

# SPRING



# 2012

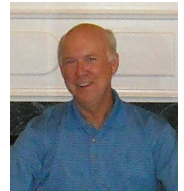
*Sweetwater  
Country Club*

Homeowners Association Newsletter

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Our annual meeting and election will be conducted on June 18. Four of the seven Board positions are up for election, so if you are interested in serving your community please let me or another board member know your interest.** All that is required is for you to complete a simple biographical form...and, if elected, be prepared to enjoy working with some very talented people to maintain the high quality of SWCC. We are always looking for "new blood," someone who can bring new ideas and perspectives to the Board. Please give serious consideration to running for the Board!

I'm saddened to see two of the most-hard working and talented volunteers of the HOA and Board leave our community to return to their roots in Texas. **Norman and Christine Knight have decided to return to Texas** to be near family members. They have been a **dynamic duo** for the HOA, on the Board, the Landscape Committee, the Welcome Committee, and I'm sure I've missed some other roles they've capably filled. I've been involved in several community organizations over the years and seldom have I seen two individuals who have tackled their participation with the passion and dedication of Norman and Christine. **You will both be greatly missed!!!**



It appears that we might be experiencing the start of a turnaround in the real estate market in SWCC. Some houses have sold in only a few days and others have been selling quicker than in the recent past. Hopefully, this trend will continue as our area, state and country works through this economic downturn.

In closing, I'd like to encourage all homeowners to be considerate of their neighbors and the community as a whole as you go about your daily lives and as you maintain your homes and properties. Doing so makes SWCC a better place to live and helps maintain our property values. As touched on elsewhere in this newsletter, we have gotten recent complaints regarding the maintenance of properties and the parking of oversized vehicles in driveways and on the streets. The oversized vehicles in combination with concurrent parking of other vehicles on the streets have created situations where school buses and emergency vehicles are not able to navigate safely through our neighborhoods. This not only creates a safety hazard but also creates aesthetically displeasing conditions. Your neighbors are entitled to live in the environment that they anticipated and are entitled to when they purchased their homes. Please remember that when you purchased your home, you accepted the legal obligation to maintain your property and to follow the Covenants and By-laws of SWCC. We appreciate your cooperation and support in helping us maintain the beauty and continued success of SWCC.

Have a safe and enjoyable spring and make sure you are prepared for the upcoming Hurricane season!

Best regards,

*Jerry Phillips*

## Board of Directors

**Jerry Phillips, President**

407-814-2661

**Norman Knight, Vice President**

407-886-6464

**Carol Robinson, Secretary**

407-496-4922

**Jim Van Anda, Treasurer**

407-880-7904

**Bobby Anderson, Director**

407-358-8686

**Tom Brennan, Director**

407-889-8784

**Jon Momberger, Director**

407-889-9422

**Megan Mansfield**

**Community Association Manager**

**The Continental Group, Inc.**

385 Douglas Ave Ste 3000

Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

407-644-0010 Ext 7240

**mmansfield@tcgmgt.com**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS** are held the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00pm at Sweetwater Country Club. The meeting is proceeded by the ARB meeting at 6:30 pm.

## Important Phone Numbers

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



## 2012 REAL ESTATE UPDATE Sweetwater Country Club

**As of April 15, 2010**

Per MLS records

**8 homes Closed/Sold** since 1/1/12; Sold Prices ranged from \$154,000 (2042 sq ft) up to \$397,000 (3691 sq ft). Of the 8 Closed Sales...4 Cash; 4 Conventional.

**13 homes Under Contract/Pending**, listed from \$158,550 (3245 sq ft) up to \$399,900 (4042 sq ft);

**Only 7 Active Listings** at this time and listed from \$325,000 (2886 sq ft) up to \$345,000 (3017 sq ft).



## The 2011-2012 SWCC HOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Front Row:

Tom Brennan, Carol Robinson, Jerry Phillips and Norman Knight.

Back Row:

Bobby Anderson, Jon Momberger and Jim Van Anda

# PROPERTY MANAGER'S MEMO

In recent months my office and members of the Board of Directors have been contacted about various aspects of the **transfer of ownership of properties located within Sweetwater Country Club Homeowners Association, Inc.** There have been several inquiries into what roles the Association, the title company, the buyer and the seller play in the process.

