

Neighborhood News

Riverglen and River Watch Home Owners Associations

FALL 2010

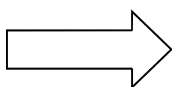
President's Update, Richard C. Huber Riverglen HOA

Hello Riverglen,

Welcome to the Fall 2010 edition of your newsletter. I am sure most of you are ready to move into the fall and cooler weather. I would first like to thank all of the contributors from both the River Watch and Riverglen Board of Directors and Committees.

Since March the community has made some new additions and improvements. The most obvious is the traffic lines on Donneymoor Drive. In discussion with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and Traffic Control they agreed to mark the street in the hopes that this would help with traffic control and calming. The results are positive so far but only time will tell if this measure will solve the accident and speeding issues.

Also, we finished the small park repair. For those new to Riverglen, the small park was damaged during a traffic accident where a driver at a high rate of speed couldn't make the turn and crashed through the fence. All of the playground equipment was destroyed in the crash. Brian Lorentzen, the Springwood Representative, took the lead for the repair and has now finished the Phase One effort; next year the community will expand the amenities in the small park. At the upcoming Riverglen Homeowner Association Annual Meeting Brian will present plans for Phase Two. Please share your comments with him at the meeting or join him on the committee. Great Work Brian.....



The Riverglen Annual Meeting is scheduled for 7PM, November 4, 2010, at the Riverview Community Center

We are also having continual problems with the community irrigation system. The system is very complex and large and it is continually being maintained and this maintenance is expensive. This last month the 5 hp pump at the main park had to be replaced and this month we have to replace a bladder. This is necessary maintenance and you will see the expenses reflected on the annual budget.

The Palms have been trimmed on Dooneymoor and the Creeping Fig trimmed. We anticipate that with rain and irrigation the fig will cover the entire wall. This will reduce our painting and cleaning cost in the future. As you know there is a lot of wall and it is expensive to maintain, so our plan is to keep working with Raymow to get the wall completely covered.

Continued on page 2

President's Update, Martin McDonough River Watch HOA

Well, as much as I hate to admit it, crime has found its way to RiverWatch. While I have "spoken" to this topic in the past, I feel that this is an important issue and one that seems to be on the rise. Leaving no stone unturned, I too have recently experienced a vehicle break-in at the hands of person or persons unknown. Like 4 of my neighbors, one of my vehicles was broken into a few weeks ago and about \$1000.00 worth of damage was done. This is not about the incident, but about being alert to what is happening around you and your neighbors. In that week alone, at least 6 cars were entered illegally (that I know of) and how many more could be targeted.

The good news, no one was injured in these break-ins. The bad news, both of my dogs woke me at 2:45 am and I quieted them and went back to bed! I too have become a little complacent and this is not good for me or my friends / neighbors. The lesson here, I need to be more alert to my surroundings and question everything that is out of the "norm". Some keys to minimizing these types of occurrences:

- Get to know the habits of your neighbors. We all develop patterns and when something is out of the "norm", call the authorities. Had I done so, I might just have caught the individuals breaking into my vehicle.
- If in doubt, call the authorities. This is the single most important aspect of ending crime or criminal behavior. A good defense is a strong offense – so if observing anything that "just is not right", call!!!
- Do not let strangers into your home. This seems to be obvious, but it happened in our community. If you did not call a repair person and they show up at your door, it is most likely not good. We are a non-solicitation neighborhood and should not have door-to-door salesmen, alarm repair people or anyone coming to your home that is not expected / invited.
- See a strange vehicle driving through the neighborhood, call the authorities. We have recently updated the gate camera system and can now catch vehicles coming AND GOING as well as the vehicle tag numbers of all vehicles entering RiverWatch. Downloading this data has been improved and your Board of Directors will work closely with the authorities should the need arise.
- Consider leaving outdoor lighting on to discourage "shadow areas" near your home. At the very least, consider installing motion detection to your existing front and rear lighting.
- Scale back shrubs and plants that create dark areas near your entrances or windows. While the most recent rash of incidents were vehicle-related, one can never be too careful.

