

AUTUMN



2014

*Sweetwater
Country Club*

Homeowners Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Unbelievably, time flies and we're already in the midst of the holiday season. I hope that everyone has a safe and enjoyable time as 2014 winds down and we launch into 2015. It doesn't seem possible that it's been 15 years since the Y2K craze had us all crossing our fingers as 1999 came to an end.

While we don't have a Y2K time bomb ticking, we do seem to have a bit of a trend in the appearance of portions of some of our 17 neighborhoods. As everyone should realize, the appearance of SWCC as a whole helps determine our property values and the appeal of our community. It defines who we are. When each of us purchased our lots and/or homes we agreed, at our respective real estate closings and by law, to be legally bound by three things (often collectively referred to as our C&R's) our **Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and Covenants and Restrictions**. These three documents were drawn up specifically to make sure we all understood that we were purchasing real estate in a special community that we would all be proud to live in. They were not developed to be a punitive tool for the homeowners' association and HOA Board. **You should have copies of these documents, but if you can't find them they can be found on our property management company's (FirstService) website which is: www.fsresidential.com.** Our founding documents are not suggested guidelines...they are essentially part of the law if you live in SWCC.

Unfortunately, a small percentage of homeowners do not seem to take our documents seriously or perhaps are not aware that they even exist. I recognize that due to oversights by some realtors, real estate attorneys, closing agents, or sellers a few of you may not have received the documents when you purchased your property, but that doesn't make them any less binding. While it is a small percentage it doesn't take many to affect the overall appearance and impression of SWCC. If one of that small percentage is your neighbor it can have a big impact on you.

Everyone is required to maintain their property in such a manner that it is consistent with the look of the neighborhood, looks pleasing and does not negatively affect the community. Some common violations we are seeing include major repairs to vehicles outside of the owners' garages, not maintaining lawns at acceptable heights with limited weeds, poorly maintained/dilapidated mailboxes, heavily stained roofs or walls of homes, unsafe mold accumulation on sidewalks, and parking RV's, boats and trailers outside of garages for more than 24 hours at a time and only for the purpose of loading and unloading, recharging batteries, etc.

Most of our standards are contained in Exhibit B to our C&R's. But our documents also give the Board latitude to act when things not mentioned in Exhibit B negatively affect the character of SWCC. Additionally, they give the Board and Architectural Review Board the power to adopt additional standards necessary to maintain the value of our community. The Board is working on supplementing our standards to help eliminate ambiguities.

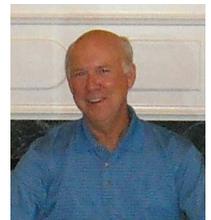
Some of our 17 separate sets of C&R's give the Board the authority to fine homeowners \$100 a day for violations. They also give us the authority to take additional legal actions as necessary to gain compliance. Additionally, recent actions by the Florida Legislature give all homeowner associations, and therefore SWCC, the ability to assess fines of \$100 a day for violations whether fines are provided for in the C&R's or not. The Board has initiated the steps necessary to set up an independent committee of homeowners, consistent with Florida law, to review violations that have been identified by the Board and our management company. By law, committee members cannot be related to Board members.

I hope this does not come across as an unnecessary lecture. It was intended to get the attention of the few who don't value our community standards and the beautiful place we all chose to live. The bottom line is that the HOA is going to focus on using the full power of the C&R's and recent Florida law changes to make sure that a few homeowners are not defining who we are!

The Board will provide more detailed information as the violation review process is developed in the near future.

My best regards,

Jerry Phillips



Board of Directors

Jerry Phillips, President

407-814-2661

Mark Manfre, Vice President

407-474-1295

Tom Brennan, Secretary

407-889-8784

Jim Van Anda, Treasurer

407-880-7904

Bobby Anderson, Director

407-358-8686

Skip Strohm, Director

407-920-5423

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Megan Mansfield

Senior Community Association Manager

FirstService Residential

407-644-0010 x 7240

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Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

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2014 REAL ESTATE UPDATE Sweetwater Country Club

As of December 1, 2014

23 homes Closed/Sold since JAN 1, 2014;

Sold Prices ranged from \$165,000 @ 2865 sf
up to \$435,000 @ 3823 sf.

5 homes now Under Contract/Pending;

MLS listed from \$235,000 to \$329,000

11 Active Listings at this time...

MLS listed from \$199,000 to \$425,000.

(according to MLS records 12/1/14)



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS are held the
4th **THURSDAY** of each month at 7:00 pm at
the Sweetwater Country Club. This meeting is
preceded by the ARB meeting at 6:30 pm.

