



March 2018 First quarter

Greetings to all of our owners and a special welcome to new arrivals (who should make a note of the special 'Meet and Greet' opportunity listed at the end of this Newsletter).

Our Annual Meeting was held on February 12th and we have to thank our volunteers who helped the signing in process to run smoothly. 50 owners attended, many bringing proxy votes with them from other owners who were unable to attend. This was fortunate because we barely received the minimum number of votes needed for the election of members to the Board. Please remember, everyone, that a sufficient number of votes is critical if we are to avoid holding a further Annual Meeting, which would be very costly.

The ballot results later revealed that Bonnie Baisley, Carl Johnson and Gary Lavallie were all returned to office. Each Director will assume their former duties.

Our speaker this year was Debbie Mans, City Manager of New Port Richey, who brought us up to date on the many welcome changes that are taking place in our City. New and diversified businesses are appearing and new programs being introduced to further the upward trend and gradual upgrading of areas throughout the City.

While waiting for the ballot count the Directors gave their reports

Marlene Winchester, President, reported that our membership had changed 24 times since the last Directory was published in March 2017. Of the 24, eight owners had sadly passed away or moved to be closer to their family. All but one unit up for sale sold quickly and at much increased prices.

Marlene thanked one of our owners, Frank Roth, for cleaning up the north side of the pond on the west side of Remus. Some funding has been allocated in the 2018 budget to help with the cost.

Regarding maintenance fees, Marlene reminded those owners who have elected to pay on line to be sure that the fee is paid by the 5th to avoid late payment charges. And those owners paying by coupon should be SURE to use the correct month's coupon. Be aware also that if payments go beyond three months in arrears the matter will be handed over to our attorney and the owner will incur legal fees as well as late fees. Marlene encourages *all* owners to use Autopay if they possibly can. This avoids time consuming problems and helps to keep our maintenance fee at its current low level.

Every owner needs to be in possession of our Fifth Amended Deed Restrictions so that they are not in violation of our rules and regulations. Copies are readily available, so just ask.

Finally, Marlene reports that all bills are paid and up to date and our Bank Accounts reflect healthy balances. No increase in HOA Fees is anticipated in the coming year.

Claire Phillips, Recording Secretary, reported that much of the year had been spent trying to reduce and update our documentation, much of which is duplicated. The main purpose is not to merely reduce the workload, but to make it possible to pass some routine work on to volunteers who, happily, are now coming forward. Newsletters will be mailed out four times a year

More importantly, reducing the workload will make it easier to replace Board Members and lessen the possibility of having to appoint a Management Company if we were unable to replace any major player on the Board.

The appointment of a Management Company would certainly result in much higher HOA fees and, at the same time, reduce the quality of our landscaping and maintenance of buildings, all of which make our community so attractive to potential buyers and help to increase the value of our properties.

We are required by law to maintain a mailing address for each owner and we have *finally* managed to arrive at one which is 99% accurate. However! With so many new owners we have to reiterate that we can only record one single mailing address for each owner/unit. And that has to be your *mailing address* which may not necessarily be your Briar Patch/Unit address. It is up to every owner to arrange for the forwarding of their mail to any alternate address that they may have (snowbirds for example). Any mail that is returned to us is just put on file (*including your Homeowners' Directory*).

On that subject, Claire expects to mail out the 2018 Homeowners' Directory around mid-March.

Gary Lavallie, Director of Pool, was pleased to report that many more owners are using the pool. Some new lounge chairs have been added. Due to Insurance requirements we were required to install a line across the deep end to avoid any liability. Cameras have been installed plus a "No Guard on Duty" notice.

Gary continues to maintain our informative Website **briarpatchnpr.com** (have a look!) and will happily forward any information to Directors if requested. Documents may also be downloaded also from this website.

Carl Johnson, Roads & Grounds reported that it had been a good year. Several much needed projects were completed for the Irrigation System. A program for semi-annual mulching and trimming of general areas had been started and we survived Hurricane Irma with only minor damage. (Carl failed to mention that, due to his preplanning with Tri-S, Briar Patch was cleared of all debris in record time and far ahead of neighboring properties.)

Carl said he needs help in two areas:

One: – Removal of trees. All tree removals need a permit from the City of New Port Richey. Doing so without a permit is subject to a \$500 fine levied by the City Code Enforcement Department on the unit owner who had the tree removed.

Two: Forms. (Found in the clubhouse next to the blue box). Use our *Landscape Modification Agreements* (found in the clubhouse near the Blue Box). ANY change in landscaping requires this form. Use it for Trees also. *Work Requests and Irrigation* – just fill out the form and put it in the box.

And *please* don't stop the Ground Crew and take up their time explaining your problem. Carl goes through all that needs to be done every time Preston is here but he needs the forms to verify the work and the charges.

Carl thanked everyone in advance for their help in these matters. He pointed out that in 2017 we went through the worst drought in ten years and our grounds still look great. In closing Carl was pleased to report that Roads and Grounds ended the year just under Budget.

Bonnie Baisley, Director of Clubhouse, reported that the year had gone well. New and badly needed Porch Lights plus new Fans were installed. Bonnie thanked Francine Lehrer for her recent assistance and, to close, reminded everyone that there is card playing in the Clubhouse on Tuesdays and Bingo on Wednesdays.

Frank Ferreri, VP/Buildings & Architecture, wanted to remind everyone that our *HOA Fee was raised* to \$120 ten years ago in 2008, where it remains today. He said that lot of work went on behind the scenes to maintain our community and the number one comment he hears is how good it looks.

Buildings & Architecture also was under Budget for 2017, thanks to Pert Painting, who continue to do a good job and also to Scott, our new handyman and carpenter. Five buildings are due to be painted this year: 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32.

ROOF LEAKS: A few leaks do occur from time to time. *Owners should call GAF at the number given in the Homeowners' Directory, giving them the warranty number of their building. (Note that a list of the warranty nos. for all buildings is being included with this mailing. Keep this list with your Briar Patch documents for your own use and for future owners).* No NEW roofing is scheduled until 2025.

Comments from Owners: One owner and former Board member questioned whether we should consider raising the HOA Fee, however slightly, as a safety measure for the future, but Marlene said that she could see no reason for doing so at this time.

Another owner mentioned that brown patches were appearing on her lawn (and other lawns) and Carl said that this was due to a fungus that they were aware of and treating. However, the cold weather had halted its activation. The treatment should start working once the warm weather arrives.

A vast amount of time was spent discussing lawns and trees, all of which has been covered at many previous Board Meetings. However, it did emerge that there is a rogue tree company with a truck going door to door, despite our No Solicitation sign. They claim to be working for Briar Patch which is not the case but do charge the house owner. All owners are cautioned not to use them.

Did you miss this? Recycling collections have been changed to the 2nd and 4th **Thursday of each month.** Put out your recycling containers the night before.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**New Owners! Meet and Greet Seminar
at the Clubhouse, Saturday, March 31st at 4 p.m.
There will be light refreshments.
Come and meet other new residents of our lovely
community. Get answers to your questions.**

**Francine's Dinners at the Pool
DINNER FOR MEMORIAL DAY
DINNER FOR JULY 4TH
Watch the Pool Notice Board for Dates and look for the
posted notice at the entrance**

**CLUBHOUSE EVENTS
Tuesdays – Card playing
Wednesdays – Bingo**

**NEXT BOARD MEETING
Monday, May 14th at 1 p.m.
at the Clubhouse. All welcome**

Have a great Springtime everyone.

Board of Directors.