



The Villas Voice

A Newsletter For The Villas Community Association of Rancho San Joaquin
Irvine, CA
February 2011
Volume 5, Issue 1

From Our New President

**By Dick Seaholm
Association President 2011**

Welcome to my first column, which I hope will be informative and useful to all residents of our community. As a newcomer to life in a community association, I've had to make a lot of changes in the way that things are done here. Living in my own home for 35 years in Costa Mesa, I knew that if the house needed painting, or the roof repairing, or if I wanted a tree cut down, I either had to do it myself, or pay for someone else to do it.

Now that's all changed. In The Villas, the Association has the responsibility for doing those things, and anything else that belongs to the common area. The "common area," I learned, is everything the owners share in common, and own equally, but does not include the units we live in, which we own.

The legal term for the condominium unit we own is called the "separate interest," which is actually little more than some cubic space. We get to paint the interior walls, or even slap some wallpaper on them, but we don't own the wall itself.

Meet Our 2011 Board

Congratulations, applause and appreciation to those homeowners elected to serve our community in 2011.

- President — Dick Seaholm**
- Vice President — Marguerite Bivens**
- Treasurer — Tim Hunter**
- Secretary — Gini Cassara**
- Member-at-Large — Annette Richie**

A big 'thank you' to all who voted! We reached a quorum on the first try! This effort saved community money by not having to reschedule annual elections. There were only 3 votes to spare, so each of your votes was very important!

Technically, the common area includes the walls outside of the unfinished surfaces of the perimeter walls, the floors, ceilings, roofs, streets, driveways and other amenities.

There is another area that has come to be called an "exclusive use common area," which covers the area between the separate interest (condo unit) and the common area. It is defined by Calif. Civil Code as the area designated for the exclusive use of one or more, but fewer than all, of the owners of the separate interests, and which is appurtenant to, or legally attached to the owner's separate interest.

That's a mouthful, to be sure, but I think it gives us a pretty good idea of where we stand. The only problem is that the new code may not agree with our current CC&Rs, which are mostly outdated and ambiguous because they were created way back in 1978.

In our ruling documents, instead of the term, "exclusive use common area," it refers to something it calls a "residential element." These items are defined as garages, atriums, patios, and related plantings within those areas. In any case, I find that there is a lot of room for interpretation between our old laws and the new state codes. That means the Board must ask for legal advice, and that doesn't come cheap.

We'll get into more issues like the one above as we move along. I'm sure everyone would like to know more about the Association's financial condition, and maybe our goals for our maintenance programs.

We'll take on all subjects as soon as I know more about them. Your Board of Directors is looking into those areas and more, so stay tuned. Financial audits and architectural audits are all scheduled to be done in the coming weeks ahead.

Thank you for your support in the last election. I hope I can rely on your support for the year ahead.

In This Issue

- MESSAGE FROM NEW BOARD PREZ
- 2011 BOARD ELECTED
- VILLAS WEBSITE UPDATES
- CONCERNS FOR DOG OWNERS
- LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES
- RECYCLING

www.rsjvillas.com

It's an updated, current Villas website with HOA Meeting Minutes, Board Bulletins, Landscape and Residence Guidelines, plus much more information you can use. With the click of your mouse, you can stay informed!

The VILLAS PROPERTY MANAGER

**Optimum Professional
Property Mgmt**

17731 Irvine Blvd, Suite 212
Tustin, 92618

Phone: 714-508-9070

Regular Business Hours

8:00AM – 5:00 PM

24 hour Emergency Service

Community Manager:
Stephanie Jebbia
sjebbia@optimumpm

Visit:

www.optimumpm.com

Reminder

HOA Meetings

February 24 @ 7:15 pm

Rancho Senior Center

You are welcome to attend our HOA monthly meetings. Held 4th Thurs of each month unless noted.