Continued on page 7

Riverglen HOA Upcoming Events

All BOD and ACC meetings are held at the Tampa Bay Academy conference room @ 7:00 PM

Riverglen BOD

September 16
October 21 (Budget)
November 18
December (no meeting)
January 20
February 17
March 17

Annual Homeowner Meeting

November 4
Riverview Civic Center

Riverglen ACC

September 9
October 14
November 12
December 10
January 14
February 11
March 11
April 8

Auto-debit your Association Dues!

Isn't it hard to remember quarterly payments? Take the hassle out of paying your Riverglen Association dues by signing up for Auto-debit.

You can find the Auto-debit form at www.riverglenhoa.com on the Menu under the Forms section.

“Florida Friendly” Landscaping

Recently some questions have come up about the Florida law (SB 2080) regarding Florida Friendly Landscaping and how it applies to homeowners in a deed restricted community.

Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and Hillsborough County representatives recently conducted seminars for Community Association Managers and Homeowner Association (HOA) Board members to explain and discuss the impact of the law on homeowner associations. Here are a few highlights:

1. HOA covenants, restrictions, and ordinances may not prohibit Florida-Friendly Landscaping practices. There are nine (9) principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping. Details are available from several sources, including SWFWMD <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/yards/> University of Florida http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm
2. The law does not invalidate HOA architectural control committees or landscape committees. It does apply reasonable limits.
3. The law does not prohibit reasonable limits on Florida-Friendly Landscaping such as a requirement to be well maintained, or limiting particular elements (such as a butterfly garden, composting bin, or rain barrel) to a backyard or screened area where feasible.

It is important to note what is not included in the 9 Principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping – neglecting to water turf areas, and letting the grass die. Allowing your yard to become a wasteland of dirt and weeds is not Florida-Friendly.

The 9 Principles do include proper irrigation and fertilization. Replacing some areas of your lawn (subject to ACC approval) with alternative plantings that require less water would also be consistent with Florida-Friendly principles.



Riverglen Continued...

The wall maintenance, to include the fig growth, belongs to the community so please don't spray, cut or peel the fig from the wall. Some homeowners have even thrown their charcoal over the wall and burned the fig. If you cause damage the BOD will pass the bill back to you, so please be careful. Any questions or concerns please send me an email.

The community budget has allowed us to make the necessary repairs and upgrades to the community without any dues increase or property assessments. I am proud to report that we have one of the lowest association fees in Hillsborough County. Over the next few months leading up to the RGHOA Annual Meeting we will host our budget planning meetings for 2011. Cathy James, the Riverglen Treasurer has done an excellent job in keeping the board on budget so please watch the billboards for monthly meeting announcements.

I would also encourage anyone who would like to advertise in future newsletters to please contact Ralph Brown or myself and we will get you the necessary information to get started. As you may be aware, advertising offsets the cost of the newsletter.

I hope to see everyone at the Annual Meeting. If you're interested in working on the Board of Directors or any of the Committees, please contact the Property Manager, Jerry Santana at Greenacre Properties.

See you at the Annual Meeting.....

Riverglen ACC

Since beginning of the year we have notified many homeowners regarding storing trash/trash cans and yard waste outside in view for days. Please note according to Riverglen Covenants Article VI, Section 22. "No Lot shall be used or maintained as a dumping ground for rubbish. Trash, garbage, or other waste shall not be kept except in sanitary containers designed for that purpose. All incinerators or other equipment for the storage or disposal of such waste material shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition. All garbage and trash cans and containers shall be kept in the garage or in the rear yard, screened to conceal them from view of neighboring Lots and streets, except on the days of collection".

Other issues we noticed are mold/mildew on the house, sidewalks, roof, driveway, mailboxes, fences and yard not being maintained. Riverglen Covenants Article VI, Section 18. states "Each homeowner is responsible to maintain each Lot and Structure owned by him, including: all landscaping located thereon, in good condition and repair, including, but not limited to (i) the repairing and painting (or other appropriate external care) of all Structures; (ii) the seeding, watering, and mowing of all lawns; and (iii) the pruning and trimming of all trees, hedges, and shrubbery so that the same do not obstruct the view by motorists, pedestrians or street traffic".

We appreciate your cooperation in these matters.

