



## Spring Newsletter 2019

It's that time of year...again. I can't reference the 'pool potatoes' returning because some of that group took umbrage last year of taking on that label so, let's say the pool muffins have returned to the pool and I'll take my chance they won't be lined up outside my office door with pitchforks, No longer can I throw a log in the office fireplace (actually the last fire was *well* into Spring...45 degrees 3 April) and not look like an idiot and I can put my top down without fear the Interior will be covered with lime-green dust (or water oak leaves) from the bloody pine pollen so...I guess it's time for the *Spring Newsletter*....

For those that rarely make it past this first page, the following dire warning: HVAC filters. With hot weather around the corner, this \$2 item could cost you thousands of dollars. **CHANGE THEM** and do it often. Already we've had freeze-ups and the resulting water on the floor in both the upstairs villa and downstairs resulted in rather expensive repairs....all for a stinking \$2 filter. Tenants, should be make aware of this as well.

I'm always amazed at what the local paper, the Island Packet, considers newsworthy enough for the front page. Recently they had a writeup about a local restaurant (The Purple Cow) that was obviously understaffed and over crowded. Amazingly several of the people waiting for service were off-duty servers themselves from other local restaurants (Street Meet and Fiesta Fresh). They got up and started helping out wherever they could, taking orders etc. Cute story but I have a purpose in bringing it up.

Looking after the greater needs of the majority of Preserve owners/residents, while maintaining a very low regime fee (expense to all) has always been paramount in the decisions that have been made for 15 years. These decisions have been made with an increasing problem (something that will not get better) of increasing difficulty of those companies/vendors that serve our community in their inability to hire qualified help to replace employees that have moved on to better opportunities that didn't involve wasting 1 1/2 hours of their life every day commuting to our Island Paradise...a Paradise they, for the most part can't afford to live in...and that's the reality of life. We have to recognize this and just deal with it as best as we can.

This staffing problem is 'Island-wide', pervasive, getting worse and effects all industries and trades, not just hospitality. Quite simply, everyone on the Island has to get used to schedules not being kept...or indeed even started. Ongoing repairs etc., constantly have Interruptions in the 'flow' of the job. Residents that are unable to adjust their schedules or at least keep schedules agreed to, for those of vendors the HOA has hired will find jobs' completion stretching out.

OUR SHREDDING party...same story: can't find drivers, can't find repair people and on and on. BUT, finally nailed down a date. Just head to the back road with your accumulation of papers you don't want to just

through away. They'll be shredded ON-SITE 25 May between 9 and 11. There is no cost to y'all.

**MAIN LINE BACKUPS** - they happen. Each building has two lines that empty to the outside. So that's 3 villas in each building that share a line. I'm going on 15 years as your president and in all that time there have been but FOUR instances where the backup was a result of structural issues: One was a bad installation and repaired, two were a result of root invasion and the fourth due to a major root ball ripped up from a storm. So, do the math - 84 main lines and just 4 due to exterior issues. We average about 8 backups a year, in every case it's just a matter of clearing the line. Clearing it from what, well an accumulation of what the residents have been putting down those drains for possibly years. Rarely is the issue due to something just done such as flushing a diaper or dumping an entire pot full of cooked white rice down the kitchen sink drain (true stories folks - I don't need to make this stuff up) and in these cases the residents were charged for the service/cleanup. BTW, cooked white rice looks exactly like maggots when retrieved from a drain...took the plumber 15 minutes to calm down! Normally the backup is a result of long term abuse. Usually a build up of fat/grease that settles just beyond the exit pipe where it goes outside and the last-straw-syndrome kicks in. Because all 3 villas share the same exit line it's normally very difficult to ascertain the culprit...or, culprits that caused the backup. Possibly the culprit was someone that set the stage for ages and moved out. Drain backups that occur more than once in the same drain amazingly stop occurring just after someone moves out...a miracle!

**SHORT-TERM RENTALS** And yet ANOTHER plantation (Hilton Head Plantation) has joined the Preserve (and many others) in forbidding short-term rentals. Being summer is just around the corner it's time to once again remind ALL owner's of the Preserve's chiseled-in-granite rule forbidding ANY short-term rentals. Vacationers come to the Island to let off some steam, relax and have fun for the short time they have. That's what we have the south end, beaches and hotels for. There are communities that are geared for vacationers, indeed encourage them... the Preserve is not one of them. The Preserve is a quiet close-knit community with very little turnover and we intend keeping it that way. Indeed, more and more communities such as our neighbor, Hilton Head Plantation, are realizing that short term (airbnb etc.) is not something that adds to the quality-of-life or property values. If an owner is discovered advertising their Preserve villa short term on venues such as airbnb, Vrbo or Craigslist etc., they will be fined \$500 per ad. If a short term resident is confirmed the owner will be fined \$150/day each day the short-termer's are in residence. The renters will be informed they are illegal residents and denied use of the Preserve's facilities and told the owner or property manager knew this when they took their money.

