



**.. MARCH / APRIL 2014 ..**

**President's Note:**

Like it or not . . . we live in a gated community that is set forth as an association governed by statutes and guidelines for our mutual benefit. Therefore, we are all interconnected and have responsibilities to each other. We don't have to like our neighbors but . . . We should know them. They are part of the security and protection of your property and are the first ones to possibly come to your assistance in an emergency.

So . . . I all too often hear from residents:

- "I don't want to get involved in the politics."
- "I am only here on weekends or a couple of months each year so I don't want to get involved with my neighbors or the association."
- "I don't live here full time so the CC&Rs and rules don't really apply to me."
- "I can't be bothered with all of that as I use this property as a rental and it is too much stuff to expect my tenants to follow."
- "Don't tell me what I can and can't do . . . It is my property and I don't see everyone else paying attention to the rules."

I personally am not aware of any real "politics" in the Montage. I have been on the board for a number of years and we rarely have any problems. There are times when equipment malfunctions or needs repair and it takes longer to be corrected than we would like, but . . . In general things get handled and the area is maintained pretty well. Our

management company is responsive and tries to meet all homeowner needs and concerns in a timely manner. Yes, there are snags at times but . . . a little patience and understanding . . . and it all works out.

Perfection is an ideal . . . Not a reality. Each of us contributes to the overall efficiency or entropy of our community. Non-involvement and isolation devalues the Montage and the overall value of our properties.

I am proud of the Montage. I am proud of the dedication of your Board of Directors. I am grateful for all of the things PPM does for us which most of us have no clue goes into the work they do for us. I am proud to recognize almost two thirds of the residents here although by sight if not by name. I talk to potential home buyers about the good things we have to offer as do some of the others who live here.

We all benefit . . . In many ways . . . by knowing our neighbors, being observant and making even a small effort to be involved in where we live.

<p><b>REMINDER: ANNUAL MEETING</b> <b>SAT. MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup>, 11:00 AM</b> <b>CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY</b> <b>MUSEUM</b></p>
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The Annual Meeting of the Homeowners / Residents of the Montage at Mission Hills is just around the corner. The annual pot luck, election of board members and an update on things Montage. It is an important opportunity to come together and see our neighbors and meet all of the others that are concerned for our homes and property.

## **A NOTE FROM NICK NICKERSON, VICE PRESIDENT AND SOON TO LEAVE THE BOARD . . .**

Hello Neighbors. As I am nearing my three year term as a Montage at Mission Hills Board Member, I wanted to take a moment to thank each of you for allowing me to serve our community. I believe each and every one of our homeowners would benefit from serving a term on the Board or getting involved with one of our Committees. I can tell you from experience that your Board and Committee Members are all dedicated volunteers who have the best interest of our community at heart.

As I reflect on the past three years I am reminded of a few of the key improvements the Board provided during my tenure. These included: the removal, replacement and restoration of our perimeter landscape along Gerald Ford and Da Vall Drive; the drainage corrections to our community's detention basin which eliminated the standing water problem and helped to minimize the presence of mosquitoes; the installation of new landscape within the detention basin that not only provided an aesthetically pleasing look, but also served to stabilize the slopes surrounding the basin to prevent further erosion; the repair of the pot holes along the edges of our streets and the application of sealcoat slurry; and the replacement and modernization of our gate controllers.

I would like to leave you with a few thoughts:

- Many of us, me included, have received rule violation letters or landscape/architectural correction letters. These letters are not sent to you with malicious intent. Rather, as a reminder that the community has a whole adopted rules and/or standards that we all agreed were in our best interest. If a majority of our homeowners continually break a rule or ignore a standard, then I submit the

rule or standard is no longer accepted by the majority and should be changed.

- During my three years on the Board, I have been approached by residents who reported their neighbor(s) breaking a rule, and then while I was paying attention to the neighbor, I noticed that the original homeowner occasionally broke the same rule. Life happens and sometimes we can't avoid bending a few of our rules during the normal course of living in our homes. Tolerance is a virtue.
- Routine street maintenance is performed on our streets every three to five years. These efforts are intended to maintain the 20 year life cycle of our streets. All of the pot holes along the edges of our streets were caused by irrigation run off from our yards. The cracking we are currently experiencing is also partially caused by moisture getting under the asphalt. Our community's streets were built with a modified rolled curb with an 8 inch gutter pan. The 8 inch gutter pan is not wide enough to withstand the constant flow of water. The dry well in our detention basin is also routinely receiving more water than it was designed to handle. Resulting in the saturation of the soil and lengthening the percolation time of even the smallest rain storm.
- If the irrigation run off is permitted to continue we will be replacing our asphalt before the end of its typical life cycle. We as homeowners need to do everything possible to prevent our irrigation water from saturating our streets, or, be prepared to have our dues increased to correct the resulting damage.