Ali Houshmand
Riverglen ACC Chairman

Park Update

The small park playset is finally in place. After a vehicle accident over a year ago, a protracted "battle" with the driver's insurance company, and a lengthy process finding a contractor, the small playground area has finally been rebuilt.

The Riverglen Board of Directors is considering options for improvements to the small park area including:

- Addition of a small covered pavilion
- Additional tables and benches
- Additional landscaping and parking area
- Other uses such as butterfly garden, meditation garden, etc.

Obviously, there will be some budgetary constraints. But we would like to hear what you want for that area. Send your ideas to any member of the Riverglen Board of Directors or to the Property Manager (addresses listed on the website: www.riverglenhoa.com).

We are still in need of someone to step forward and volunteer to chair the Riverglen Parks committee. The parks and playgrounds in Riverglen are a very convenient community asset that many neighborhoods do not have. Thanks to the efforts of a few concerned residents, we have managed to keep the facilities in reasonable shape. But we need someone to coordinate upgrades, and keep a watchful eye on the facilities and equipment so that maintenance and repairs can be accomplished in a timely manner. If you can help, please let us know.



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Perspective from the Board Secretary

Summer is over, fall is in the air. So what does that mean? Well, for some folks with children it means you are free again. I can just see the guy in the office supply commercial singing it's the most beautiful time of the year as the young ones go back to school. For the young ones, it is another year of school drama, in some cases new boyfriends or girlfriends, new friends, meeting up with old friends in person rather than on Facebook. There are also the try-outs for the sport teams, cheerleading, and academic teams. It is the whole rite of passage for some as they move from elementary to middle school or from middle to high school. For my wife and I those days are over, but now it means college football, and many checks to an investment fund I have had for the last three years called CSF (College Slush Fund). I have not found it on the Dow Jones yet however I joke with my friends that most people invest in stocks, bonds and real estate. I am hoping for a long term high rate of return when next year we begin investing in a yet to be named graduate school.

Over the years, those of us with children have gone through the rituals year after year in one form or another. Lots of us have done it right here in the Riverglen and River Watch communities. We have seen the growing of our children and the changes they have made in becoming adults. Those of you that are in the early stages of child rearing, good luck. The worst part of it is explaining to your child that the world is not coming to an end when the incident (drama) that they are experiencing has been experienced by hundreds of thousands of other and their life is still intact. Boyfriends, girlfriends come and go as do friends in general. Life and times go on and everything survives in one form or another.

That brings me to my bi-annual rant! Ha! You must have thought you escaped it by my opening tone. Not so fast there Skippy! The point is that there are a lot of things that have changed in our families within our neighborhood. The one constant is the fact that for whatever reason, there has not been much homeowner involvement in the community. It is the same people handling the same situations year after year. This could be looked at in a couple of different ways. One is that these folks on the individual boards or committees are doing a great job and why fix it if it's not broke. Or you could say what's the use, no one cares about what I have to say, these people will do what they want. That can't be any further from the reality of how either association operates.

What everyone has to realize is that both associations run on documents and covenants that rule what can or cannot be done in the neighborhoods. I hear so many times that we as board or committee members don't have the community in mind. Again, that thought is incorrect. Each board member has the fiduciary responsibility to adhere to and in some cases enforce the documents and covenants as they are written. This means even if the board member does not want to or disagrees with what the document says he or she must still abide by what is written and put aside their personal views. Look at your community as its own little town. Just as a town has rules and laws that it must abide by so does our community. The town has the mayor and council to manage the town, a planning board or zoning committee to ensure the

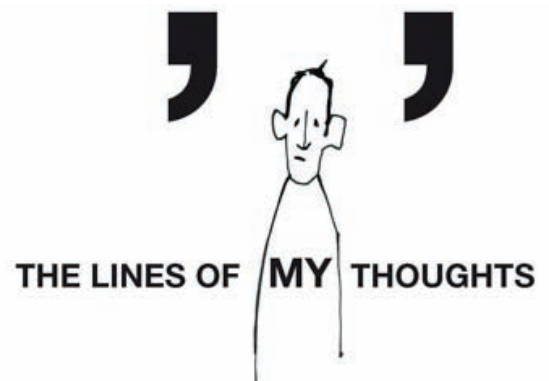
town's design standards and plans are followed. We have the same in that our boards of directors oversee the management of the community with a management company that is hired to maintain the day to day operations. Both Riverglen and Riverwatch have Architectural Control Committees that ensure the standards of the documents are followed by the homeowners. They also review and approve requests by homeowners for changes they wish to make on their property.

