

# Emerald Gardens Jewel



www.EmeraldGardens.org

Fall / Winter 2015

## From the Desk of the President:

Hello fellow residents of Emerald Gardens,

Another 6 months have passed and the holiday season is fast approaching. During the last six months, we have been quite busy. As you may already know, we (actually, I should say the lake committee) has been working hard gathering information and filling out forms, so we can apply for a county grant to help us with the expense of maintaining and improving our beautiful lake. This has been a monumental task and I want to personally thank Melanie, Debra and Joan for all their time and hard work on this project. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

During our August and September meetings, we spent a majority of the time discussing our budget. I believe we all try very hard to ensure we spend the community's assessments wisely. Many of the board members (and homeowners) have dedicated their own time and in some cases money, to help save costs. To give you an example, the above mentioned lake committee has spent hours of their own time doing research, attending seminars, gathering estimates and completing paperwork in an effort to obtain grants from the county, to help with the cost of keeping up our lake. If we are able to obtain these grants, the savings will be enormous for all of us. Many of our fellow neighbors have donated time to replant the front entrance and assisted with the yearly distribution of mulch for the flower beds. We have neighbors that decorate for holiday occasions by putting up flags, hanging lights, serving on committees, etc. Had these folks not done this, some of the costs would have had to come from the association budget. We have some wonderful neighbors living here and I personally appreciate all that they do. It is amazing to see what can be done when people are willing to work together to help others in need.

Budget discussions are never easy and after careful consideration, we agreed to raise the dues to \$335.00 for next year. You will see a complete breakdown of expenses when the new budget is mailed out to all homeowners in November. In addition to our monthly expenses, we are trying to build up a reserve in case of an unexpected storm. Currently South Carolina is going through a state of emergency due to flooding. Neighborhoods are under water. Those types of natural disasters can be devastating for a community. It is important to build up a reserve, so we are not left with nothing, should something like that happen here at home.

Thank you.  
Petra

## The Current Board of Directors

President .....Petra Jata  
Vice President..... Gavin Christie  
Secretary ..... Chuck Berster  
Treasurer ..... Doug Miller  
Member at Large ..... John Kelner

Business Manager:

Kevin Billingsley, CAM37024

Webmaster:.....Kevin Billingsley

Newsletter Editor: ..Kevin Billingsley



Halloween is around the corner and the Board of Directors asks all homeowners please make sure your yard light is lit! As always, we expect many little ones in the neighborhood. Please drive safely and watch out for trick-or-treaters



*Welcome to our  
newest homeowners!*

**D & T Rosile**

4513 Diamond Cir N

**T & L Perrault**

4536 Topaz Ct.

**E & X Nguyen**

4579 Topaz Ct.

## Pencil in the date for the 2016 Annual Meeting

The Emerald Gardens Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday January 22, 2015 at St.

John's United Methodist Church. The doors open at 6:30 and the meeting will start promptly at 7:00pm



# From the Management Desk

First, I would like to take a minute and thank the homeowner's of Emerald Gardens. I just completed my 5th year as manager and while I am not often the most liked person in the community, (when violation letters go out) I do my best to serve the community with your best interest in mind.

With that said, what is the state of the community? It is my assessment as manager that we are on the right track. The Board is looking to the future and working to preserve our current assets. Over the next several months, we will be taking steps to improve the quality of our lake, cleaning and trimming the oak trees at both entrances and possibly some replanting at the Bliss entrance. We hope you are encouraged as you see these changes take place.

With the 2016 Budget, we continue to grow our 'reserve' accounts. It is the hope of the Board, that we are able to set enough monies aside, to support an unexpected event, such as a hurricane. While the county will aide us in cleaning up down trees etc., they will work at their pace. Should we need things handled quicker, we will incur the cost.

Have you been to the web site recently? You may notice some changes there as well. Email notices have gone out a few times in the past month, regarding these changes. If you still are not receiving these, please let me know. Visit the Contact Us page and provide me with your email address. We will not sell or pass along your email address. We will only email you with community information.

Thank you again.

Kevin Billingsley

Community Association Manager, CAM37024

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## HOA's... What is your Commitment as a Homeowner?

The association is glad you've found a home in our community. We presume it has all the amenities you were seeking and you're settling in nicely. This is the time the association likes to remind new homeowners that common-interest communities like ours create some unique obligations to the community and to other residents within it:

**Read and comply with the community's governing documents.** You should have received a package of documents well before you closed on your home. If you didn't, check the association's website or ask the manager or a member of the board for copies. Make sure you understand what's included in them, particularly the rules about pets, parking, your home's exterior maintenance, and architectural guidelines and when you must pay association assessments.

**Provide current contact information to association board members or the manager.** Make sure they know how to reach you in case of an emergency, and ask them to notify you of association meetings and other important events. If you rent out your home, provide contact information for your tenants also for use in an emergency.

