



MONTAGE NEWS – September 2011

I am getting more support from other Board members by contribution of articles. In this issue Curt Beyer provided the articles on Gardening Calendar and Bits & Pieces. I also received a request for the articles on Gate Codes, Cats and Rats relayed from homeowners through PPM.

You homeowners may also submit article for the Newsletter on items of interest or concern to you.

First a comment on the letter we all received from the law firm of LoCoco-Smith last week. I have run it by PPM and the Board and the consensus of opinion is that it is just an “ambulance chaser” attorney trying to drum up business. The first homes built in Montage will be 10 years old next year. 10 Years is the statute of limitations for filing Construction Defect lawsuits.

To my knowledge, and those I contacted on this subject, there are no Construction Defects in the homes within Montage. Yes there have been problems with individual homes – I had problems with windows when I moved in – the subcontractor fixed them. There have been problems with termites in the Southeast corner of the development – the developer’s termite exterminator contractor took care of those. There have been isolated problems with electrical wiring – the contractor’s electrical subcontractor addressed those.

Over all Montage is a pristine community. The homes were very well built. We should all be confident that we are living in a premier community of the Coachella Valley. But, certainly, if you feel your home has defect(s) it is time to file a lawsuit to try to obtain some satisfaction. Note: Construction Defect lawsuits can drag out for years and typically the only ones that receive any money are lawyers.

Moving on – At the July Board meeting the Board approved a contract with MC Builders to re-paint the perimeter walls. They will be painted with a new color pallet that was obtained by the A & L Committee from a subcommittee of owners within

Montage that are artists. The Board approved the new color pallet; it is a beige based pallet, so it will not be as susceptible to fading. The walls will be painted in early September.

At the September Board meeting the Board will be evaluating bids for pumping the dry well and catch basing at the corner of Da Vinci and Van Gogh. The pumping will be done in the later part of September. It is important that no pools be scheduled to be drained between about September 10th and the end of the month. We have to pay for every gallon of water drained.

GATE CODES

The montage gate codes will be changed with the daylight saving time change in November. This year I have received many complaints that some homeowners have provided the homeowner gate codes to their gardeners, pool men and other service workers. Not only has this created noise problems for other owners (due to workers starting earlier than 7:00 AM or on Sundays). This is in violation of the CC&Rs and the Community Rules; it also exposes all owners to unnecessary risks. As I have learned by attending Community Associations Institute meetings and Cathedral City HOA Presidents Council meetings – service workers often share gate codes with their staff, family members, friends and gangs to which they may belong. The security compromises of “sharing” the homeowner gate code are real. Once they are out there is no telling how far they will be communicated. When our new gate codes are provided this year, please be responsible for keeping the homeowner’s gate code confidential and for use of only homeowners.

Once again - our gate are not security gates, only vanity gates. The bad guy can always find a way to get in, but you shouldn’t make it any easier for them.

CATS

Those of you that have cats that you allow to roam in the development are reminded that not everyone shares your fondness for your cat.

Several complaints have been received concerning roving cats using their neighbor's yards for "potty". Please control your cats, if you don't maybe the coyotes will.

RATS

There are rats around Montage. While we have a pest maintenance company to try to control them within the common areas (perimeter and retarding basin), it is up to individual homeowners to control them within their own yards. The easiest way to do this is not to attract them in the first place. The major attraction is fruit. Reminder – remove ripe fruit from your trees. And for part time residents – remove all fruit if it is going to ripen before you return.

GARDENING CALENDAR . . .

Taken from the Coachella Valley Water Districts "Lush & Efficient, Landscape Gardening in the Coachella Valley."

September

The 15th of this month launches the most important planting season of the year. Planting reaches its peak by October 15, when winter and spring annuals such as petunias, snapdragons and pansies are placed in their beds. This narrow window of time allows new plants to develop roots when the soil is warm before the cooler late fall and winter air temperatures slow plant growth. Sow seeds of wildflowers, set out trees, shrubs and perennials from containers. Plant bulbs and bulb cover such as sweet alyssum.

If renovating and reseeding lawn with annual or perennial ryegrass, slow down Bermuda grass growth by reducing irrigation and cease applications of fertilizer.

As part of soil preparation in flower and vegetable beds, add organic mulches and slow-release fertilizers.

If petunias, snapdragons and pansies have been planted continuously in the same soil for a number of years, apply a fungicide to prevent die-off problems with new plantings. Or plant these annuals in a new location, giving the old bed a rest.

