

# Friends of the Village Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 7

 Laguna Woods Village

August 2011

## MEET-THE-CANDIDATES NIGHT Thursday, August 25 6:30 P.M. at Clubhouse 1



### WHO WILL FILL THE SEATS?

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR UNITED AND THIRD BOARDS AND HEAR THEM DISCUSS SUCH THOUGHT-PROVOKING TOPICS AS...

...REASONS FOR RUNNING FOR A DIRECTORSHIP, GOALS FOR THE COMMUNITY AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM;  
... THE TABLED GRF RESOLUTION TO REINSTATE A “TRUST FACILITY FEE;”  
...MAINTAINING THE QUALITY OF THE COMMUNITY WHILE KEEPING ASSESSMENTS DOWN;  
...IS THE UPKEEP OF OUR AMENITIES AT THE APPROPRIATE

LEVEL, OR SHOULD WE SPEND MORE/LESS ON THEM;

...IS THE “SHARED COST” CONCEPT APPROPRIATE OR SHOULD CHANGES BE CONSIDERED;

...CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION DISCUSSIONS;

...BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS;

...ISSUES EACH MUTUAL SHOULD FOCUS ON DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS;

...SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH PCM’S SERVICE, OR SHOULD SELF-MANAGEMENT BE CONSIDERED;

...WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE MANAGEMENT COMPANY, OTHER BOARD MEMBERS, AND DISGRUNTLED RESIDENTS;

...AND MANY MORE ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE COMMUNITY.

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ENJOY REFRESHMENTS WITH FRIENDS AFTER THE MEETING

# EVENTS CALENDAR

**OCTOBER 6, CLUBHOUSE 5, 6:30 p.m.**  
**LONG-RANGE PLANNING BY AND**  
**FOR THE COMMUNITY**

**HOLIDAY PARTY!**  
**DECEMBER 1, CLUBHOUSE 5, 5:30 p.m.**  
**NO-HOST BAR, HORS D'OEUVRES AND GOURMET DINNER**  
**WITH WINE BY JOLANDA**  
**PREVIEW THE MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT BY RON & SHOKO**  
**ROBBINS AND VOCALIST RESA:**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6quMykwFBW4>  
**START PLANNING YOUR TABLE OF 8 OR 10 AND**  
**BE READY TO SIGN UP NEXT MONTH**

## **GRF's Explanation for Imposing a Facility Fee on New Buyers**

*(Ed. Note: The following article is from the GRF Board explaining why it is recommending a \$1500 facility fee be paid by new manor buyers. The final vote on the facility fee will be at the September 6 GRF Board meeting.)*

In the GRF meeting of 8/2, a plan to institute a \$1500 facility fee on new buyers was presented. The room was filled to capacity with members, most there to protest. Speakers were very emotional and unfortunately many were inspired by information circulated by email which was incorrect. There wasn't time for the Board to respond to these concerns, so the following is a written response.

The single most important duty of a director of any of our corporations is to maintain and perpetuate our respective corporations (i.e., the United, Third and Mutual 50 housing and the GRF amenities). As our community ages, the need and cost for maintenance becomes greater. If, in addition, we choose to update or improve existing facilities, this will come as an additional cost.

All of the directors of GRF, and we believe the directors of the housing mutuals, recognize this. We must be concerned about the inevitability of increasing costs and maintaining affordability.

At the same time, we recognize that the future, even the very near future, is dependent on attracting new members who appreciate the benefits of Laguna Woods Village living and are willing and able to share the cost. If we fail to attract these members, our service levels

and, more importantly, our quality of life here will go down.

The facilities fee is offered as a partial solution to these two powerful demands of affordability and attracting new members. But it is not the entire solution. To the extent that facility fees are collected and placed in reserve funds for maintenance, it reduces the need for reserves to be funded entirely from assessments. Consequently the monthly assessment would be reduced.

Many see this as less painful than paying for reserves on a monthly basis. Two "sister" communities, Rossmoor Seal Beach, and Rossmoor Walnut Creek, have collected these fees over many decades. The residents are happy with the plan and it has not negatively affected their sales volume or values.

Claims that this plan would reduce the value or volume are bogus. There is no evidence of that. To the contrary, a facility fee could increase both volume and values. A major fear of prospective buyers in considering a common interest development [HOA] is that the community may not be able to sustain itself, resulting in the risk of being hit with unplanned special assessments. A facility fee reduces that risk.

In fact, the California Association of Realtors (CAR), which had originally lobbied for the law that prohibited facility fees some years ago, has changed its position and supported the passage of the new law that overturned this prohibition. Their fears that the fee might reduce property values were replaced by the realization that property values would actually increase because of greater certainty by buyers that the association could sustain itself, reducing the risk of special assessments.