While I will no longer be on the Board after the Annual Homeowners Meeting in March, I will continue to volunteer as a member of the

Rules Committee and will continue to assist in programming our vehicles and garages to synch with the new gate transponders.

Stop by and say hello sometime...there is always a cold beverage available.

## RESIDENT CALLS

This month calls from concerned residents have included:

- Garage doors left open for extended periods. They are to be closed unless someone is working and needing continues access. It advertises what may become easy pickings should an opportunistic individual come along and help themselves.
- Rats are seen as they look for fruit and etc. that is within their reach. (Many of us have pest control traps that are serviced monthly to address this constant problem . . . even though we have no fruit trees.).
- Cars parked on the streets overnight or in the wrong direction or not up on the rolling curb (applies to gardeners and other vendors as well.).
- Gardeners, cleaning people, construction and handymen gaining access prior to the 7 A.M. start time (meaning they have a resident's access code and are not using the vendor access code) or working on Sundays.
- People getting through the gates by following someone in or hurrying through the 'out' gate before it closes. We all have a duty to all of us to watch and if necessary, stop and wait for the gate to close as we enter or leave.
- Many homes need to consider being painted and garage doors are often needing attention. Our development is 10 years old and we all are facing the renewal of our paint and doors and gates.

- Trash Bins: Some are being set out on Sunday evenings and then not being taken in after being emptied on Tuesdays. Talk to a neighbor to set your trash out on Monday night or Tuesday morning and then putting the emptied containers back. We have some neighbors putting them back for absent residents almost weekly just because they need to be cleared off the street.

Calls informing someone of gate problems, parking and other complaints should be directed to PPM (760-325-9500). Not getting a return call does not mean that action is not being taken. Many things can and are handled quickly or assigned to the appropriate company or individual able to handle the situation.

As board members, we often meet homeowners face-to-face and will listen to their concerns and do what we can to address the comments. Please know that being aware of a troublesome situation does not always meet with an easy nor with an immediate solution. At times there are extenuating circumstances or special considerations with which to be dealt.

## Architectural & Landscaping Committee Robert Fouyer, Chair

Our fountains at both the Gerald Ford and Da Vall entrances were out of commission for 2 or 3 weeks due to equipment failures. It was necessary to replace the pumps and cartridges, but they are now working like new again. The fountains themselves are due to be refurbished in the year 2015. The Phoenix Roebellini Palms in front of the fountains have grown to the point where they detract or block the view of the fountains, and the Committee has recommended that changes in the landscaping be done at that time, if not before.

Our monthly perimeter walk-thru was done in February with **ConserveLand**, our landscaping maintenance company. This inspection revealed several plants that needed replacing as well as the need to replace a dead tree in the detention basin, which was removed a couple of months ago. As reported previously, several plants were frost damaged, but they seem to be coming back with the beautiful warm weather we've been having.

**Montage** homeowner, Scott Reese, recently had his home painted and had problems matching his existing colors using paint codes that we provided to him. After completing his painting project, he contacted us about volunteering to help us update our old paint codes and schemes with **Dunn Edwards** and **Vista Paint** companies. I sent him everything the A & L Committee had and he took it from there. He contacted property services representatives at both **Dunn Edwards** and **Vista Paint** to go into their archives and see what could be done to update and matching our existing and very dated home paint colors and codes to the ones in use today. In doing so, he also asked them to have our paint colors and schemes put on their web site, and is working on getting the information put on the **Montage** web site as well. He is owed a great deal of gratitude for all his time and efforts in accomplishing this task. The article below details the result of his efforts:

## **NEW (FREE) HOME PAINT ARCHIVE INFORMATION AND SERVICES**

*by Scott Reese*

Many **Montage** homeowners are painting or touching up the paint on their homes. With that in mind the Board has created a new Home Painting Information page, which will be available on the **Montage at Mission Hills** website beginning March 22, 2014. The new House Painting Information page includes all the information you will need including: (1) Board approved **Montage** painting policy, (2) the updated and approved paint color

schemes, (3) a map and (4) an address directory to help you find your current color scheme. Also included are links to local paint suppliers to help you and/or your contractor order the correct paint you need.

**Montage** homes were originally painted in one of nine paint schemes prepared by a professional colorist. The paint pallet included three schemes for each of the **Italianate**, **Tuscan** and **Contemporary** architectural styles within the development. Generally paint schemes contain three to five colors, including trim and details.