Later in the month, as the path of the sun drops lower to the south, gradually taper off irrigation. However continue to deep-water trees and shrubs.

October

This is a month of sunny days, yet it's usually comfortable to work in the garden. Plants are thriving, and planting of most everything continues through the month. However, hold off planting cold-tender tropical subtropical plants such as citrus until spring, unless you have a microclimate at your home where plants are protected from wind and cold.

This is the month to turn your home landscape into a showplace. Everything is in your favor. The weather is mild and nurseries are loaded with fresh plants in containers, flats and pots. Well-rooted seedlings adjust readily to transplanting during this season. Moisten soil prior to planting. Water plants in gently after planting and continue to water regularly as they begin to become established. Avoid excessive moisture. Dig down into the soil with a trowel to a depth of 6 inches to make sure moisture penetration is adequate.

Continue to overseed Bermuda grass lawns until mid-October.

October is the best time to sow wildflower seeds, but you can continue up until mid-November.

November

Continue fall planting if you missed the October period. Plants will establish slower with cooler temperatures.

Apply high-nitrogen fertilizer to ryegrass-seeded lawns to spur health and green color as days shorten and colder nights slow growth.

Bring cold-tender plants in containers under shelter to protect from freezing temperatures.

By November, many perennials such as rudbeckia and gaillardia that flower from summer into fall have completed their bloom cycle. Cut back to basal growth and clean up leaf debris.

Chrysanthemums are in their prime. You can cut flowers for use in fresh arrangements. This also helps flowering branches from drooping excessively.

During October, November and into December, Texas rangers are in bloom. This makes it a good time to select plants by flower color by visiting your nursery. More than a dozen selections are now available.

Roses usually enter winter dormancy, although they may continue to bloom until severe frost. Keep soil moist. Wait to prune in late January or early February.

Hold off pruning or thinning citrus until after flowering ceases in spring.

BITS & PIECES

Walking dogs each day and routinely traveling each of the streets in our community some residents have a chance to see many small details and notice things that may be easily overlooked as many of the rest of us drive in and out to our daily activities.

Many of us have trees that are in need of trimming each year . . . But we also overlook that the branches of our trees need to be high enough for the street sweeper to pass under as well as to not obstruct the view of street signs at our corners and this may need to be accomplished at various additional times of the year.



Trees need to be trimmed to allow street sweeper to pass beneath them. Thinning the inner branches reduces the possibility of wind damage/uprooting.

Many of us have plants that are reproducing and setting out new starts that can be moved into pots toward relocation in our outer perimeter as we replant and re-landscape. These seemingly minor donations can save us all a great deal as we work to accomplish this large expense. This may apply to plants that have grown in and become visually disruptive. Give the management company a

call or let a board member know of any we may use and we will be in touch.

In observing the demonstrations by street sweepers competing for the bid to clean our streets this summer . . . I learned those of us with front yards of sand and rock need to have that sand about an inch lower than the curb it abuts.



This prevents the washing of dirt onto the street when we get rain and all but prevents the discolored patches that can be seen regardless of how well the street sweeper can clean. The use of a hoe or a comment to our gardener will help eliminate the problems of this kind.

Those of us living on the perimeter need to be aware that hedges and plantings that reach over

the wall are the responsibility of each appropriate homeowner. This applies to the branches and leaves trimmed which fall on the outside of our perimeter wall. These trimmings are not the responsibility of the gardeners that tend to our common areas. Please remind your gardeners of this as it can be a source of problems.

It has also been noticed and reported to the board that some of the gardeners are blowing the spent bougainvillea blossoms and leaves and trimmings into the streets and into the retarding basin when they feel no one is paying attention. Please, help us to keep our community looking its best by helping us all be responsible on our property and for those assisting us in maintaining it.

Gardeners and contractors should be reminded by home owners that they cannot begin their work within our community prior to 7 a.m. This is city ordinance as well as a part of our CC&Rs. It is important that the gate code being used by non-residents be the one provided as their gate code is only good during working hours. With the burglaries and etc. giving our resident gate code out puts all of us at risk. It seems like a small thing but we have responsibility for all of the homes in Montage. **(Cathedral City Municipal Code: Title 11 PEACE, MORALS AND SAFETY: chapter 11.96 NOISE CONTROL)**

It is appreciated that many of those walking for pleasure or to let their pets have some exercise are often seen picking up items of trash and etc. as they move through the community. These individuals are an additional part of the security for all of us as even small changes are noticeable to those who have the time to see those details each day. It is great to say hello when we see each other and get to know all our neighbors. It is important to know who belongs here and who is watching out for our mutual welfare and security.