That brings me to the next portion of my rant. I will be the first to tell you that I think the same as others do that some of the documents need to be updated to follow the changes of time. Again no argument from me, but as a director on both boards, I can tell you that that will never happen without your involvement. There is a process that will not allow the board to make any of these changes without a quorum at each HOA's annual meeting. My suggestion is that you look at the documents, see what ones you feel need to be altered, enhanced, updated, removed, or even may need to be made to be more restrictive. Once these items are identified, they can be requested to be placed on an agenda for a vote. Then you need to be proactive and come out to the annual meeting to allow a quorum to allow a vote on the changes that the neighborhood wants. You the neighborhood make the rules, not the board. It is you the neighborhood that decide the standards of the community, not the ACC or the board. It is the ACC and the board that manages and enforces the rules that you the community say that it wants. So when you get a letter from the management company for whatever reason, remember we are just doing what you the homeowner want us to do. If it does not change, then I would assume that you like what you see happening and want it to continue. If not, let me know

In closing, I have been appointed to and accepted the position as Riverwatch Board Member and have assumed the duties as Secretary to the board, a position that I currently hold on the Riverglen Board. With my appointment I will do my best to ensure that the documents and covenants of the community as well as the Florida Statute 720 which are the laws that govern all Florida Homeowner Associations will be followed to allow both Riverglen and River Watch maintain its value not only in property values but also as a valuable place to live.

Stop by a meeting for either board; see how your neighborhood is governed. See how your dues are spent. Check out a committee; see what you can do to keep Riverglen and Riverwatch the fine community it is.

Jim Egbert
Riverglen
Board
Secretary
Riverwatch
Board
Secretary
Riverglen
Ponds
Committee
Chair



GARDENING FAQ

By Chris Brown

What does “Right Plant, Right Place” refer to? In a nutshell; it means purchasing and installing plants that will thrive in our zone (9a) and grouping them with plants of the same light and moisture requirements. An example would be; planting Lantana, Crown of Thorns or Juniper plant in the same bed. They all require full sun, drier conditions. Another example would be Caladiums and Impatiens together. Both require shade and moist soil.

What are some hardy palms for this area? My Christmas Palm didn't make it through last winter.

As a general rule, choosing palms (or any other plant) that are rated for Zone 9a will give you the best odds for surviving our extreme conditions. 9a means that we are in the coldest part of zone 9. We aren't quite tropical so palms that do well in Miami, for instance, probably won't survive our colder winter. Smaller palms that do well here are: European Fan Palm, Scrub Palmetto, and with protection, Robellini Palm. Sagos, (which are Cycads, not true palms) do well but you will need to regularly treat for problems with scale. Larger palms that do well in our part of Florida: Chinese Fan Palm and our native Sabal. Less hardy, but widely planted: the Queen Palm. “Christmas” Palm, Foxtail Palm, or Royal Palm are NOT recommended. You may get them to survive for a few milder winters but the first bad winter will probably kill them. Unfortunately, they are available at both Home Depot and Lowes as well as many nurseries. If customers demand them they will be offered. Big box stores are in business to make money and you will see shrubs, flowers and trees that are poorly suited for Central Florida offered right along side “Florida Friendly” ones. It pays to do some homework. “Planting zones” were designed to help prevent costly mistakes, and those zone labels attached to the pots are your best guide when making a major tree purchase.

What does Florida Friendly mean?

It refers to plants and trees that have proven to grow and flourish in our summer heat, periods of drought, the rainy season and dry winters. This doesn't mean that they are made of cast iron and will survive any extreme temperature or neglect; it means that given the right care these plants have a better chance of thriving than others. Once again, the planting zone and planting information tag on the plant should be your guide in selecting your plants.



What are a couple of flowers that will do well in a sunny area of my yard? I do have a low volume irrigation system and the area also gets a little shade in the afternoon. I want to attract butterflies also.

