

JANUARY 2014

# BIENVILLE PLACE NEWS

## THANK YOU AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

To all those who contributed to the success of our annual meeting in December by mailing and passing along their proxy vote, as well as those who attended, THANK YOU! A minimum of 20% of the Association must be present or combined with proxy votes to hold a meeting and conduct business. We did just that with your help.

## ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting was held Thursday evening, December 19, in the Fellowship Hall of Wesley United Methodist Church on Old Spanish Trail – across from the Middle School. A great big THANKS goes to Greg Horshok for making that happen. Greg coordinated with the church so we could use their facility at a significantly less amount than we had been paying to the Ocean Springs School District. The church facility was very nice and gave us a much less sterile environment, which probably helped with the open exchange of information.

## ELECTIONS

Last year’s Board and ARB members agreed to continue in their current positions and were re-elected.

### Board of Directors

- President – Ashleigh Rogers Zelaya
- Vice-President – Tana Owen
- Secretary – Sue Mitchell
- Treasurer – Bebe Walls

### Architectural Review Board

- Chairman – Troy Million
- Member – Dale Boudreaux
- Member – Buddy O’Brien

## GARAGE SALE

The annual Garage Sale in October was again a success. More than 24 homeowners set up for

this annual event. Mark your calendars for this year’s the 2014 Garage Sale.—Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. As with each year’s event, signs will be posted at the Hanshaw Road entrances the week of the garage sale. We’ll also advertise in *The Sun Herald* for 3 days. The day before the garage sale we’ll post directional signs at Hwy 90 & Hanshaw (don’t want them stolen). The feedback from last year’s sale was once again positive. Holding it in October makes it a lot cooler for everyone – sellers and shoppers alike.

## WHAT’S THE HURRY

You’ve probably seen trucks and cars zooming up and down your street. If you were to sit on the side of the street by most any of the stop signs, you’d most likely see quite a few of the drivers who don’t stop – and in a lot of cases, don’t even slow down at the stop sign. Those drivers are not necessarily passing through our subdivision. They could very well be Bienville Place residents. The posted Speed Limit in Bienville Place is 21 MPH. We’re a family-oriented neighborhood and there are lots of children who live here. Please Slow Down, Stop for stop signs, and Watch\_Out for the kids. It’s important for us to stay safe and to keep the children safe!

## PARKING

Parking on the grass and sidewalk easements was discussed at our annual meeting. Safety was the number one concern. There are a number of homeowners whose exercise routine includes walking on the sidewalks. Additionally, children are quite often seen playing on the sidewalks. When a car is parked on the sidewalk or extends out of the driveway and blocks the sidewalk, it sets up a safety hazard. Walkers and children are forced out into the street, where they can easily be hit by oncoming traffic. Please keep safety in mind the next time you think about parking on the sidewalk.

## THE BOATS WERE MOVED

In the 4th quarter of last year, letters were sent to violators of the boat, trailer, and vehicle covenant

Thank you very much for your cooperation by complying with the request.

## **ENTRANCE SIGNS**

**W**e're working a 3-phase project to make the Hanshaw Road entrances more attractive. Phase I of the project has been completed. The entrance signs started the new year with a makeover. There were several places requiring repairs as a result of vandalism. The weather had faded the stucco, plus dirt and stains needed to be covered. The update made a significant difference in how the signs look. Thanks for the positive feedback we've received on this phase. Phase II will entail cleaning the granite monuments at the Cabildo Place entrance. Phase III will be to replace or add to the existing vegetation by the signs that faces Hanshaw Road. We'll probably hold off on that phase until it warms up.

## **WHY WE MOVED HERE**

### *A HOMEOWNER'S PERSPECTIVE*

**T**his is a very interesting excerpt from a letter the Board received from one of our property owners. "The restrictive covenants in Bienville Place played a large part in our decision to move here 12 years ago. Unfortunately, the lack of enforcement of the covenants negatively impacts the marketability and value of our homes, as it can appear to potential buyers that we are a neighborhood in decline." I know a lot of us moved here because it is a covenant community and we should all abide by those covenants.

## **REPORTING A VIOLATION**

**W**ith that in mind, property owners can report a suspected covenant violation to the Board by submitting the suspected violation to the Board in writing. Send an email to the Association email address [info@bpoassn.com](mailto:info@bpoassn.com). Another option would be to send a written request through the mail to BPOA, PO Box 0071, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0071. A signature is not required if you would like to remain anonymous. We are currently taking actions to correct identified violations.

