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The Prez says, ***“Top of the month to ya.”*** On behalf of the Countryside Valley HOA Board of Directors, **I would like to wish you and your family a Very Happy St. Patrick’s Day and blessed Easter Sunday.** This is one of a series of bimonthly newsletters to help keep you up-to-date on important information regarding our neighborhood and community. We hope you find it useful. If you are new to our neighborhood, welcome.

A Tale of Two Families: The “Jones” family moved into their new house in a nice neighborhood and was quite happy. They enjoyed the freedom to decorate their house and landscape the yard to their satisfaction. However, after some time, they began to notice things within the neighborhood that concerned them. First, they observed old cars parked in neighbors’ yards waiting to be fixed. They also saw garbage containers strewn in yards and driveways. Then they became concerned about RVs, boats and trailers being stored here and there. They realized that the freedom of owning a home in that neighborhood also meant having to endure others’ right to living the way they wished.

The “Smith” family moved into their new house in a gated community and was quite happy. They enjoyed the opportunity to make their house a home and live happily ever after. However, due to busy schedules, work, little league games, and other life events, they fell behind with some of their homeowner responsibilities. One day, they received a letter from the “HOA” pointing out some of the things that violated the neighborhood “CC&Rs.” At first, they were mad because they felt the association was making much ado about nothing. They also felt singled out as they noticed neighbors with the same “violations.” They had to decide whether it was worth having to live within a set of rules or moving somewhere else.

We have all made a decision to live in a neighborhood that fortunately, or unfortunately, has a set of rules that govern our community. They provide a high set of standards that are left to a Board of Directors to enforce. For some, these standards are easy to comply with because they have pride in their home and property, taking the time and making the effort to make sure they are always looking their best. Others need to be reminded to maintain the property on a regular basis. Most fall somewhere in the middle.

Like it or not, we have volunteer Board of Directors who do their best to hold residents accountable to maintain their homes and properties to the high set of standards outlined in the CC&Rs. Most associations have a paid management company to manage their affairs. They are expensive and enforce the CC&Rs immediately and without a personal touch. This Board is responsible for setting policy related to the CC&Rs. This includes things like nuisances, unsightly articles, and parking. The most common “violations” to these three issues are barking dogs, garbage/recycling containers visible on non-pick up days, weeds, dead/overgrown vegetation, wood and stucco in need of repair and paint, and parking on the street.

So, as long as we live here, we should remember to take pride in our homes and properties, asking ourselves if our properties were on the market for sale, would they sell based on appearance?

No Playground: If you have children, please tell them that the gate area is not a place to ride bikes and play. Cars go in and out all the time and the safety of small children is a real concern. Also, please remind kids not to play or ride their bikes in other people’s yards and driveways. Thank you.

Roads Update: The Board is in the application process of qualifying for a loan of \$86,000 to help pay for the roads in Countryside Valley to be resurfaced. The association currently has approximately \$178,000 in the bank. The cost to have all of the roads and drainage areas resurfaced, new speed bumps installed and painted is around \$180,000.

New Gate System: As you probably know, our gate has taken its share of hard knocks this past year. It needed to be repaired twice and replaced once. Also, the keypad is on its last leg. Most recently, the remotes were not working effectively. The Board received an estimate to replace the keypad that would require replacing the operators (motors) that move the incoming and outgoing gates. It would also require new sensors, safety edges, and phone system. The total is a whopping \$8,627.00. The Board has not yet made a decision whether or not to replace the gate system.

Candid Camera: Related to the gate issues, the Board also looking into installing a new camera system at the entrance of the neighborhood to identify vehicles or individuals that may cause damage to the gate. Hopefully, we will be able to hold individuals accountable for the cost of repairing the gate when damaged. Also, children have been observed playing on and around the gate, opening it with the keypad and riding bikes in and out of the gate area. If you have children, please remind them that the gate is not a place to play, as it is a safety concern of the Board.

Tow Away Zone: The Board is very happy that most residents utilize their garages and driveways to park their vehicles. This provides a better looking neighborhood, easier access for garbage and recycling vehicles, a safe means for riding bikes and walking dogs, and access for emergency vehicles. Again, we are all afforded 4 parking spaces, two in our garage and two in the driveway. If we choose to use our garage for storage, that reduces our parking spaces.

While most residents do indeed respect the “**no parking on the street**” policy, a few still park on the street on a regular basis. Those residents have been informed of the violations. The Board is now discussing the possibility of towing vehicles that have received the following:

- Numerous friendly reminders
- A letter
- A hearing
- A fine assessed to the property

Towing any vehicle would be a last resort. However, if a resident is unable to comply with the parking policy, the Board may be left with no other option. If any resident is having a parking issue, please contact the Board to discuss a solution to the problem.

Neighborhood Walk: It is the time of year that the Board will be walking the neighborhood to assess the current condition of the community. So, we should all pay attention to:

- Weeds
- Dead/overgrown vegetation
- General debris in the yard, driveway, curb area
- Stucco/wood that needs repair or repainting
- Garbage and recycling bins in need of being placed behind the gate or in the garage
- Window coverings in need of replacement
- Hoses needing to be hung up
- Gates in need of repair
- Cracked walls

Well, there it is. At the end of the day, this is a great neighborhood in which to live. We have a great local school district, close proximity to shopping and I-10, and friendly neighbors all around us. The Board encourages all to attend the monthly meetings the first Monday of each month at the CCC at 7:00 p.m.

Todd Autenreith - President Countryside Valley HOA Board of Directors