

HERITAGE HUNT CONDOMINIUM I UNIT OWNERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 16, 2010

SPRINKLER MALFUNCTION CAUSES WAKE UP ALARM

At 5:02 A.M on Saturday, August 7th, Building B got an early wake up alarm. The problem turned out to be a sprinkler system malfunction on the third floor, causing the alarm to sound. Residents gathered outside, the fire department responded, and the trouble was resolved by 6 A.M., at which time residents were allowed to return to their units.

Our sprinkler system is complex as it has to allow for pipes running through unheated space in the attic and garage. In those areas we have what is called a “dry system” where the pipes contain air under pressure until the system senses a problem at which point water fills the pipes to be available to sprinkle any source of excessive heat. The system is inspected and tested quarterly; and in fact we had a full annual inspection the previous Monday. Unfortunately, the testing process can stir up crud in the pipes and this may have caused the failure and alarm Saturday morning. What we know is that an “accelerator” valve appears to have malfunctioned.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM OUR IMPROMTU FIRE DRILL

First, I commend all who were involved as all residents appear to have responded quickly to the alarms. I do note that we should all an emergency plan, including what we do, and don't, want to take along in an emergency evacuation.

In an emergency, one should not use the elevator. But stairs are a problem for anyone with mobility issues.

In preparation for the HHCI Fire/Safety presentation, held on July 7, 2008, (available on DVD from Ed Plummer x1656), the Fire Marshall inspected our buildings and concluded that he could not recommend “sheltering in place”. He noted,

however, that having fire sprinklers substantially reduces, but does not eliminate, the likelihood that a fire might fully engulf a building.

He pointed out that the stairwells themselves would be a relatively safe place to wait for help as they are basically self-contained cinder-block structures. He suggested that, as an alternative to staying in one's unit or getting outside, one could go to the stairwell (farthest from any visible smoke, if any) and wait there on the stairwell landing for assistance. Fire personnel will check the stairwells for people.

One question that comes up is, “What should any resident who has trouble getting out of the building do?” The answer is difficult and really comes down to each resident making his, or her, own decision.

Remember that the FIRST priority of emergency responders is to preserve life, before property. They will make every effort to assure that all people are safe and out of the building if appropriate.

Whatever your decision, it would be a good idea to plan for an emergency. If you have never gone down the stairs, then in an emergency, with the alarms sounding, the process might be confusing. If necessary, ask family or friends to help you practice an evacuation.

This is an opportune time to remind everyone that hall doors should always be closed and latched. Doors should never be propped open. When going through a hall door, make a conscious effort to be sure the door not only closes, but latches. This means that you should never leave a hall door “ajar” because you need to run out for just a moment and will be right back.

Another issue is that the fire trucks didn't arrive for about 20 minutes. Accordingly, we have written the Fire Marshall to review the response time. Additionally, the Board is also reviewing the incident to determine what can be learned from it.

RECENT BUILDING PROJECTS

- Water leak repair to north end of A Bldg
- Water leak repair to brick wall at Units B112 & B113
- Excavate drain pipe in front of Unit B111 and remove foreign object from pipe and repair broken pipe elbow
- Repair ceiling tiles in A Bldg garage where anchors pulled out of concrete slab above ceiling
- Service middle and north end A/C units in A Bldg where condensate was overflowing on to floor.

FUTURE BUILDING PROJECTS

- Resurface entrance aprons to both buildings. The paint is badly worn on both and we are looking into a non-slip concrete coating that should last much longer than paint.
- Applying non-slip coatings to the concrete walk ways around the garage elevator lobbies as these can get slippery under high-humidity conditions.

STRANGE NOISES FROM A BLDG ELEVATOR

Two things have been going on. First, someone, possibly the fire/safety inspection crew on August 2nd, turned on the fan in the elevator – the fan switch requires key. This fan is quite loud and we have never routinely had it running. Second, there is a sump pump in the elevator and it has been running, generally for about 5 minutes at a time. This pump sounds a bit like a vacuum cleaner on steroids. The elevator is adjacent to an A/C unit that had a stopped up drain and was overflowing condensate water on to the floor. This may have caused the ground around and under the elevator pit to have become saturated, causing the sump pump to run. If the sump pump cycling doesn't subside in the next week or two, we will investigate further.

TRASH/RECYCLING

Our trash and recycling contract comes up for renewal next year and we are now soliciting bids.

This leads to issues we are now having with trash and recycling. Namely, we are not as conscientious as we should be about what we put in the recycle bins and how trash is bagged (or not) – please read the article that follows.

Our current trash contractor often doesn't completely empty the dumpsters but also is fairly lax about what they will take. A new vendor may be more particular. Based on bids a couple of years ago, we should be able to save money by changing companies but we may have to be more diligent than we have been about how we dispose of trash and recycle. We continue to see loose items in the trash, boxes not broken down, wrong items in the recycle bin, and raw garbage loose in the trash dumpsters. Please realize that plastic shopping bags dropped down the trash chutes often break open.

A major factor in trash disposal and recycling is that our contractor takes our trash to disposal and recycling centers. If the wrong items are in recycling, they could make a whole truck load unsuitable for processing. Likewise, improper, hazard waste in a trash load could “contaminate” the entire truck load. In such cases, there could be the possibility of fines or recourse back to the source of the contamination – meaning US if the contaminated trash were picked up from our trash rooms.

