



# President's Message...by Athena Alford

Spring is almost here and I am very glad to say that there have been many improvements that we have seen in the neighborhood over the past few months. Many people have begun to fix their lawns, we've seen a flurry of homes being pressure washed clean, and just a general attitude of improving ones home has flourished.

The goal of this year's board has been to first invigorate all homeowners to take pride in our community and get everyone up to a level of excellence in how we are seen.

Secondly it is our goal to make sure that all homeowners are treated fairly and uniformly when dealing with the covenants.

While this has not been an easy road to travel and it has taken some pushing from our management company to see that everyone is inspected fairly and the same across the board, I believe they have helped to drive home that our community has covenants regarding the appearance of everyone's home and if you choose not to follow our guiding documents then the en-



forcement allowed by the covenants and Florida law will take place. Our goal with enforcement has never been to fine homeowners and profit, it is more a way for us to bring problems to ones attention and get a plan together to fix it within a homeowner's means and timeframe.

The other area where Florida Property & Association Management has been a positive light has been in the collection of annual assessments.

They have provided a steadfast and fair collection process which has helped all owners to be treated fairly. No matter how this item has been handled in the past, this is the most important work for the association for the entire year. Without these monies coming in we

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## 2009 Assessment Deadline is Jan 31st...



Deadline for submission of the 2009 Annual Assessment is Saturday January 31st.

Payments that are received with a postmark after this date will be subject to a \$25.00 Late Fee, Interest at 18 percent (18%) from January 1st, and Certified and First Class postage costs of approximately \$5.74.

Also, in accordance with Florida Statute 720.3085 any payment received will first be applied (in this order) to any interest accrued, administrative late fees, any costs and attorney fees incurred in this collection effort and then to any delinquent assessment.

If you have not mailed in your \$161.00 annual assessment, please do so today so you do not incur these additional collection costs!

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## HOMEOWNERS' MEETING

### Summer: Watch for Future Announcement of Date & Place

# Let's "Renew America Together"...

**"We are one people; We are one nation; and together we will begin the next great chapter in America's story." — President Barack Obama**

The President believes that we, as Americans, have a responsibility to help our communities and fellow citizens. In summoning a new spirit of service, he is calling on us to make an enduring commitment to our neighborhoods. Every time our nation faces crisis, our national experience has shown Americans rise to the challenge.

While government has an important role to play in helping rekindle our economy and addressing the problems of a distressed nation, President Obama believes each of us, as Americans, have a responsibility to do what we can for our communities and fellow citizens.

## ***We are one nation...***

The United States is once again at a crossroads and that is why the President hoped to use the occasion of his Inauguration to rally our nation to commit to service in our communities. We are asking for your participation in meeting this challenge.

In 1994, Congress transformed the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday into a national day of community service to further commemorate a man who lived his

life in service to others. As a tribute to that legacy and the very real needs of our nation, the President and Vice President launched a national organizing effort on the eve of their Inauguration to engage Americans in service.



This national day of service fell on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and, unlike past calls to service, President Obama is calling on all Americans to do more than just offer a single day of service to their cities, towns and neighborhoods. He is asking all of us to make an ongoing commitment to our communities.

Never has it been more important to come together in shared purpose to tackle the common challenges we face.

The website <http://www.usaservice.org> is designed to help promote these events and for Americans to make their commitments, build communities, find opportunities to serve and share their results.

These can be events that engage people in direct service, or bring people together to reflect on Dr. King's legacy and how they can commit to becoming more engaged citizens.

We ask all of you to please create an event or sign up to volunteer today, even in our community there are people who need your help!.

## **Animal Control Issues...**

The Association gets plenty of calls from owners wanting us to take action against another owner because of pet issues. Unfortunately pet issues are an individual owner issue which must be resolved by the owners themselves. The best place to start is by reporting the problem to the city at their call center **630-CITY (2489)**. The city will send an investigator and if a violation is found, they can issue a citation.

To help everyone, here are a list of the city codes for pet regulations:

**Sec. 462.301.** General. (a) Animals shall not be kept on property in a manner that causes any one or more of the following: creates unsanitary conditions; is a source of infestation by insects or rodents; creates physical conditions

that endanger the health or safety of humans, that are detrimental to property values, or that tend to degrade the appearance of a neighborhood.

**Sec. 462.302.** Noise. (a) It shall be unlawful for the owner, or any person having temporary custody, of an animal or animals to allow the animal to bark, meow, whine, howl, or to make other sounds common to the species, persistently or continuously for a period of 30 minutes or longer when every animal is not contained within an enclosure sufficient to baffle loud noises.