**Maintain your property according to established standards.** The community's appearance can add value to all the homes within it—including yours—so it's important to keep landscaping neatly groomed and your home's exterior well-maintained.

**Treat association leaders honestly and respectfully.** Board members are homeowners—just like you—who have volunteered to give their time and energy freely to govern the community. While you should share your concerns about the community with them, do so in a way that's constructive, informative and helpful. Attend board meetings and vote in community elections. Board meetings are open to all who wish to sit in and keep up with issues under discussion. The association is a democracy, and your voice and vote can affect important issues. Pay association assessments and other obligations on time. Your regular assessments pay for common-area maintenance, amenities and other shared expenses. If you don't pay on time, the burden for paying your portion of the association's bills, like water, electricity and trash removal, falls on your neighbors.

# Time to clean out the garage...

**EGHOA ANNUAL COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE** The date is set! Everyone is welcome to participate in the Annual Garage Sale. November 7, 2015. Times: 8:00am until 1:00ish. During the morning of the sale, you are permitted to park your vehicle in the grass between the road and the sidewalk.



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## Emerald Gardens GEM Award

The second 2015 GEM award goes to 4450 DCS, owners Scott & Mara LaPorta. Congratulations to these homeowners. The GEM Committee recognizes this property for several recent improvements which has provided great curb appeal.

If your home is selected for the "Emerald Gem Award", you will receive a gift card and a sign to display in your yard recognizing your efforts. Congratulations to the winner and keep up the great work everyone, as you never know who will be the next award recipient.



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## Wilkinson Wall Maintenance - Time to clean

If your home backs up to the wall along Wilkinson, please remember to keep your trees and bushes trimmed off the wall. In order to maintain the life of the paint and abide by the warranty requirements, we need to keep the wall free of vegetation.

The Board is making plans to have the wall pressure washed. Prior to this work, we will notify the homeowners, to insure the vegetation has been trimmed. Thank you for your cooperation.

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## Your Backyard Lake or Pond

The freshwater lakes and ponds in our neighborhoods are man-made parts of a storm water system. When rainwater lands on rooftops, parking lots, streets, driveways and other impervious surfaces. The runoff flows into grates, swales or ditches located in neighborhoods that lead the water into a storm water pond.

A storm water pond helps prevent flooding. It allows pollutants to settle and be absorbed before it can drain into the ground water or into streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries or the gulf. Ground water is our main source of drinking water. Storm water ponds are designed to replicate natural processes and are often required to have aquatic and wetlands plants around the perimeter or in littoral zones to create wildlife habitat and help filter storm water runoff. For this reason, storm water ponds are not pristine swimming or fishing lakes (e.g. clear of vegetation or phytoplankton (algae)). Vegetation filters polluted runoff, traps sediments, controls the growth of exotic or nuisance vegetation and helps make the pond visually pleasing. Aquatic plants pump oxygen into the water and create habitats for wildlife by providing cover and nurseries for fish and other organisms.

In Sarasota County, the responsibility for permitting most storm water systems rests with both the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Sarasota County, while littoral zone monitoring is primarily managed by Sarasota County.

- After a developer completes construction of permitted systems in residential areas, the permit and the legal responsibility for maintaining these systems are typically passed on to a homeowners, condominium owners or property owners association.
- Then the upkeep and maintenance of the system becomes the responsibility of the association.
- Therefore, please make sure and coordinate with your respective association prior to implementing any management activities on common property.

For storm water ponds to do their job effectively, they must be managed properly on a regular basis. Preventing pollutants from entering a pond is much easier and cheaper than cleaning out a pond.

# ***Emerald Gardens, HOA***

***PO Box 21401***

***Sarasota, FL 34276-4401***

## **Littoral Zones**

Many of the ponds in Sarasota County have “littoral zones”, or shallow water areas that support aquatic vegetation and mimic natural wetlands.

Vegetated littoral zones provide numerous benefits, including:

- improving water quality in the pond before being discharged to other waters,
- providing aquatic habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife,
- helping to prevent erosion, and
- reducing the likelihood of algal blooms and exotic vegetation creating an undesirable monoculture.

Most littoral zones were required to be created when your property was originally permitted as part of the storm water management system.

Littoral zones are also required to be monitored by a professional environmental consultant until success criteria is achieved. In general, a littoral zone is considered successful when at least 85% of the zone is covered by at least three different desirable plants. In addition, nuisance or exotic vegetation such as cattails and primrose willow are not to exceed 15% of the zone.

When a littoral zone has been deemed successful, monitoring may cease. However, if the littoral zone becomes unsuccessful at some point in the future, monitoring may again be needed.

As with your any aspect of a pond, vegetated littoral zones need regular maintenance to become successful and optimize their values and functions. As such, littoral zone plants should not be removed, mowed or sprayed with herbicide and routine storm water pond maintenance should not negatively impact the littoral zone.