Dog Owners

IRVINE LAWS

- CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG
- THREE DOG MAXIMUM PER HOUSEHOLD
- KEEP DOGS LEASHED
- GET THEM LICENSED

ALSO:

DO NOT USE THE RSJ APTS ACROSS THE STREET AS A 'POTTY AREA'

RECYCLING/TRASH DISPOSAL

- Household hazardous waste is NOT allowed in our trash bins
- Use Irvine's Recycling Center at 5311 Oak Canyon
- They accept paint and paint products, motor oil, batteries, poisons, pesticides, fluorescent lamps, mercury, electronic items, etc.

For more information there is a hot line at (714) 834-6752.

ALWAYS BREAK DOWN CARD-BOARD BOXES BEFORE PUTTING IN TRASH BINS.

WATER COSTS SOAR!

The Villas water bill continues to go up, up, up. Your help is needed to reduce our community water usage.

EASY THINGS YOU CAN DO

- Report any outside sprinkler leaks
- Shorten your shower time
- Use a water-efficient shower head
- Repair leaky toilets and/or other faucets.
- Use a full dishwasher to wash dishes, instead of washing by hand
- Take your car to a car wash rather than using community water
- For more ideas:
www.wateruseitwisely.com

*REMINDER: Although home owners don't get an individual water bill, your water cost is passed along to the community and translates into higher monthly dues for everyone.

The Villas Voice

How To Get People To Pick Up After Their Dogs

By [Julie Elle](#), eHow Contributor (Reprinted from ehow.com)

Not everyone lives next door to ideal neighbors. More often than not, people find that their neighbors have at least one undesirable habit that can strain the neighbor-to-neighbor **relationship**. If your neighbors have a dog or dogs, it is safe to guess that the habit you'd like your neighbors to break is that of using your yard as a dog bathroom. Instead of being polite and accepting this bad habit, here's how you can get your neighbor to clean up after a dog:

INSTRUCTIONS:

Try talking to your neighbor about the problem the next time you see him outside. It might be the case that your neighbor is completely unaware that his dog prefers your yard to its own when it is time to take care of its bathroom needs. Politely mentioning the problem as you chat in the driveway might be all it takes

Call your neighbor. You may be too bashful to meet face-to-face to address the problem. If this is the case in your situation, just call your neighbor and politely request that she clean up after her dog visits your yard.

Become more of a presence in your yard. Try spending more time outside for a few days.

If the dog uses your yard for a bathroom while your neighbor can clearly see you, he will likely come right over to clean up after Fido. You will have caught the dog in the act and your neighbor will know it. As you maintain your presence in the yard for a few days, your neighbor may be shamed into making sure that he cleans up after his dog, and the habit of doing so will hopefully stick.

Contact your neighborhood association. Discuss the problem and request that they send a notice to the offending neighbor. Once the situation is made public in this way, your neighbor will likely comply with the request to clean up after their dog.

Set an example. If you are also a dog owner, make it a point to clean up after your own dog, preferably in full view of your neighbor. When your neighbor sees you taking the extra time during your walk to properly clean up after your dog, he might be inspired to return the favor.

Guidelines For Planting In Common Areas

The following information can be read in more detail at www.rsjvillas.com

"The Landscape Committee has been working closely with our landscape contractor for the purpose of creating a planting template for the fronts of all homes. A master plan for all areas must be followed by all owners in order for it to be successful, which in turn would avoid any type of hodgepodge appearance."

"The Landscape Committee is willing to work with any owner who is interested in participating in our "new" look landscaping. Therefore, if an owner has any ideas on how they would like their front common area to look, please follow these FOUR guidelines"...noted on our website under VILLAS LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES.

THE VILLAS

A PROUD HISTORY

The Villas Community was built in 1978. That year, our homes were honored throughout the entire western U.S. by winning six out of the ten prizes given by the West Coast Builders Association.

