



Early Winter 2010

SOMERSET NEWS

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Somerset Property Owners Association

Ames, Iowa Est. 1997 www.somersetames.com

Annual Dues Increased for 2011

The Somerset Board voted unanimously at their October meeting to raise the annual residents' dues for 2011. The increase is approximately the 7% allowable amount which can be put in place without a general vote of the residents, according to the SPOA by-laws. The Board is concerned about the aging infrastructure of Somerset, the anticipated invasion of the emerald ash borer, and the possibility of emergency needs, all requiring funds in reserve. This is the first increase in dues since the inception of the development.

Looking for Volunteers

There are two Board positions up for election at our annual meeting, those of Bruce Bonestroo and Mark Knuth. If you would like to serve on the Board, let us know, or attend the meeting and volunteer. We welcome the participation! The Board meets once a month plus the annual meeting.

Remember, Katie Swalla handles the SPOA's paperwork and answers our phone as well as interfacing with you, the residents. Katie's phone number is 292-0183 or email somersetclubhouse@hotmail.com.

Snow Removal Contract Signed

Landscape by Design will once again be our snow removal service this winter. They were our lawn care service this last summer and we have negotiated a favorable contract for their services during the winter months. If you have any comments or concerns about snow removal, please email them to somersetinames@yahoo.com. This season is already adding up to a much less expensive proposition!

Playground Improvement

A group of volunteers tackled the eroding mulch around the playground equipment at several of Somerset's parks. The mulch was replaced and built up and drainage was improved. Thanks to our volunteers!

Mailbox Replacement Program a Success

Remember, if you need a mailbox replaced or new mailbox parts, we have them stocked and they're available at the Clubhouse. Please call 292-0183. We're happy with the response we've had to this program, which helps us maintain a cohesive look in the development.

The Block Party for Somerset and Taylor Glen residents was held on July 18 at Crescent Lawn. Thanks to Jen Brekke and Jessica Loecke for all their work and to all the other volunteers. There was a good turnout and the families who attended had a lot of fun.

Welcome to our new businesses, El Azteca Restaurant, Pearle Vision, and the new Salon 7 location. Let's keep them busy and thriving!

www.somersetames.com includes:

Maps, Covenants, Meeting Dates, Member Directory, Newsletters, Volunteer Opportunities, Meeting Minutes, Social Events, Fence Guidelines, Grounds Care, more.

The website has been designed to allow for groups and associations to be able to add data and information. If you have a group, business or club that would be interested in using the website, please contact us...go to the website and its contact list.

ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 25, 2011, AT 7 P.M.

Save the date, **Tuesday, January 25, 2011, at 7 p.m. at the Somerset Clubhouse.** At this meeting we will elect officers for the coming year, review the budget, discuss issues, and vote on items of general importance. We need a quorum of 60% of our members to take any action, so we need your attendance! Or you may vote your proxy, which you will receive in the mail. If we cannot reach a quorum, our by-laws state we must hold a second meeting with the needed quorum now only 50%. Please come and represent yourself and your concerns. Thanks, and see you there.

*Somerset Clubhouse
2400 Aspen
Ames, Iowa 50010*

Annual Meeting Tuesday, January 25, 7 p.m. at the Clubhouse!

Trees, Trees, Trees

SPOA is now responsible for more than 1100 trees! In October Somerset volunteers, led by Nick Lauter, planted 50 new trees. Several of these were planted in The Grove, where three large old silver maples were lost due to summer storm damage. Fifteen more were the first trees planted along the path that runs between Cambridge and Aspen on the west side of Somerset. The remaining two-thirds of the new trees were replacement parkway trees, for which the Association is responsible.

Unfortunately, tree replacement at these levels will likely be required over the next several years. A professional assessment in 2007 reported that more than 200 of our trees would not be expected to live beyond 10-15 years of age, mostly due to improper planting depth (too deep). Other causes of early demise are mower or string trimmer damage, improper watering, and improper staking. More careful planting and homeowner education on tree care are our best ways of limiting the need for tree replacements.

The next three paths due for new plantings are the “north trail” east of Kent, and two paths west of Stange where no trees have yet been planted. Contact the SPOA Board if you would be willing to volunteer for tree planting in 2011!



Storm Damage, The Grove, 2010

Storm Damage Report

It was quite a summer! In July the windstorm came through causing damage to many ash trees along the south streets and toppling three large old maples in The Grove. Somerset volunteers dragged many of the downed trees and limbs to The Grove, forming a formidable pile which the City of Ames removed. SPOA spent over \$4000 to remove and trim the remaining damaged trees. Then came the rain....

A Story of the Flood

The night of August 10, we woke to find rainwater was creeping into the basement. As we began pulling items off the bottom shelves, we heard glass shattering and water came rushing through the egress window. Within 15 minutes the run off from the field east of the house was filling our basement, climbing our stairs, and lifting our refrigerator off the floor. Once the water was over the electrical outlets, we decided it was time to get the kids out of the house.

After a sleepless night, we headed back to Somerset to assess the damage. It was overwhelming to climb through the debris filling the living room, bedroom, home office, and laundry room. As we began sifting through, neighbor after neighbor came over to see what they could do to help. After the first few minutes, Joe and I stepped out in the back, had a few tears, and reminded each other, “It’s just stuff”, and decided to pitch almost all of it.

We formed a human chain from the basement to a throw pile in the neighbor’s driveway. In 100 degree heat, neighbors, friends, and strangers worked for 12 hours to remove the contents of the basement, including a washer, dryer, and piano, and then helped tear down the walls as well. We continue to marvel at the generosity of our neighbors. You gave your time, your energy, and your generous spirit to help us keep our heads above water during and after the flood. Though we lost a lot, we feel rich in community and lucky to be living in Somerset. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

*Jen, Joe, Lucy, and Luke Brekke
2608 Somerset Drive*