

# THE FLASH

*Fountain Lakes Newsletter*

MAY 2019

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## Maintaining Fountain Lakes

Our President Ryan Willoughby would like to thank everyone in advance for their patience while Fountain Lakes amenities are being improved. Repairs are going on with the pool, the tennis and pickleball courts, the bocce court, the shuffle board court, and so on. Everything is getting better! We have a very active recreational community in Fountain Lakes and want to be able to accommodate even more participants, as exercise and social interaction are the major components of a healthy life.

With Fountain Lakes Blvd resurfaced, the community certainly looks renewed. Now it is our turn to make sure our properties are well maintained, both in the landscaping and with the building. Our community is deed restricted, which means there are enforceable expectations for maintenance, and that changes, including things like new roofs, need to go through an Architectural Review Committee to ensure that the change reflects the community standards. Unfortunately home maintenance is ongoing and must be regularly attended to, otherwise a community can look untidy and go downhill. We have the luxury of doing our maintenance ourselves, thus saving money, compared to other communities who pay high fees for maintenance to be done. However the need to do regular maintenance every year remains, either by doing it yourself or hiring professionals to keep your Fountain Lakes home and property looking good.

Is your lawn weed-free, your shrubs trimmed and not leggy, mulch well topped up and tidy, beds well defined and weed-free, mailbox painted, house exterior clean and painted? If you are a snowbird you can start to plan now for the maintenance that you will complete, or arrange for, when you return to Estero for another fabulous season in 2019-2020.

If you want professionals to assist you with your landscape, email us and we will suggest companies who could help. Driftwood and other nurseries are just a short drive up 41, and they can suggest sprays and fertilizers you can use. However be aware that dollar weed and some of the other perennial weeds, can only be eradicated with sprays more powerful than non-licensed individuals can use. We tried to spray ourselves, but ended up having to hire professional sprayers.

If you require house painting, let us know and we can try to arrange reduced costs by having the same company quote on painting a number of homes in Fountain Lakes. There is often economy in numbers!

It is exciting to see how much better Fountain Lakes is looking each year, and this will pay off in personal enjoyment, pride of ownership, and when the time comes to sell, fast sales and higher values.

## Fountain Lakes Real Estate Update

*As he is a resident of Fountain Lakes, and was willing to help, I asked Sean Lorch to compile some Real Estate statistics for our newsletter.*

The 2019 housing market started off slowly, but has picked up in recent weeks. As of April 12th 2019, 6 listings have closed in Fountain Lakes which is well below average. The good news is there are currently 14 pending contracts so the closed sales number will be jumping dramatically in the next 45 days. This jump should get us back to normal levels. I will report on these sales after they officially close. In the meantime, please reach out anytime if you have any questions or if there is some information I can search out for you.

### 2019 Fountain Lakes Year to Date Closed Sales

|                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 21707 Sungate Ct          | \$250,000 on 1/02/19               |
| 3700 Bali Lane            | \$239,628 on 1/25/19 (foreclosure) |
| 22705 Forest View Dr      | \$402,500 on 1/28/19               |
| 22380 Fountain Lakes Blvd | \$278,000 on 3/18/19               |
| 22794 Snaptail Ct         | \$288,000 on 3/21/19               |
| 3731 Springside Dr        | \$350,000 on 4/01/19               |



As a realtor of almost 15 years, I've learned a thing or two about technology and would be happy to help Fountain Lakes residents out at any time with their technology on a complimentary basis. If you are not familiar with technology it is always good to have a friend nearby who can assist you to get started or to move to the next level of expertise. Whether it's your iPhone, printer or computer, reach out to me and I'll do my best to get you fixed up.

Sean Lorch - Call or text me at 239.298.6760 or email me at [realtorsean6565@gmail.com](mailto:realtorsean6565@gmail.com)

# Make Your Summer Berries Last Longer

One of the cardinal rules of keeping berries mold-free is to leave them unwashed until the moment before consumption... but by washing your berries in a solution of vinegar and water, you can extend their shelf-life by days (sometimes even weeks!). In a large bowl, make a diluted vinegar bath—1 cup vinegar, 3 cups water—and give your berries a dunk. The vinegar will eliminate any pesky mold and bacteria.

Rinse them well under the tap to remove the vinegar. Line your salad spinner with about 3 layers of paper towels in order to create a pillow for your berries, then spin your berries for about 15 seconds, or until they are completely dry.

Place them well spaced in a sealable container lined with paper towels and leave the lid partially open as to avoid trapping moisture.

## Hurray... the vote was Successful!

The Capital Contribution vote was successful and new buyers will be making increased capital contributions to our Fountain Lakes reserve funds. This will benefit all current residents of Fountain Lakes, as a good reserve fund is excellent insurance for our community and provides peace of mind to new purchasers that they are buying into a community with a proper financial reserve backing it.

