



From the Desk of the President:

Hello Emerald Gardens Residents.

Summer is fast approaching and so is our semi-annual meeting. We had many residents attend our annual meeting and it was really nice to see everyone. I hope we have as many, if not more, attend our semi-annual meeting.

During our annual meeting there was some discussion regarding the possibility of privatizing our roads within Emerald Gardens. Many expressed concerns regarding vandalism that took place as well as several burglaries. This was not the first time this privatizing our roads has been raised and in the past we had always heard that it was too expensive to complete. Well, after the meeting I made some phone calls to the county to find out exactly what would be needed to complete this task. The following is the information I received for the county. Needless to say, it is quite extensive and as expected, quite expensive.

The first item need to complete this task is to have **100%** buy in from our 127 homeowners. The second item is to ensure our entrance could accommodate this. The entrance would need to be completely refigured to provide enough room for cars to turn around and we must allow for cars to stack three (3) cars deep. Provided there is enough room, the entire entrance would need to be ripped out and reconfigured. While I do not have exact figures, I can imagine it would come at quite an expense. If we were able to move past these two important items, we would also need to complete the following: Paperwork to vacate the right of way (another fee from the Sarasota County). Establish a maintenance agreement with the county and demonstrate we have sufficient cash on hand to pay for immediate repairs. This was estimated at **\$80,000.00**. We would need to establish a reserve account for future repairs including resealing the roads. Then there is the cost of proper insurance coverage, the value of which would need to be determined by the county, in order to cover the cost of unexpected damages/repairs. Water and public utility reviews would be required, noting possible changes that would also come at a cost. After this, we would need to take over the cost of maintenance for these systems. The subdivision plans would need to be changed. This would involve hiring a surveyor and engineer to submit new plans. The county estimated the cost to be as follows: Base fee of \$3,750.00 + acreage fee of $\$115 \times 43.44 = \$4,995.60$ + lots \$1,086.00 (estimate) + recording fees'. This totals approximately \$10,000.00. This does not include the cost of hiring an attorney to process all the legal issues.

As you can imagine, this would be quite an expense. Since we are a small community consisting of 127 homes, the special assessment to complete this would come at an estimated cost of **\$8,000.00 to \$10,000.00 per household**. This would not include the substantial raise in our dues in order to maintain the cost of the entrance, road maintenance and other related costs.

Many of us do not have the funds to pay that type of special assessment, nor do we have the funds to pay a substantial increase in our yearly dues. Since 100% buy in is needed, I believe it is safe to say that this would never come to pass. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as president of the Emerald Gardens homeowners Association.

Sincerely,

Petra Jata

Petra Jata



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Petra Jata

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Gavin Christie

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Member at Large
John Kelner

Business Manager
Kevin Billingsley, CAM #37024

Webmaster
Doug Miller

Jewel Editor/Designer
Gavin Christie



Thank you!

A special thank you for all the volunteers who came out in April and helped put down literally a dump truck load of mulch. Thanks go to Chuck Berster, Gavin Christie, Petra Jata, John Kelner, Melaine Marsh, Lee Meier, Debra Pietsch, Mike Temboris and Kevin Billingsley. With all the help, we were done in an hour! **Thanks again!**

**Welcome to the
NEW Homeowners**

May 2015 – 4507 DCN –
Phillip and Kara Lucia.

WELCOME

FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE PRESIDENT – GAVIN CHRISTIE



OTTERS - THE CUTEST OF KILLERS (READ KEVIN'S ARTICLE TO THE RIGHT FIRST) →

To elaborate further of Kevin's article about the alligator, I also had several conversations with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the trapper they had dispatched to deal with our gator. It is a very interesting relationship that the commission has with its trappers. There are no fees paid to trap alligators. In order for the them to earn money for their service, trappers sell the meat of the captured alligators to local restaurants.

Whereas Kevin's communication with the trapper was preventative based upon what it would or could do, my concern with the gator however was about what it might have done. I'll start at the beginning. Recently three otters and the aforementioned alligator all had made Emerald Gardens a temporary residence during the last few months. As Kevin mentioned in his article an alligator trapper was dispatched to "relocate" the alligator. After a first failed attempt to capture the seven footer, the alligator decided to move on... or so I thought.

Early one Saturday morning, the weekend after the failed attempt to capture the alligator, I was approached by my neighbor to tell me that one of my cats seemed to be dead on the edge of the lake. OH NO! I went there to find my cat of ten years, Yetty, soaking wet with bite marks and dead on the lakes edge. I immediately assumed it was the alligator. Maybe he had begun to eat Yetty and was startled and went back into the lake. But why was Yetty wet? Was it from the alligators mouth? Yetty's remains hadn't been overtaken by insects yet and was in a state of rigor mortis. I figured he had been dead for between 3 and 8 hours. Hey, I do watch CSI. After having the alligator trapper come out a third time to trap what I believed was the murderer of my cat, he informed me that it seemed that the alligator had moved on. The trapper also mentioned how an alligator of that size would have swallowed Yetty with one gulp. He then told me about the otters. Yes, the otters. They sure are cute, but can be very mischievous and like to kill small animals including cats and small dogs. They drag their victims into the lake, drown them, play with them for a while and then throw them back on the shore.

