

January 2000 Newsletter Article

2000 is here and we wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year. The holiday decorations in Bienville Place were just beautiful and we'd like to thank everyone who helped make our subdivision look so festive. As we enter into a new year, Bienville Place can look forward to another great year as one of the most highly desired communities on the Coast ... an outstanding place in which to live and invest.

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On November 18, 1999 we had a very informative and productive meeting. The main topics included:

- [Setting our 2000 Budget and Dues Assessment](#)
- [Election of Officers](#)
- [Recognition of 1999 Volunteers](#)
- [Open Forum Discussion](#)

Setting our 2000 Budget and Dues Assessment

The Board's proposed budget and dues assessment for 2000 were unanimously approved. The budget was increased from \$6,920 to \$12,220—an increase of \$5,300. Over 80% of the increase can be accounted for in lawn care and dues/covenant enforcement. The additional funds allocated to lawn care will allow for biannual shrub trimming and cleanup around the dam by our lawn maintenance contractor. The increase to the enforcement category will allow the board to take legal action against owners that fail to either pay dues or comply with the covenants.

Although our budget for 2000 is considerably larger than 1999, the dues assessment will remain at \$50. (See article entitled "[2000 Dues](#)" for more information). This is possible, since all owners paid their 1999 dues and we are starting the year out with over \$6,000 in assets. There should be enough new income to cover all budget categories, excluding dues/covenant enforcement, which will hopefully not be needed.

2000 Budget	
Property Taxes	100.00

Lawn Care	2600.00
Landscaping	1200.00
Water	120.00
Repairs	500.00
Postage/PO Box	300.00
Newsletter/Flyers	150.00
Meetings	50.00
Welcome Committee	50.00
Attorney and Legal Fees	500.00
Dues/Covenant Enforcement	4500.00
Liability Insurance	2150.00
Total	12220.00

Election of Officers

Of the seven elected positions, all but two were filled by incumbents. This should help provide the continuity needed to continue building the strength and viability of the Association. Frances Bloom was elected President (1999 Secretary). Mickey Culberson was elected Vice President. Brian Schafer was elected Treasurer (1997 ARB/Treasurer and 1998-99 Treasurer). Tom Shaffer was elected Secretary. The following individuals were elected to serve on the Architectural Review Board: Mike Gemelli (1998-99 ARB), Ken Meyer (1999 ARB), and Tom Robillard (1997-99 ARB).

Recognition of 1999 Volunteers

We recognized the efforts of Marta Gemelli in helping with the Welcome Committee and sponsoring a Garden Club which met earlier in the year.

Other residents have helped clean up the grounds on various occasions throughout the year. They pruned the trees and bushes, planted shrubs at the front entrance, and arranged to have fallen trees removed near the dam after hurricane Georges. Here is a listing of those who have helped: Mike and Marta Gemelli, Ken Meyer, Miles Quigley, Greg and Susan Rehe, Pat Robinson, Howard Rush, Brian Schafer, Tom Shaffer, and Steve and Jo Souers.

We also want to acknowledge the 1999 officers—especially those retiring: Steve Souers (President) and Howard Rush (VP).

Summary of Open Forum Topics

A brief summary of the open forum topics discussed at the annual meeting are provided for your information.

- *Phase IV Update* — Concern was expressed that the covenants are not effectively being enforced in Phase IV. Although the Association has no authority over Phase IV, the Board has tried to work cooperatively with the developers and even offered in writing to assist with non-architectural covenant stipulations. A follow-up letter was also sent by our attorney echoing the same concerns and solution. To date there has been no response from the builders. A new developer is now involved in Phase IV and the Board is resolved to continue to develop a working relationship with the developers in Phase IV.
- *Entrance* – The brick wall is in need of cleaning and one of light fixtures is broken. Mike Gemelli, Tom Robillard and Ken Meyer volunteered to clean the wall. The light fixtures will most probably need to be replaced in total.
- *Street Repairs* — For several years Alderman John McKay has attempted to get our streets repaired. At several city meetings he has gotten council approval, but apparently our streets are not a major priority considering the major drainage and expansion of Government Street that the city is currently working.
- *Lot Maintenance* — Concern was expressed about the overgrown weeds on some of the unimproved lots. Last year the city came through and mowed about 10 feet back from the street. We will check and see if the city can do this again. It was also pointed out that there is a city ordinance which requires lot owners to install sidewalks once the subdivision has been platted for five years. Sidewalks would help control the weeds and the Board will request the city to follow-up. The only other option is to contact lot owner and proceed through covenant enforcement.
- *Christmas Decorations* — In previous years luminaries were cooperatively used to decorate the subdivision on a designated night. Interest and participation dwindled. It was suggested that committee be formed to judge the decorated houses in the subdivision. Don Smith volunteered to chair, perhaps it can be organized this year.
- *Golf Scramble* — Tom Robillard will organize a golf scramble for interested Association members this spring.
- *Landscaping* — The desire to landscaping the island located on

Versailles Court was expressed. Interested members should submit landscaping plans to the Board for possible funding. Of the \$1200 allocated to landscaping , \$800 is committed to purchasing and applying mulch to the common areas. Therefore, several hundred dollars are available to landscape the island.

- *Lake* — It was suggested that a vegetation-eating fish species be stocked in the lake to cleanup the lake. This is an issue for the lot owners on the lake to address, as the Association does not maintain the lake.
- *Fences* — Several individuals expressed a concern that the fencing covenants should be amended—desiring to make the covenants regarding fences less restrictive by allowing fencing on lake properties and 6-foot high fences. An informal poll was taken on the interest of amending the fence covenants among those present; 5 for, 9 against, and 7 abstained. Based on the interest indicated, a [committee](#) be formed to address all of the issues regarding fences. Volunteers for the committee were Shawn Holly (Chairperson), Don Smith, Joe Schiller and David Hayden.

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We intend to pursue dues payment from all property owners again this year — 100% compliance. We believe that this is the fairest approach to dues collection, since everyone benefits from the Association. Even if you are in the process of selling your home, you will derive benefit from the Association.

All persons who own real estate in Bienville Place are members of the Association and are responsible for the upkeep of the common property. See [Bylaws](#) concerning dues assessment and collection practices.

Annual dues are currently set at \$50 and due by January 31. A delinquent account more than 30 days late will be assessed a \$10 late charge. Please use the coupon below to submit your payment

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Based on the dialog at the annual meeting, the Fence Committee will address fencing location, material, size, and whether fencing will be allowed on lake lots. In order to ensure that the will of the majority of the lot owners is accomplished, all committee actions must first be approved by the Board and these actions are expected to be unbiased.

The committee will use the following process to solicit input from all owners prior to formally amending the Covenants:

1. Survey lake lot owners to determine if a majority desires to allow fencing on lake properties. If so, what limitations would they like to see imposed regarding location, material, and size.
2. Solicit input from all remaining lot owners.
3. Prepare proposed amendments and review with Board of Directors, Architectural Review Board, and attorney.
4. Hold a special meeting to discuss proposed covenant amendments — informational only, no vote will be taken.
5. Mail out letter with suggested Covenant wording and include well prepared "for/against" statements.
6. Go door to door and obtain petition signatures.
7. File amended Covenants with the County.

The committee will hold its first meeting the week of January 17 to begin developing the written survey. If you would like to serve on this committee, contact either Frances Bloom (875-9917) or Shawn Holly (875-1222).