

## **APRIL**

April is the first full month of a Spring full of blooms and blossoms. April showers will be welcome but steady rain would be more useful. Notable days this month include: Good Friday on April 3; Passover begins on Saturday, April 4; Easter Sunday is on April 5; Chant-arelle Pool opens on Wednesday, April 15; and Community Service Day is Saturday, April 25. Have a happy month!

## **BOARD MEETING**

There is no Board Meeting in April. The next Board Meeting will be the homeowners meeting on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, starting at 7pm.

## **NO TGIF PARTY IN APRIL**

There will be no TGIF in April because the first Friday of the month falls on Good Friday.

## **TAX MATTERS**

Sonoma County Property Tax: **The second installment was due February 1 and becomes delinquent at 5pm on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**Federal & State Income Tax:** Returns must be postmarked no later than Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Tax Assistance:** The AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide program at Vintage House is open on Mondays & Wednesdays between 9am and noon.

## **PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

Happy Spring to all of you in Chantarelle. The flowers, trees and bushes are blooming, and some of us even have vegetables starting to grow. The pool will open on April 15<sup>th</sup> and I know that is good news for our dedicated swimmers, so enjoy the water.

I just read that Sonoma's rainfall total is 20.03 inches as compared to 20.42 for last year. We are the only town of the 19 that are listed in The Press Democrat to have less rainfall this year than last year and we have had less rain than the other 18 towns, so we need to be mindful of drought conditions. Debbie and Susan are carefully monitoring what needs to be done in terms of water management.

Spring also will bring our first Community Service Day to do some planting, painting, rock displays and food collection. We need as many hands on deck as possible to make sure that Chantarelle stays as beau-tiful as it is, and to add some new ideas to our landscape. Watch for a flyer in your mail tube prior to April 25<sup>th</sup>.

At the Annual Meeting the vote was 68-0 to carry forth our revenues into 2015. After listing our events and projects for 2014, I was amazed that we as a community had accomplished so much. Congratulations and thanks to all who continue to contribute to our growth.

Our committees continue to grow as well. Mary Howland has volunteered to assist on the Website Committee, and I know that John is grateful for her will-ingness to serve Chantarelle. We all benefit, so thank you, Mary.

Don't forget that our May meeting will start at 7 p.m. on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The time change was suggested in the community survey, and will give the Board a chance to meet some more Chantarelle residents.

We are also looking into some cost effective, brighter lighting for the Clubhouse, which should make it more conducive for all Clubhouse functions.

**WARNING to automobile owners:** Please be aware that there have been several thefts of catalytic converters in the area. Thieves get under a car and cut out the converters in a matter of minutes. We recommend that you make a special effort to garage your cars to increase security. A new converter can cost up to a thousand dollars.

Stay safe, and enjoy our beautiful Sonoma weather.  
*Dave Owens*

## **MOVIE NIGHT**

April's movie will be shown at the Clubhouse at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. The feature is ***The Theory Of Everything***, which dramatizes the relationship between renowned physicist Stephen Hawking and his wife Jane.

## **LANDSCAPE NOTES**

Hello friends in Chantarelle! Your Landscape Committee doesn't have a lot of new updates for you this month, so just a few comments here.

As we all have noticed, Sonoma was blessed with only the smallest dose of rain again this month. While spring is springing everywhere, and it is truly beautiful, water conservation continues to be our top priority as we think ahead to how we want to move forward with the stewardship of our landscape.

Meanwhile, let us all enjoy the bounty of spring loveliness that flourishes in our neighborhood. For that, we can thank not only those who came before us on the Landscape Committee, but also residents who have planted their own beautiful gardens that can be seen and enjoyed by all of us as we walk and drive along our streets.

As our future unfolds, it will continue to be our commitment to maximize such beauty in our neighborhood as we adapt to the drier conditions that clearly continue to prevail.

Enjoy a marvelous April and we'll have more to share with you in May. *Debbie & Susan*

## **2015 DIRECTORY**

By now you should have received your 2015 Directory. If your details are not listed correctly in the new directory, please advise John Dodgshon.

## **CLUBHOUSE RESERVATIONS**

To reserve the clubhouse for an event, please call Liz Wardimon.