Otters are in the weasel family and are considered a nuisance animal in the Florida. During one of my conversations with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission they told me to shoot the otters. What? I couldn't do that so I called the trapper one last time to see if there was a market for otter meat. He laughed and told me no.

The murderous otters have since moved on, but sadly Yetty (a.k.a Yetty Spaghetti) is gone. During their short stay in our lake, they killed my cat. Keep that in mind next time we have a family of otters stop by Emerald Gardens.



SHORELINE RECONSTRUCTION AND PRESERVATION

In December, Kevin and I met with the Sarasota county Environmental Services to discuss preserving our lake and shoreline in a more natural way. The representative recommended "lake (pond) naturalization" and provided us with a color brochure of plant suggestions for this process. As we toured a portion of the shoreline, he pointed out that some homeowners have let the grass grow up to a foot or more from the leading edge of the lake. He said this is a very good way to preserve the shoreline. Allowing the grass to grow taller in this area promotes root growth and holds the soil in place, preventing it from washing away. It also helps to prevent fertilizer from washing into the lake, which leads to increased algae growth. The representative also mentioned that the county provides grants, which will match our cost for plants up to \$10,000, if we use natural plant life to preserve our lake. During this time, Kevin and I also met with two shoreline companies to obtain estimates to restore our eroding north end of lake. In March, I again met with one of the shoreline companies to obtain an estimate to repair a culvert located on the southwest end of our lake. During our walk around the lake, I pointed out some area's that appeared to be eroding at a faster rate than others are. The representative explained to me that this type of erosion usually involves some type of water runoff, either from natural sources such as rain, or from man-made sources such as draining water from a pool or French drains leading from gutters to the lake. He recommended that any residence that have French drains check them from time to time to ensure they have not collapsed and that the hose from any pool pump be brought all that way down to the lake. Of course, I asked what impact that would have on any wild life in the lake such as plants, fish and other animals. He explained that the water we drain from our pools is clean water. Yes, there are some chemicals such as chlorine, but that would have little impact if all we were doing were allowing some run off to keep our pools from overflowing. He stated that unless we all drained our pools into the lake at one time, allowing some run off would have no impact on wild life living in or around our lake.

In March, Joan Rosenbaum, Melanie Marsh and Barbara Kolbe graciously volunteered to be on our Lake Committee. This committee has volunteered to look into applying for these grants, which includes completing the rather large multi-page application as well as meeting with the county. This will be a huge cost savings to us if we are able to obtain some of these grants. As a homeowner living on our lake, I have a stake it keeping up our shoreline and preserving our lake in a way that is more natural. Natural plant life will cut down on the need to use chemicals to control the algae in our lake. It will also promote additional animal life such as birds, fish and other wild life, which is what, makes our lake and Florida so beautiful. For those of us living on the lake, please partake in some of the suggestions explained above such as allowing your lawn to grow along the shore and to allow water drainage directly into the lake or out to the street. These little steps can go a long way to help preserve our lake and its shoreline. Thank you.



— FROM THE MANAGEMENT DESK —

Hello to Emerald Gardens Residents...

From the Management Desk –



Alligator or Otter?

Let me start from the beginning. As many of you know, we had some excitement recently with multiple sightings of an alligator in the lake. In an abundance of caution, I used the "barking chain" (excuse the Dalmatian pun) to quickly notify our residents and ask everyone to please use caution around the lake. I realize we have a few Otters, but the description was clearly that of an alligator.

I called Sarasota County and was asked to pass along a message to our residents. Please do not feed, or antagonize the gator. They went on to request, that we leave the gator alone and it will most likely move along. The County said unless the gator shows signs of aggression, they do not like to trap them. I was later informed the alligators are not relocated, they are harvested.

The feedback from the residents was strong, so I then called Florida Fish and Wildlife to report the gator. They took our information and dispatched a Trapper. After obtaining a permit, the trapper came out later that day and was very close to catching the gator, who he estimated to be 7 feet in length, when some curious kids stopped and spooked the gator back to the center of the lake.

The trapper returned the next day and after sometime, was unable to locate him/her again. He called me to say, keep your eyes open and should it return, to let him know.

I have not had a report of a sighting since. It is believed the gator moved on to another lake.

If you wish to receive our emails, please contact us via the web site with your email address. We will do our best to email only pertinent information.

Kevin Billingsley
Community Association Manager, CAM37024
Email: SRQCAM37024@gmail.com



SARASOTA COUNTY - With the rainy season fast approaching, residents and business owners are being reminded to keep lawn clippings out of local roadways.

Doing so will help to ensure that area waterways and aquatic life are protected, and prevent the possibility of costly damages to important infrastructure.

While it may seem harmless, yard debris can easily be transported to storm water pipes and ditches, which can lead to flooding and costly maintenance, costs which could also be passed on to homeowners. Plus, residents and business owners can be subjected to fines.