## **PURPOSE OF THE ARB**

**W**hy do we have an Architectural Review Board? They are vested with the power to control the buildings, structures and other

improvements placed on each Lot for the purpose of ensuring the development of the properties as an area of high standards. Refusal of approval of plans and specifications may be based on any grounds, including purely aesthetic. The ARB works closely with property owners to try to accommodate their requests, while maintaining the high standards established by the covenants. Without their outstanding work, Bienville Place could look like a "neighborhood in decline". Help us maintain the high standards in Bienville Place by abiding by the existing covenants.

## **IMPROVEMENTS OUTSIDE YOUR HOME**

**P**roperty owners are responsible for obtaining approval from the ARB for most changes or improvements to their property. Matters requiring approval include, but are not limited to the following: new home construction, additions or changes to existing homes, i.e., decks, sun porches, enclosures of existing porches, swimming pools, exterior color changes, roofs, installation of satellite dishes, and fences. A penalty of fifty (\$50) dollars may be assessed if changes or improvements are made prior to plan approval by the ARB. If you make any exterior changes or modification to your property, you must obtain approval of the plans from the ARB before you begin work.

## **APPROVAL OF PLANS**

**O**ne complete set of plans and specifications are required to be furnished to the ARB when applying for a project approval. These are retained by the Board for its records. Detailed guidance for the submission package is outlined in Article II, Section 2 of the Covenants. Submit your plans in writing to BPOA, PO Box 0071, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0071. After receiving the plans, an ARB member will contact you to set up an appointment to discuss your project and then go from there on the approval process.

## **RECURRING VIOLATIONS**

**I**t is the responsibility of property owners to comply with the Covenants and Bylaws. Non-compliance and not paying Association dues can lead to financial penalties and liens being placed on properties. The major recurring violations are associated with:

**Dues.** Every year collecting dues is a very time-consuming process. The treasurer contacts property owners, in writing, whose accounts are delinquent to allow them the opportunity to bring their account up to date to preclude lien actions.

**Utility trailers, RVs, boats, boat trailers, and jet skis.** Storage of such items must be screened from public view, either within the garage or within an approved storage facility. When owners of these items park them in their driveways, in the street, or on the grass in their yards, even for a temporary period of time, visitors or potential homebuyers get the impression that it must be alright. It also turns into a domino effect amongst homeowners and renters that the Board continues trying to correct.

**Fences.** The fence covenant varies based on the location of the property. Bienville Place subdivision was built in 4 phases. The fence covenant varied between phases and fences that existed when their phase joined Phase I were granted grandfather status. That's just one reason why it is important to work with the ARB on fence requirements. Different rules could apply to different phases.

## REACTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

Ever wonder what the reaction is when a homeowner with a covenant violation is contacted by a Board member or an ARB member, with either written or face-to-face communications? Sometimes the homeowner may apologize and correct the violation or just correct the violation with no further contact. Sometimes a homeowner will take the position of "Others do it so why am I being singled out?" or, "There are other people with violations around here and I'm not fixing this until you get the rest of them fixed." Each request to the ARB and Board is unique and a perceived violation could possibly have been granted an exception based on the particular circumstances of that property, therefore, making it an exception, not a violation

## NUMBER OF PETS

According to the Covenants, no animals, livestock, or poultry of any kind shall be raised, bred or kept on any Lot. The exception is dogs, cats or other common household pets of the domestic variety. These may be kept provided they

are not kept, bred or maintained for commercial purposes. There is a limitation on the number of animals a household may keep – two (2). That is a combined total of all animals.

## IT'S WORTH REPEATING

This article was in the July 2013 issue of the Bienville Place News.

**Barking nuisance.** Please don't put your dog outside and leave them to bark and disturb your neighbors, particularly "early" in the morning and "late" in the evening. These are times neighbors are either sleeping or trying to enjoy quiet time with their families. Because we love our pets and can ignore their barking doesn't mean the same for our neighbors.

**Cleaning up behind our pets.** It's not uncommon to see homeowners walking their dogs and not cleaning up behind them. Please respect the yards of other homeowners and clean up behind your pet.

**Roaming dogs.** On a regular basis pets are seen roaming the streets and making themselves at home in yards other than their own. Additionally, loose dogs present the opportunity for someone (even your pet) to be harmed, whether intentional or not.