**Sec. 462.303.** Animals at-large prohibited. (a) No owner of any dog or cat shall permit the dog or cat to be at-large.

**Sec. 462.305.** Destruction of property and biting. (a) No owner of an animal shall permit the animal, either willfully or through failure to exercise due care or control, to destroy or damage the property of another including, but not limited to, the unprovoked biting, attacking or wounding of another person's animal. (b) No owner of an animal shall permit the animal to bite, attack or wound a human.

We hope this information helps you cite the proper nuisance code when you call the city.



# Special Assessment, Why the Need...



Last year the Association came very close to having to require a Special Assessment to continue operations. Thankfully for us we collected on two foreclosure properties and were able to continue operations.

If you look at our budget you will see we are not spending money on anything we don't need to spend money on. While we have plans

this year to paint the playground equipment, add some more rubber mulch and make modifications to the front entrance lighting, those are the only three items we are doing and they are maintenance related.

The need for a Special Assessment is often misunderstood by association members so we'd like to address it here in case we are forced into that position again this year because of all of the foreclosure actions pending in our community (13 so far this year) and the amount of owners who will not pay their dues on time which requires substantial up-front legal fees to file liens and start foreclosure actions.

If a Special Assessment becomes necessary, the Board of Directors has to call a special meeting

of the members to discuss the need and discuss the amount of the Special Assessment. Once that has been discussed and the Board feels there is an immediate need to continue operations, the Special Assessment is levied and becomes payable within 30-days.

This is different from Special Assessments requiring a majority vote of the owners for new projects. Continuing operations mandated by the governing documents, state and local regulations, and insurance requirements only requires a majority vote of the Board of Directors to implement.

Please help us avoid this by paying your 2009 Assessment on time so we are not forced to spend precious dollars on collection efforts.

## Operation Gratitude — Sending Care Packages to U.S. Troops...

As part of President Obama's national "Call to Service" you are encouraged to participate in community service. Making a care package for one of our troops overseas is a way for you to participate and help others.

Hundreds of thousands of American troops are deployed in hostile and remote regions of the world, including the Middle East, Afghanistan, Africa, Guantanamo Bay and on ships throughout international waters. The physical conditions they must endure are difficult and they may be separated from loved ones for long periods of time. **OPERATION GRATITUDE** seeks to lift troops' morale, and bring a smile to their faces by sending care packages addressed to individual service members deployed overseas. **OPERATION GRATITUDE** care packages contain food, toiletries, entertainment items and personal letters of appreciation, all wrapped with good wishes of love and support.

### *Here's how to do it.*

**STEP 1: Write a letter or a card to say "Thank You"** to the soldier that will receive your package. You may decorate your letter however you'd like. Soldiers really like bright colors and drawings and would love to see your artwork. You don't need to put a stamp on your letter! It will be included in your package.

**STEP 2: Make your Care Package.** You can include such things as: AA Batteries; Crossword or Sudoku Books; Baby wipes or Pampers hand wipes; Ziploc bags; Playing cards; Writing notebooks; Pens; Stationary/note



cards; Beanie Babies; Packs of Gum; Girl Scout Cookies; Lip Balm; Socks; Toothpaste and toothbrush; Stamps.

**STEP 3: Send your Care Package:** Operation Gratitude is an organization that works with the military to find soldiers who need a care package. Please send your package to Operation Gratitude and they will get your package to a soldier. Address is: **Operation Gratitude, 16444 Regugio Road, Encino, California 91436.** If you cannot send a package, please make a financial donation to help this valuable organization continue its mission to help our service members. **Web address is:**

[www.opgratitude.com](http://www.opgratitude.com)

# Fence Selection & Standards, it's more than you think...



Probably the most hotly contested area in this community is a lack of any specific fence standards and the need for some sort of standard with specifications.

What you probably don't understand is that there is a requirement for 6-inch wide picket shadowbox fencing for neighborhoods constructed after 2003.

This standard was actually mandated by the State of Florida in response to the building code enhancements that were enacted after hurricane Andrew tore apart southern Florida in August 2002.

Shadowbox fencing actually reduces the wind load pressing

against a fence during high winds. The open slating (spacing) between the fencing pickets allows air to go through the fence and thereby relieves the stress on the fence and reduces the likelihood of the fence collapsing and then being picked up and hurled into neighboring properties.

Hurricanes probably pose the single greatest threat to living in Florida. Winds in excess of 70 miles per hour can cause extensive damage and if the wind picks up an improperly installed fence, there's no telling of the damage and possible loss of life that can result.