Yard debris also poses an environmental threat, because as it decomposes, nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are

released causing algae blooms, which can block sunlight and lead to fish kills and unsightly waterways.

Keeping the grass clippings on the lawn will not only protect the environment and local infrastructure, but also provide beneficial nutrients to the soil, and your lawn, according to Wilma Holley, a Florida Friendly Landscaping Specialist for the UF/IFAS Extension in Sarasota County.

"It's important to remember that keeping yard debris off the roadways is a benefit to everyone," Holley said. "Sarasota County's waterways are of vital importance, and protecting one of our most precious assets should be a top priority."



SAVE THE DATE – SEMI ANNUAL MEETING

[DATE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE]

THE EMERALD GARDENS SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY JULY 23, 2015 AT ST. JOHN'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND, OR PLEASE RETURN YOUR PROXY TO US. THE DOORS OPEN AT 6:30 AND THE MEETING WILL START PROMPTLY AT 7:00PM.



BLOCK PARTY



At our last general meeting it was discussed that it would be great if our community was, well more of a community. Therefore on October 3rd, 2015 from 4:00 PM - 9:00 PM, Emerald Gardens will be having a neighborhood party on Topaz Court. There will barbecue grills set up to cook any fare you might desire, hot dogs, hamburgers and coolers filled with soft drinks will be provided by the homeowners association for all to enjoy. Please feel free to bring your own "adult" beverages and food of your choice to share. A pot luck of sorts. This will be a great time to meet new neighbors, make new friends and catch up with old ones. There is plenty of time before the party, so stay tuned for more details.

Emerald Gardens HOA
PO Box 21401
Sarasota FL 34276-4401

The Emerald Gardens Jewel



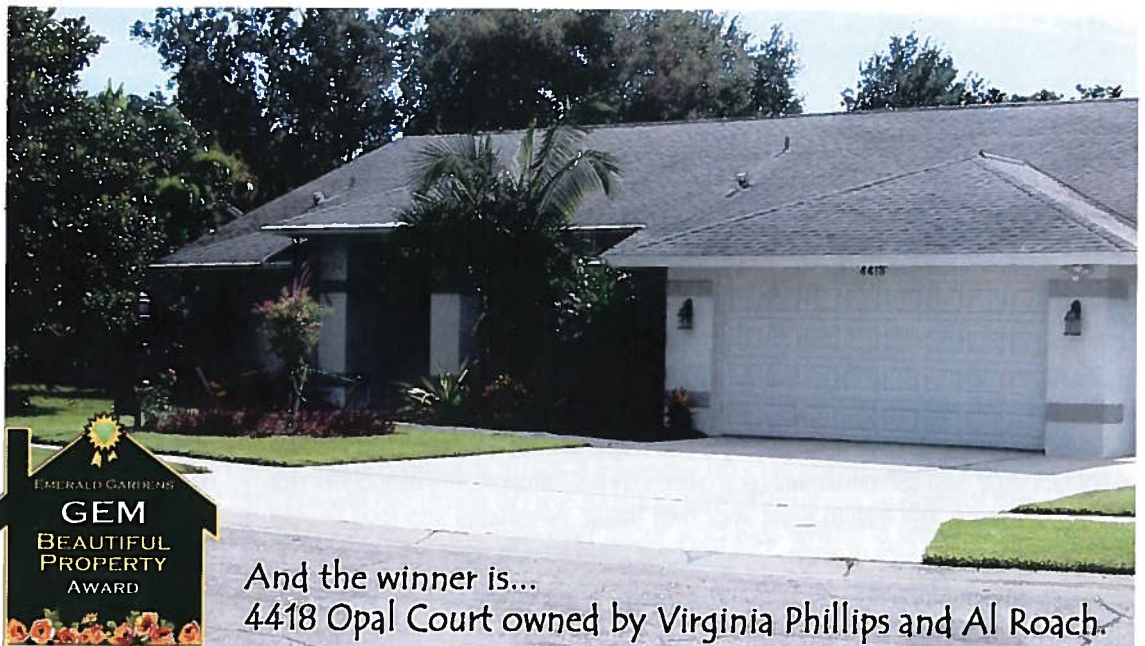
Emerald Gardens GEM Award

Submitted by the Nomination Committee –

Neighbors, you know that feeling when you work hard to keep your home and yard looking good and you stand back and say "Yeah that looks good", well you are not alone. There are many homes where pride and efforts are appreciated by neighbors and visitors alike making Emerald Gardens an attractive Sarasota neighborhood. With that said, the board has approved a semi-annual award for the "Most Improved" property. 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 first property to win the "Emerald Gem Award" which is 4418 Opal Court. Owners are Virginia Phillips and Al Roach.

Congratulations to the winner and keep up the great work everyone, as you never know who will be the next award recipient.

Notes: This award will be presented twice per year. Board Members and Committee Members are not eligible for the award. The winner will receive a gift card to a local restaurant as well as have a sign posted in their beautiful yard. A picture of their home will be displayed on our web site!



And the winner is...
4418 Opal Court owned by Virginia Phillips and Al Roach.