

Casitas Montana News and Views July 25 2011

Water - By far, the most expensive expense (did I say that right?) is WATER!! Most of our HOA dues goes towards paying our very high water bills each month. Last month we spent over \$1100 on just water! We have been considering sub-metering all units for some time, but could not find a company willing to do it for a reasonable fee? Everyone said we did not have enough units? For those who do not know, "sub-metering" is basically installing water meters on each unit, so that all owners pay for the exact amount of water they use! Currently our HOA pays the water bill. So everyone is paying the same amount - no matter how much they use! This certainly does not encourage water conservation. I can't think of a more fair way of allocating this major expense - Pay for what you use! I think it will greatly promote water conservation and encourage all owners to fix and repair water leaks in their units. Overall, I think everyone will benefit and our overall water consumption will go down. In case you did not know, we live in a desert and water is in short supply. We (really Mary, from Snow Properties) have recently found a company that has agreed to install and bill all the owners direct for the water that they use. The total amount for meters and installation comes to about \$250 per owner. The \$250 cost to purchase and install the meters can be paid in installments over a 90 day period. We need to put this matter to a vote. You can cast your vote/opinion on-line at <http://sunset.webplus.net/page11.html> or mail in the ballot that is included with this newsletter. This is all done with the hopes that we can lower our HOA dues!!

More good news – Our HOA is again running in the black! Yes, we have even started to build up our "reserve fund". A reserve fund is very important to pay for any items that may arise outside the standard monthly bills. We have been successful in collecting some past dues bills and are again getting new owners that are paying on a monthly basis.

Speaking of new owners, they are some that are not aware of all our rules and what they can and what they can't do? Our rules (CC&R's) are posted on our web site at <http://www.casitasmontana.com/html/CCRS.html> Some have asked about modifications to the outside of their units and about installing gates on their patios or balconies. Yes, it is possible, but all changes/modifications need to be approved by the board first. We want to have all patio gates be of the same color, style, and type. Basically we are trying to keep a uniformed look. Same with storm/security/screen doors. We want them to be all the same color and blend well with our buildings.

Also just a quick reminder - this is a NON-RENTAL community. You need to go before the HOA board and present your "hardship" case. If you prove your "hardship" case, you are then allowed to rent, but not for more than two years. There is also a "rental fee" of \$300 payable once a year. At the last board meeting, a new rental policy was passed by the board. You can view on our web site under HOA Members only

With the increase in new owners living here, assigned parking has again starting to be an issue? All units are assigned 1 parking spot. If you have 2 cars, one can go in a visitors spot, but these spots are on a "first come" basis. Some people may have to park on the street? For more details about where you can park go to www.casitasmontana.com/html/Parking%20Letter.pdf

Anyone noticed? New Pool Furniture! We upgraded the older furniture and replaced them with 4 new chairs plus 3 lounge chairs. Since the table was in good condition, we decided to save money by repainting the old table black, so it would match. Also we bought all new cushions. So, PLEASE take care with our new chairs and cushions. Please use a pool towel when using the chairs so that your suntan lotion (everyone SHOULD BE using sunscreen?) does not stain our new cushions!

Reminder - The Board decided that the 2 gates on the back fence would have a chain and a combination lock. The code will be set at 1133 (last four numbers of the Snow office phone).

Be observant of your surroundings at all hours of the day—don't always associate crime with after dark. If anything seems "off" don't hesitate to report it. There is a non-emergency number you can call where a patrol car will be sent out very quickly: 602-262-6151. Also, don't assume anything. Get to know your neighbors, their children, even their vehicles and pets. In doing so, you will become better aware of any potential threat. Let's do our part in keeping Casitas the same safe and quiet community that it is.

How much money do we take in? How much do we spend? Where does it go? I certainly want all records to be open. I have started to post all monthly income and expenses on our website. Check it out. In fact, did you notice all the links I mentioned in this newsletter? Everyone should go to our web site www.casitasmontana.com then click on the HOA Members Only link. From there, we have many links to all sorts of information everyone should be aware of.

There are 20 owners/residents, and everyone living here needs to be part of the solution. Please express your opinions and thoughts. This is your community... Get involved! We do have one spot open for a new board member?

William Jugenheimer

Member of Casitas Montana HOA Board