



TALL SHIP BEACON

Issue No. 19 Date: 1 June, 2008 Editor: Carlos Luria

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT CARLOS LURIA



Thanks to the adroit maneuvering of last year's board in shepherding our lawsuit against the developer through to a successful conclusion, we are now in a lot better financial shape than we were a year ago. Virginia Sholar and her board deserve a big round of applause for their persistence, and this year's board has had a much less stressful job because of it

LANDSCAPING: As housing prices tumble it becomes increasingly important for us to show the Tall Ships in the best possible light, and we may have to increase the amounts we have allocated for landscaping and painting. At this writing it looks like we'll be able to do so without seeking additional funding, but if petro-chemical costs continue to rise and revenues from buy-in fees decline as sales slip below normal levels, we may have to increase assessments next year.

SALE OF GREENSPACE: As you may know, we own four acres of undeveloped land at the top of Tall Ships Drive. Some have suggested selling it outright, or building additional condos on the property. Even if this were a propitious time for such an expansion, the move would require the approval of 100% of the property owners as well as of all banks, mortgage holders and others with a financial interest in the Tall Ships, and that, for all practical purposes, is unachievable.

HANDICAP ACCESS: Another persistent question is whether we are required to provide handicapped

access? The answer is that we are not, for our structures are not 'public buildings.'

Were we to install wheelchair-accessible ramps, they would have to meet very specific OSHA and Disability Act standards for width, slope, surface and hand-rails; they would be very costly and in most instances quite unsightly. For those reason your board voted to turn down the proposal.

SOUNDPROOFING: The soundproofing between units on the same floor is excellent, but the same cannot be said for vertical units. When the neighbor above you installs wooden floors, every footstep is annoyingly audible. We cannot do anything about wooden floors that have already been installed. But in May, 2008 your board responded to homeowner concerns and voted that future wood floor installations on the second and third deck will have to meet two specifications: they will have to be "floating wood floors" and they will have to be mounted over a felt, sound-absorbing underliner. That will typically add \$1 per square foot to the cost of the installation. Owners will be notified of this by a mailing, and the new rule has already been added to the Tall Ships Handbook.

FIRE ALARMS: The previous board also spear-headed the installation of a new fire alarm system – a considerable improvement over what we had before, and at a lower, long-term cost than we were previously paying. The Fire Dept. has responded to seven alarms since January 1st. Two were the result of burnt food; two resulted from a failure to open a fireplace flu, one was due to rain short-circuiting a call box, one was triggered by an unknown cause and one was a potentially serious fire that began to get out of hand when a renter used a charcoal grill on his deck

Most of the start-up problems have been corrected, and those that remain are predominantly of human origin. Here is how the system works: If a sensor₁

detects smoke, all of the horns in that building start blaring, to warn occupants to get out. At the same time, a human operator at the alarm company's monitoring station calls the 911 Emergency Response Center in Walhalla, which transmits a radio signal that activates the beepers our firemen carry. Our Fire Dept. states it can be on-scene within five minutes of being notified, and its practice has been to check the entire building *before* silencing the alarms.

With humans in the chain, errors will and have occurred: Sometimes an operator at Walhalla's 911 Center *telephones* the North Gate, or our Fire Dept. instead of transmitting a signal to the firemen by radio. The North Gate is not manned for much of the night, and the Fire Dept.'s phone will not be answered if the crew is out on another call. That has happened on two occasions; both, fortunately, involved false alarms, but 30 minutes or more elapsed before the error was corrected and the firemen appeared on the scene. Meanwhile, the horns kept blaring.

It is virtually impossible to remain in the unit when the horn is active, and our concern is that repeated false alarms will cause unit owners to take drastic action such as disconnecting their horn entirely. That has already happened once. The fire chief has agreed to silence the alarms more quickly, but he also recommends that when we know that we triggered an alarm by burning food or whatever, that we call 911 and tell the dispatcher that. While the firemen will still come to the scene, they will be able to pinpoint the problem more quickly and silence the alarms. Meanwhile, disconnecting a horn is not only illegal, but may also incur liabilities, for removing a horn from the circuit can disable other horns in the building.

TREASURER'S REPORT **Bob Routman**

As the final stucco repairs wind down, we undoubtedly feel relief that the major expenses of roof repair, stucco repair, and structural reinforcement are behind us. With the settlement recovery of \$550,000 defraying some of the expenses incurred, homeowners are probably curious about the final tally. Are we ahead or behind? My curiosity prompted me to volunteer to be Treasurer, especially after learning that the Association had been unable to find a replacement Treasurer for an extended period. Fortunately, the property management company, Goldsmith, performs our day to day financial

operations – not the Treasurer. Hence, Goldsmith administers the collections and disbursements and provides monthly financial reports and bank account reconciliations to the Treasurer and Board. Thus, Association funds are still always supervised by the Board even absent a Treasurer.

As new the Treasurer, I asked Goldsmith to search the historical financial accounts related to the three capital expenditure items (roof, stucco & structure) and the fourth item of legal expense incurred. The period reviewed commenced with the first roofing expense dated August 4, 2003 and concluded March 6, 2008 when the requested data was provided. We incurred \$1,138,151 in related expenses during the four and a half year period. Stucco - \$539,059; Roof - \$424,202; Structural - \$121,932; and Other- \$52,955. The \$1.1 million was funded by tapping the reserve account, deferring maintenance items in the operating account, a \$432,000 special assessment (\$3,600 per unit) and the settlement recovery.

The \$550,000 settlement recovery is a gross amount. We incurred expenses of \$265,478 in attorney fees in total. They consisted of (A) \$82,500 in contingency fees (15% of the recovery) and (B) \$182,978 in billed fees. Those billed fees were ongoing expenses incurred during the lawsuit and paid for in part by deferral of other maintenance items. Because of attorney fees, the net settlement recovery is only \$284,522 - the actual amount received and available to be applied against the \$1.1 million in expenses. Thus, the final net cost to the Association for the four and a half year capital improvement period is \$853,629.