## Take Fabulous Action Shots with “Burst Mode” on your iPhone or iPad

Burst mode is best used for moving subjects like photographing animals or birds ....or children playing or children jumping into the pool or playing in the ocean. For any action shots burst mode is perfect.

Instead of one click, you simply hold down the shutter button on your iPhone or iPad camera and many photos will be taken in close proximity to each other. You will hear a constant clicking sound in rapid succession. The pictures that you take in burst mode will be stacked one on top of the other in your picture file. When you touch that stack of pictures, the word “select” will appear at the top of your camera screen, touch it and then the

## Removing Berry Stains

Berries are delicious but do have a tendency to end up staining clothes or linens.

Do a quick treatment of the stain immediately. While the blemish is still fresh, stretch the fabric over a bowl until taut. From as great of a height as possible, pour boiling water in a smooth, steady stream over the affected area. This should remove the bulk of the stain and allow you to breathe a little easier.

Submerge the stained part of the fabric in a bowl of white vinegar for about an hour or more. (Apple cider vinegar also works well, but it will leave your fabric with a yellow tinge.) Wring out the fabric. If the stain remains (and let's be real: berry stains are persistent), apply non-gel whitening toothpaste to the area and rub, rub, rub! Rinse well and remove excess water. Repeat as needed. Just because the stain didn't come out at first, don't despair; work at it again.

## Alligators

Many of us really enjoy seeing the alligators in the lakes around Fountain Lakes, but alligators have recently been seen roaming the neighborhood! This one was in Forest Ridge Shores. This is mating season for alligators, so you may see some more activity than other times of the year. We do have a preserve in our community so it is not unusual to see wildlife.

Please do not approach, feed, or antagonize alligators. Notify the Wildlife Fish and Game organization if it is aggressive.



pictures will be laid out one beside the other and you'll be able to scroll through them.

Select the ones that you like, by touching the little square in the bottom right hand corner of the pictures where a little checkmark will appear. Then when you have selected all that you want, click the word “Done” Your camera will give you the option of only saving the ones you checked and getting rid of the rest of the pictures taken in burst mode, rather than you having to go in and delete 20 or 30 individual photos. The camera simply deletes all the ones you don't want, all at one time, so it's very handy. The pictures that you selected are saved in your picture file.

# Be Warned of an “Assignment of Benefits” Scam

## *Do Not Sign Assign Your Insurance Benefits*

Estero officials are warning residents of this scam that is being used, especially by roofers. An assignment of benefits agreement gives the rights of your insurance claim or the benefits of your insurance policy to a third party...the roofers. Basically, a third party outside of your insurer will have the ability to file a claim, make decisions regarding the repair or replacement of your roof, and collect insurance payments – all without you being involved.

### **Why Should You Avoid Signing an Assignment of Benefits Agreement?**

Because filing an insurance claim can be a bit of a headache due to the bureaucracy of everything involved, an assignment of benefits agreement may seem like a good idea. Why wouldn't you want your roofing company to just handle the insurance claim as well as whatever repairs are required? The reason why is because you're giving up all control related to the process. This means:

- The roofer will have the rights and benefits of your insurance policy.

- The insurer will only communicate with the roofer regarding the claim.
- You won't have any say or be able to make any decisions regarding the claim.
- The roofer will be able to file suit against your insurer without your knowledge.
- The roofer could endorse checks on your behalf.

The assignment of benefits agreement is legally binding and can't be canceled. It also isn't needed for repairs to begin. The State of Florida has many helpful resources to download and read before you sign any sort of contracts with a roofer.

Assignment of Benefits of insurance contracts also happens with auto insurance in Florida. The scam goes something like this: Shopper has a chipped or cracked windshield. The shopper is approached in the parking lot of the store with much of the same scenario, the contractor will repair the windshield while shopping so just sign this contract and the contractor will handle everything with the auto insurance company. Another nightmare begins!

## **A Safe Habit**

So that servers cannot change the amount of your tip, write the total amount of the bill, including the tip, below the numeric total and above the signature line on your visa, like you would write it on a check. You never know when a blank customer copy might be seen as an invitation a dishonest server to adjust your tip after you leave, so always keep your copy of the receipt because it will make it much easier to dispute any suspicious charges that might pop up.