**HOA DOCUMENTS:** The most frequent comments that I hear is the new owner was "never told" about the existence of the Homeowners Association and they never received a copy of the Association documents. The responsibility falls to the seller of the property to disclose that there is a Homeowners' Association AND provide a full and complete set of the documents for the Association to the potential buyer. This requirement is in place so that the buyer can know what they are signing up for when purchasing in an Association. Florida Statute Section 720.401 requires a disclosure be made at the closing that spells out the existence of the Association and also delineates the owner's obligations to the Association (the disclosure can be accessed online by searching for this section of the statutes at [www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes)).

If you do not have a set of the governing documents, there is access to the Association Documents online through the Orange County Clerk of Courts website for a complete copy ([myorangeclerk.com](http://myorangeclerk.com)). There are also a set of documents online through Continental Connect. Please note that due to the 17 different sections of the Sweetwater Country Club Homeowners Association covenants and restrictions, there is a spreadsheet (by selecting the Forms and Documents button and then Association Documents and titled Area Definitions) that indicates what section of the covenants applies to your address. The Articles, Bylaws and the Unit 1-Phase 1 Covenants apply to ALL sections of Sweetwater Country Club. **If you need access to the Continental website to access this information (as well as to access your account and to add your e-mail to our system to be notified of Association communications), please contact our Customer Service Department at the number below.**

**CLOSINGS:** The title company (or real estate attorney in some cases) is charged with making sure that all the required information is gathered and all the amounts that are due and payable at closing are listed on the HUD/Settlement Statement as well as other closing documents. One of the many items listed on the HUD is the assessments due to the Association as well as the **required \$750 Transfer Fee (paid by Buyer)** at every closing in Sweetwater Country Club HOA. **The estoppel is the only document that discloses the transfer fee of \$750.** The estoppel is typically released by the management company (as the bookkeeping entity) on behalf of the Association. It is the title company's responsibility to make sure that an estoppel is ordered for a closing AND to make sure that any past-due assessments and the transfer fee are collected. There is a required fee (paid by the seller) for the estoppel (cost is based on how quickly the Estoppel needs to be released) as there is liability for releasing the information. Florida Statute allows for up to 15 days for an estoppel to be released to the person requesting the document.

Should you be contemplating the sale or purchase of a property, it is important that you ask questions, gather the pertinent information and be informed about the obligations you have to the Association before the closing. Should you have any questions or need any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

**Customer Service 1-866-378-1099**  
**(available MON-FRI from 8 am-6pm EST)**

**Megan Mansfield, Community Association Manager**  
P: 407-644-0010 Ext 7240, F: 407-644-6693 or [mmansfield@tcgmt.com](mailto:mmansfield@tcgmt.com)



Happiness is Serious Business™

## SWEETWATER COUNTRY CLUB ON-LINE

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

**[www.continentalconnect.com/sweetwatercountryclub](http://www.continentalconnect.com/sweetwatercountryclub)**

**[www.sweetwatercchoa.com](http://www.sweetwatercchoa.com)**

# NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY UPDATE

By Tom Brennan, Security Liaison



Normally our neighborhood security issues are rather mundane; important to be sure, but mundane nonetheless.

**This time, however, there are a couple of serious items, so please continue reading...**

## **Neighborhood Watches**

The concept of Neighborhood Watches is a good one, and enthusiastically endorsed by the Orange County Sheriff's Office. It encourages ALL neighbors to get to know each other and, by extension, to keep an eye on each other and each other's property. Several of the neighborhoods, through the encouragement of the Sweetwater Country Club Homeowner's Association, have established such Neighborhood Watches, and are pleased with the program. These are not an official element of your homeowners association.