In fact, the Solano model was named their "Home of the Year," the top honor bestowed by this prestigious organization. Also selected as an award winning community, 3 out of our 4 Villas models were singled out for excellence in design and land use planning.



The Villas Voice

A Newsletter For The Villas Community Association of Rancho San Joaquin
Irvine, CA
March 2011
Volume 5, Issue 2

Protocol: Rules of Etiquette at Board Meetings

In the interest of efficient, productive meetings, we address board meeting protocol. Association board meetings are governed by State Civil Code; more specifically, the Open Meeting Act which dictates the format for HOA board meetings.

The Open Meeting Act requires that associations:

1. give members the opportunity to attend all board meetings with the exception of Executive Sessions
2. give a four day (or more) notice that a meeting be held, noting the time and place
3. publish a comprehensive agenda so interested members can comment on a particular topic during the Open Forum.
4. post the notice and/or agenda in a prominent place—on the bulletin board at the pool, or on the website.

www.rsjvillas.com

- The purpose of the Board Meeting is to conduct the business of the Association, which means discussing topics on the agenda—and, per civil code, **only** those topics. The agenda that the board follows is contained in the director's book, along with the details on all items that require board action, which you may have noticed sits in front of each director. The Director's Report is prepared by our management team each month.
- The Act gives members the right to speak at board meetings—but only

during a session called the "Open Forum" and for a "reasonable amount" of time, which is determined by the Board. Historically, precedent has allowed fifteen minutes total for the Open Forum, with three minutes per owner. Since we have a 9:00 shut off, we can't increase the 15 minutes, which means we would have to reduce speaking time to two minutes, which might seem unreasonable.

- There is no limit on the number of topics an owner may address during his or her three minutes. There is, however, a protocol outlined for the manner in which a member may speak. They have no right to shout, use profanity, or make obscene or threatening remarks. Members who engage in such behavior may be ejected from the meeting.
- Again, a member's right to speak applies to the **Open Forum session only** after which the General Session continues when the Board conducts official business for the Association. While members have a right to **observe** the business part of the General Session, they have no right to speak. We ask for your cooperation.
- Occasionally, during the Business Session, a director may ask a member a question to clarify an issue about which the member may have raised during the Open forum. Sometimes these issues are significant enough to warrant inclusion as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- It is important to achieve a reasonable balance between the needs of the individual members and those of the Open Meeting Act. The objective of the board, therefore, is to keep the best interests of the association in mind during these meetings.

Send comments to: dickseaholm@cox.net

In This Issue

- PROTOCOL: ETIQUETTE AT THE BOARD MEETING
- UPDATES ON LANDSCAPING
- REMINDERS FOR DOG OWNERS
- ATTENDING YOUR BOARD MEETING
- NEWS YOU CAN USE

Visit Your Website

www.rsjvillas.com

OPTIMUM
PROFESSIONAL
PROPERTY MGMT
PHONE
714-508-9070

Regular Business Hours
8:00AM – 5:00 PM
24 hour Emergency Service

Community Manager:
Stephanie Jebbia
sjebbia@optimumpm.com
www.optimumpm.com

Important Numbers

Irvine Police Dept
911 or (949) 724-7200

Irvine Fire Dept
911 or (949) 538-3501

Animal Services
(949) 724-7092

Get Involved!

If you are interested in your community, and if you have never attended a board meeting, then NOW is the time to start.
Keep abreast of what's happening!

Reminder

Board of Directors Meeting

March 24 @ 7:15 pm

Rancho Senior Center

As a resident or owner, you are welcome to attend our BOD monthly business meetings. Held 4th Thurs of each month unless noted.