This recent bill, which was passed by the legislature, would never have occurred without the support of CAR. Of course there were a number of HOAs that also recognized the value and supported the legislation; however HOA support, while important, was far less influential than the support of CAR.

A number of speakers at the board meeting spoke to the low prices and low sales volume currently within our Village. And some supplied statistical data to make their point.

The fact is that our sales volume and values have gone down. But this is not unique to our Village. Most housing in Southern California has had a similar experience, although this supplies little comfort. But we must be careful in how statistical information is used.

Many a case is made by using statistics inappropriately, even though well intended. Choosing statistics on a selective basis can almost prove any point. Mentioned many times in the meeting was that the median selling price of our manors has gone down. Median price is a valid measurement of value but that median can change dramatically from month to month.

The major reason for dramatic monthly change is that we have a huge range of manor values, arguably from less than \$100,000 to over \$1 million. This range is significantly greater than a typical zip code. In one month, more expensive homes may have been sold; next month, less expensive ones are sold.

A more meaningful measure would be to compare similar manors, e.g., by manor model. The local realtors could do us a service by compiling the information in that way. And instead of relying on monthly medians, look more to quarterly, semi annual and annual figures.

Housing values are determined by the "market." Comparisons must be made with similar or competitive housing in our nearby neighborhoods such as Costa Del Sol. If our market values are down disproportionately from the greater market, why? We who live here view Laguna Woods Village as perfect. But do prospective buyers view us through the same set of eyes?

Does the Village meet the expectations of our prospective buyers? Potential buyers near our present median age may see us as we do; however, younger buyers may not. Which age group do you believe is our most likely target? It's wonderful how fresh paint, nice landscape and comfortable reserves affect younger buyers' eyes.

It was disturbing that many of our members in attendance questioned the capability of our board directors. But of greater concern was their questioning our ethical behavior. How sad.

Board members should be selected based on prior experience, a commitment to giving their full attention to sustaining our community, and, of course, a record of ethical behavior. Board members do not represent specific interest groups no matter how powerful or large.

As difficult as it is, a director's duty of loyalty is to the corporation. That often puts board directors in the difficult position of condemnation by some residents, but that is the law and it is essential if our or any community is to thrive and protect our individual investments.

We hope this has given you the information you need to understand why the GRF board is unanimous on the importance and benefits of a facility fee to our corporations and our members. We believe it will reduce monthly assessments, make affordability more predictable to prospective buyers, and in time, increase both sales volume and value. If we didn't believe in this, we would never suffer the pain to implement it.



## **Message from the President by Maxine McIntosh**

Recently I dropped in at the Clubhouse I Fitness Center. It was good to see so many people availing themselves of the fitness programs there. I happened to notice a lot of names written on a bulletin board along one wall. I was told to note the numbers written beside each name. Those numbers indicated the age of each person represented on that board.

There were 35 residents posted as active participants in regular exercise classes or as ones who routinely work out independently. The ages ranged from 90 up to 102 years! I was so impressed. These active seniors don't allow age to stop them. A member of staff told me that there are others (especially women) who didn't want their names or ages posted.

Then, while dropping in at the third-floor Fitness Center in the Community Center building, I discovered a similar bulletin board filled with more names of many of our very-senior residents who obviously plan to work out until age 100 or older!

This is an incredible message for all of us...we can stay fit for most of our years. If you are healthy now, I salute you. If not, maybe this information will help you to make the decision to get started.

In this Village there is a huge selection of activities that can make us healthier and keep us healthier. You may have noticed a walking club that meets weekly in one of the clubhouse parking lots before setting off together for good weight-bearing exercise. With six swimming pools scattered around the Village there is plenty of room for lap swimmers, walkers in the water and, of course people who just want to have fun. All of this can increase muscle tone and good circulation. Clubhouse 6 is open only in the summer. It feels more like a large backyard pool with its circilinear design. This can be especially nice for socializing with friends. while moving through the water.

Many Villagers, especially new “move ins”, have told me that it feels like they are walking in a park wherever they go. But we do have a well-maintained park (with restrooms) along Aliso Creek. Serpentine Walk takes you from Gate 11 all the way over to Gate 3 - crossing only two streets. Friendship Walk near Gate 1 is undergoing a face-lift right now. But soon, I presume, it will once again entice walkers to enjoy the views up there.

I recently discovered a short but very pretty walking path at the very back of Gate 11. Also, GRF is planning a new park close to Third Mutual. I understand that picnic tables may be ordered for this park (a request made on the survey of The Recreation Needs Assessment).

