

THE STEEPLECHASE REVIEW

MAY 2025



Bi-annual Newsletter including news, views and announcements.

Contributions welcome.

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VOLUNTEERING : EXPERIENCE OF PAT HEUTER

I had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with Pat Heuter, one of our Steeplechase long-time residents and a Neapolitan for over 47 years. In listening to her stories of the joy and friendships that she has experienced here in Steeplechase, we started talking about the power of connection through participation and volunteering. Pat can speak confidently to this. In her years, she has volunteered at her church, at the Alzheimer Support Network, on many Steeplechase Committees and participated in the '[Red Hat Society](#)', naming just a small sample of her projects. Pat's caring attitude, calm approach to life's challenges and continuous connection with the world around her is a tribute to a life of commitment and engagement. She wisely notes that one always receives more from volunteering than one offers.

Yet there also is a hesitation by people to volunteer. Why is this? There has been a decline in volunteerism which has been attributed to time constraints (lives do get busy!), changing priorities among upcoming generations, distractions related to social media and even health ...



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VOLUNTEERING & THE EXPERIENCE OF PAT HEUTER **continued**

concerns following the disruptive covid period where there is a greater avoidance to general interactions.

Yet, the MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEMS has shared interesting research which has shown that volunteering offers significant health benefits, especially for older adults, including:

1. Improves physical and mental health. Volunteer activities keep people moving and thinking at the same time. Research has found that volunteering among adults, age 60 and over, provided benefits to physical and mental health. Volunteers report better physical health than non-volunteers. Research also has shown that volunteering leads to lower rates of depression and anxiety, especially for people 65 and older.

Volunteering reduces stress and increases positive, relaxed feelings by releasing dopamine. By spending time in service to others, volunteers report feeling a sense of meaning and appreciation, both given and received, which can have a stress-reducing effect. Reduced stress further decreases the risk of some physical and mental health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety and general illness. In addition, people who volunteer have lower mortality rates than those who do not, even when controlling for age, gender and physical health.

2. Provides a sense of purpose and teaches valuable skills. The work that volunteers provide is essential to everyday

activities, even on a property like Steeplechase, giving volunteers a sense of purpose, especially when giving their time and talent in the areas they find meaningful, like the maintenance committee, the social committee or the landscaping committee.

3. Nurtures new and existing relationships. Volunteering increases social interaction and helps build a support system based on common interests. One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to participate in a shared activity. And in a community, this helps us get to know one another and help each other in times of need.

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer? There is a wide variety of volunteer opportunities in every community, and certainly here in Steeplechase. You can explore opportunities in many organizations in Naples. Or reach out to a Board Member and consider where you can get involved right here in Steeplechase. You can only benefit from such a step!

Sincere thanks to you, Pat, for sharing your experiences with volunteering!

SOCIAL CLUB UPDATE

The STEEPLECHASE SOCIAL CLUB is an opportunity for everyone living on the property. It is a chance to attend an event, get to know one another and build connection in a relaxed and easy manner: simply being together.

Did you know that it's called a CLUB because it is not an official Steeplechase Board-supported Committee. It is not a part of the Association budget. Events are funded by attendee participation.

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SOCIAL CLUB UPDATE continued ... There is also a raffle at major events where people donate money then 50% is saved for the SOCIAL CLUB budget (paper plates, decorations, etc.) and the rest is raffled off.



Once a month from about October to April there is a theme party (e.g. Valentine's Day, Saint Patrick's Day...). During the summertime, we propose going to a restaurant each month due to the heat.

While there are 4 people listed on the website as organizers (Barbara Elnes, Arlene Goffredi, Richard Atkins and Barbara Sworin), there are many other contributors (as just one example, Sue Bavisotto, whenever she is in town). The group sets up events in advance and has a lot of fun doing so.

And everyone is invited to attend.

We want to give a big shout out of thanks to everyone who works to makes these events enjoyable and inclusive.

Please do join us sometime!

These 5 pictures are lovely memories from the March St. Patrick's Day Social Club event.



BROKEN OR CRACKED BAY WINDOW?

We've had a few owners at Steeplechase who have had cracks in their bay windows. Repairs to these windows are the owner's responsibility. If only half of your window is broken, that is all that you need to replace. When repairing these windows, there are three things Steeplechase asks you to be aware of and conform to: windows have green tint, vinyl inside and out, and a colonial trim... that way it'll match perfectly the rest of the windows in your bay window area.

