

FORREST LAKE TOWNHOMES



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4

Paula Williamson, Editor (FLNewsletter@yahoo.com)

May 25, 2010



Town Meeting

Thursday, May 27th

7:00 p.m.

Clubhouse

Open Forum.....all is invited!

Caution to Pets

Dan Coosa

Please tell every dog or cat owner you know. Even if you don't have a pet, please pass this to those who do. Over the weekend, the dotting owner of two young lab mixes purchased Cocoa Mulch from Target to use in their garden. The dogs loved the way it smelled and it was advertised to keep cats away from their garden. Their dog (Calypso) decided the mulch smelled good enough to eat and devoured a large helping. She vomited a few times which was typical when she eats something new but wasn't acting lethargic in any way. The next day, Mom woke up and took Calypso out for her morning walk. Halfway through the walk, she had a seizure and died instantly. Although the mulch had NO warnings printed on the label, upon further investigation on the company's web site, it was discovered that this product is HIGHLY TOXIC to dogs and cats.

Cocoa Mulch is manufactured by Hershey's, and they claim that, "It is true that studies have shown that 50% of the dogs that eat Cocoa Mulch can suffer physical harm to a variety of degrees (depending on each individual dog). However, 98% of all dogs won't eat it."

[Snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) site gives the following information:
<http://www.snopes.com/critters/crusader/cocoamulch.asp>

Cocoa Mulch, which is sold by Home Depot, Foreman's Garden Supply and other garden supply stores contains a lethal ingredient called 'Theobromine'. It is lethal to dogs and cats. It smells like chocolate and it really attracts dogs. They will ingest this stuff and die. Several deaths already occurred in the last 2-3 weeks.

Theobromine is in all chocolate, especially dark or baker's chocolate which is toxic to dogs. Cocoa bean shells contain potentially toxic quantities of theobromine, a xanthine compound similar in effects to caffeine and theophylline. A dog that ingested a lethal quantity of garden mulch made from cacao bean shells developed severe convulsions and died 17 hours later. Analysis of the stomach contents and the ingested cacao bean shells revealed the presence of lethal amounts of theobromine.

Security Corner

- Ken Barker

Change of security officers

Many Forrest Lake (FL) residents will already know that there has been a recent change in the community's security arrangements. Our contract security company ABM has reassigned one of their employees (Wayne Wisnowski) to another post and this move has already taken place. Under the Texas "Employment at Will" legislation ABM's action (as his employer) is allowable, not unusual, and no explanation is required. Contrary to the opinions of some residents, and stories that are circulating though our community, Officer Wisnowski was not an employee of FL and was not terminated by our Board. ABM are in the process of appointing a new permanent replacement security officer to the post and this officer will receive extensive orientation and training on our community operations from the other security officer (Garner Bloehm) assigned to Forrest Lake. We very much appreciate Wayne's long service to our community and wish him well in his future work.

Pool Rules

With the summer season comes greater use of our pool. We urge all residents to read carefully the posted rules for use of the pool and pool area. We do get many unannounced visits by City inspectors and if they find that state and city rules for pool use are not being observed they can immediately close our pool for an indefinite period. Although our security officers do remind offenders when they see rules not being followed there still are many residents who choose to ignore them. Also, it is very important to not open gates to other parties who claim to have lost or forgotten their pool entry key, or say that it will no longer work. There usually is a very good reason for their entry problem and unauthorized entry may result in liability issues that could impact the finances of every homeowner in Forrest Lake if an incident occurs. So, please do not do it.

Summer school vacations

The summer season brings an increased number of young children and grand-children into our community. We remind all parents, grand-parents and guardians that there unfortunately exists a significant number of pedophiles resident in our neighborhood so they should be very careful where dependent children play and that they are accompanied, or remain visible, at all times. Juvenile gang activity is also prevalent in our area and increasing. There are a number of very good parks with a mile or two of Forrest Lake. These have extensive playground equipment and other facilities that children will enjoy, but again we recommend that adult surveillance is maintained at all times.