Tennis, lawn bowling, basketball and many other activities offered to all of us who live here, could add better quality to the years we still have ahead of us. Who knows...one day more golfers may make the decision to start walking the course instead of always using a golf cart. I was told about one woman in her mid-90's who never uses a golf cart!

Whatever you choose to enhance the quality of a healthy life, start moving now. If it seems too challenging, start small – walk to the corner and back. Walk across the pool in chest-deep water. Go with friends. Enjoy the experience.

Everything out there is always ready. Everything is maintained by staff and staff is always available to assist you.

Here's to your health – your improved health.

### **IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT?**

**OUR CLUB YEAR ENDED MAY 31, AND RENEWAL FEES WERE DUE JUNE 1**

Starting January 1, 2012, memberships will be on an annual basis and will cover the entire calendar year.

Therefore, you can either pay a half year's dues of \$7.50 single or \$10 double to cover the period June 1 – December 31, 2011 or you can pay \$22.50 single or \$30 double to carry your membership through December 31, 2012.

### **IS THIS CONFUSING?**

If you're not sure if your membership is current, contact Myra Norman, 949-588-0758.

If this is not confusing, send your check to Myra Norman at 3312 San Amadeo, Unit #C and mark it: “FOV Membership Renewal.”

A form for new members may be found at [www.friendsofthevillage.com](http://www.friendsofthevillage.com).

## **Recycling is Underway for Entire Village**

**by Shari Horne**

After four years of hard work, a recycling program is underway for the whole Village. Fifty new bins have been delivered in United and fifty in Third Mutual. Future bin deliveries are tied to the contamination levels in the new bins. Therefore, it's important to know what can and cannot be recycled!

Volunteers will be going door to door with important information about recycling and bulky item pickups, etc. In order to keep contamination levels low, only clean recyclables with no food, bodily waste or things like grease or make up can go into the blue bins. Garbage goes into the dumpsters, no matter if they are gray or red. Newspapers must still be separated into the black carts; money from them goes directly to the Village.

Volunteers are needed to distribute material. Even if you can only do your own cul-de-sac, call Shari Horne at 830-5562. All help will be welcome!

## **The Foundation of Laguna Woods Village**

**by Pat Wilkinson**

A 73 year old man with severe heart problems and his wife have lived in the Village for 8 years on low Social Security. They budget carefully, but during the summer heat wave, they needed to use the air conditioner because of his medical problems; their electric bill tripled. The Foundation covered that bill for \$251. This is typical of the type of help we give to the community. We need your generosity to give our assistance to those who need it. Every dollar, no matter how few, makes a huge difference. Please give what you can TODAY!

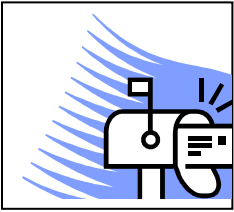
We want you to know that your \$'s will ONLY go to our friends and neighbors. Donating is even easier now – use your credit card on our website – [www.lagunawoodsvillagefoundation.com](http://www.lagunawoodsvillagefoundation.com). Questions: please call 949-268-2246 or email us at the [foundation@comline.com](mailto:foundation@comline.com). Donor envelopes are available on the wall by the front desk in the Community Center. You may send your donations to P.O. Box 3279, Laguna Woods Village, CA 92654-3279. Thank you so very much.

## **Headphone Amplifiers Available**

Headphone amplifiers are available in all clubhouses and at the community center.

If you have had trouble hearing the speakers at meetings, plan to arrive a little early, go to the office and request one of the amplifiers.

Be sure to have your Village ID card with you as you will be asked to leave it at the office until you return the headphone.



## Comments from a Reader...

*I'm an absentee owner in Third. Just want to comment on the job y'all do for us absentees...this was a delightful issue (July 2011)...I visited the Village this month and*

*must comment on the conditions I found manor 3486 to be in. Hello to all my friends and neighbors...no time for a visit but miss y'all...but the repairs, etc., to the building were obvious. I was so pleased...please, keep this coming.*  
Cathy Gerry

## Dartha Stewart, Martha's Twin Speaks

By Jan Marshall

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

The secret is out. I have been hidden and silent till now. I am Martha's younger (by 1 minute) twin sister, Dartha. It is our 70th birthday and time for the world to finally know I exist before the TMZ expose'.

FLASHBACKS: During delivery, sis fashioned a duvet from the placenta to cover mummy. Gold leafing our umbilical cord, while nursing, she sprayed a touch of vanilla around mom's areola. I drank mother's milk straight from a Schmuckers© jelly glass.

She smirked when the doctor patted her bottom. I moaned and gave him my adult web site. I did not fit in.

Mother thought adoption would be best. She traded me to a cousin for a year's supply of Polish Sausages.

