

## Spring Letter to Homeowners

March 15, 2011

Dear Friends and Neighbors at LaSalle's Woods"

There is good news and bad news.....

First the good:

- We survived a snowy/icy winter --- flowers are popping up and the grounds crews from Nature's Way are beginning to do the clean-up and add new mulch.
- Plans are on schedule for re-surfacing the tennis court when the weather breaks.
- A permanent storage area has been created in an under-used corner of the pool buildings for safe-keeping of important records and blue prints.
- We had a good calendar year for 2010 fiscally coming in slightly under on our quarter of a million dollar budget. We made numerous capital improvements and ended the year with a \$58,000+ fund for future projects (tennis court etc) with more funds to be added this year.
- We are looking forward to our third year of holiday pool parties with gatherings on the Friday before Memorial, Independence, and Labor Days, and the pool will be open in approximately 60 days!

The bad news:

- In January, a situation was discovered where a plumbing modification (kitchen water filter) malfunctioned and caused considerable water damage to three condos. If you are going to be gone, especially in the winter, it might be advisable to turn off the water at the intake—some units have switches that can be thrown.
- We also had a very costly fire on the early morning of Friday, February 18, starting on the deck of Unit 104 and spreading upward to Unit 103 with resulting smoke and water damage to adjacent units. The fire department was once again amazing in knocking the fire down and keeping it from engulfing the entire building. No one was injured (but 103's cat who is recovering) but the two condo interiors may be declared a total loss---fire and insurance investigation reports are expected on this matter and bids were received this past Friday for rebuilding.
- Preliminary findings are it was caused by careless use of smoking materials on the deck which ignited a propane tank on a grill accelerating the flames to cause so much damage. LSW has excellent insurance in place but the two owners may not have adequate coverage for the losses incurred. It is a complicated matter and is being sorted out by investigators, adjusters, and owners with help from our property manager and the board. No time estimate for rebuilding—4-8 mos?

What we must do:

- Section 308 of the Indiana Fire Code states:

***"308.3.1 Open-flame cooking devices. Charcoal burners and other open-flame cooking devices shall not be operated on combustible balconies or within 10 feet (3,048 mm) of combustible construction.***

***Exceptions:***

1. *One and two-family dwellings.*

2. Where buildings, balconies, and decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system.

- **308.3.1.1 Liquefied-petroleum-gas-fueled cooking devices.** LP-gas burners having an LP-gas container shall not be located on combustible balconies or within 10 feet (3,048 mm) of combustible construction.

**Exceptions:**

1. One and two-family dwellings
2. Where buildings, balconies, and decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system”

The National Fire Protection Codes reveal the same types of prohibition:

*“For other than one and two family dwellings, no hibachi, grill, or other similar devices used for cooking, heating, or any other purpose shall be used or kindled on any balcony, under any overhanging portion, or within 10 ft (3m) of any structure.”*

**In summary you must use any open flame grill 10’ from the condo/garage structures.** While this fire was not caused by using a propane grill as referenced above, the damage was accelerated by the tank’s location. The Board believes we must adhere to Indiana Code restrictions and that effective immediately our rules are changed to **‘No gas or open flame cooking or heating devices (including charcoal grills), may be used on LSW decks or within 10 feet of any combustible construction. Furthermore, LP tanks should be immediately removed to your outside storage unit in the garages/driveways areas and the grills used in an open area or at the fire pit designated for open flame cooking’.** (Indiana Code seems to permit electric grills which some are purchasing now.) Thanks for your cooperation and **PLEASE BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL WITH SMOKING MATERIALS BOTH OUTSIDE AND INSIDE YOUR HOMES!**

Meetings will be held with the village attorney and insurance providers to review this incident and adopt appropriate rules and regulations on providing proof of insurance from individual homeowners. Please review your current policy to make sure you are covered for any likely losses, liability, and temporary housing. This incident was avoidable, very costly, and most unfortunate and we are sorry for the losses and inconvenience to several neighbors. Fire still remains our major one threat with 35+ old cedar construction!

See you at the Annual Meeting on April 16th or at the pool parties---enjoy your spring and summer at one of the best kept secrets in the Midwest!

*Your Board of Directors*