News You Can Use

- Tree pruning and planned removals, grass aeration underway
- Pool heating starts mid-Aprilmore on pool and spa guidelines next month
- Report any outside sprinkler leaks
- Take your car to a car wash rather than using community water
- Please do not hose down our sidewalks, sweep instead
- We have a timed reclaimed sprinkler system in place. If there are dry areas, please report them, do not water them.
- Household hazardous waste is NOT allowed in our trash bins
- Use Irvine's Recycling Center for hazardous waste and electronics
- Always breakdown boxes before putting them in the bins
- Please keep bins closed
- If you have an over-abundance of items for the bins, please try to dispose of them during the week and not on Saturdays and Sundays, if possible. Overflowing bins are unattractive and have health impacts from rodents, etc.

Check our website to see the February edition of the Villas Voice newsletter.
www.rsjvillas.com

The Villas Voice

Update From Landscape Committee

The Landscape Committee has been diligently walking the property with our manager, Stephanie Jebbia, and our landscape supervisor, Joni James.

During our walks we assess the progress of the work, check on issues that have been brought to our attention and discussed plans for future landscape improvements. Meeting routinely with skilled professionals has been educational, especially Jonsie of Dan's Landscaping, who is an experienced arborist and botanist.

The mission of the Landscape Committee is to retain property values by maintaining and improving the landscape environment. With this goal in mind, the overriding concerns have been to work within an already stretched budget. Another major concern in decision-making is ensuring the safety of our community, and limiting our liability as a result of sewer and drains clogged by tree roots.

One thing we have learned is that our sprinkler systems need to be updated to reduce water costs. New systems are being installed and plantings have been scheduled with a focus on water conservation. Additionally, we have the costs of maintaining all of the trees on our property, which require annual pruning.

There are several trees that have caused structural damage to foundations, sidewalks and even plumbing; plus the on-going costs for cleaning up debris, leaves, flowers and bark.

What follows is a four-year, two-phase proposal to address our most critical issues: diseased trees and trees that result in damage to structural elements.

We have created an outline of all the trees on the property and the trees most in need of treatment have been circled in red. We are grateful to Dan's

Landscape Service for all of the work that went into this endeavor. A copy of this information will soon be available via Optimum Property Management and our Villas website: www.rsjvillas.com.

Our team is also addressing the association rules regarding the unauthorized plantings inside of the condo unit's patio areas. Owners who have planted items that have damaged slabs, roofs and drain pipes have been contacted about compliance.

Some homeowners have suggested paying for the pruning and removal of trees surrounding their units. We would like to know your thoughts on this subject, so please contact the Landscape Committee with your comments via Optimum.

Although the Board will make the final decisions regarding our proposed plan, we would still enjoy hearing your ideas as well. We know that you too are concerned about the

future of our community, so, as a recent article said, we must work together for the good of all in order to maintain the standard of living we have enjoyed.



IRVINE LAWS ABOUT DOGS

- Please carry 'poop' bags and clean up after your dogs, size doesn't matter
- Irvine has a limit of 3 dogs per household
- Keep dogs leashed regardless of size
- All dogs must be licensed

VILLAS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION *NEWS*

September, 2011

WE DO NOT HAVE A QUORUM FOR THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED 9/22 MEETING SO THE SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, 9/27. SAME TIME: 7:15, SAME PLACE

Ana Jensen is no longer with Optimum. Cynthia Hunter, CCAM—who has recently been promoted from Director of Training to Vice President of Association Management at Optimum—has offered to serve as our Interim Property Manager. Residents who have had exposure to Cynthia's wide range of expertise either via working with her on the board or on committees or by simply attending meetings, realize how fortunate we are to have her. She has sixteen years of experience in community association management, five years in the real estate industry and construction industries.

Call Cynthia at: 714-508-9070, ext. 313 or email her: chunter@optimumpm.com

LANDSCAPE NEWS & NOTES

- Residents on the back of Navarre will be happy to know The Landscape Committee's next financial priority is to clean up the area between the Villas and the Temple. The Board will discuss funding for the project at the September 27th board meeting.
- The Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) is serious about water conservation. They awarded Santiago Community College \$75,000 to create draught tolerant demonstration gardens specifically for HOAs to view and, ideally, emulate. If you wish to view the gardens, they're located on two acres located on the NE side of the campus

near the intersections of Santiago Canyon and Jamboree in the city of Orange.