This is my ideal planting bed, most plants that are labeled, “full sun” really enjoy a little shade in the hottest part of the day. And the fact that you have a low volume system means that under current water restrictions, you can water your flowers daily if needed. My favorites are **Pentas**. They come in two sizes, dwarf and the “old fashioned” pentas which get about 3-4 feet tall. They will bloom from spring until frost and only require a little deadheading and removal of old, yellow leaves to keep them looking their best. Fertilize a couple of times in summer. You can cut them back as well and they grow back quickly. Pentas do freeze but frequently come back from the roots in the spring. Although **Mexican Petunia** is still widely available and is a great butterfly attractor, it is still on the state's invasive list and I don't recommend it for yards that abut conservation. It is hardy but will quickly spread and crowd out everything else if left unchecked. It also comes in a dwarf variety, which is a little better behaved, but in my opinion, not as striking. If you decide to plant it, purchase the new “sterile variety”. It doesn't set seed so is less a danger of escaping into conservation areas. But it does spread via the roots so you will need to judiciously thin it out. The pink variety is a less aggressive color variety. **Butterfly Weed** and **Tropical Sage** are also good selections for your planting area and will also “self seed” so you'll have plenty to share with neighbors and friends. Butterfly Weed has the added benefit of a larval plant so you will attract butterflies as well as provide the larva with food.



Advertising in the Newsletter

If you are interested in placing an ad in the next edition of this newsletter, or know of someone who may be interested, submit contact information (Business name, phone and e-mail) to the publisher at IKarePublishing@aol.com, or call Karen at 813-907-3629 and let her know that you wish to advertise.

Ads are limited to 1/8 page (business card size), and are priced at \$60.

Advertisements will be accepted from any reputable business; however, we especially encourage local businesses, and those operated by Riverglen and River Watch residents, to submit ads.

River Watch HOA Upcoming Events

All BOD and ACC meetings are held at the Tampa Bay Academy conference room @ 7:00 PM

River Watch BOD

September 15 (budget)
 October 20 (budget final)
 November 17
 December 15
 January – TBD
 February 16
 March 16
 April 20

Annual Homeowner Meeting

Jan 2011 – date TBD

River Watch ACC

September 13
 October 18
 November 15
 December 13
 January 17
 February 14
 March 14
 April 18

Community Garage Sale

April and August 2011
 Dates TBD

River Watch ACC

I would like to announce the change in the ACC for River Watch. I have stepped down as ACC Chair and turned over the seat to Mark Warshawsky. After many years on the committee, he will have no problem assuming the chair. The reason for this change is due to my appointment to the River Watch Board. In my last article as ACC Chair I want to touch on a couple of items.

We have issues with neighbors that are making the alterations to their property without prior written approval from the ACC. In some cases, we have homeowners that see something that another homeowner has done on their property and they assume that it is OK. The problem arises when they get the violation notice and find that they have spent money on changes that are not permitted by our documents. Just because you see something on another property does not mean it is automatically

approved for your property. You **must** submit the proper paperwork for approval. What you may not know is that the property you saw and copied may be in violation and going through the enforcement process. What they have may seem OK to you and others, however the ACC or the Board does not have the power or authority to approve something that is not permitted according to the documents. So if you do anything to your property, submit an ACC request, following the guidelines by submitting all of the required information for approval. Also, I see many homeowners placing their yard waste on the cement pad (man hole cover) for the drainage.

STOP THIS NOW!!! The items you put there stand a chance of going into the drainage system which in the long run either clog the drainage or end up flowing into one of the ponds in the community.

Jim Egbert



New River Watch Welcoming Committee

Moving? Well, I hope you're not, but for those who are new to our community, moving can be a hectic experience. I know it was for me. I have owned a home before, but not in an HOA neighborhood, so I needed to learn fast. I had so many questions and just didn't know

where to go to find the answers or who to ask.

Purpose

From our experiences we decided to form a Welcoming Committee for River Watch with two purposes.

- Welcome new neighbors: Greet our new neighbors with open arms and provide them with answers to commonly asked questions.
- Basically, let's have a little fun: We want to emphasize the need for participation of not only new neighbors, but also current neighbors in our community. In turn, this will create a neighborhood culture that is both supportive and inviting.