Of course, those out of pocket expense should not be considered to have resulted solely from the builder's errors. Some twenty years of normal wear and tear necessitated capital maintenance. Some roof repairs, stucco, drainpipe and window frame repairs were arguably exacerbated by age. Capital replacement with age is an expected normal expense. We were lucky to recover some money to ameliorate the expense for correction of original structural inadequacies. The next steps are to begin catching up on delayed operating items and to plan and accumulate adequate reserves for future capital expenditures.



**Tech Manager's
Report**
Tom Schill

STUCCO REPAIR PROJECT:

Due to our contractor's other commitments, there has not been as much progress as I would have liked. However, it has given the budget a breather, as well as a short reprieve from the scaffolding. They are due to resume work as I am writing this, about 1 June.

There are only 4 balconies remaining, all in Yawl. Other work left to be done include rotted fascia on walkways, repairing eroded concrete on the walks, and installing gutter kick-outs in the fronts of the buildings. I'm sure other things will become evident as they continue throughout all the buildings. Work will continue only as long as the board can justify the cost with the severity of the problems.

WELCOME COMMITTEE

Sylvia Stuart



Please get to know our new neighbors, Bob and Sarah Puls, have moved into Yawl (495 Tall Ship, Unit #240) from Miamisburg, Ohio.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Sylvia Stuart

Our first party of the season was the Kentucky Derby. As you can see from the picture of the Tall Ship race fans, they really became quite intense as to the outcome. We had plenty of winners and losers, but we all had fun. Food was no object from the appetizer to the desserts. What good food. Thanks to Bob Dunlop and Barry Stuart for their help with the Pari-mutual betting, and Judy Coolidge-Fill and Carolyn Asperger co-hostesses for a job well done. The Humphreys and the Reeves were part timers here this year.



Events coming up!!

Cocktail Party at Frigate – Sometime in July

Block Party – Sometime in October

Look at the bulletin-boards or Tall Ship Web Site.

TECH CORNER

DECK PANELS:



*Frances Johnson,
Director*

My husband is one of those rare individuals who can fix just about anything and enjoys problem solving.. Our Problem: Our blue deck panels were faded, and this is his easy and economical solution. What we are here

Supplies:

- 1.) Krylon, fusion for plastic, spray paint (in a spray can. The blue cap indicates the color.) At Wal-Mart for \$4.49.
- 2.) Rope , 100 feet. 1/4" works better than the 5/16" currently used and looks nice.
- 3.) Clear plastic to protect deck floor from paint.

Instructions:

Choose a sunny, low humidity, calm day.

- 1.) Remove lashing and take down the panels.
- 2.) Clean panels with Fantastic and a damp cloth. Rinse well. Allow panels to dry thoroughly.
- 3.) Lay panels flat on plastic, faded side up.(This is the side that was facing outside and will be the only side painted.)
- 4.) Spray this faded side only.. Allow paint to dry thoroughly.
- 5.) To re-hang panels, turn the painted side to the inside. (The other side is not faded.)
- 6.) To make re-hanging the panels easier, for each panel cut four 12" pieces of rope; tie the panels to the railings at the four corners using the short pieces of rope.
- 7.) Now lash the panels in place. Do not lash too tightly, to prevent bowing of the railing.

THE CONDENSATE PROBLEM *Carlos Luria*

Our air handlers are located in the closet adjoining our front door. In the summer, when warm air is pulled through the air handlers, moisture condenses, collects in a drip pan, and is led out of the building through a small PVC pipe. But when the air conditioner is not used for an extended period, algae builds up inside the pipe and blocks it. The next time the air-conditioner is used, the condensate will accumulate in the

drip pan and overflow, staining the ceiling in the unit below, and creating insurance problems for you.

The solution is to pour a little Clorox through the pipe, to clear it of the algae buildup. Many owners have installed a tee fitting in that pipe to facilitate the Clorox treatment and you will find a description of how to do that on our website. This should be done at least once, and preferably twice a year. See www.tallshipscondos.com/notices.htm for a data sheet on how to configure the Tee fitting.

THE INTERNET CONNECTION: We use e-mail to keep owners abreast of what is going on with their properties and to alert them to potential problems. It is as private e-mail list; the addresses are not shared with anyone, and conscious of the fact that we all receive far too much e-mail every day, we limit our transmissions to the essential. 108 of our 120 owners are enrolled, and if you are new, or one of the ten percent that are not, we urge you to join the List. Simply send an e-mail to info@tallshipscondos.com to do so.

Similarly, we post a lot of reference material on our web site – stuff like the By-Laws and the Handbook that you may need once in a blue moon, and then can't recall where you stashed them. Go to our web site at <http://www.tallshipscondos.com> and click on "Now Hear This!"

Lastly, the site also contains a "Members Only" section for comments and polling. Your username is your legal name and your password is your Unit No.



Keeping Things Tidy
Bob Stojetz, Director

New Trash Containers:

The board introduced new trash containers. to improve and increase capacity, provide a lid that stays with each container. and plastic liners for better collection. Residents are asked to put trash in plastic bags before depositing them in the new containers. This will keep the containers clean, and help eliminate odors.

Insect treatment of condos:

All units are treated bi-monthly; the schedule is posted by the mail boxes and also on our web site. The schedule is:

Cutter, Square Rigger, Yawl & Ketch:

3rd Monday of Jan., March, May, July. September and

November

Frigate, Clipper and Schooner:

3rd Monday of February, April, June, August, October and December.

Window cleaning:

Windows are cleaned once a year, in June, after the pollen season.