QUAKE SENSE

From: Doug Capp, a Rescue Chief and Disaster Manager

I am the Rescue Chief and Disaster Manager of the American Rescue Team International (ARTI), the world's most experienced rescue team. I have crawled inside 875 collapsed buildings, worked with rescue teams from 60 countries, founded rescue teams in several countries, and I am a

member of many rescue teams from many countries.

The first building I ever crawled inside of was a school in Mexico City during the 1985 earthquake. Every child was under its desk. Every child was crushed to the thickness of their bones. They could have survived by lying down next to their desks in the aisles. It was obscene – unnecessary.

Simply stated, when buildings collapse, the weight of the ceilings falling upon the objects or furniture inside crushes these objects, leaving a space or void next to them - NOT under them. This space is what I call the 'triangle of life'. The larger the object, the stronger, the less it will compact. The less the object compacts, the larger the void, the greater the probability that the person who is using this void for safety will not be injured. The next time you watch collapsed buildings, on television, count the 'triangles' you see formed. It is the most common shape, you will see, in a collapsed building.

MORE EARTHQUAKE SAFETY

1) Most everyone who simply 'ducks and covers' when building collapse are crushed to death. People who get under objects, like desks or cars, are crushed.

2) Cats, dogs and babies often naturally curl up in the fetal position. You should too in an earthquake. It is a natural safety/survival instinct. You can survive in a smaller void. Get next to an object, next to a sofa, next to a bed, next to a large bulky object that will compress slightly but leave a void next to it.

3) Wooden buildings are the safest type of construction to be in during an earthquake. Wood is flexible and moves with the force of the earthquake. If the wooden building does collapse, large survival voids are created. Also, the wooden building has less concentrated, crushing weight. Brick buildings will break into individual bricks. Bricks will cause many injuries but less squashed bodies than concrete slabs.

4) If you are in bed during the night and an earthquake occurs, simply roll off the bed. A safe void will exist around the bed. Hotels can achieve a much greater survival rate in earthquakes, simply by posting a sign on the back of the door of every room telling occupants to lie down on

the floor, next to the bottom of the bed during an earthquake.

5) If an earthquake happens and you cannot easily escape by getting out the door or window, then lie down and curl up in the fetal position next to a sofa, or large chair.

6) Most everyone who gets under a doorway when buildings collapse is killed. How? If you stand under a doorway and the doorjamb falls forward or backward you will be crushed by the ceiling above. If the door jam falls sideways you will be cut in half by the doorway. In either case, you will be killed!

7) Never go to the stairs. The stairs have a different 'moment' of frequency (they swing separately from the main part of the building). The stairs and remainder of the building continuously bump into each other until structural failure of the stairs takes place. The people who get on stairs before they fail are chopped up by the stair treads - horribly mutilated. Even if the building doesn't collapse, stay away from the stairs. The stairs are a likely part of the building to be damaged. Even if the stairs are not collapsed by the earthquake, they may collapse later when overloaded by fleeing people. They should always be checked for safety, even when the rest of the building is not damaged.

8) Get near the outer walls of buildings or outside of them if possible - it is much better to be near the outside of the building rather than the interior. The farther inside you are from the outside perimeter of the building the greater the probability that your escape route will be blocked.

9) People inside of their vehicles are crushed when the road above falls in an earthquake and crushes their vehicles; which is exactly what happened with the slabs between the decks of the Nimitz Freeway. The victims of the San Francisco earthquake all stayed inside of their vehicles. They were all killed. They could have easily survived by getting out and sitting or lying next to their vehicles. Everyone killed would have survived if they had been able to get out of their cars and sit or lie next to them. All the crushed cars had voids 3 feet high next to them, except for the cars that had columns fall directly across them.

COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE LIGHTS

The next inspection of the perimeter and developer installed front yard landscape lights will be about September 7th. The inspection will normally be the first Wednesday of every month (some months differ due to weather or other conditions). If you notice a light out, notify Jennifer, she will inform the light maintenance company 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. Dog owners have even more responsibilities than cat owners.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be Thursday, September 15, 2011 at 3:00 PM at the offices of Personalized Property Management, 69850 Adelina Road, Cathedral City.

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.

Tom Tousignant, President

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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

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President - Tom Tousignant

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A & L Committee Chair - Sandy Nips

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Neighborhood Watch Chair - Pam Price

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Newsletter Input, Comments or Suggestions...

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