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LAND-SCAPING COMMITTEE UPDATE



The work that goes on at Steeplechase to maintain landscaping provides us with wonder when we take the time to look. As you drive onto our property the next time, give your eyes and spirit this gift. Consider a closer look at the trees and the plants. The beauty of our landscaping lies in it's ability to evoke a sense of awe, tranquility, and connection to nature. It becomes an extension of our homes! And we can thank our Landscaping Committee, Vision Turf Care and everyone's contributions as property owners for this wonder in our midst.

A lot has been happening in the past months to deliver this wonder! Vision Turf Care cut and trimmed the palmettos around the pool area and around the sidewalks to the pool and this has been done in a way that retains the Florida style of a tropical look while ensuring spacing necessary for plant care and avoiding overgrowth. The fallen leaves and broken branches have been cleaned out under all bushes so fertilizer could be put down.

A most unique facet of Steeplechase is the diversity and number of trees that populate our areas. Can you guess how many types we have? The various trees require different types of care.



Landscaping Committee:
Len Hook, Linda Reed,
Mayra Blanche, Smitty
Howarth

We have 50 cabbage palms, 16 Chinese palms and 2 Queen Palms. These trees require annual trimming in the spring. This was done in early May as recently communicated.

The hardwoods have recently also been thinned out and elevated and this is done every three years before hurricane season. We have 1 Banyan, 64 Oaks and 9 Black Olive trees that we trim.

Our pines- all 36 of them- require no trimming. And then we have self-cleaning trees that require no trimming at all: 6 Foxtail Palms, 7 Christmas Palms and 1 Royal Palm.

It could be a lovely expedition early one morning to try to identify a few of these tree types, especially those within eyeshot of your entrances or patios. Nature can ground us, remind us of the magic of the world around us and draw us towards becoming the best we can be in life. Let's celebrate our landscaping.

And we thank our wonderful landscaping Committee – pictured here - and Vision Turf Care!

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PLANTS DONATED TO LANDSCAPING

One of our residents had the kindness of thinking of Steeplechase when she was at a garden center and some plants were on offer. Paula Estes brought a series of plants to the Landscaping Committee and the team dove in to utilize them in a few sparsely populated ground areas and planters.



Very sincere thanks, Paula, for your thoughtfulness. And thanks to the Landscaping Committee for working hard to make best use of these gifts.



CONDOMINIUM KEYS

Steeplechase Rules and Regulations state: *Each condominium unit owner shall deposit keys (door, deadbolts, screen door) and codes to disarm burglar alarms with the Management Company.* You are urged to give another key set to the Association. The Board of Directors keeps these keys in a safe place, and they are only used in times of emergency or when an owner is informed of the need for entry.

At the current time, the Association does not have keys for every unit. We will be reaching out to those owners who still need to provide a key. If any owner has changed their key(s), please contact the Board to give us your new key(s).

RING CAMERAS

From time to time, the question is asked if ring cameras are permitted. Steeplechase recognizes that such a device is a safety feature for many owners, and therefore, permits ring cameras. Owners are asked to keep to the small devices that usually fit in the space of the original doorbell. Larger devices that require additional material to secure a device to the building are not permitted. Once again, owners are asked to be courteous of their neighbors and to not place cameras where they will be intrusive to neighbors.



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CHECKING YOUR WATER HEATER

In our continuous attention to managing risks, we find it important in this issue to remind everyone of the expectations related to Water Heaters.

There have been cases where a unit's water heater has leaked resulting in property damage to the affected unit, as well as the unit beneath it.

Now if you do a little research on water heaters, you will find that a typical water heater lasts between 6 to 15 years, with an average lifespan of around 11 years, but factors like water quality, maintenance, and usage patterns can influence this. Also, the quality of these heaters can vary significantly.

To protect our homes and those of our nearest neighbors, Steeplechase has documented the expectations regarding water heater maintenance and more in the [OWNER'S GUIDE TO MAINTENANCE \(page 5. III. HIGH RISK ITEMS\)](#).

Here are **quick** common-sense things you can do in your condo for your and your neighbour's safety and peace of mind.