Though separated by space, Martha and I led comparable lives. I too give advice. My friends call it nagging and hate it.

While I am not rich, I could help her out if she ever needs dough. I have some in the freezer.

We have similarities as well as differences. She is looking for a perfect potted poinsettia. I am looking for a sober one that isn't rude. You see, while sis talks to plants revealing nothing, I tell mine everything. My plants hold their ears when they see me. My plastic flowers all have silk worms with puzzled expressions. Many hanging plants (*they didn't even leave a note*) were originally table sitters. They whisper, "Here comes Mudder Kevorkian." I do not think that is *funny*.

I would love to visit Martha. We could nosh on her homemade Sauteed Tiger Tail. In turn, I will reveal a hint that can save hours of spitting and cursing. I, too, know stuff. This revelation could transform her life to include bathroom breaks.

Sadly, she spends many hours attempting to unstick Saran® wrap from itself? Does she know if you put it in the fridge next to the panty hose, they both will be easy to peel off?

This tip would also give *Marti* time to tend to the trees she uses for crafting stationary. Then she could drop

me a note with ink made from squid and octopi that are staples in her home.

The bell startles me - once again, the man in brown, with cute legs, has delivered another plaque: "Dartha Stewart has been awarded Good Housekeeping's 'Seal of Disgust'." Aha. This explains why people wipe their feet *after* they leave my home.

Here is a personal wish for my twinnie.

*Happy Birthday!*

*Sis, do not envy me for receiving the one honor that is beyond your grasp.*

*Instead, visit me. I will divulge the delights of defrosting. We may need to wear high boots and pith helmets to keep from forming a fungus walking through my manor. Then again, you can always glue gun us the more stylish Manolo Blahniks for the walk-through on Cul de Sac 17.*

*I'll call the gate for you".*

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## Ham Radio in our Village - A Vital Resource

by Eleanor Nelson

You've probably walked by it a hundred times or more when you visit Clubhouse 1 on your way to the Fitness room or some other Clubhouse 1 activity. You see the window of a small room, and its only designation is a lighted sign, reading W6LY. What is that?

It's the call number for the Laguna Woods Village amateur radio station W6LY, the headquarters of the Laguna Woods Village Amateur Club known fondly as Ham Radio. The club has 32 members who are all licensed by the FCC to be radio operators. The room overflows with a variety of radios, all used for a variety of communications including long distance around the world communications, local communications and digital communications. Many operators still use the time tested method of Morse Code to reach other stations when conditions are not conducive to voice communications.

"Nobody knows exactly how the term 'Ham Radio' originated," says Art Welch, K7TX who has been club president for the last 12 years. Some think the AM stands for amateur radio; but apparently somebody added the "H" to make it sound better. There are many other theories on where Ham came from but it has become the way to refer to many committed radio operators with outstanding electronic skills and knowledge about radio wave and electronic communications. Station W6LY, at 100 watts, gives members access to other Ham operators all over the world. The equipment, antennas and prediction of propagation for communications allows members to communicate via radio waves all over the US and many countries. But Ham radio is more than a hobby for its members.

It plays a vital role in the disaster preparedness system for Laguna Woods. "Amateur radio is the heart of the communications system that automatically goes into play in the event of a disaster, such as a flood, a fire or an earthquake. When all other communications fail, Ham radio is there to assist like it has in many disasters including the recent tornados in the midwest, the Katrina disaster and Japan. All first responders have their own system of communications but our station allows us to communicate up and down the state and across the US says Jim Riedel k6EEE, club secretary.

The station's disaster plan, when activated, assigns available communicators, equipped with their own radios, to designated areas of the community. Among them are Clubhouses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, the small golf course and the PCM Incident Command station. The communicators can handle communications requested between various clubhouses and relay messages to PCM Incident Command if necessary. Additionally, the station can also contact fire, police, Village security personnel, the Red Cross, hospitals and Laguna Woods City Hall. But their role could extend beyond Laguna Woods in the event of a

major disaster. Our Ham operators can pass information of an emergency nature and health and welfare information outside the Village. The National Traffic System is a well established (over 60 years) system of amateur radio operators organized to pass emergency and health and welfare traffic. The National Traffic System (NTS) is an organized network of amateur radio operators sponsored by the American Radio Relay League for the purpose of relaying messages throughout the US and Canada. During normal times, these messages are routine greetings ("Happy birthday Aunt Mary") and keep the system well oiled and the operators trained so that everything works when needed. When there is an emergency or disaster NTS works closely with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service to provide emergency communications. The most common type of disaster-related messages are "health and welfare" inquiries and notifications into and out of the area affected by the disaster.

"Ham Radio is not just a hobby. It is also a vital part of disaster preparedness," says Riedel.

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