

FORREST LAKE TOWNHOMES



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 8

Paula Williamson, Editor (FLNewsletter@yahoo.com)

September 30, 2010

Annual Board Election

Three positions on the Board of Directors are open. Those positions are the ones currently held by **Elva Bryant**, **Stephanie Rush**, and **Earline Soteris**. All 3 of these ladies are seeking re-election. No additional candidates have filed for positions. Ballots are being mailed on Monday, October 4. It is very important for all homeowners to read the directions (there are 2 envelopes and you place one inside the other) and return them. Ballots are due in the office by 12:00 Noon on Monday, October 16th. Please, please vote! Your vote can make a difference. Do not ignore this important responsibility you have.

There were approximately 30 people at the Meet the Candidate night September 30th in the clubhouse. The purpose of this was to allow residents to ask the candidates questions. All 3 candidates named the grounds as the best thing about Forrest Lake. They agreed that the biggest challenge facing FL is the neighborhood in which we live. **Billy Martin** moderated the meeting and stated the importance of security and praised our security guards for doing a good job.

Forrest Lake Audit Committee Report

August 31, 2010

The Audit Committee met and reviewed the more than 45 cost centers and all items that make up those cost centers.

From this we developed 23 questions concerning increase, decreases, totals not matching etc. These questions were sent back to the board for explanations of each item.

We then met with the board and they explained all of the questions that we had.

We found that the board receives three or more quotes before contracting any outside service (trash hauling, multi-media, grounds maintenance, and pavement replacement).

All insurance is shopped by our agent and the board is given the best three or four polices to choose from.

Found that all money funds were in order and in line with what the by-laws require

With these findings we recommend the 2011 budget for Forrest Lake Townhouse Association.

Jim Elswick
Stuart Kane
Richard Raborn
Portia Sweet
Franklin White

Dear Jim:

On behalf of all Board members I extend thanks to you and all members of the Audit Committee for the very professional way in which they conducted the recent review of the FL budget for Fiscal 2011. Answers to their searching questions established a valuable visibility in a number of key areas, and very adequately addressed the concerns of us all to ensure that our community was being administered on sound financial principles.

Our grateful appreciation to all Committee members for the expertise they employed in this task and for the many personal hours of careful examination involved. This demonstrates community spirit at its best and we are so lucky to have these residents living among us.

Ken Barker

Security Corner

Ken Barker

The crime activities endemic in the run down apartments and condos on DeSoto, just off Antoine and less than a mile from Forrest Lake, have been a source of worry to everyone in the neighborhood for several years. Following a long and persistent campaign by Near Northwest Management District (NNMD) and the Greater Inwood Partnership (GIP) we are at last seeing some action from the City. (For the record FL is an active member and a strong supporter of both these organizations). Demolition has now started on the DeSoto units and hopefully will be extended to adjacent structures in the coming months. Will this bring an immediate drop in crime in our area? Unlikely, but it is a critical first step for the law-abiding residents in taking back their neighborhood. We in FL will be watching developments very closely in the coming months and in the meantime certainly do not plan on relaxing our own security coverage.

At the NNMD monthly security meetings we regularly meet with law enforcement officers and they warn that they anticipate the usual upswing in petty criminal activity in the months leading up to the Christmas period. The current economic problems and tight job hiring situation will obviously exacerbate this. HPD and Precinct One Deputies also highlighted a growing trend towards robberies from vehicles parked at grocery stores and fast food places. If purses or valuables are visible it takes a thief just a few seconds to break a car window, open the door and take whatever they want. So, conceal your purses and other items before you arrive in the car park, as determined thieves will likely already be operating there and looking for potential targets.

Closer to home, in FL you may have occasionally spotted a new face working with our small security officer team. This orientation exercise provides another officer from our security company's organization to gain some valuable experience in FL operations and so to be available and immediately effective if one of our regular officers (Phillip or Garner) is taking an additional, and very well-earned, rest day.