## **SUNSHINE COMMITTEE**

If you know of anyone at Chantarelle who is sick or if you have a new neighbor, please let Willy Hoekstra know, so that she can contact them. Willy's number is 996-0661.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Please refer to your 2015 Directory for a list of our Board of Directors and Committee Members.

## **SAFETY & WELFARE NOTES**

Hans Steuck has provided this timely advice from AARP...

### ***Property Tax Outrage***

Eileen Battisti's mountain of troubles began when she paid her property taxes six days late in 2009, causing a late-payment charge of \$6.30 to be added to her account. Next year, Battisti mailed in a check for the full amount noted on her tax bill. What the bill didn't show was that she also owed the county \$234.72 as a result of interest & charges added to that original late fee. That shortfall was enough to ultimately prompt her local tax collectors in Beaver County, PA, to sell the house in a tax sale. "I couldn't believe it," Battisti says. "They sold my house because I owed interest & penalties on that late fee, yet for three years, they never told me anything. Of course I would have paid that fee if I knew about it — \$6.30 is just lunch money!" Battisti's nightmare stemmed from the fact that she had paid off the mortgage on her house just outside of Pittsburgh. She did so with the proceeds from her husband's life insurance policy after he

died from stomach cancer in 2004. "This was his final wish," says Battisti, now 54. "He wanted to be sure that the three children and I would always have a place to live." But that meant that her property taxes were no longer paid by the mortgage company. Battisti says she didn't know about the outstanding balance on her home because the bills she received from the county tax office made no mention of it. "I paid what I was told I owed them," she said. The county, for its part, claims that it sent her all the notification that the law requires. S.P. Lewis of Imperial, Pa., bought Battisti's house for \$113,000 at auction, then offered to sell it back to her for \$160,000. If she didn't buy it, he wanted to charge her \$2,500 a month in rent for the period of time she remained in the house. Outraged, Battisti hired an attorney and challenged the county. Last year, after a long legal battle, a Pennsylvania appeals court overturned the sale of Battisti's home. But Lewis has asked the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to review the court decision overturning the home sale. So far, this whole thing has cost Battisti more than \$30,000 in legal fees. This is hardly an isolated case. Around the country, aggressive taxing authorities are increasingly seizing and selling homes as a way to generate revenue, says Julie Nepveu, a senior attorney at AARP Foundation Litigation, which supported Battisti's case on appeal with a friend-of-the-court brief. "Older homeowners are most vulnerable to losing their homes through tax sales like this one. It's a huge problem that has reached crisis proportions in many parts of the country." Nepveu urges consumers to be diligent about their tax bills, especially if their mortgage is paid off and taxes aren't automatically paid. In Battisti's case, Beaver County's tax office mailed out notifications that were "incomplete, confusing, contradictory and hard to read," Nepveu says. "I spent a weekend with Mrs. Battisti's notices, and if I, as an attorney, couldn't understand them, imagine how confusing it is for the average person." Jim Christiana, a state representative in Pennsylvania, has called for an investigation into the Beaver County tax office. "What happened to Mrs. Battisti did not sit right with me," he says. "There is lack of transparency here, downright abuse." The tax claim bureau did not respond to the Bulletin's inquiries. For homeowners who face difficulties paying their property taxes, there is help: Every state has special abatement or exemption programs for property taxes. According to a report published by the National Consumer Law Center, these programs grant "full or partial relief to taxpayers due to age, disability, income, or personal status. The benefits are not automatic and most programs require the home-owner to proactively apply for the abatement or exemption."

## **NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE**

Please submit items for the newsletter and the Chantarelle Website to John Dodgshon. Our thanks to Cecilia Angel for her continued dedication to delivering the newsletter.

### *Advertisement*

**All Walks of Life:** Need a little help around the house for you or a loved one? Personal Assistance and Elder Care available. Certified & Bonded. References available.

I live here in Chantarelle. Flyers and Cards are in the Club House.

*Dona Kinkead 415-425-3110*

*Note that advertisers are not endorsed by the HOA*

## **FREE SET OF TWIN BEDS**

Benny Lee would like to give away a set of twin beds. These are fairly new (less than 10 years old) that he does not need anymore. The sets include head board and mattress. If anybody is interested, please contact Benny Lee at 105 S Temelec Circle.