What is it?

What's really neat about the new Welcoming Committee? It is all the things we will be doing in the neighborhood, with your help, of course.

- Welcoming Package or Basket: Let's give new neighbors some answers right away, stuffed in with some fun gifts.
- Welcoming and Awareness Sessions:
 - ✓ Who are my neighbors? You may have some life long friends next door, but you haven't really met them yet.
 - ✓ What is going on in our Community? In addition to this great newsletter, let's all get together and learn something new, or just say "Hi".
- Resident Surveys: What can we do to improve our community? You do have a voice and we would love to hear it.
- Appreciation Events and Updates:
 - ✓ Sometimes it is nice to say "Thank you for being our neighbor". We are hoping to have more "Muffin" days or similar events every couple months.
 - ✓ Also, we want to make sure you know what is going on in the neighborhood so that you are informed and can participate.

This is a great place to live and with all the hustle and bustle, that can easily be forgotten. After a hectic day, you are not coming back to your house; you are coming back to your home. This is also not a street with some houses all around; this is a community and a neighborhood. I am happy to be a new part of it, and I hope we can make this a truly great and fun place to call home.

Casey Vaughan & Cyndi Allen

Tree Roots and Sidewalks in RiverWatch

A Challenge on the Horizon

Martin G. McDonough



As you have most likely observed, the streetscapes in RiverWatch are lined with Oak trees. They are beautiful, provide shade, give us wonderful tree-lined streets and present a probable threat to your sidewalks.

Over time, it is anticipated (expected) that the roots from these growing trees will undermine your sidewalk. In doing so, it may lift a section of your sidewalk and create a walking / tripping hazard on your property – referred to as sidewalk “raising” or “heaving”. This lifting or heaving

is usually caused by the growth of the tree root, such that the sidewalk breaks along the expansion joint and the end (one or both) lifts up. Once this lifting or heaving is over 0.5 inch, it must be repaired or replaced (Article 6, Section 13 of the HOA documents state “... Each Owner, at his sole cost and expense shall maintain the sidewalk on his Lot...”).

So what can a homeowner do once a section of their sidewalk has heaved? There are two reasonably accepted courses of action, grinding down the raised area or replacing the entire concrete square.

Grinding – If this is the first time the concrete has heaved, the raised area may be corrected by grinding down the raised area flush with the original surface. This can be accomplished with a concrete planer (sometimes referred to as a concrete grinder or scarifier). A concrete planer can be rented at some of the local tool rental companies or a professional contractor can be hired. Concrete planning will usually correct the problem, but the correction is short lived as the tree roots continue to grow. Additionally, grinding can usually be done only once before it becomes unsightly or too thin and the square has to be replaced.

Replacement - Just as it implies, this is the replacement of the entire square or squares in question. This option requires the removal of the raised section, will usually include cutting the tree roots out and replacing the concrete to the “pre-heave” level (consistent with the undisturbed sidewalk) and smooth texture. Some companies offer an option where a root barrier is placed in the ground to stop additional roots from growing back under the replaced sections. You should also be aware that a number of tree experts believe that cutting mature tree roots can lead to health decline, destabilizing the tree to wind (tropical storms / hurricanes) and in some cases lead to the death of the tree.

Keep in mind that as the trees in RiverWatch mature – so will the root structure. This lifting or heaving of the sidewalk has already begun in a number of areas within our community. It is anticipated that as sidewalk inspections are done, more and more homeowners will be faced with this problem and will need to identify which correction method works best for them. Having faced this problem in a previous community, I will choose to remove and replace the square when necessary as grinding can be unsightly and a short-term fix.

Riverwatch Continued...

The common thread, be observant and “see” things that are out of the norm with a different set of eyes. Statistics indicate that many crimes are stopped in progress or stopped before they happen with neighbors reporting anything out the norm. Keep in mind that there is a Home Security Checklist, Crime Prevention Tips and a Warning About Suspicious Salesmen publication in the Homeowner section of the website.

My commitment to myself and my neighbors is to see past the “norm” going forward. In the wake of my recent loss, I can assure you that I will again look at the “comings and goings” in RiverWatch with a new set of eyes.

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