's came up.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes from the December 20 Board meeting were approved as written.

**Treasurer's Report:** The financial report was giving by Lindsey Griffith. The Associations Reserve and Operating accounts contain a total of bit more than \$200,000. One homeowner account is in default and several others are delinquent. The total amount owed in delinquent accounts is approximately \$18,000.

**Business Review/ New Business:** A proposal from Kirkpatrick Landscape to apply weed killer was approved. The Mardi Gras Social was presented and a request for volunteers to work the Annual meeting in April was made. Howard Butzer and Velva Stern volunteered to assist.

The board has received some landscape requests. A list of the missing utility box access panels has been made. We are in the process of replacing or having new ones made for the homes missing these panels. The paint colors have been listed and put up on our web site ([www.casaclancahoa.net](http://www.casaclancahoa.net) )

**G**ail reported that our attorney has presented to Family Development, a list of the issues we want resolved pertaining to the Portofino Development to our north. This list covers such issues as pad heights, building set backs, drainage, maintenance of the north perimeter wall, the vegetation to be planted along the wall as well as having some say in what types of vegetation will be planted along the wall to assist in giving us more privacy. Feed back from Family Development seems

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fairly positive, requesting some minor changes in wording but they have not presented these changes back to us formally as of this date.

The next board meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2012 at the US Bank meeting room, 10:30 AM.

### **Committee Reports:** **Architectural Committee:**

**T**he Board approved the nomination of a new member to the committee. She is Charlotte Jackson. The monument sign on the corner of Portola and Hovley Lane W. has been removed this past week. The engineering reports needed by the City are being submitted and it is expected that the new sign will be in place by the end of February.

### **Casablanca Communications** **Meeting minutes, Jan. 10, 2012**

The meeting was called to order by Syd Sonneborn at 10:02 at the deck area of pool #4. Approximately 16 members members in attendance.

Syd started the meeting with announcements on the remaining CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training session at the COD, Feb. 25, 26 and March 3. He also requested assistance in planning for the activities associated with the Great California ShakeOut drill held in October each year. He would like to have a plan by the next Communications meeting in February.

The member forum started with Gail Christiansen announcing that a pot-luck brunch social is in the planning for February 18 at pool # 4. It is to have Mardi Gras theme.

Issues with maintenance of the clock, gate and hand rail at pool # 3 were discussed. The hand rail can't be replaced without draining water from the pool because the rail needs to be fastened to the bottom of the pool, not a step. This is a new Calif. regulation. Pool # 3 is heated so the repair is being delayed. A cover on a drain in the jacuzzi is also loose. A garden hose stop by pool # 4 is leaking and can not be shut off.

**W**e were reminded that there has been some more mail box robberies. Don't put checks in the mail to be picked up in your mail box in front of your home.

Calling in problems into management was stressed to those in attendance and to follow up with management if the work does not get done. Management assumes the work has been completed after they contact the proper vendor. Rhonda does not know the work has not been completed unless we notify her that it has not been corrected.

Roof maintenance is under way. Miller Roofing started on Armanac. Your drains are to be tested in this procedure.

Respectfully submitted by: Syd Sonneborn,  
Committee Chair

### **HOA Landscape Board Report for** **Tuesday, January 17, 2012**

**T**hey're finishing up the tree trimming in the complex. They will be removing two eucalyptus trees as part of the Board's plan to remove two per year.

The citrus trees are already loaded with fruit and all homeowners should take advantage of them. Please note: All trees which are located in the common are available to all homeowners. There are no private fruit trees in the common

area of Casablanca.

Again, please do not change or add anything to the newly landscaped common area.

Please notify Management if you notice any irrigation problems.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Butzer, Landscape committee chair.

## Give Plants Their Space Article

The following is a copy of an article that ran in the Los Angeles Times that Howard Butzer brought to the last Communications meeting. Howard thought this might help explain the Landscape Committee's philosophy on the way they have chosen plants and replanted the foundation vegetation.

### Give Plants their Space

*Emily Green*

The single hardest thing to remember in planting is restraint. The temptation to crowd young plants during installation is so strong that almost everyone does it.

The problem may be that we treat young plants like babies, which in some ways they are. Like us, they start small, then grow. But we replace cribs with twin beds and twin beds with double beds, and we may even redo the basement so a six-foot-tall baby can have a queen. With plants, you have to start out envisioning a queen-size bed for the newborn or, in the case of many shrubs and woody perennials, you can easily end up with the horticultural equivalent of John Goodman in a crib.

Do not look to most newly installed civic gardens for a good example. Landscape architects are among the worst offenders when it comes to crowding. Most pack new installations with young plants to create an instant sense of fullness, leaving a client briefly pleased but facilities staff invariably resentful as they must dig their way out of a mess.

Some argue that this brief show of a dozen John Goodman in a space where eventually only one will fit is worth it. As they grow, you can thin. But shrubs and agaves and particularly cactuses aren't clover. Thinning gets harder as they get bigger. Digging out big plants will destroy the soil structure, which is critical to the root health of the plants that are spared. Disturbing the earth also invites colonization by weeds.

Others argue that you can mitigate overcrowding by buying larger specimens. Start big! After paying your chiropractor for the damage to your back trying to place 15 gallon toyons along a hedge line, never mind getting them level and moving astonishing amounts of dug-up soil, you might regret the decision. Moreover, if you buy woody perennials or shrubs in anything larger than a one gallon pot, the price jumps up precipitously while the life span of the plant drops.

Another justification for crowding is that you can prune your way out of it. In other words, all you have to do to John Goodman as he grows is cut off his arms and head. But reducing a plant to its ankles carries a toll on its health. You're not only sacrificing the beauty of the natural form, but also signing up for expensive maintenance.

Restraint wouldn't be so rare if it weren't hard. Overbuying is almost irresistible when you're holding a six-pack of coral bells, a pint-sized pot of an ornamental grass, or a one gallon agave or lavender or (fill in the blank). It's almost impossible to believe that the it'sybitsy, got-to-have-10-of-them Cleveland sages each might reach 4 to 6 feet in diameter in three years. But they will.

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So go to the nursery with measurements of the space you want to fill. Read the plant tags. then if you have intimidating blank space left over after planting, brandish that secret temporary space filler: wildflower seeds. California poppies are perfect - low growing. fleeting and easily thinned. In lieu of a long-term woody mess, you have the ephemeral washes of color prescribed by nature itself.

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

Syd Sonneborn, Editor/Publisher

Gail Christiansen, President

Dorothy Saulnier, Board Member

Howard Butzer, Landscape

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### Casablanca Management

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#### **Desert Management**

Rhonda Drews Manager, 760-862-1202

PO Box 799, Rancho Mirage CA 92270

rdrews@desertmanagement.com

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