-- Test your smoke alarms regularly, replace the batteries annually, and replace the entire alarm when more than 10-years-old. (Note: sensors tend to fail after this period, even if there is an audible sound during test). Consider a smoke alarm with a 10-year battery that eliminates the need for annual battery replacement, such as the Kidde i12010S.

-- Make sure there is a smoke alarm in each bedroom, as this is a County requirement to pass an inspection, if needed.

In addition, to prevent leaks and water damage, the [June 22, 2012, Amendment to the Steeplechase Declaration of Condominium, Section 11](#), requires unit owners to:

-- Have air conditioner inspected at least one time each year.

-- The Association has taken great care over the past year to make sure that all units have metal toilet connectors to help prevent serious leaks that have devastated some unit owners. If you ever switch out a toilet with a new one, please be reminded to make sure that you have kept the 125 psi-rated metal toilet connector (Fluidmaster Pro-series)

-- Replace your water heater when it is 10 years old.

—Replace your dishwasher when it is 14 years old.

If you are unable to do these things yourself, or you would like a voluntary independent inspection to find out if you may need to do them now, please talk to Cambridge Management.

Ken Abel - Maureen Traxler

PLUMBING PROBLEM OR WATER LEAK?

Q. Who do you call if you have a plumbing problem or water leak in your unit?

A. Your first contact or email should be to the Board President, mtraxler@optonline.net, and "cc" our treasurer, gary@garycryan.com and vice president, jackiefritsch@icloud.com. Gary and Jackie are full-time residents and can come to your unit to find out what the problem is. Following this, the Board member may have to contact Cambridge Management to help you find the proper contractor to fix your problem.

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HOMEOWNER REPAIR RESPONSIBILITY

Q. When is repair the homeowner's responsibility?

A. If a problem has to do with the structure of the building or its framework, such as piping or drywall, the Association is responsible for repairs, to a degree. Anything inside your unit is your responsibility. For further clarification should anything happen in your unit, please contact Board President Maureen Dellacona, Treasurer Gary Ryan or Vice President Jackie Fritsch for further assistance. The Board will reach out to Cambridge to confirm responsibility.



REQUEST TO MODIFY CONDO PROPERTY

Quite a few owners are making alterations and upgrades to their units. Here at Steeplechase where our buildings are 30+-years-old, this is a good thing for our community. Please be reminded that if you are getting ready to start renovations, you must fill the [Request to Modify Condominium Property](#) form for approval by the Board of Directors. You can find this directive in our [Owners Guide to Maintenance](#). Pursuant to Section 11.3 (D) of our Declarations, before you proceed with any improvements whether interior or exterior, owners must complete the *Request to Modify* form (under "Forms" on the Steeplechase website) and submit it to Cambridge Management. [Owners can access Association documents and forms on the Steeplechase website without a Password.]

This is important because the Board should know when such projects are going to take place, especially at times when the Board could be scheduling work around the community, such as gutter cleaning, driveway power washing or tree trimming.

Additionally, for the safety of all, we need to be assured that owners have contractors that are licensed and insured. Please keep this in mind and conform with this request if you are scheduling work projects. Any owner who did not complete this form prior to having work done will be required to complete the form, even if work has begun or is completed.

Another reminder: In our Rules and Regulations under "Noise," it states: Renovation and construction work on units is only permitted Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. All major modifications/renovations must be done during the months of May-September. In the coming months, the Board of Directors will be reviewing the types of major work projects that warrant a completed form and Board approval, and whether less intrusive projects may be approved by the Board for completion in Season.

One last point, please be courteous and inform your neighbors when you have major projects scheduled at your unit.

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ABOUT OUR MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

We at Steeplechase are very appreciative and honored to have the services of Ken Abel, as the chairperson of our Maintenance Committee. With a background in construction, Ken is an owner who is graciously giving of his time to help our Steeplechase community stay vibrant and in good working condition. He advises the Board on regular maintenance projects, and helps us find quality, licensed and insured contractors to give estimates and do work at Steeplechase.

Please contact Ken if you need advice or want to ask him to bring something to the attention of the Board. He is a great asset to our Steeplechase Community.

Ken also has an “assistant,” Mayra Blanche, who Ken has instructed about the carriage lamps and general lighting at Steeplechase. Mayra will manage burnt-out bulbs replacement on the common property while Ken is not in residence, May through October. Thank you, Mayra!

