



MONTAGE NEWS – March 2011

The removal of 80 tons of decomposed granite in the bottom of the retention basin has been completed. The basin is draining better – it doesn't take as long for the lake in the bottom to disappear after a pool draining or a rain. We will continue to monitor the retention basin for a while to see if it is now acceptable. The next step would be to install a second drywell at a cost of \$15,000 to \$20,000.

The Landscape Architect the Board hired to develop the plans for the Perimeter Landscape Rejuvenation Master Plan failed to provide the plans for consideration at the January Board meeting. Plans are required for submission to Cathedral City Planning Department for their approval. So the project is still on hold. The Board hopes to get the project moving soon. Once we have an approved plan the project is intended to begin implementation in phases based on available funding in each successive year with a big start during 2011.

You all have received ballot packets by snail mail (required due to double blind envelope per State requirements). If you haven't, call Jennifer at PPM and request a replacement package.

We have 5 candidates running for the 3 positions on the Board that are up for election. Also, a ballot (not secret – must be signed to be valid) for the renewal (or not) of the Mission Hills Social Membership Agreement.

Please read, consider the information carefully for both ballots and return your ballots. The election ballots submitted will be the principal means of establishing a quorum at the March 19th Annual Homeowners Meeting. The MHCC Social Membership ballots will be used to determine whether to renew our memberships.

We now have 93 homeowners that have submitted the Consent Form to receive Community information electronically. If you received this Newsletter in the mail, you need to complete and submit a Consent Form. The

Consent Form is available on the website. Homeowners that have not submitted forms may be left in the dark on urgent issues.

I am still looking for all the help possible in producing the Newsletter. Volunteers for editor, contributors of articles, life events of homeowners, gossip, rumors, etc. – I'm not good at this, need help!

Jerry, thank you for your Gardener's Corner article.

There is room for several more articles that would be of interest to homeowners. If you would like to participate contact me (see Important Contacts below).

FLASH – Elizabeth Dreyfuss (one of our homeowner's) will be singing 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM Thursdays beginning March 3, 2011 at Cello's Restaurant (one of our advertisers) Call for reservations 760.328.5353. Also, TOMMY'S BEEN BUSY MAKING HIS LIMONCELLO AND...IT'S READY!!! Go soon – it sells out quickly every year.

NEW SCE SMART METERS

During November Southern California Edison had a contractor install new Smart Electric Meters in all homes within Montage. This was part of their plan for installing the Smart Meters for all customers throughout their service area.

I have recently received a complaint from a homeowner that with the new Smart Meter his electric bills have gone up approximately 50% compared to the same time periods last year. He intends to bring this up for discussion at the Annual Homeowner Meeting. He is looking to start a petition, protesting the Smart Meters.

I suggest you look carefully at your SCE bills for the last couple months and compare them to the same months for last year to see if you also see an unexplained increase.

ANNUAL HOMEOWNERS MEETING AND POT LUCK

The Annual Homeowner's Meeting and Pot Luck is going to be Saturday, March 19th at the Children's Discovery Museum in Rancho Mirage (by Pavilion shopping center). I hope to see you all there. I am always amazed at the good cooks we have in Montage – we will have a very good lunch.

Make sure to complete your ballots and mail or deliver them to PPM before the meeting or deliver them before the meeting starts on the 19th. The ballots received will be used to establish the quorum at the meeting. If we do not have ballots from more than 50% of the homeowners we will have to adjourn the meeting and reschedule. This happened in 2007 and all homeowners were assessed \$10 for the cost associated with holding a second meeting.

Gardner's Corner by Dr. Jerry Stamper

I moved to California from Texas where the mantra is "if you don't like the weather wait fifteen minutes and it will change". Sound familiar? A couple of weeks ago I picked my first ripe tomato. Two nights later I lost my plants to a freeze. "Prepare for the unexpected" should be the mantra in the desert. It is possible to protect most plants from extremes of weather.