**City Ordinance.** The City pet ordinance requires owners to clean up after their pets. There is also a pet leash requirement. Concerns with leash violations, noise nuisance or cleaning up behind pets should be addressed to the Ocean Springs Police Department.

## BPOA WEBSITE

We have a new Association website and email address. Suggestions for content and changes are gladly accepted. Our website address is [www.BPOASSN.com](http://www.BPOASSN.com). We'd like to hear from you. Contact us at our new email address [info@bpoassn.com](mailto:info@bpoassn.com). There are links to important numbers throughout the city, county, and state, in addition to contacts for the Association.

## ANNUAL DUES

The dues for 2014 remain at \$75.00. Enclosed is the form to return with your check or you can **PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE**. We now offer an alternative to writing a check and mailing your annual dues. Go to our new website at [www.BPOASSN.com](http://www.BPOASSN.com) where there is a link in the menu at the top for the

**ANNUAL DUES** page. Select that option and payments can be processed using your PayPal account or a credit card through PayPal. If you opt to pay your 2014 dues online, the total will be \$77.48. The additional \$2.48 is a handling fee through PayPal. If you elect to write a check for your 2014 annual dues the amount will be \$75.00. Annual dues are per Lot and are payable in advance and are due on or before 31 January of the dues year. This is dues year 2014 so the dues should be paid by January 31, 2014

### **ANYONE CAN LOOK AT YOUR PROPERTY INFORMATION**

**H**ave you ever looked at this website? <http://mapping.co.jackson.ms.us/jacksoncountyflexwebmap/> It is the link to the Jackson County property database. When you open the website using this link, it's labeled as "Jackson County Dashboard". In the middle of the page is an area that you must click "I AGREE" to use the database. In the upper right-hand corner is a "Parcel Selection Search Tool". The search options are (1) Parcel Identification Number (PIDN), (2) Address (3) Subdivision or (4) Name. The information in this database should be the same information on your "Deed". You can print the information for your records. Based on BPOA research of property owner data, some information was found to be in error. Suggest you take a look at your information in this database – owner name(s), spelling, property address, and your mailing address. An error, for example, indicated a property was sold in August of 2013 and the database still indicates the previous owner's information. If you find a discrepancy, you can go to the Chancery Clerk office in the Jackson County Complex in Pascagoula. They can pull your deed and assist you in correcting your information. Hopefully it's just a key stroke error, not a deed error.

### **ANYONE CAN LOOK AT YOUR PROPERTY TAXES**

**T**he Jackson County Real Property Tax database is another important informational database. <http://www.deltacomputersystems.com/MS/MS30/PLINKQUERY.MHTML> The query form indicates putting information in "One" of the fields will give you results. Entering address information does not necessarily work. Put your name (last then first)

and you should get information on your property. It's pretty interesting. These two databases use the same information. If it's wrong in one database, it should be wrong in the other. Again, go to the Chancery Clerk office and they'll guide you in the right direction to correct your info.

### **LAKE IBERVILLE**

**T**he lake was restocked after Hurricane Katrina because the salt water flowed into the lake and killed a significant amount of fish. In the spring when it gets warmer, we'll have the Wildlife and Fisheries experts test the health of the lake again. If results of the test indicate there is a need to restock the lake, it will be restocked. Homeowners and their family members are welcome to fish from the dam. The banks of the lake are private property. If you want to fish from the banks, you should ask the property owner if it's permissible. Lake Iberville is a private lake and is closed to the public.

### **HOME-BASED BUSINESS**

**T**he covenants state that no activity, whether for profit or not, shall be carried on any lot which is not related to single-family residential purposes. Additionally, the City ordinance on home-based businesses states there shall be no external evidence of use. The City guidance further outlines that if you own a home-based business, there can be no employees or clients/customers that come and go from your home.

### **NUMBER OF HOMEOWNERS**

**O**ccasionally we are asked "How many property owners are in our subdivision?". The answer: 195. Of those 195, 3 own 2 lots and the Association owns 1 lot – the Dam.

### **NUMBER OF RENTERS**

**T**he same question comes up about renters. The answer: we don't know. There's no way to track that information.

### **COPIES OF COVENANTS AND BYLAWS**

**C**opies of the Covenants and ByLaws are on our website [www.BPOASSN.com](http://www.BPOASSN.com). If you need the Association to provide you a hardcopy, email us at [info@bpoassn.com](mailto:info@bpoassn.com) or mail your request to the post office box.