Maureen Traxler



PLANTS IN OUR ECOSYSTEM: HIBISCUS

Article inspired from [University of Florida \(UF/IFAS Extension\) Gardening Solutions website](#).

What would Florida be without the ubiquitous Hibiscus? This gorgeous flowering bush comes in a tremendous array of colors and immediately brings us into a sense of an island paradise. The most common type that we see in nurseries and landscaping in Florida is the tropical hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) which is thought to have originated in tropical areas of Asia.

The bush pictured here can be found on the west side of the pool.



The Hibiscus flowers can come in single or double forms, and often last for just a day. While individual flowers may be short-lived, the plant will produce blooms over a long flowering season—nearly year-round in South Florida. The great thing is also that these festive flowers attract Hummingbirds and many types of butterflies including Cloudless Sulphurs, blues, and Gulf Fritillaries.

In the South, they'll stay green throughout the year, while in North Florida hibiscus will freeze to the ground, but usually return from the roots. Tropical hibiscus are sensitive to cold weather; the slightest cold wave can cause lower leaves to yellow and drop off.

And if you want to enjoy a great celebration of this bush, look up the annual [Punta Gorda Hibiscus Festival](#) with plant, craft and food vendors and loads of music.

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DECORATING with PLANTS & OTHER OBJECTS IN COURTYARDS & COMMON AREAS

While it is appreciated that some owners go out of their way to enhance the property in their courtyards and in the common areas nearby their units, Steeplechase is a small community and we do have Condo Association rules to preserve the quality of life for all. If one owner is allowed to go beyond the rules, sooner or later others would ask for the same. We look for uniformity in our community.

Residents do have some latitude in beautifying their courtyards, and the Association has a landscape committee that will work with residents. It is not permitted to place items in common areas, such as greenspace between garage doors and the street, because this could interfere with landscape and utility workers.

Please refer to our Rules and Regulations, #6 Exterior Appearance, for further guidelines.

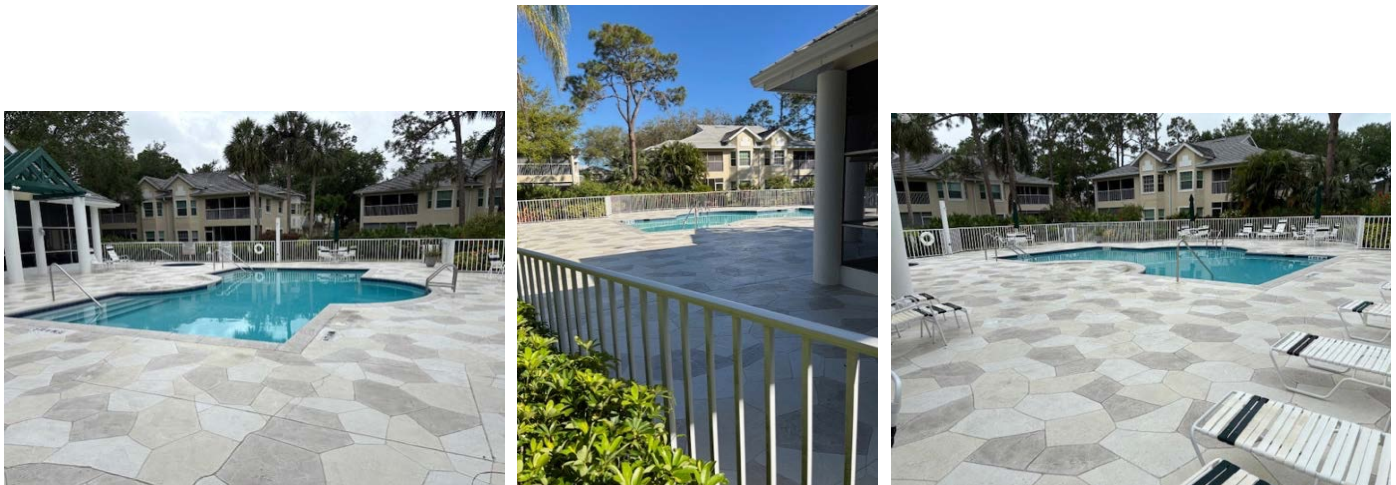
From time to time, the Board of Directors reviews these regulations.