Hurricane Preparedness meeting

A hurricane preparedness meeting is being scheduled by the Near Northwest Management District (NNMD) at the Lutheran Advent Church on Pinemont for May 27. (6-8:30 pm.). Unfortunately this conflicts with a Forrest Lake community meeting on the same date so our board members who normally would have attended the NNMD event will have to miss it. We have made arrangements to receive a full package of handouts and a possibly a private briefing later to enable us to share this important information with our residents.

**FORREST LAKE TOWNHOUSE ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
April 15, 2010**

Present: Ken Barker, Earline Soteras, Elva Bryant, Stephanie Rush, and Bob Wharton

Earline Soteras called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The Minutes of the March meeting were approved.

Treasurer: There is an YTD loss of approximately \$23,000. The majority stems from the nonpayment of maintenance fees by homes in foreclosure. April is mid-year for FLTH and the actual numbers will be compared to the budget to review differences.

Maintenance: Painting of the back of the townhomes will begin in May 2010. The maintenance crew repaired a break in the wiring to several homes; the break affected the storage area lights. The job saved \$2,000.00, compared to the bids by outside sources.

Landscape: We are checking several trees on the property which appear to have died during the cold weather, but we will wait a few more weeks to see if they come back. We have followed up with the Harris County Flood Control Board regarding the mowing along Cole Creek and are still awaiting an answer. We are reviewing problems with tree roots in certain areas around the property and researching ways to resolve the problem.

Security: Ken attended the Northwest Management District Security Meeting and advised that the police believe that there will be an increase in activity by young gangs as summer approaches.

Old Business: A total of six homes are delinquent owing a total of \$19,000.00. Of these six, four are in foreclosure. Another 18 homeowner are one month late.

New Business: An Open Forum Meeting will be held on May 27, 2010 at 7:00 PM in the Club Room. The termite inspection went well, although 49 homes left their gates locked.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Bob Wharton, Secretary



Important Phone Numbers

Office Manager (<i>Cheryl</i>)	713-681-3591
Property Manager (<i>Pokey</i>)	713-956-6236
Security (<i>Garner</i>)	713-201-5656
Emergency (Life Threatening)	911*
Houston Police Dept. (non-emergency)	713-884-3131
City of Houston (Loose dog pickup)	713-222-3501

Board Members:

Earline Soteras	713-688-3730
Ken Barker	713-681-1115
Elva Bryant	713-688-5807
Stephanie Rush	713-812-1080
Bob Wharton	713-680-8377

Maintenance (for after-hours appointments)

Francisco	713-409-4820
Willie	713-828-2428
Nahun	713-202-7148
Omar	713-818-4738

Note: There is now only one security telephone number.

Neighborhood News:

- Congratulations to **Morgan Rowell** for not only just turning 12, but also to her softball team, Central Christian Cougars, who went undefeated for the season and made it to State Playoffs in San Antonio and WON State Championship. Morgan is the youngest and smallest on the team and her coach calls her "Smalls." Way to go Smalls!!
- Welcome home, **Tommye and Ken Barker!** They went on a fabulous cruise and then vacationed with family in England.
- **Bobbie** and **Jim Elswick** attended their granddaughter's wedding in California and extended their vacation a few days in San Diego.
- Get well wishes to **Stuart Kane** who has been battling problems with his leg after a fall. Here's hoping you'll be up and around as good as new in no time.
- **Marga Oliver** had a great Mother's Day surprise. Her daughter and granddaughter from Royce City appeared at her front door. Along with Marga's son, they took her to lunch and then spent the day.
- Speaking of Marga, we wish her an early happy birthday (June 20th). She never ages – she's 39 again!
- **Debbie Magaña** and **Paula Williamson** are going down the bayou (Louisiana) to attend Debbie's great-niece's wedding. Jambalaya, crawfish pie, me oh my o.....!!
- **Linda Carroll** and **George Schanz** are planning a trip to Oklahoma to visit family.
- **Bill Smith** has been laying low.....no one has seen him at the pool lately. Bill, where are you?