But, the recent case in Sanford involving a man shooting another individual while allegedly patrolling his neighborhood as part of a Neighborhood Watch, merits SWCCHOA Board comment. Your Board strongly condemns the carrying of any weapons whatsoever in the neighborhood. Further, the Board recommends that any suspicious behavior, including the presence of solicitors, be reported to 911 immediately, and that the recommendations and instructions of the 911 Dispatcher be followed to the letter. Neighborhood Watches are just that, neighbors watching out for each other...not taking inappropriate actions. The follow up to any observed inappropriate activity is for the Sheriff's Department...not the Neighborhood Watch volunteers.

All Neighborhood Watches established through the Orange County Sheriff's Office provide detailed instructions on how to organize and conduct the affairs of the Neighborhood Watch. All individuals in such established Neighborhood Watches should review those instructions now and periodically hereafter.

## **Recent Robberies**

About 2 weeks ago, the Board received information from our security personnel about a rash of home robberies that affected both our HOA area as well as some nearby neighborhoods.

We mobilized our resources and distributed the information as quickly and as widely as we could. To date, that threat seems to have died down. The mode of operation was to knock on a door sometime after 10:00 am. If the door was not answered, the perpetrators went to the rear of the house and broke in.

That use of our email distribution lists worked well, but it did show that we are missing a number of email addresses, or the ones we have for some residents were no longer valid.

**So, here's what you need to do if you did not receive (1) our emailed newsletter about 2 months ago, or (2) an email notification about this robbery threat:**

**Send an email to our management company giving your name and address, as well as your current email address...you'll be glad you did! We'll only use it for important neighborhood business.**

Send it to: [mmansfield@tcgmt.com](mailto:mmansfield@tcgmt.com)

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NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY continued.....



### **Vacant Homes**

Here's an issue that needs your input. Every neighborhood under the SWCCHOA has at least one vacant home, and others pop up from time to time. The problem is, despite our best efforts to track foreclosed and other vacant homes, there really isn't a mechanism to do this effectively.

Consequently, **we are asking our residents to assist in letting us know about empty homes in your neighborhoods.** We will pass these addresses along to our security staff of off duty Orange County Sheriff's Deputies, who, in turn, will routinely patrol these homes to watch for vandalism and unauthorized trespassers. It is better that we hear from several neighbors than from none, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Send this information to:**

**Megan Mansfield at [mmansfield@tcgmt.com](mailto:mmansfield@tcgmt.com) or**

**Tom Brennan at [tbemail@aol.com](mailto:tbemail@aol.com)**

### **Parking within the Sweetwater Country Club neighborhood**

We have received numerous complaints recently about parking issues. We are asking our deputies to be more diligent in enforcing County laws that pertain to these issues, so please be proactive if these affect you.

#### **Parking Over the Sidewalks**

Parking in a driveway is legal, but you may NOT block the sidewalk!!! So please be more attentive to this point...it's getting out of hand.

#### **RV Parking**

RV and boat parking in neighborhoods is not allowed under the provisions of the SWCCHOA covenants, although parking at home for a period not to exceed 24 hours for loading and unloading ONLY is a permitted exception. This is not to be construed as blanket permission to park for up to 24 hours for any other reason.

#### **Parking on Grass**

Parking in yards and on grassy shoulders of our streets is not permitted for any reason.

#### **Overnight Parking on the Street**

Overnight parking is permitted in driveways, but not on public streets in the neighborhood.

### **Mark Your Personal Items**

In case you didn't know, all pawn shops are required to notify the police of items taken in that might be stolen. The police will then, if possible, try to match that property to items reported stolen. One idea supported by the police is for everyone to mark their property by etching the items with a drivers license number. This works well for TV's, electronics, snow shovels, and other items of size. For smaller items, such as watches and other jewelry, be sure to have clear pictures available to share with any investigating officers should a robbery occur. You'll increase the chances of getting your items back significantly.

There's quite a bit to digest in this article, but it's all designed to make our community even better, so hopefully you've found something in here that you can use.

*Tom Brennan*

**Board Director and Security Liaison**



# SWEETWATER COUNTRY CLUB HOMEOWNERS

## LANDSCAPE REPORT



The Sweetwater Country Club HOA Landscape Committee is dedicated to providing a well maintained and beautifully landscaped community for our residents. The Committee is pleased to report the following community projects that have been completed or are in the process of being completed:

Southernmost parkway on Majestic Oak has had the Indian Hawthorn removed around the holly trees. Roundup sprayed to remove old sod and Jasmine Minima planted. Mini pine bark was added. Heather Glen - one dead palm tree will be removed; several others are being monitored for disease.