ITS BUDGET TIME

Warren Miller's Finance and Budget Committee will be working on next year's budget for the next three months, meeting on the 4th Wednesdays at 2 P.M. in the lobby of A Bldg. All condo owners are welcome to attend. This is your chance to participate in the process that determines our condo assessments for next year.

If anyone has any questions or comments about anything in this newsletter or related to our condos, please call Ed Plummer at x`1656.

What's Happening To Our Precious Earth?

By Linn Keezer

On April 22, 2010, the oil well under the now sunken Deepwater Horizon off-shore oil rig began to leak oil into the gulf of Mexico. After 3½ months this oil spewing into the Gulf, the well is now capped, but there is no clear idea as to the long term consequences. This disaster has affected not only the people who live and work on the Gulf coast. It is destroying an entire ecosystem that will take generations to be restored (if it can be restored).

We are all angry with BP for this mess. Many of us are also angry with the government for lack of regulation or enforcement that allowed this accident to happen or for insufficient actions in the aftermath. This oil gusher (it certainly isn't a "spill") is a global disaster. It is a major failure to properly care for the resources that the Earth provides us to live our lives every day.

Just as we expect the responsible parties to clean up this mess and to prevent such a catastrophe from happening again, we should hold ourselves to high expectations in caring for our environment and the future of the planet that our grandchildren (and their grandchildren) will have to live on.

One simple thing we can do in an effort to be good stewards of our world is to reduce the amount of waste products that we put into landfills and incinerators that belch toxic smoke into the air. We all need to actively and knowledgeably participate in our community's recycling program.

A plastic grocery bag takes 1,000 years to decompose in landfills. If that one little bag takes that long, consider your mall shopping bags, your trash bags. There is a growing industry in recycling, taking one thing and making it another. Old tires are shredded and used as playground tread. Grocery bags are remanufactured into clothing. These are examples of the economical aspect of recycling.

Many people think that recycling is too much effort and assume that recycling is just for 'green fanatics.' However, there is now overwhelming research and evidence that demonstrate the problems of synthetic waste and environmental contamination is very real and threatening our health, weather patterns and planetary eco-systems.

The biggest, most powerful changes lie in the habits and attitudes of ordinary people. Becoming environmentally aware and responsible is no longer an option for the few. If we want to save our world from an environmental catastrophe we must all act now and together. This is the only way to send a clear message to politicians and decision makers that we need change. Start by doing what's easy and simple. You don't have to be an expert over night. The first step is to start realizing that there is 'no such place as away' so when you 'throw something away' it just goes some place else, for someone else to deal with or most likely becomes a contamination in the environment.

It is important to recycle because there is a real global problem with too much waste being produced by human beings. As a species we produce so much synthetic waste that we are literally running out of space to bury it, or dispose of it in other ways without contaminating the environment. If you throw something away, it is no longer useful, it ends up in landfill, incinerated, or in some other way contaminating the environment. If you recycle something, it can be recovered and become material for a new product, plus it does not go to into the waste stream.

Between 60% and 75% of all home synthetic waste can be usefully recycled. The more people that engage in recycling, the more resources are available for reusing these materials for new manufacturing, plus lessening the load on waste disposal.

Items accepted for recycling include:

- Paper
 - Newspaper
 - Magazines & catalogs
 - Junk mail (even envelopes with clear windows)
 - Mixed paper
 - Telephone books
 - Soft cover or paperback books
 - White office paper
 - Single layer cardboard (please flatten boxes)
 - Empty non-waxed food boxes (i.e., cookie and cereal boxes)
 - Shredded paper (please place in a paper bag and staple it shut)
- Glass
 - Clean glass bottles and jars
- Metal
 - Tin/steel food and beverage cans (please rinse)
- Plastic
 - Plastic jugs and bottles (please rinse and remove caps)

Other items that can be recycled at the Balls Ford Road Composting Facility include:

- Corrugated cardboard
- Electronics
- Scrap metal
- Textiles
- Household batteries
- Used motor oil
- Used antifreeze and automobile batteries

Items that can be recycled at other locations include:

- Plastic grocery bags (at your grocery store)
- Plastic dry cleaning/laundry bags (at your dry cleaner)
- Wire hangers (at your dry cleaner)
- Wine corks (at some wine retailers, including Cork & Fork in Gainesville)

Items that CANNOT be recycled include:

- Paper
 - Waxed, foil or coated paper
 - Plastic coated items like overnight shipping envelopes
 - Pizza boxes
 - Bags that have contained greasy or oily food
- Glass
 - Glass bottles that have had any type of oil in them
 - Plate glass
 - Mirrors
 - Light bulbs
 - Ceramics
 - Cookware
 - Drinking glasses
 - Chemical bottles
- Metal
 - Foil
 - Trays
 - Pans
 - Aerosol cans
 - Paint cans
- Plastic
 - Plastic cups
 - Plastic bottles that have had any type of oil in them
 - Tubs
 - Dishes
 - Plastic bags
 - Medicine containers
 - Hoses
 - Toys
 - Styrofoam

If you would like more information on recycling, you may contact our waste removal contractor, AAA Trash Hauling, at 703-818-8222 or visit them on the web at www.aaatrash.com.