Important Phone Numbers

Animal Control	407-836-3111
Code Enforcement	407-836-3111
Fire Department	911
Orange County Quick Dial	311
Public Library (Apopka)	407-835-7323
Public Works Dept.	407-836-7870
Sheriff (Emergency)	911
Sheriff (Non-Emergency)	407-836-4357
Country Club	407-889-4743
Tree Removal Permits	407-836-7920
Zoning Violations	407-836-3111



Community Garage Sale Coordinator

...Thank You!

The Board of Directors would like to send a sincere thank you to **Cis Gammons** for being the coordinator of the first three years of the Sweetwater Country Club HOA Annual Garage Sales. Since establishing this very popular community event in 2012, it has grown into quite an undertaking. Cis is a successful Estate Sale Coordinator and her efforts in organizing and being the main point of contact for the community event has been greatly appreciated!

Cis is no longer going to be the coordinator, but don't worry, the event will continue next year as **Laura Strohm** has volunteered to takeover in the fall of 2015. Please join us in welcoming Laura...we are looking forward to the Community Garage Sale in 2015. Thank you for your willingness to volunteer your time to make this annual event to continue and be a successful and popular event!

PROPERTY MANAGER'S MEMO



It is hard to believe that it is so close to the holidays already, the year has simply flown by! I hope you are enjoying the fall weather and making plans for the holidays that are here.

We continue to see a steady increase in the number of ARB application for painting and landscaping and upgrades to the houses inside the community and we thank those that have submitted for approval prior to making these changes! Keep those ARB applications coming for the changes you are planning to make to the house and the property.

MAILBOXES



These need to be maintained in the same manner that the house and the landscaping should be. I have seen a lot of mailboxes that are simply being overlooked when it comes to maintenance and cleaning. Please look at your mailbox and see if any of these apply to your mailbox and take the time to address these issues that are being seen throughout the 510 homes in the Sweetwater Country Club community:

- Door to the mailbox is missing, broken, hang open/won't latch and needs to be painted or replaced.
- Flag is missing, hangs off the box, or is rusted or in need of painting.
- Mailbox is covered with green and black mold and mildew and needs to be cleaned and/or painted.
- Mailbox stucco (if applicable) is missing, chipped, cracked and needs to be repaired, patched and/or painted.
- Blocks (if applicable) are damaged, missing sections or the blocks can be seen through the paint and/or stucco.

THANK YOU to all those owners that have received letters about their mailboxes and taken steps to bring them back up to the community standard!

There are certain sections of the community (Heather Glen and Hamilton Place) that have specific mailboxes and colors that are required to be used in these sections. For all other sections, if you are completely replacing the mailbox, **did you know that an Architectural Review Board application is required before changing the mailbox? ...it is.** If you need an application, please contact us at any of the phone numbers or e-mail addresses below.

Have a safe and happy holiday season this year!

FirstService Residential Customer Service is available 24 hours, 7 days a week at **1-866-378-1099**

Megan Mansfield, Senior Community Association Manager

407-644-0010 x 7240; fax 407-644-6693 or megan.mansfield@fsresidential.com

Shannon Gogulski, Administrative Assistant

407-644-0010 Ext 7298, F: 407-644-6693 or shannon.gogulski@fsresidential.com

SWEETWATER COUNTRY CLUB ON-LINE

Remember to use the following website to stay informed of what is going on in the community:

<http://FSRSouth.FSRConnect.com/SweetwaterCountryClub>

NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY UPDATE



The Holidays are Coming... and so are some unwelcome guests!

Just a reminder that petty crime rates trend upward as the holidays approach. People are away from home for extended periods, more high-end electronics are purchased, and the security routines we all have are sometimes ignored or forgotten. I can assure you that our neighborhood will be visited by some unwelcome guests this year...what I don't know is whether they'll stop at your house.

Call 911 !!!!

Here are some of the excuses we hear for individuals not calling 911 when our residents have been confronted with an unusual or suspicious circumstance....

"I didn't want to bother the 911 operator"

"I didn't think it was important enough to report"

"I forgot"

"I didn't want to get involved"

"I told my husband/wife/neighbor"

Think these are funny? Just remember that these exact quotes have come from our neighbors and fellow residents, and in every case we might have lost the opportunity to stop a crime, and we definitely missed the chance to add a name and ID to the police data base.

So, if you have ANY questions, CALL 911!!!! Your neighbors may thank you for it...

Our Biggest Crime Problem

Well, it's not exactly our biggest crime problem, but it sure seems to be a major contributor. . Fortunately, it's also the easiest problem to solve...if everyone participates. What am I talking about? **SOLICITORS!** Sure, we all get them; we recognize them as kids selling items for school fund-raising, contractors looking for lawn-mowing or tree trimming work, individuals eager to explain their particular religion, young adults selling magazines to earn scholarships....but is that their primary purpose? Many of our burglaries over the years have been AFTER someone has cased the homes to determine whether someone is home or whether a dog will bark, or if an alarm system is installed. And what better way to learn about a neighborhood than to go door-to-door, especially during the day.

