

# LAKE COUNTRY VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

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Editor - James Armstrong

## Dog Park?

A fellow homeowner approached the board at the January 17th meeting with a suggestion for establishing a fenced in space on common area to use as a dog park. No specific area has been suggested at this point, just the general concept. The board feels that we need input from other homeowners in order to consider the merits of this proposal and is requesting feedback, pro or con, to better gauge the level of interest. The actual proposal submitted to the board is posted on our website at <http://www.lcvillage.org/2017/02/20/got-a-dog-park/> but modifications might be included based on comments received. If you have any comments on this proposal we ask that you submit them in the "Leave a Reply" section at the bottom of the website posting by March 31st so they can be considered at the April 4th regular meeting of the board. Thanks!



To this point the majority of the comments have been positive. However, some residents have registered serious concerns.

**Treasurer's Tidbits**  
By Tom Maglienti

I seriously considered providing you with a lengthy consideration of the HOA financial situation, including complicated spreadsheets, but the editor nixed that idea ☺. So, here are a few highlights for your consideration.

We have been doing our level best to control costs, and I'm happy to report we are doing, well, OK. At the present time in the fiscal year we are about \$20,000 under budget. That works out to be about \$2.50 of your monthly dues. On top of that, since switching our reserves into a higher interest bearing account, we have earned an additional \$3,000 in interest over what we were earning in the past. We are hopeful that we can continue this pace and maybe even reduce the dues a bit next year.

We are currently in the process of preparing the budget for next fiscal year which begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. We will be taking a look at the longer term financial responsibilities of the HOA for everything from kiosks to water and sewer facilities. By doing this we hope to identify long term needs and plan for their funding so that money will be available should the need arise. It looks to me as if the financial affairs of the HOA are in pretty good shape. If you have any questions about the particulars of our finances, please feel free to give me a call at 569-6935 or email me at [tomm@lcvillage.org](mailto:tomm@lcvillage.org).

## Community Garage Sale

The yearly community garage sale is the first weekend after the Fourth of July. We would appreciate donations of articles (to Patty Jaehn), to be sold to raise money for the HOA.

## Board Highlights

By Patty Jaehn, President

After the last election when the dust had settled and new officers were elected, the first project was to transfer money in our savings account to Seacom CDs. We are now earning an average of \$330 a month compared to the \$4 we received in our regular account.

Our lawyer, Gary Favro, resigned. He was replaced by Tom Murnane of Stafford, Owens, et.al. PLLC.

Due to flooding last winter between Maine and Maryland, we hired the engineering firm of RMS to advise us on remediation and we selected Ed Garrow and Sons Excavation Contractors to do the work. Even though work commenced late in the year, they were able to complete the project before cold weather. They will return in the spring to finish restoration.



The board adopted a code of ethics and developed procedures for bidding on contracts with the HOA.

The board also passed a resolution that reduced the late fee on HOA delinquent dues from \$41 to \$25 with a five business day grace period. There is a process for waving late fees under exceptional circumstances.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank homeowners who take the time to decorate their homes for special occasions and changes of seasons. I post the pictures on our face book page, Friends of Plattsburgh Lake Country Village. We are hoping to organize the first ever LCV block party and look forward to meeting you at that time.

## **Landscape Report**

By Don Miller

The Landscape committee has five members, Jim Trombley, Sue Thompson, Carol Skhuttleworth, and co-chairs Bob Turek, and Don Miller. We receive many requests from residents to improve the landscaping around

their units. These request mostly come in the late spring and summer, and we are very



receptive to them. We try to deal with each request by balancing what the owner wants with what is possible, given the constraints of HOA rules. We make every effort to get each request done as soon as possible.

Last year we planted eleven trees in areas with few trees. We planted nine different varieties of trees. This year we plan similar projects if the money is available from this year's budget. Although landscape beautification is important to us, sometimes other projects take precedence.