Since we are still in a winter mode, I'll discuss some of the actions I take to protect my plants. Remember, I'm not authorized by anyone to give advice but I'm just sharing my experiences. Hopefully, this will encourage you to share some of your experiences with cold weather.

I grow tropical plants both in pots and planted in the soil. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Pots usually can be moved to protected areas. Knowing the windy areas will be helpful, cold wind is very damaging. I find moving plants close to a wall can help. Walls absorb heat during the day and release it after the sun goes down. Sometimes all we need is a couple of degrees to protect a plant. In addition, plants need to be well watered to protect from drying or desiccation by cold wind. That does not mean to leave them sitting in water. Just like people sitting in cold water can make a plant sick, even if it doesn't freeze. Gardenias are plants which are very susceptible to "wet feet syndrome". Covering plants is another option for protection.

There are some rules to follow as many people learned with the recent freeze. Just laying a covering on plants is not a guarantee of protection. Keeping the protective material above the plant allows for an air pocket which increases the effectiveness of the protection. Ideally the material should be impervious to water or at least water resistant. Shade cloth can work although it is not perfect. Placing newspapers beneath the shade cloth gives added protection. Plastic works as long as it doesn't touch the plant. Again, newspaper can be helpful. Be sure to remove the plastic when the sun comes out otherwise you may have a plant cooked in its own juices.

For small plants in the ground using an overturned pot is very effective. If the pot has a drainage hole it doesn't need to be removed. The hole prevents heat buildup that could be damaging to the plant.

Fortunately our freezes are light and of short duration so large plants and vines usually don't need protection. After the chance of frost or freeze passes don't be in a hurry to prune. Let the plant "tell" you the extent of the damage. Most plants have great regenerative ability.

Finally, if you lose a plant just think of it as nature's "survival of the fittest" philosophy. There are many great plants available at local nurseries. Soon the cold days/nights will be only a memory and we will need to think about protecting plants from sun and heat but that is a future topic.

Happy gardening!

ARCHITECTURAL & LANDSCAPE

The A & L Committee thanks you for your continued cooperation in making the community look good.

COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE LIGHTS

The next inspection of the perimeter and developer installed front yard landscape lights will be about March 2nd. The inspection will normally be the first Wednesday of every month (some months different due to weather or other conditions). If you notice a light out, notify Jennifer, she will inform Desert Properties Light Maintenance to look for that light in their next inspection.

STREET SWEEPING

Our streets are swept on Thursdays. Please make sure all cars, including service workers, are off the street. Also, be sure that trees are trimmed and don't interfere with the street sweeper.

DOGS

Dog walkers need to keep to the streets. Anyone caught letting their dog urinate or "do their business" on another homeowners property will be assessed a \$100 fine. There are no common areas within the Montage gates, except the retention basin. The areas along the walls by the mailboxes are private property, maintained by the adjacent homeowner. Please respect homeowner's property and keep your dog on the street area only.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be Saturday March 19, 2011 at 9:00 AM at the Children's Discovery Museum immediately preceding the Annual Homeowners Meeting. Come early any see your Board in action.

Check the community message board on the wall by the retention basin or the web site for the agenda. It will be posted at least 4 days before the meeting. We will also start posting the agenda on the website at least 4 days before each Board meeting.

Tom Tousignant, President

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Keep This Information Handy When You Would Like to Comment or Report an Issue:

Property Manager - Jennifer Zeivel 760-325-9500;

jzeivel@ppmInternet.com

President - Tom Tousignant

td2znot@aol.com

A & L Committee Chair - Sandy Nips

sandynips@hotmail.com

Neighborhood Watch Chair - Pam Price

760-202-8728

Cathedral City Police 760-770-0300

Police Emergency Only 760-202-2411

Cathedral City Fire 760-770-8200; Emergency 911

Newsletter Input, Comments or Suggestions...

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