Did you know that every section of our overall HOA is clearly marked as "No Solicitors"? Well, it's true, although these signs are only as effective as our willingness to enforce them.

Actually, there are 2 ways to enforce our "No Soliciting" policy...**First**, if you do not feel threatened, ask the solicitor what he/she is doing, and then inform him/her of our policy and that you will call 911 if they do not leave the neighborhood immediately...then DO IT!! **Second**, if you wish to avoid contact at all, call 911 right away. Explain that you wish to report a suspicious person going door-to-door (or walking in the neighborhood if more accurate). Have the best possible description of the person or persons, with particular attention to both a physical description and a description of clothing worn and vehicle used, plus exactly where the person is and what direction he/she is going.

You'll hear all sorts of excuses: "I'm just trying to earn a living", "As a church, we're non-profit and aren't bound by the no soliciting guidelines", "I've been here before and am just going to see one of my customers". All plausible statements to be sure, but balance these statements with how you might feel if a neighbor's home is burglarized and it might have been because you let a solicitor go unchallenged.

So what to do? It's easy...CALL 911 and let law enforcement do its job.

"Remember, even together, we cannot stop all crime, but together we sure can stop all crime in the Sweetwater Country Club HOA."

And again, if you are going away for a while, be sure to have our security deputies check your homes while you're gone. It's easy... just call the Zone 1 office of the Orange County Sheriff's Office at (407) 254-1001.

Best regards,

Tom Brennan

Chair, SWCCHOA Security Committee

SWEET WELCOME COMMITTEE

Should you learn of a new neighbor of yours that has moved in, please contact Joyce Anderson at 407-358-8686 so that we can make sure they are on the list to receive a Sweet Welcome...please welcome our newest neighbors to the SWCC HOA community:

Susan Cruze- 1029 Golf Valley Drive

Gail Retzer & Guillermo Maggiolo – 1101 Tall Pine Drive

Jennifer Frank - 2418 SWCC Place

John & Diane Sabo - 2449 Park Village Place

Thomas & Nancy Ewing - 1616 Green Cricket Court

David Perkins - 1255 Majestic Oak Drive

Carolyn & William Dickerson - 824 Mystic Oak Place

Paula & Mark Stehli – 2718 Orchard Drive

Richard & Joyce Roberts – 2500 Emerald Tree Lane

James Utegg & Frances Perez - 2401 Willow Springs Drive

Sandy Durber - 1413 Majestic Oak Drive

Craig Carter - 2332 SWCC Place

Douglas Black - 2444 Via Genova



LANDSCAPE REPORT



This year the HOA Board authorized funding for a special project to plant Ligustrum and Magnolia trees in the northern three Islands on Majestic Oak Drive. We anticipate additional funding next year in order to complete the South Island. That will involve removal of ten Pine trees and eight Holly trees that are affected by Witches Broom disease and replacing them with Magnolia Trees.

We continue to lose Washingtonian Palm Trees at the rate of one per each two months and plan to remove seven Palms at Heather Glen and six from Diamond Hill.

Currently, we are doing major upgrades to the entrances at Sweetwater Greens and the extended west entrance at Oak Tree Court up to the Golf crossing on Sweetwater Country Club Drive.

Holiday decorations this year will include lighted wreaths for our five major entrances. Additionally, we are going to experiment on night lighting for the Canary Island Date Palms.

We invite you to attend our monthly landscape committee meetings which are held on the first Monday of each month at 10:00.

Anyone who has an interest, questions or would like to become a member of the Landscape Committee, please call me at 407-884-0583 or edlynch66@embarqmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Lynch
Landscape Committee Chairperson

Is your Trash a Temptation?



Certainly humans are not drawn to trash, but the animals that are prevalent in the areas that surround Wekiva Springs state park (as in bears, raccoons and other scavenger animals) certainly are! Here are some things to think of when setting out your trash for pickup:

- Make sure that trash bags are tied securely (especially bags with food scraps). Bears can smell food from miles away and it might be your trash that brings them into the community.
- Place your trash, no matter how small, in a container with a lid. This will keep the smell contained so that animals are not attracted by it.
- Place your trash containers at the road early in the morning on the day of pickup. A lot of scavengers are nocturnal and they are up at night and ready, willing and available to get into your trash to find food.
- Make sure your trash containers are kept clean.
- If you are in a bear prevalent area, consider purchasing a bear-proof trash can – they will not be able to get into these containers, but the trash pickup service will!