POOL COMMITTEE UPDATE by Ed Finamore

General Pool Conditions

As we emerge from Spring and head for the hot Summer months, we are pleased to report that the pool conditions are in good shape and the pool and spa systems are operating as required to provide maximum comfort for our owners and guests. Previous equipment problems with the pool heaters and pumps have been resolved, and our pool contractors are doing a good job of keeping the water temperatures maintained, with the water clear, clean and operating within the required chlorine levels.

As planned this year, the pool deck surface has recently been refurbished and is looking like new again. Our pool surface contractor has power washed the surface, repaired cracks and chips, restored the colors and resealed the entire surface with a non-skid protective material (see pictures below of the newly refurbished surface). This updated appearance is much appreciated by our owners when using the pool or attending our periodic social events at the clubhouse



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POOL COMMITTEE UPDATE continued...

Clubhouse

The clubhouse building remains in good condition and serves us well as the central focal point for Steeplechase events and activities. We have recently installed WiFi in the building to accommodate Board meetings, vendor presentations and social functions. Owners are welcome to connect to the WiFi system whenever they are visiting the clubhouse area. **[WiFi PassWord: 12341234]**

One area that continues to remain unaddressed is the upgrading of the aluminum cage that surrounds the clubhouse building. The cage, screen and screen door entrance are aging and should be replaced before they deteriorate further and become a major detraction from the overall clubhouse appearance. We hope this can be addressed soon if the budget permits.

We are also looking into the purchase and installation of an automatic dishwasher to accommodate the use of the nice dishware in the clubhouse that is available for social events. The Board is currently examining the impact that the installation would have on the existing cabinetry and is evaluating the associated cost to install. We hope for a resolution of this issue in the coming months.

Replacement of Pool Deck Furniture

One ongoing problem which has continued to detract from the overall pool area is the continuing deterioration of our 30-year-old pool deck furniture. Many pieces of the existing furniture have already broken down to the point where they had to be discarded. The remaining useable furniture continues to deteriorate at a rapid pace and is increasingly becoming unsafe due to potential for breakage during use. Replacement of the pool deck furniture has rapidly become a top priority that must soon be addressed.

Overall, the pool and clubhouse area continue to be well maintained in the face of a tough budgetary environment brought about by the rapid rise of insurance costs that command a large portion of the Steeplechase budget. The good news is that the essential requirements associated with pool and clubhouse maintenance are funded sufficiently and remain in good operating condition.

BIRDS AROUND KING'S LAKE

Steeplechase is situated in an extraordinarily rich ecosystem which allows us to enjoy nature in a secluded and peaceful setting. Every day in every season we can find an astounding array of avian friends around King's Lake. We all are familiar with one of the more vocal birds that has made the lake home - the Limpkin. While the early morning loud, grating, piercing high-pitched screeches and wails may be less welcome at that hour, we are fortunate to have such ready access to this rare and rather cool bird, named after its limping gait.

LIMPKIN (Photo Len Hook)



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BIRDS AROUND KING'S LAKE *continued*

In a morning stroll, a small group of eager birders observed the following from the path around the lake:

1. Fish Crow 8	11. Tricolored Heron 1	21. Purple Martin 3
2. Mottled Duck 2	12. Great Egret 3	22. European Starling 4
3. Eurasian Collared-Dove 6	13. Osprey 1	23. Brown Thrasher 3
4. Mourning Dove 4	14. Bald Eagle 1	24. Northern Mockingbird 8
5. Killdeer 6	15. Belted Kingfisher 1	25. Red-winged Blackbird 6
6. Pied-billed Grebe 1	16. Red-bellied Woodpecker	26. Common Grackle 2
7. Anhinga 1	17. Downy Woodpecker 3	27. Boat-tailed Grackle 4
8. Double-crested Cormorant 1	18. Pileated Woodpecker 1	28. Pine Warbler 1
9. White Ibis 1	19. Loggerhead Shrike 3	29. Yellow-rumped Warbler 1
10. Glossy Ibis 2	20. Blue Jay 9	30. Northern Cardinal 2

Congregation of Cattle Egret (Photo Dee Hook). Red-bellied Woodpecker, Killdeer, Great Egret (Photos Serge Wynen). All photos taken on King's Lake.



We hope everyone can enjoy the magic of the birds that inhabit King's Lake.