FYI:

Earline Soteras

Here is a list of who to call if you have concerns:

- Landscaping - Elva Bryant
- Security - Ken Barker
- Maintenance - Earline Soteras
- Documents - Stephanie Rush
- Contract services - Bob Wharton

Remember....

- ❖ Slabs/foundations are your responsibility
- ❖ We will get around to repairs on storage sheds soon.

Reminder About Our Website: www.forrestlake.com

To view the newsletter in color and save pictures, go to the Forrest Lake website, www.forrestlake.com. Although the pagination is a little off, the photos in color make a real difference. You may also find bylaws and other information on the website. Bookmark it and return to read it each month. **Ollie Perry**, former FL resident and Board member, is our webmaster and he does a great job of keeping it up to date for us!

Letters to the Editor:

May 8, 2010

Dear Friends and Family,

Speckles and I will be getting an addition to our family this week. Her named is Maddie. She is about 2 years old, chocolate in color and weights 8 pounds. She is a Dachshund. We are very excited.

Mary and Speckles

She is here....I have seen Mary Bird and Speckles walking with the new dachshund. She looks really tiny – Welcome! -pw

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Dear Editor,

When I read the letter of April 3, 2010, from the Elswick's, I was surprised and shocked that people I had thought of as friends would write such a scathing letter. Mr., Elswick takes great issue with the fact that I keep saying maintenance and outside repairs are "on the schedule." But "it (I assume he means the schedule) never gets done." Let's take a look at this.

First, Mr. Elswick did e-mail me specifically wanting to know the starting and ending dates of painting the backs of each townhouse building. He gave me a short deadline to reply. When I finally got back to him with all the information he requested regarding supplies, times, etc., I had missed his short deadline.

When I tell people that something is on schedule, everyone is free and welcome to go to the maintenance office and see it for themselves. All maintenance work done by Forrest Lake employees is scheduled down to the last detail as to what has to be done to what building, by what date. This schedule is followed as best we can based on weather conditions, vacations, sicknesses, and other factors that cannot be quantified at the time the schedule is set up and approved.

It appears from Mr. Elswick's letter that, concerning his particular townhouse, exterior painting of the back should have been done 5 to 7 years ago. During some of that time, Mr. Elswick was President of the Forrest Lake Board and oversaw everything done at Forrest Lake. Why didn't he complain or fix this problem at that time?

Just for the record, exterior maintenance is an ongoing thing. Our maintenance crew does not just "patch." Our employees replace and repair what is bad on each townhouse. It is grossly unfair for anyone to say that our maintenance employees patch things up. Anyone who sees them work knows they do not "patch."

The following work was done between 4/1/09 and 4/30/10:

| <u># of Townhouses</u> | <u>Work done</u>                                                                                              |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14                     | Fronts reworked                                                                                               |
| 33                     | Box and bay windows reworked                                                                                  |
| 14                     | Balcony, porch columns, and handrails replaced                                                                |
| 11                     | Plumbing, sewer and water leaks Replaced                                                                      |
| 6                      | Roof extensions installed                                                                                     |
| 22                     | Roof leaks checked and repaired                                                                               |
| 8                      | Wall and window leaks checked, tested, repaired                                                               |
| 68                     | Fronts painted                                                                                                |
| 26                     | Box windows painted                                                                                           |
| 19                     | Front doors painted                                                                                           |
| Numerous               | Trees trimmed, carport roofs cleaned, lake and pool cleaned and Treated, bee extermination, sink holes filled |

Remember: We have only 4 maintenance employees and 1 supervisor.

In Mr. Elswick's second to last paragraph, he alludes to establishing a fund for painting the backs of each building. We can do this, but the money is going to have to come from each townhouse owner, since there is not a line item in the budget specifically for exterior painting. How does Mr. Elswick suggest we fund this "fund"?

If things are so bad at Forrest Lake, please remember that no townhouse owner was assessed for any damages from Hurricane Ike when many townhome and condo communities were. Also, remember that in the past 34 years of Forrest Lake's existence, there has never been any assessment. We are proud of that and plan to keep it that way.