## **Water Main Issues**

By Tom Maglienti (Utility Committee)

As most of you probably know, the City of Plattsburgh is planning to replace its aging water main facilities throughout Lake Country Village. They plan to begin this summer by reconstructing Maine Road in its entirety. We have been told that they will do their best to limit the inconvenience to all homeowners and to keep the changeover to the new water system as short as possible. They plan to install the new system completely, keeping the existing water main in service so that individual changes can be kept to about a 4 hour outage for each affected homeowner.

Since the HOA owns the water facilities in the cul de sacs, we are also in the planning stages to hire contractors to coordinate the replacement of our mains with the city's project. This means the cul de sacs of Alana and Caitlin will have new water facilities this year as well. We will keep you advised of our progress on this important issue as it happens by emailing updates to our list and posting the same on our website. If you would like to be included in our email list, please fill out the form included with this newsletter or look for it on our website under Documents > Other Documents > Forms

## **Notes from the Property Manager**

By Adam Whitbeck

In 2016, 26 units were sold in Lake Country Village. Currently, there are eleven units on the market. Over the course of my tenure as the property manager the most common violations of community rules have been storing trash cans in plain view. This is an easily correctable problem. Other common violations include not maintaining landscaped areas in the warmer months, and posting signs on common area. Posting of signs on the commons is most problematic during political campaigns.

## **Life in American HOA Communities**

By James Armstrong

Most Americans don't know that the USA has the longest continuous history of communes (collective settlements with a shared means of production and collective ownership of property) of any country in the world.\* Most of us don't associate Lake Country Village with this piece of historical trivia, but LCV is a distant relative of communal societies.

Home Owner Associations (like LCV) are a kind of cooperative. Our residences are privately owned but we share common property, the commons, which we are collectively and equally committed to maintaining. Similar arrangements are found around the world. Perhaps the best known is the Israeli Moshav, a relative of the more famous Kibbutz.

You might be surprised by the fact that communities like ours have been much studied by anthropologists, sociologists, and community planners. Phil DeVita (a LCV resident) and I published a book (*Distant Mirrors*) about American culture that contained an interesting essay, "Neighborly Strangers" about Home Owners Associations, comparing them to other forms of collective and cooperative living. The author, Honggang Yang, who grew up in the Peoples Republic of China, thought Americans were conflicted about sharing property with others because it contrasted with our notions of individuality and private property. He found his neighbors in his Florida community to be much less involved in the community than what he experienced in workers cooperatives in China. In his Floridian HOA residents were apathetic about community engagement. Most of their close relationships were with people outside the community. However, people who shared common interests, such as gardening, did get involved in the community and shared close friendships. Others got involved in community governance (The Board of the HOA), but most remained aloof, disengaged, and complained a lot. Nonetheless, most residents were happy with their situation, balancing privacy concerns with community responsibility. These are thought provoking observations for us to consider.

\* Y. Oved: *200 Years of American Communes*

## **EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT THE 2017 ELECTION!**



Greetings, Homeowners! I wanted to share with you the results of this year's election season. As of March 7th (closing date for applications), we received three applications for the Board. We currently have three open seats. Two of the applications were from current Board members who were up for re-election, Bob Turek and Tom Maglienti, and the third was from a homeowner who is interested in joining the Board, Linda Turner.

Because we did not receive more applications than open seats, a formal election will not be needed this year. However, information about the three candidates will be posted on the website so that you may learn more about each candidate and his or her qualifications. In addition, we invite you to attend the Board meeting on Tuesday April 18th from 6 pm to 7:45 pm, during which we will be hosting our traditional 'Meet the Candidates' forum. You will have the opportunity to meet each candidate and ask questions about their interest in running for, or remaining on, the LCV HOA Board. Refreshments will be served.

Board meetings are held in the Plattsburgh Public Library Auditorium on the second floor. If you have any questions, you are welcome to email me at [elections@lcvillage.org](mailto:elections@lcvillage.org). Thank you, and we hope to see you on the 18th!

Carol Shuttleworth, Elections Committee Chair