Replacing the dead sod along Majestic Oak Dr. from Heather Glen and Sweetwater Greens to Diamond Hill is currently under discussion. Various alternatives to St. Augustine (which is cost prohibitive) are being investigated.

The Landscape Committee welcomes Carolyn Booth as its newest member and Ed Lynch as its chairperson. Additionally, we are reaching out to any of our community who would like to become a part of the Landscape Committee. Please call Christine (407-886-6464) if you have any desire to join us or any questions about the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christine Knight and Ed Lynch*

**Landscape Committee Chairpersons**



## SWEET WELCOME COMMITTEE

warmly welcomes these new homeowners to our community



Ronald and Janet McIntyre  
671 Majestic Oak Drive

Thomas and Janet Coyle  
2541 Fox Squirrel Court

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ON THE COMMITTEE TO HELP WELCOME YOUR NEW NEIGHBORS, CONTACT MEGAN MANSFIELD AT THE CONTINENTAL GROUP.**

# Misconceptions about Property Values



Like almost every community in the country, our association has felt the pinch in the housing market. We'd like to dispel a few common misconceptions about what contributes to the rise and fall of property values.

## **Assessments are too high...**

False. Actually, assessments have nothing to do with property values, and high assessments will not turn off potential buyers—if they're educated buyers. Our assessment may be higher—or lower—than a neighboring community depending on many factors. Are we providing more services? Is our property older? What utilities are included in the assessment or do we have more homes?

The more important question is what value are residents getting for their money? To answer that question, the association mails a detailed budget with line-item documentation to all owners and makes it available to potential buyers. A low assessment should be as much a red flag as one that appears too high.

## **We have too many renters...**

False. Lenders are required to charge higher rates for loans or deny a loan for homes in associations with renter-owner ratios that exceed a certain percentage. But that doesn't mean renters affect property values. Our association board sees renters as owners-in-training who aren't ready to purchase their homes yet. In fact, renters have all the same rights to enjoy our community as owners—except voting or holding office. We welcome renters, encourage them to participate in association activities and hope they will eventually buy a home in our community.

## **Community living is carefree...**

True and False. Association living is *maintenance* free—leaving maintenance decisions to a board—but not entirely carefree. Residents need to care about their community and recognize that common-interest living involves service and commitment. Good maintenance increases curb appeal which helps sales and may help property values. However, without committed residents to serve on the board and in other positions, maintenance and curb appeal are quick to suffer.

## **Architectural and aesthetic uniformity are necessary to protect property values...**

False. The board's objective is to maintain standards rather than ensure uniformity. Yes, *some* uniformity is good, but the board believes there is room for individual expression—as long as aesthetic standards are met.

Property values are based largely on comparative values of homes throughout our community. However, we can ensure that our values are at peak levels by assessing adequate fees to maintain our community now and for years to come, by ensuring all residents are involved and engaged in the community and care about the association and by maintaining high aesthetic appeal.

## Sweetwater Country Club HOA

c/o The Continental Group  
385 Douglas Ave, Suite 3000  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

### WHAT ABOUT GARAGE & ESTATE SALES?

Orange County is strict and enforces the rules when it comes to Garage Sales. Below are some of the guidelines and restrictions that will help you be a good neighbor and keep you from being fined by Orange County Zoning and Code Enforcement. More information can be obtained on the Orange County website below:

- A Garage Sale Permit must be obtained prior to sale
- The Garage Sale shall not exceed 48 hours
- No more than one sale every 6 months
- You will be responsible for parking control
- No vehicles are allowed to obstruct the driveways of other homes
- Parking of commercial vehicles are prohibited in residential boundaries where the sale is conducted.



**Garage Sale Permits cost \$14 ...you can apply on-line at [www.ocfl.net/zoning](http://www.ocfl.net/zoning) or by calling Orange County Zoning at 407-836-3111; fax 407-836-5507.**