Homeowners are pre-approved to repaint or touch up their homes using the current approved color scheme for their home. A homeowner may (A) request changing the color scheme of their home to one of the other approved paint schemes or (B) request elimination of one of the colors in the color scheme pallet. **Any proposed change of color scheme must be approved by the Architecture and Landscape Committee prior to the start of work by submitting a variance request. The Variance Form can be found on the Montage website.**

Now you, or your painting contractor, will be able to simply go to the sales staff at either **Dunn Edwards Paints** or **Vista Paints** on Perez Road (corner of Date Palm) and tell them you live in **Montage at Mission Hills**. Give them your paint scheme number or address, and they will be able to find the precise **Dunn Edwards** or **Vista Paint** colors that match your home. No more guessing, looking for old paint cans, or detective work. You may also be able to bring a paint color sample to another supplier for spectrophotometer matching.

Here's how it works. **Montage** homes were originally painted with paint supplied by either **Dunn Edwards Paints** or **Vista Paints** and both company stores have maintained paint archives of our paint schemes over the years.

Those paint archives had become out of date, old colors having been replaced by new ones with different names and paint codes.

Working with both **Dunn Edwards Paints** and **Vista Paints** representatives, we have been able to update each of their in-store and on-line paint archives. **Note that updated colors may not be precisely exact to the original color due to changes in color technology and materials since your home was last painted.** New paint will not match the current color on your home due to the age and deterioration of color resulting from weather and exposure to the sun.

The new **Dunn Edwards** and **Vista**-in-store / supplier paint archives for **Montage at Mission Hills** can be found at each paint supplier's website. Paint scheme PDF samples may be downloaded from the supplier sites or the **Montage and Mission Hills** website. After reaching the supplier webpage you only need enter the 92234 zip code, enter / select **Montage at Mission Hills** and then select and download your color scheme. **Note that on-screen and printer color representations will vary from actual paint colors due to variance in printers and monitors.**

**Dunn-Edwards Paints Color Ark web page**  
<http://www.dunnedwards.com/CommunityPropertyManagers/CommunityPropertyManagers.aspx>

**Vista Paints Color Paint Archive web page**  
<http://www.vistapaint.com/archive>

The Board of Directors would like to thank Denny Pierce of **Dunn Edwards Paints** and Jared Knight of **Vista Paints** for their cooperation and support in making these paint archives available. While the Board does not endorse contractors or suppliers, most homeowners have been very satisfied with the paint and services provided by these suppliers.

If you have any questions please contact Robert Fouyer, Chair of the Architecture and Landscape Committee at [chateauf@aol.com](mailto:chateauf@aol.com)

## WHAT IS A HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION

(Article contents and or reference provided by [houselogic.com](http://houselogic.com)) Edited and updated by Michelle Madison, Montage HOA Board Member

If you live in a newer suburban community or planned unit development, you—like some 59.5 million other Americans, according to the Community Associations Institute—are probably a member of a homeowners association. It's also a good bet that you haven't given your HOA much thought until you have a problem. Since HOAs make and enforce the community rules, it's smart to understand what you can do and what you can't do.

## HOA facts

Each HOA is a volunteer group of neighbors who manage common areas of a subdivision, creates its own covenants, conditions, and restrictions. These CC&Rs cover resident behavior (no parking on the development street over night), property management (draining your pool notification) and common responsibilities including fee schedules and fines for non-compliance.

Average annual dues for a homeowners association is \$420, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And there's value in the fee. [A 2005 study](#), which appeared in the Cato Institute's Regulation magazine, compared a group of Washington, D.C., area HOA properties with similar homes without community benefits—a total of about 12,000 homes. The HOA house values were found to be .54% higher. That's \$1,067 on the average U.S. home value of \$197,600.

When you don't like the rules even if you disagree with the rules, keep paying your dues. HOAs have broad legal powers to

collect fines and fees and regulate activities. If you don't respond to letters from the board, property manager, or a collection agency, the HOA can and will turn to small claims court or file a lien against your property.

You can handle some issues, if they don't affect the CC&Rs, with a phone call. If you want to do something that's against the rules—like installing a laundry line in your front yard—start by making a written request for variance, using the appropriate HOA form in your CC&R documents. (These are available on the Montage web site.) A variance gives you permission to be the exception to the rule. Submit your request to the board and to the property management company. Maybe help your cause by seeking a compromise: That you'd like to hang laundry line in your yard, but only in the back yard.

### **Don't expect a quick solution**

Some HOA boards meet as little as twice a year. (In the Montage Executive Board meetings can be scheduled monthly but Regular Board Meetings are scheduled every 2 months starting in January each year.) If the board decides the issue is worth pursuing, it may require a community vote. If it passes a majority, the board will adopt it. Board members also may consult the HOA attorney to see if there's a legal liability if they rule against you.

If you don't get a timely response, request a hearing and resubmit your request for variance with as much support for your cause as possible.

If the board rules against you without a community vote, you can appeal the ruling with a petition signed by a majority of other homeowners.