- They also have a "grass for cash" program. The IRWD will pay HOAs \$1.50 per square foot to remove up to 10,000 square feet of turf. We have applied and hope to receive funding to set up a demonstration garden of draught tolerant plants. ("Draught tolerant," not necessarily "native," plants. While there is crossover, there is a difference.)
- The IRWD also has a rebate program for newer, more efficient types of irrigation such as emitter tubes. They're tubes that go under the ground and release water in a more focused and efficient way than sprinklers which are necessary where there's turf (lawn). This is something we'll consider if and when we transition to less turf.

CONSIDERING HOME IMPROVEMENTS? DO YOU NEED TO COMPLETE AN ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION? WHEN IN DOUBT CHECK IT OUT!

If you're thinking of remodeling either the interior or exterior of your unit, check with Cynthia Hunter, Property Manager to make sure you don't need permission from the Architectural Committee. You can find an application on our website: www.rsjvillas.com or request one from Optimum.

Below are some of the upgrades that require architectural apps:

- Window change-outs. Only almond or bronze-brown are permitted. White windows are not. We do have a unit on Segura with white windows that are grandfathered in because, at the time of installation, multi-pane windows were only available in white.
- Satellite Dishes. Placement is the concern. They are not allowed on the roof. A dish attached to the roof would void the 20 year roof warranty on our new roofs.
- Tile, brick, wood or other materials used to update your front patio or courtyard.
- Painting Your Front Door. Four colors are now allowed. They are posted at the pool.
- Any patio cover or overhang.
- Any modification to interior plumbing, electrical, gas lines or structural walls requires approval BEFORE submission to the City of Irvine for appropriate permits.
- New air-conditioning units.

It is impossible to mention every change an HO may consider so err on the side of seeking approval. **Let the Architectural Committee be your guide.**

If you don't apply for the appropriate architectural forms your improvements are in jeopardy. Best case scenario: they may be stopped midway, slowing progress on your project. Worst case scenario: your unit may have to be returned to its original condition at your expense. If you install a satellite dish on your roof, for instance, you will have to pay for a roof repair by a Villa's contractor. Or, if you install white windows, you will have to shell out to paint them. Again: **when in doubt, check it out.**

COYOTE ALERT!

They're hungry. As more and more of their habitat are usurped, they prowl residential areas in search of food. Most cat owners know to keep their cats indoors—if they want to keep their cats—but dogs are at risk, too. In Laguna Woods there have been numerous instances recently of coyotes grabbing small dogs—leash and all—from owners who walk them after dark or before dawn. Be wary. Recently, coyotes have been seen on Morena as early as 10 o'clock at night. There has also been an incident in the Villas in which a dog was attacked by young coyotes during daylight hours.

DON'T BE A PARTY POOPER—BE A DOG SCOOPER!

It seems now, more than ever, the Villas' sidewalks are being fouled by a few inconsiderate residents who don't pick up after their dogs. Be kind to your neighbors and a responsible community member.

CELL PHONE ETIQUETTE

The regulations posted at our pool state that radios are not allowed unless used with earphones—a simple courtesy to neighbors who may have different tastes in music or who simply prefer silence. When the regulations were developed, had there been cell phones, no doubt one would read: “No cell phone conversations.” If you must have your phone because you're expecting an important call, please keep the conversation brief. Too, be aware and wary. When you're talking on your cell while walking community sidewalks your voice carries, sometimes revealing personal information you might not knowingly share.

WE NEED A VOLUNTEER TO DO GRAPHICS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER
CONTACT: CYNTHIA HUNTER,
PROPERTY MANAGER
(714) 508-9070. EXT. 313 OR
CHUNTER@OPTIMUMPM.COM