Financial News

Ken Barker

It seems that every time we switch on the TV these days there is another horror story being related about the economic situation. Forrest Lake of course is not immune from the financial and job uncertainty problems which depress housing market prices and are leading to escalating costs for essential supplies and services. By maintaining a very tight control on costs and the use of our multi-talented in-house maintenance group we have been able to minimize, but not escape, the day to day financial difficulties first time that have impacted so many other local housing associations and their operations. In all our management activities your Board has always kept in mind our two main goals of maintaining home prices (as far as possible during these difficult times) by the presentation of that essential "good curb appeal" impression, and the provision of a safe and pleasant life style acceptable to the majority of our residents. Unfortunately, all this comes at an ever increasing cost.

With the valuable assistance of the Audit Committee (comprising five very talented and public spirited residents) we have just finalized the budget for Fiscal year 2011 (this runs from November 1, 2010 through October 31, 2011). The preparation and review of the budget takes many weeks of detailed work by Board members and key employees, and much tough decision making is involved. We will talk about this in more detail next month.

In the meantime, as we move towards the final month of our Fiscal Year 2010, here follows the year to date (YTD) figures for the preceding 10 months through August 31, 2010.

	Budget YTD Thru 8-31-10	Actual YTD Thru 8-31-10
Total Income	\$ 742,292	\$ 738,955
Total Expenses	\$ 719,542	\$ 742,949
Net surplus before Appropriations	\$ 22,750	\$ 14,006
Total Appropriations due	\$ (48,600)	\$ (48,600)
Surplus to General Fund	\$ (25,850)	\$ (34,594)

Warning: Bottle Bombs!

Submitted by Dan Cocozza
Verified by Snopes.com

Please read the email below. Call 911 if you suspect you have found one; better to be safe than sorry.

Kids are putting Drano, tin foil, and a little water in soda bottles and capping it up - leaving it on lawns. When you go to pick up the trash, and the bottle is shaken just a little - in about 30 seconds or less it builds up a gas and explodes with enough force to remove some of your extremities. The liquid that comes out is boiling hot as well.

Don't pick up any plastic bottles that may be lying in your yards, streets, sidewalks, gutters, etc.

Pay attention to this:

1. a plastic bottle with a cap.
2. a little Drano.
3. a little water..
4. a small piece of foil.

Disturb it by moving it; and BOOM!! No fingers left and other serious effects to your face, eyes, etc. People are finding these "bombs" in mailboxes and in their yards, just waiting for you to pick it up intending to put it in the trash. But, you'll never make it!!! It takes about 30 seconds to blow after you move the thing.

FORREST LAKE TOWNHOUSE ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES August 19, 2010

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

Earline Soteris called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

The Minutes of the July meeting were approved.

Treasurer: There is an YTD loss of \$36,939. The majority stems from nonpayment of maintenance fees by homes in foreclosure. Below is the breakdown:

	Budget YTD 7/31/10	Actual YTD 7/31/10
Total Income	\$ 668,063	\$ 664,122
Total Expense	\$ 647,588	\$ 657,321
Net Surplus before Appropriations	\$ 20,475	\$ 6,801
Total Appropriations	\$ 43,740	\$ 43,740
Surplus to General Fund	\$ (23,265)	\$ (36,939)

Maintenance: The renovations on the back of five buildings have been completed. This is an ongoing project until all buildings are completed.

Landscape: Bids from five landscaping companies are being reviewed.

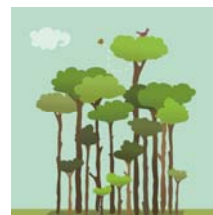
Security: We now have a camera in the mail room. We currently have ten cameras throughout the property for security purposes.

New Business: The Audit Committee has reviewed the 2011 Budget and has forwarded a total of twenty-three questions to the Board. Responses are being prepared. We are in the process of taking bids for the trash management contract which expires at the end of September.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Bob Wharton, Secretary



Head for the trees...

Let's shelter from the rain...

Submitted by **Ken Barker**

Good idea? Not necessarily, because Security and Maintenance Department have both reported several incidents recently where during a brief rain and wind storm large branches have suddenly dropped to the ground. In addition, we have some very tall trees in our grounds and these often attract lightning strikes during electrical storms. Only last month another tree on the east side of FL was struck and if anyone had been sheltering under it at the time it would have really ruined their day. So take heed.