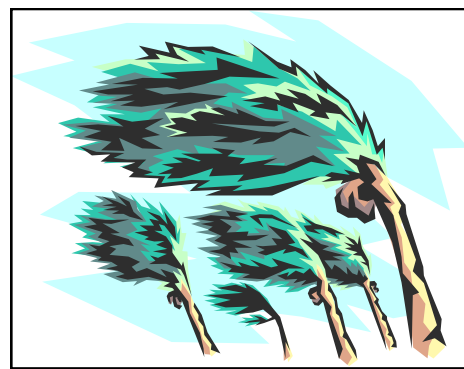
That is specifically why the Board of Directors will be developing new fencing standards to describe in detail the requirement that all new wood fencing be constructed with 6-inch wide pickets and be assembled in a shadowbox configuration, not a privacy configuration nor board-on-board configuration.

However, with advances in technology some of the newer space-age fencing materials can

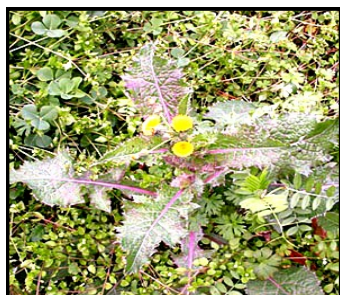
actually withstand even greater wind loads than wood fencing and this will be taken into consideration when someone applies to install new fencing or replace their existing fencing as it wears out.

Thankfully the governing documents give the Board some flexibility in approving fencing materials and designs that may be constructed or installed so long as the newer types of fencing meets or exceed the new hurricane standards.

We will be working on these new standards and will mail you a copy once they are finalized. If you have any suggestions, please let us know via e-mail: [board@parkviewridge.org](mailto:board@parkviewridge.org).



## Weed Control Begins With Proper Management...



Proper management practices that encourage a dense, thriving turf are the best method of weed control. Healthy turf shades the soil so sunlight can't reach weed seeds ready to germinate. A thick turf also minimizes the physical space available for weeds to become established.

There are several management practices that will promote a healthy, dense grass.

- **Proper Turf grass Selection:** Proper management begins with selection of the best turf species or variety for a particular area. For example, heavily shaded areas will support only a few turf grass species. This results in thin, weak turf that is very susceptible to weed invasion. Good grass choices for shady conditions would be certain cultivars of St. Augustine

grass, zoysia grass, and to a lesser degree, centipede grass.

- **Proper Cultural Practices:** Proper fertilization, watering, mowing, and control of other pests are required to produce a dense turf that will prevent weed infestation. If turf is over- or under-watered, over- or under-fertilized, or mowed too low or too infrequently, the turf is weakened and cannot compete with weeds. Damaged areas resulting from using unsharpened mowers increase time needed for turf recovery, allowing for weed invasion. It is very important to understand that weeds don't create a void, they fill a void.

- **Sanitation:** It is extremely important to prevent the introduction of weeds into lawn areas. A good practice is to wash off mowers and trimmers used in weed-infested areas before mowing or trimming in weed-free areas. Similarly, rototillers should be thoroughly cleaned prior to and after using to minimize dispersal of weed seeds found in the soil. Yard clippings that contain weeds should be properly disposed of or composted to reduce the possibility of unwanted contamination

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simply could not function and attempt to make improvements in the community.

Please note that the Association is following our governing documents, Florida Law and the Fair Credit and Debt Collections Act regarding collections. Without following our documents on these issues there would be no order to enforcement on any issues. Again our goal is to apply our covenants firmly but fairly for all. Remember, we use a Postmark-by date for payments, there is not a grace period after this date elapses.

As the Board, we would like to thank all homeowners whom have given their time and efforts to help their neighbors in doing landscaping repairs and helping keep their yards manicured when their neighbor is unable to do the work themselves.

I would ask that each of you take the time and thank those who give to others and maybe see if someone near you could use a little help, to get involved with your neighbor.

Lastly if you haven't been to the playground recently, you need to go see some of the improvements

we made to this area for the children. Last year we installed new rubber mulch to make the area more "kid friendly" and installed "Little Tikes" black barrier edging and we had the playground equipment power washed and sealed. This year we plan on painting the wood with a color so it will add some zest to the playground and replacing two sections that have weather damage. We will also repair the broken gate.

Last year we also had the front entrance cleaned up and repainted. It had been several years since anything has been done up there and it was about time we did some preventative maintenance before the area got too bad and then required major renovation.

You will notice in the upcoming construction projects we are leaving the covered bust stop and benches as a planned but unfunded project. Hopefully the City will reinstate the matching grants program next year and we can file an application to help offset the expenditure.