Our main (Rt. 278) large Preserve sign was repaired but the line bringing power to the light was severed probably by root invasion somewhere along the lengthy route from the source at building 32. So, we've gone green and installed a solar light rather than go thru the costly process of running another line. Probably first such sign on 278.

The the edited items below appeared in last year's Spring Newsletter and the situation has dramatically improved, much to the benefit of the community. I thought it worth repeating for those new residents both owners and tenants (as ALL of you get this missive), that have joined us since.

Unfortunately, what often starts out as good intentions becomes an eyesore. Littered around the community are a collection of broken, lopsided, empty, weed growing pots/planters or vessels for dead flowers. Pots at doorways and on the concrete...fine. But any pot placed on soil will eventually lean as the soil is affected by rain wash-off

Along these same lines. 'Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder'. What one person thinks is just too-cute-to-die-for is just an eyesore to someone else. What may be perfectly fine in a private stand-alone home is not going to work in a multi-family (condo/villa/apartment) community. Hanging do-dads from trees and balconies (if it can be seen from the road) as well as any advertising/pennants and other generic wavy things don't belong in the Preserve and will be removed. This is the same thing as not allowing someone to paint their door fuchsia or put a neon beer sign in their window

(most of you by now have heard of this *true* story).

**Rules/Regulations (RRR's) and Common Sense (latest version is always available on the Preserve's web site>owners page>scroll down to last item):** Wouldn't it be great if everyone led their lives using common sense, respected the environment, other people's needs for peace, quiet and general quality of life? I'll get into the 2% section below but, having done this job for nearly 15 years now, and considering my maybe overly practical or pragmatic outlook on life, I've been surprised and pleased with the overwhelmingly positive response from owners and those considering becoming an owner, that we have such guidelines. Over and over I hear from prospective buyers and their agents that having such a comprehensive written guideline is one of the reasons they'd choose the Preserve. I also hear from real estate agents in particular that we have a reputation for enforcing these guidelines. We are without doubt an aging community, people-wise. About 80% of new owners are retiring, downsizing and look to our RRR's as a comforting security blanket. I mean really, peace, quiet and a caring community for most of us (I'M 75!) is a more important factor than it was when we were in our 40's and probably causing all the ruckus!

And now...I've been warned by our council Rep. Weston Newton that it would be somewhat problematic for me to actually name names, so I won't but we all probably know who I'm talking about. Considering the near 600 people associated with the Preserve we really don't have that many thoughtless, selfish, entitled and just mind-numbingly stupid residents, but there's always that 2%. Maybe it's just Jan and my patience-level hitting its mid-seventies:

The 2% section... devoted to the 2% of thoughtless, inconsiderate residents that cause 95%-actually 98% (indeed! it's improved since the last Spring Newsletter) of the headaches and yes, every community has them and that brings me to my favorite and by now hackneyed expression; "...if you SEE a problem and don't REPORT the problem you're PART of the problem...". Let me expand a bit, this is your home, if you see something that aggravates you and just rips at your sensitivities, *say something to the individual that's causing the consternation*. You'll feel better for it. More importantly it will make such annoying, aggravating and/or dangerous activities more personal and effective. If that doesn't work then tell the office. I mean really, what if this annoying behavior occurred next door to your stand-alone home? What would you do, call Dr. Phil...there IS no 'office' to call? For example: someone is blaring music at the otherwise peaceful pool, point out that not everyone enjoys Barry Manilow at 100 decibels, and please use ear buds...it's a rule, someone lets their dog poop on the mail kiosk floor and you SEE it (unfortunately true)...point out that they're a cretin and are they going to pick it up, someone feels its OK to run the washing machine at 2am...put a sticky on their door that doesn't contain profanity, someone constantly goes out on their balcony to talk on the phone and you now know more about their children than you do about your own, remind them that everyone on that side of the building is listening in, particularly those that use the SPEAKER-PHONE function so you now have the privilege of hearing *both* sides of the conversation. Well, point made. If these pleasant reminders don't sink in...THEN stop into the office.

Some of the following was covered in the just recently released minutes, this is a followup.

**Speeding:** Probably the most malevolent behavior you can imagine. An aging population, *dozens* of dog-walkers with dogs on long leashes and just plain walkers out and about constantly...kind of what makes the place so nice actually. What possible reason could an idiot have to be speeding in the Preserve. So, you've heard this many times, get the license plate number or at least a description of the car and driver. If we have two complaints about the same driver I'll post their names and addresses so all of you can make your thoughts about such people known directly (unless the lawyers tell me I can get in trouble with this as well) and if that's the case, a very high fine and if a tenant, possible eviction.