But if you install a laundry line without permission, expect to get fined. Fines can range from a nominal \$25 to a painful \$100 or

more depending on the issue (and increased if not paid as stipulated). Your CC&Rs will indicate the fine schedule—per day, per incident, etc. Interest for nonpayment can accrue, and the HOA can sue you in small claims court. (Legal and collection fees may also be included as the association pursues its options.)

### **Become the rule-maker**

If you don't like the rules, the best way to change them is to become part of the process.

1. Know your CC&Rs, annual budget, and employee contracts. Do you see areas where expenses can be cut? Are service providers doing their jobs?

2. Volunteer for a committee or task. If the board needs to enforce parking rules, for instance, you can volunteer to gather license plate numbers of residents' vehicles. In addition, put your professional expertise to work: Assist the board with data entry, accounting, or website design.

3. Stand for election to the board. When a position becomes open, the board notifies the members, and you can put your name forward. New board members are elected at the annual meeting by member majority vote. Many boards are three to nine members large, with terms of one to two years.

#### **Involvement drawbacks**

As a board member, be prepared to spend two to four hours a month reviewing property management reports, monitoring budgets, or talking to other board members and residents. Most boards meet quarterly; small boards only meet twice a year, for a couple of hours.

Accept that you might become less popular if homeowners don't like your decisions. In the worst case, you could be sued, along with the rest of the association.

#### **Involvement benefits**

But there are rewards. You'll feel more in control of your community's fate. You may find that some rules you didn't support have merit after all. But most of all, you'll know

you're doing all you can to protect your quality of life and your home's value.

### **HOA Management**

Homeowner's Association Management (HOA Management) is an umbrella term that covers a broad range of services. Generically speaking, HOA management refers to the professional management of a homeowner's association, but, it's not nearly as simple as it initially sounds; There is a lot that goes into a well-managed HOA. Some management companies' responsibilities range from day to day-administrative services, financial and accounting services, aggressive debt management and active site management.

While rules and guidelines are important, they lose their value if they are not actively enforced. When individuals neglect to follow community covenants and by-laws everyone suffers, home values may decrease and a negative precedent is set for the rest of the community. It can be difficult for board members, fellow community members, to enforce rules on friends and neighbors. HOA's can benefit greatly from a professional management company who can act as an objective third-party in these matters.

The property management company in most cases is not responsible for your home repairs or for the replacement of your garbage cans. In most cases single home developments each homeowner is responsible for your own repairs, insurance and lawn care unless indicated in your CC&Rs documents.

### **Where do I find this information?**

When you purchased your home at or before you went to closing, you received a package of paperwork that included the community association's bylaws, declaration, covenants, codes, and restrictions. If you can't find it among your closing papers, ask the board to give you a copy of those. It's common to be

charged for those documents, so if you can't find yours and don't want to pay for another copy, you might ask your neighbors if any of them still have theirs. If you lease your property the homeowner should share these rules with you. In some cases as a When you read those documents, you'll find out the process and timing for turning over the association to the homeowners.

### **Read more:**

<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/home-thoughts/hoas-what-you-need-to-know-about-rules/#ixzz2u73AyRBt>

### **Burrtec "Yard Service"**

Trash truck driver fetches your trash cans, empty them and returns them. Set-up charge \$9.90, monthly charge \$7.21. Call Burrtec Customer Service [760.340.2113](tel:760.340.2113).

### **Coyotes**

Be careful letting your pets out unattended. Reports have been received about coyotes "patrolling" our neighborhood. They go over our fences like they are not even there.

### **Tree Fruit**

Please make sure you remove last year's fruit from your fruit trees. One homeowner on Artisan sent pictures of rats he trapped in his back yard – and he doesn't have any fruit trees.



## **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The next Board meeting will be Saturday, March 22, 2014 at 9:00 A.M. at the Children's Discovery Museum, 71-701 Gerald Ford Dr. Rancho Mirage, CA, 92270 (New Activity Room in rear of facility – plenty of parking)

The next regular board meeting following the Annual Meeting will be May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 3:00 PM at the Offices of Personalized Property Management 69850 Adelina Road, Cathedral City.

Check the community message board on the wall at the DaVinci / VanGogh corner or the web site for the agenda. It will be posted at least 4 days before the meeting.

Property Manager - Jennifer Zeivel 760-325-9500;  
[jzeivel@ppminternet.com](mailto:jzeivel@ppminternet.com)

A & L Committee Chair – Robert Fouyer  
[chateauf@aol.com](mailto:chateauf@aol.com)

Neighborhood Watch / Welcome Committee &  
Emergency Preparedness Chair – JoAnn Horwitz  
[JoAnnWLV@aol.com](mailto:JoAnnWLV@aol.com)  
c) 818-370-6589 h ) 760-992-5199

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...  
Bd. President, [CurtBeyer@gmail.com](mailto:CurtBeyer@gmail.com)

Website: **[www.MontageMH.Wordpress.com](http://www.MontageMH.Wordpress.com)**