Thanks as always,

*Athena Alford*, President

## Questions & Answers...

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**Q1: I heard you were going to start picking up and disposing of Basketball hoops that are left in the street. Is this true?**

**A1:** Great question! The Association has the responsibility for ensuring the community is a safe place to live. While it is a violation of city code to place basketball hoops in the street, it is also a violation of community standards in so much as you are creating a nuisance for your neighbors. We have instructed our management company to have any basketball hoop that is left in the street hauled away and disposed of. We will not bother any of them that are safely on your property or in your driveway, only those that are left in the street. If you have a basketball hoop, please make sure they are stored properly.

**Q2: I got a bill when I received a 3rd Notice of Violation, I do not agree with these fees and won't pay them.**

**A2:** The fees for sending the 3rd and 4th notices of Violation by Certified and First Class mail are required to comply with the Florida statutes. Since you did not respond to either of the two or three previous notices or you did not correct the problem, the fee is required because our management company must send an inspector to re-inspect your property and to begin building a case file for a hearing if the problem is not corrected. These fees are authorized and must be paid or you can incur additional late fees and interest.

**Q3: Why can't you make the annual dues payable later in the year? January 31st is so close to the holidays and hard for me to find the money to pay.**

**A3:** While it would be easy to say that we could extend the deadline to April or sometime later, the Association would have to recalculate all of the bills to add the additional 3 to 4 months to the annual amount as a pro-ration if we were to change the

deadline to a later date. Because this is an annual bill we feel it is better to plan accordingly throughout the year so that the funds are available to pay the bill, which is actually due on January 1st but not considered late unless the payment is not postmarked by January 31st.

**Q4: The house across from me continues to have a trailer in the driveway and their yard is always a mess. I thought this was a violation?**

**A4:** You are correct, it was a violation and was addressed. This was a case of a tenant living in a soon-to-be foreclosed house and the owner was not responsive to our requests to correct the problem. Our attorney contacted the tenant and they removed the trailer and mowed the lawn. Unfortunately they were evicted the following week when the bank took back the house. This does highlight the problems being faced as the foreclosure rate jumps. The Association will go the extra distance to get both the city and the courts involved so the neighborhood will not adversely suffer because of these neglected properties.

**Q5: Are there any plans to provide a extra police presence in the neighborhood? I thing we really need this because of all of the break ins.**

**A5:** Unfortunately due to our tight budget, we have not allocated any funds for this, however, if we collect the projected dues payments on-time and are successful with some of the impending legal actions on properties with large outstanding balances, we should be able to fund stepped up patrols. However, if you continue to let the police know of problems they will step up patrols without us having to pay for off-duty officers. If we can get a Neighborhood Watch program up and running, that would help make crooks think twice before coming here.

# What's being considered for the community...

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**Website Enhancements**—Although we don't pay anything for our web page, Florida Property & Association Management is having their entire website redesigned to meet the new 64-bit Internet standards and in the process will be adding several new features to our community link. Some of them will be a community calendar and more interactive forms. We will let you know when the new website has been rolled out.



**Front Entrance**—The lighting is being moved closer to the wall and being pointed up so the lettering will show up better. At night Moving the lights will also let us plant flowers in front of them, thereby making the flower beds more attractive. Please ask your children not to play in the flower beds while they wait for the school bus in the morning. We have suffered significant damage due to vandalism.

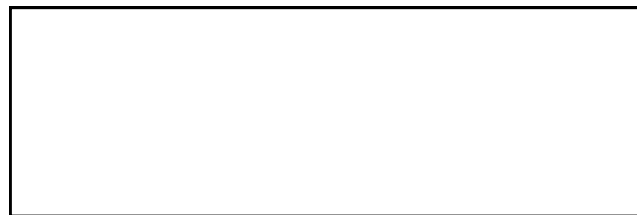
**Landscaping**—A new lawn vendor takes

over on February 1st and we will be working with him in the Spring to update the flower beds at the front and install better flowers in the beds on Playpark Trail and Ridgeview Ave.

**Playground**— We had the backflow preventer and sprinkler control valves moved behind the fencing to hopefully help keep vandals from tampering with the sprinkler system. We spent nearly \$800.00 last year repairing the system after vandals broke the control valves. We will be painting the playground equipment and installing more rubber mulch as well as repairing the gate which has been damaged by vandals. Please help us by keeping a watch out for damage in this area. If you see someone damaging this area, please call the police. We will prosecute those who damage the community's playground equipment and will seek repayment from an owner for any damage caused.

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**Return Service Requested**