BEARS – Do's and Don'ts

When wildlife feels threatened by people, they typically try to tell us to back off in their own way. For example, a rattlesnake rattles its tail and an alligator opens its mouth and hisses. **If a bear feels threatened, they may clack their teeth together, moan, blow, huff, or stomp the ground.** They may bluff charge (run toward you and then stop before reaching you). These are all ways the bear is showing you it is as uncomfortable with the situation and it wants you to give it some space. These are NOT indications of aggressive intent or an imminent attack. Truly predatory or aggressive black bears are rare and eerily silent.

NEVER approach or surprise a bear. If you see a bear from a distance, enjoy the experience, but do not move toward the bear; if your presence changes the bear's behavior, you are too close.

If you encounter a bear at close range:

- Remain standing upright.
- Speak to the bear in a calm, assertive voice.
- Back up slowly toward a secure area, be sure you are leaving the bear a clear escape route.
- Avoid direct eye contact, bears and other animals may view this as aggressive behavior.
- Stop and hold your ground if your movement away seems to irritate instead of calm the bear.

DO NOT:

- Make any sudden or abrupt movements.
- Run - running can trigger a chase instinct, and bears can sprint up to 35 mph.
- Play dead - black bears eat things that play dead or are dead.
- Climb a tree - black bears can climb 100 feet up a tree in 30 seconds.

Bears are wild animals and must be respected. Even though they are typically quiet and shy animals, they have the potential to seriously harm humans. Do not take unnecessary risks! While there have been no predatory bear attacks on people in Florida, people have been bitten and scratched by bears. In all cases, bears were defending themselves, cubs, or food sources.

If a bear is threatening the safety of humans, pets or livestock, or causing property damage, contact the **Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC)** at:

352-732-1225; Shannon Wright, Regional Director (NE Region); 1239 SW 19th Street, Ocala, FL 34471

(Information taken from <http://www.myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/encounter>)

Making Changes to the Exterior of your Home?



Please keep in mind that if you are making changes to the exterior of your house or lot...

(including, but not limited to: painting, roofing, fencing, landscaping changes, pool, screens, decking etc.) an Architectural Review Board (ARB) APPLICATION MUST be submitted for review and approval BEFORE the change is made. This process is in place per the governing documents and not to make things more challenging for you and your projects. The approval process protects you as well as the Association as the originals are kept in the official records and a copy is sent back to you!

On-Street Parking

There has been an increase in the number of reports and violation inspections dealing with vehicles parked on the street and even in the easement (the area between the street curb and the sidewalk) up onto the grass. This is strictly prohibited!

Overnight parking is strictly prohibited for commercial vehicles with double wheels, or those that weigh more than one ton. One may not park unlicensed or non-operational vehicles on public streets. All these restrictions also apply to vehicles parked in private driveways. Parking on lawns is also prohibited and is enforced by the Orange County Code Enforcement Department. Inoperable vehicles are not permitted to be parked in the driveway or on the roadways as a part of Orange County Code as well.

Most of the streets in Sweetwater Country Club Community are not wide enough to conveniently accommodate long-term on street parking. This becomes a major problem if residents park on both sides of the street. If vehicles are parked on both sides of the street there might not be enough room for garbage trucks and emergency vehicles to pass. We want our loved ones to be able to have the help of emergency services should it become necessary. You can help by refraining from parking vehicles in the street at any time. Emergencies happen at all hours of the day and night!

Street parking inconveniences others, especially those that are trying to back out of their driveways. Your vehicle may be in the path of another vehicle backing out of the driveway across the street. An obvious benefit to parking in the driveway is that chances for damage are greatly reduced. The rates for some insurance policies are governed by your statement of where the vehicle is stored.

Please also note that parking across, or blocking, the sidewalk is also prohibited by Orange County Ordinances. Now might be the time to get rid of any unused and long-forgotten items that are being stored in the garage and make some room for vehicles. Most upscale neighborhoods do not allow long-term parking on the driveway.

Help us make the community look great and park all vehicles properly in the Sweetwater Country Club community!



Community Website – Volunteers Needed

The Board of Directors has been discussing the need for a community website that provides general information about the community to the members and to those that might be looking to live in the area, or purchase a home in the community.

We are looking for anyone that might have the ability to assist in the creation or periodic upkeep of an Association website. Should you like to volunteer or have any information that might be helpful to us in this effort, please contact Megan Mansfield, Senior Community Association Manager via phone (407-644-0010 Ext 7240) or e-mail (megan.mansfield@fsresidential.com). Thank you!

Sweetwater Country Club

c/o First Service Residential

385 Douglas Avenue, Suite 3350

Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

Your Current SWCC HOA Board Members



Front Row: Berk Schnauffer, Jerry Phillips, Mark Manfre.

Back Row: Bobby Anderson, Tom Brennan, Jim Van Anda, Skip Strohm.