**Serial Poopers:** In the cloak of darkness lurks the *second* most obnoxious resident. Now that daylight savings has hit, this problem will probably improve. The Preserve has the highest ratio of dogs to residents than any other villa community. Kudos again to the 98% of owners that take care of their dogs, pick up after them, have a signed letter of recommendation from the 'dog-whisper', don't leave their wards on the balcony, see that they don't bark incessantly driving their otherwise sane, otherwise dog loving neighbors crazy and drop into the of-

fice for the ever-present treat. Then we have the 2% that really shouldn't own a pooch. They don't pick up thinking because their dog poops in the dark it doesn't smell, They send their dogs into ground cover or the woods thinking if it's out of sight it's out of smell. We actually had a cretin let their larger dog poop in the middle of the Mail Kiosk and *left it there*. I'd personally pay \$100 to get the name of that...person. The board has received an increase in the number of complaints of poop and dogs off leach (such as letting your dog run out the door, poop and run back). We'll fine anyone \$50 with the first offense (or pile), \$100 the second and if the dog owner is really that obnoxious to get a third warning, publish that resident's name so again, the 98% can make their feelings personally known.

The Preserve is one of the, if not *the* safest community on the Island. Other than health/welfare civil service and domestic problems we just don't have police presence for crime. The reasons are many but probably the most effective prevention is that we present a 'hard' target and people know one another and report when things seem 'out-of-sorts'. We can't stop people from walking/biking thru the community. One of the most inviting conditions to a more nefarious visit are open garages and leaving cars *not in garages* unlocked. Back to the garage door problem, besides the fact that it looks bad (I mean why would your neighbors want to see inside your garage all the time) anyone realizes that if someone is absentminded enough to forget to close the garage door, they probably didn't lock the door to the villa either. In any event, everything IN the garage is fair game. There is *no* reason to leave your garage door open if you're not working in it....CLOSE IT! Give your neighbors a break and help maintain the community's safe environment. If it's an ongoing problem we'll just have to start fining. And while we're on the subject of garages...

**Garage** - (definition) "*Garage (residential), a building or part of a building for storing one or more vehicles*", according to Wikipedia. We have a problem given us by the developers, no where near enough parking spaces. We can't do anything about this. A lot of residents are justifiably mad about residents that seem to use their garages for everything but their 'vehicles'. This free storage bin relegates the vehicles that should be *in* the garage to the very scarce open parking spaces...permanently. This leaves all the neighbors' guests, vendors etc. no place to park. The rules are simple, park IN your garage as a primary space, behind your garage (unless that blocks the access to a neighbor's garage) as a second option. So, it's inconvenient to park behind your garage because you might be put out in having to move the car once in awhile, so the inside car can get out....pity. Jan and I have two full size cars and have no problem fitting them both where they belong.

Really, 90% of our repeat problem residents are usually in this 2% group. So, don't get offended by the above if it doesn't pertain to you and pat yourself on the back that you're a good person that cares about our beautiful community and to all our neighbors...the board, Jan and myself thank you!

Bits and Pieces... 15 years doing this, you have to accumulate *some* useful information, some old but still relevant and some new.

Shower grout/caulk. You have to take a close look. Grout dries out over time and a quarter inch or more can fall out easily. Not a big deal and can be overlooked for years. Most shower tile is white and ANY missing grout should be noticeable with close inspection. If you see no missing grout at all...fine. If there are any spaces between the tiles and/or caulking around the tub/shower water *will* get in and over time rot the wood behind the tile....if you're lucky. If you're not lucky the entire knee wall/shower wall goes as does the pan and in many cases your neighbor's ceiling. And another potential problem is the sealant around the drain (particularly the shower drain) that if dried out allows allow water to bypass the drain and dripping into the pan below resulting in the same expensive fix.

Wood Floors. Many of you have been installing wood floors. Just a tip NEVER use any product on these beautiful floors that promise a 'shiny' finish. Products such a Murphy's oil leaves a film that builds and is very difficult to remove. It looks good for awhile but you'll pay for it down the road. Bona floor cleaner has the highest recommendation.

Lately, I've been getting way more virus/phishing emails. They usually start out that 'suspicious behavior' has

been detected in your Pay Pal, Credit card, bank account OR your account has been suspended etc., this is never the case. They want you to click on some benign link that says something like 'Resolve Now' ....DON'T. Just hover your cursor over this link...DON'T CLICK, and the real forwarding address will appear. Actually this is a good idea anytime you question an email that asks you to click a link. You'll see an address that has absolutely nothing to do with the supposed sender.

We have many residents that enjoy gardening and just fixing up their areas...great. It was popular in the past so we'll continue to offer bales of pine straw just off the road slightly in the woods by the shed on the back road for use within the Preserve and/or at the tennis court.

*Sustaining anything is much simpler than trying to attain a higher level. Quality of life has, as you all know (well, those of you who read my missives) always been at the top of my list. During our tenure and the guidance of 15 boards of directors, I believe we've achieved and maintained a community that is regarded throughout the Island as a great place to live. We're a close-knit community that, considering the number of people that are involved with the Preserve....really seem to get along remarkably well.*

Ross