## *We Need a Volunteer for This Important Task*

The Halfway Creek is the only drainage point to the Estero Bay for Fountain Lakes. All of our 3 lakes are connected and drain to this creek. The creek starts east of I75 and flows down past West Bay. The halfway creek committee has just got a new gauge in the creek near the FPL right of way. During the rainy season (June to October), the gauge is read weekly and reported to the VP of Oakbrook Properties, the overall owner/developer of Coconut Point. The gauge measures how high the creek is above sea level. Last year the readings ranged from 9.5 to 11.0 ft. The homes/condos/villas/apartments in Fountain Lakes are around 13 to 16 ft. above sea level. When Fountain Lakes is flooded, the creek level is above our lake level. When the creek flows to the Estero Bay, our lakes (our water retention ponds) recede. During the dry months, the creek is very low. The Fountain Lakes Board of Governors has a company come in to clean up blockage in the creek and also to reduce the invasive plants around the creek. South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) inspects the creek and works with us to be compliant with the laws and regulations. We are all working together to manage our water flow and retention. If anyone is interested in volunteering to help read the meter, contact Pam Dionise at 925 584 1387. We do need your help!



# April Board Meeting Notes

Thank you to Janet Hildebrand for sharing her personal notes from the last Board meeting.

**1) The Annual meeting** was reconvened and the result of the Proxy extension was discussed. The Vote to increase the Capital Contribution did pass so contribution for a single-family home will be \$1,000 paid for by the buyer.

**2) ECCL gave a presentation** to explain what the group does for the community. ECCL played a big part in getting Lee Health facility established. An observation on my part: I have always heard the facility called a hospital. In fact, that is what is stated in the presentation. But... yesterday Mike took our elderly neighbor to the facility with severe breathing problems. They treated him but had to transport him to NCH because they are not a 24-hour facility. Strange... never heard of a "hospital" that does not provide 24-hour service.

**3) The Treasures report** was very good. The reserves are pooled and we have over \$500,000 in it. Reserve interest is \$1,700 for the month. The Master Association currently does not have a deficit. Comcast paid over \$100,000 as a one-time payment which helped our deficit problem.

**4) FLLM - Ft Lakes Land Management** (the sewer plant property) has been dissolved. An Audit was done to make sure everything is on the up and up.

**5) Document - Rewrite** - The lawyer has been contacted. The Board asked the Contract Committee to work with Pegasus and the lawyer regarding the update. The committee will meet with Pegasus 4/19 at 10 AM to get started. A year ago, President Willoubhy had worked with the ARC committee

and the neighborhood presidents to draft standards for FT. Lakes that will be a basis for us to start.

**6) FLASH** - is being sent out via email to the neighborhood presidents. It is the president's responsibility to pass it along to their residents. If you are not getting the FLASH, contact your neighborhood president. There are also copies of the FLASH in the office.

**7) JRC** has use of the land and building on the sewer plant property. In exchange, he is removing exotics and hooked up the electricity. New lights will be installed around the storage units. It was noted that there has been some vandalism to boats stored there.

**8) JRC Landscape** provided a Letter regarding maintenance of the common area and clubhouse. Golf course Aerification and top dressing will take place on May 8. Beginning in June, tee boxes will be repaired one every week until complete.

**9) Social Committee** - Vicki Miller is the new Chairperson for the Social Committee. Wish her success in her new task.

**10) Halfway Creek** - Pam convinced Ned Dewhurst SWFWM to install a new gauge on the creek. It cost close to \$3,000 to get the gauge set - Thank you Pam for getting them to pay for it. Solitude maintains the Creek. Take note: we can ONLY spray and/or remove exotics. It is a preserve and we are not allowed to remove anything other than exotic. If a tree fall it must stay where it falls. The city is doing a study of Flow ways and drainage to see where dredging is necessary.

**11) New office person** - Vangie is our new office person. She is in the office from 8:30 - 12:30 Mon-Fri. Ashley and Sara are still our CAMs. The office hours are 8:30 - 7 PM Monday - Saturday.

**12) Sink Holes** - We have one bid to repair 5 sinkholes. One of the repair sites has 3 huge Oak trees over the top of the drain line. These trees must be removed in order to repair the line.

**13) Sea Wall** - portions of the top cap on the seawall (on the big lake) have broken off. We have one bid to repair the cap and seeking two more bids.

**14) School Bus safety** - Seabreeze residents have contacted FPL about placing a light on an existing pole near the bus stop. The board is looking at the bus stop site to see what can be done for better safety.

**15) Bocci Ball** - we have 55 people who play Bocci Ball. A request for another court was made but we would have to use common ground to install it. That would require a vote of the entire community to change the ground usage.

**16) FLIC contract.** Ft Lakes has a 10-year contract with FLIC regarding the irrigation. It states who owns what and who is responsible for maintenance and repairs. It was suggested the contract be reviewed prior to the expiration to see if a "rolling" 10-year contract would be a better way to go.

**17)** Did not get a date as to when the **Tennis/Pickle Ball courts** would be completed.

*Please thank our **VOLUNTEER** board members for all the time and dedication they give our association for our benefit.*