Neighborhood News:

- Condolences to **Irene Graham** on the loss of her longtime dog, Nina.
- Welcome new neighbors: **Amando** and **Martha Perez** (#171.)
- It's official! The long-awaited demolition of Candelight Trails began on September 16th.

Written by a Cop for Women's Safety

Submitted by **Stephanie Rush**

I published this or something similar to this several months ago, but thought it bears repeating just to be alert and aware! I did NOT check it out on Snopes.com – so take it for what it's worth! (pw)

1. Tip from *Tae Kwon Do*: The elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you are close enough to do it, do!
2. If a robber asks for your wallet and/or purse, DO NOT HAND IT TO HIM. Toss it away from you...chances are that he is more interested in your wallet and/or purse than you and he will go for the wallet and/or purse. RUN LIKE MAD IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!
3. If you are ever thrown into the trunk of a car, kick out the back tail lights and stick your arm out the hole and start waving like crazy. The driver won't see you, but everybody else will.
4. Women have a tendency to get into their cars after shopping, eating, working, etc., and just sit (doing their checkbook or making a list, etc.) DON'T DO THIS! The predator will be watching you, and this is the perfect opportunity for him to get in on the passenger side, put a gun to your head, and tell you where to go. As soon as you get into your car, lock the doors and leave. If someone is in the car with a gun to your head, DO NOT DRIVE OFF...instead gun the engine and speed into anything, wrecking the car. Your air bag will save you. If the person is in the back seat, he will get the worst of it. As soon as the car crashes, bail out and run. It is better than having them find your body in a remote location.
5. A few notes about getting into your car in a parking lot or parking garage:
 - A. Be aware: look around you, look into your car at the passenger side floor, and in the back seat.
 - B. If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door. Most serial killers attack their victims by pulling them into their vans while the women are attempting to get into their cars.
 - C. Look at the car parked on the driver's side of your vehicle, and the passenger side. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to walk back into the mall or work and get a guard/policeman to walk you back out. It is always better to be safe than sorry!
6. Always take the elevator instead of the stairs. Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot...especially at night!
7. If the predator has a gun and you are not under his control, always run! The predator will only hit you (a running target 4 in 100 times; and even then, it most likely will not be a vital organ. RUN, preferably in a zig-zag pattern.
8. As women, we are always trying to be sympathetic: STOP! It may get you raped, or killed. Ted Bundy, the serial killer, was a good-looking, well-educated man, who ALWAYS played on the sympathies of unsuspecting women. He walked with a cane, or a limp, and often asked for help into his vehicle which is when he abducted his next victim.

9. Another Safety Point: Someone told me that her friend heard a crying baby on her porch one night and called the police because it was late and she thought it was weird. The police told her, "Whatever you do, do not open the door." The lady then said it sounded like the baby had crawled near a window, and she was worried that it would crawl to the street and get run over. The policeman said, "We already have a unit on the way. Whatever you do, do not open the door." He told her that they think a serial killer has a baby's cry recorded and uses it to coax women out of their homes thinking that someone dropped of a baby. He said that they have not verified it, but have had several calls by women saying that they hear baby's cries outside their doors when they're home alone at night.

10. Water Scam! If you wake up in the middle of the night to hear all your taps outside running or what you think is a burst pipe, do not go out to investigate! These people turn on all your outside taps full blast so that you will go out to investigate – and then they attack!



Important Phone Numbers

Office Manager (<i>Cheryl</i>)	713-681-3591
Property Manager (<i>Pokey</i>)	713-956-6236
Security (<i>Wayne or Garner</i>)	713-201-5656
	713-204-2240
Emergency (Life Threatening)	911*
Houston Police Dept. (non-emergency)	713-222-3131
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

Correction: My apologies to **Philip Solerno** – I printed his letter which he submitted last month, but I misspelled his name. It is Philip with one "L" – sorry! - pw

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.