As for the "DARE" at the end of Mr. Elswick's letter about raising the maintenance fee, please be reminded that even though all of our expenses have gone up in the more than one year since the last increase, we have held to the current maintenance fee. At some point there will have to be an adjustment. When this happens, everyone, including all board members, will have to pay the increase to cover rising costs.

I and the rest of the Board always place the safety, care and beauty of Forrest Lake first and foremost when we make decisions. We know we cannot please and satisfy 243 individual owners all at once, but we stand secure and confident on our past record.

*Earline Soterias*

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Submissions for Q & A

Residents are encouraged to submit questions about matters concerning Forrest Lake and the Board member responsible for that matter will respond in the newsletter. So few people attend the Town Hall meetings that responses to community questions only get circulated by word of mouth and sometimes are misinterpreted. Please send your questions by e-mail to FLNewsletter@yahoo.com or you may place them in the suggestion box in the mailroom or drop them by the office and Cheryl will forward them to the Board.

God Bless Our Troops



Memorial Day
May 31, 2010
Honoring all Veterans


***** Fitness Classes *****

Now Being Offered by Forrest Lake Townhome Association

- **Water Exercise Class** –
Saturdays 9-10am, beginning June 5 and Tuesdays 10:30-11:30 am beginning June 1. Please bring a Noodle, and don't forget your sunscreen and maybe a visor.
- **Sit 'n Fit Class** –
Mondays 12noon - 12:45pm in the clubhouse, beginning June 7. This class will include exercises to help with balance, dexterity, eye hand coordination and some simple strength exercises while sitting in a chair or standing next to it.
- **Boot Camp 'n Walk** –
Wednesdays 6:15-7:15pm beginning June 2. Not just a walk in the park, this workout can be as intense as you make it. Walking interspersed with some challenging exercises. Meet in front of the club house. Please bring a yoga mat or towel.

All classes are \$10 per class, payable by cash or check made out to Yes! Fitness.

For questions and to sign up for the classes, contact Jeannie Hughes of Yes! Fitness Pilates and Personal Training at 713/906-8348 or yesfitness@sbcglobal.net

JUST SAY  **YES!**
TO JOINING ONE OF
THESE CLASSES



FINANCIAL NEWS

Ken Barker

Foreclosures on private homes have been a top news item in most of our media for many many months. Houston is not immune from this situation and unfortunately neither is Forrest Lake. So how does it impact our community as a whole?

Forrest Lake is a homeowners association (HOA) and although it is classified as a "not for profit " organization it still has to receive enough money in the form of maintenance payments from its residents to pay its bills and provide its services. Sadly, many of these costs for essential services like water, sewer, power, trash removal, etc. continue to escalate. Thankfully, most FL owners pay their maintenance fees regularly and on time. However, when a home goes into foreclosure because the owner can no longer meet their mortgage payments then the maintenance fee paid to FL also ceases. Failure to pay maintenance fees invariably results in our taking remedial actions that include filing a lien on the property for the outstanding debt owed to FL; and that of course escalates each month. This is not always successful, as under current law any lien we file is usually defined as "subordinate" to one filed by the finance company involved so FL chances of recovering the outstanding debt are normally very low.

This situation has been with us for many months and the current deficit in non-recoverable fees from this source has now reached over \$21 thousand. This means that this amount of money (escalating each month) is not available to us and has to be made up from our cash reserves. This will help to explain why we continue to show a deficit on our Fiscal Year to Date (YTD) financial results.

Financial results – Fiscal Year to Date – 6 months thru April 30, 2010

	Budget YTD thru 4-30-10	Actual YTD thru 4-30-10
Total Income	\$ 445,375	\$ 444,214
Total Expenses	\$ 431,725	\$ 446,371
Net surplus before Appropriations	\$ 13,650	\$ (2,157)
Total Appropriations	\$ 29,160	\$ 29,160
Surplus to General Fund	\$ (15,510)	\$ (31,317)

In subsequent months I will have further comments on this overall situation. Due to fluctuations in our variable cash flow the surplus transfer to the General Fund will also change from month to month, but I am expecting this situation to improve as we go into the last two quarters of our Fiscal Year.



Father's Day

June 20, 2010