



*Newsletter  
Fall 2016*

*Welcome Back Cottagers!*



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## *Residents like the quarterly newsletter*

*Thank you for the newsletter.  
Also thank all the article contributors.  
Excellent recap by all. Enjoyed it very  
much. John and Carolyn*

Another outstanding  
newsletter.  
Thank you so much.

Thanks much!

Great newsletter, as usual. Thanks.  
The landscaping and lights look terrific!  
Hope you're staying cool.

# Hello, Fellow Cottagers!



**Joanna Wragg**  
President /  
Landscaping

Hello to all our Cottages People, those who are in residence and those who are planning their fall or winter trip back. Planning will begin soon for our Winter Social, probably in December, so please keep an eye out for the message that will bring details. By then, we should have Christmas lights up—the more, the better! So if you're here, please consider some outdoor decorating at your home to add to the festive scene.

The summer has been slow and blessedly uneventful. Rain, of course, which is good for the foliage, but nothing spectacular. Our irrigation system is now up to speed and should be ready to take up the slack when the rains begin to abate in the fall. And, now that we have water again in the cul-de-sac on the west end (right turn from the entrance), we hope to get some landscape enhancements into that area as soon as possible.

As we work on maintenance and improvements in our community, the board is developing the budget and reserve-fund projections for next year. These are works in progress and not yet finished but they will be coming to you this fall. Our next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 10:30 AM at the Pelican Landing Community Center; y'all come!

Meanwhile, a big Thank You to owners who have taken steps to upgrade their own front yards! The Jaeckle, Scovel and Franson homes all have a new landscape look, which is greatly appreciated. The additional foliage adds beauty for all to enjoy and, at the same time, reduces the amount of mulch that will be needed in the October-November application, for which our Treasurer gives special thanks!

Speaking of mulch, a reminder: Mulch will be applied this year only in the front areas that are visible from the street. The side "alleys" and back yards vary greatly in their uses and are the responsibility of the individual owner. Please feel free to consult with Steve at Green Acres either to contract for additional mulching or—even better—to fill in bare spots with hardy bushes that will last for years, or with "hardscape" pavers or pebbles in areas with little sun. These plants need not be expensive rare specimens, though we love those too. A bush in the range of \$10 to \$15 dollars soon will cover a good bit of ground at South Florida growth rates.

A welcome, too, to Jerilyn and Wayne Klinkhamer of Monticello, IN, who have purchased 3633 and plan extensive remodeling before wintering here. We look forward to greeting them in person soon.

This newsletter is full of important news that you may want to keep regarding our new pool service, repainting of all our home exteriors and other developments, so I hope you'll take time to read it carefully. Please feel free to reach out to Kris, our manager, or to your board members if you have questions or suggestions.

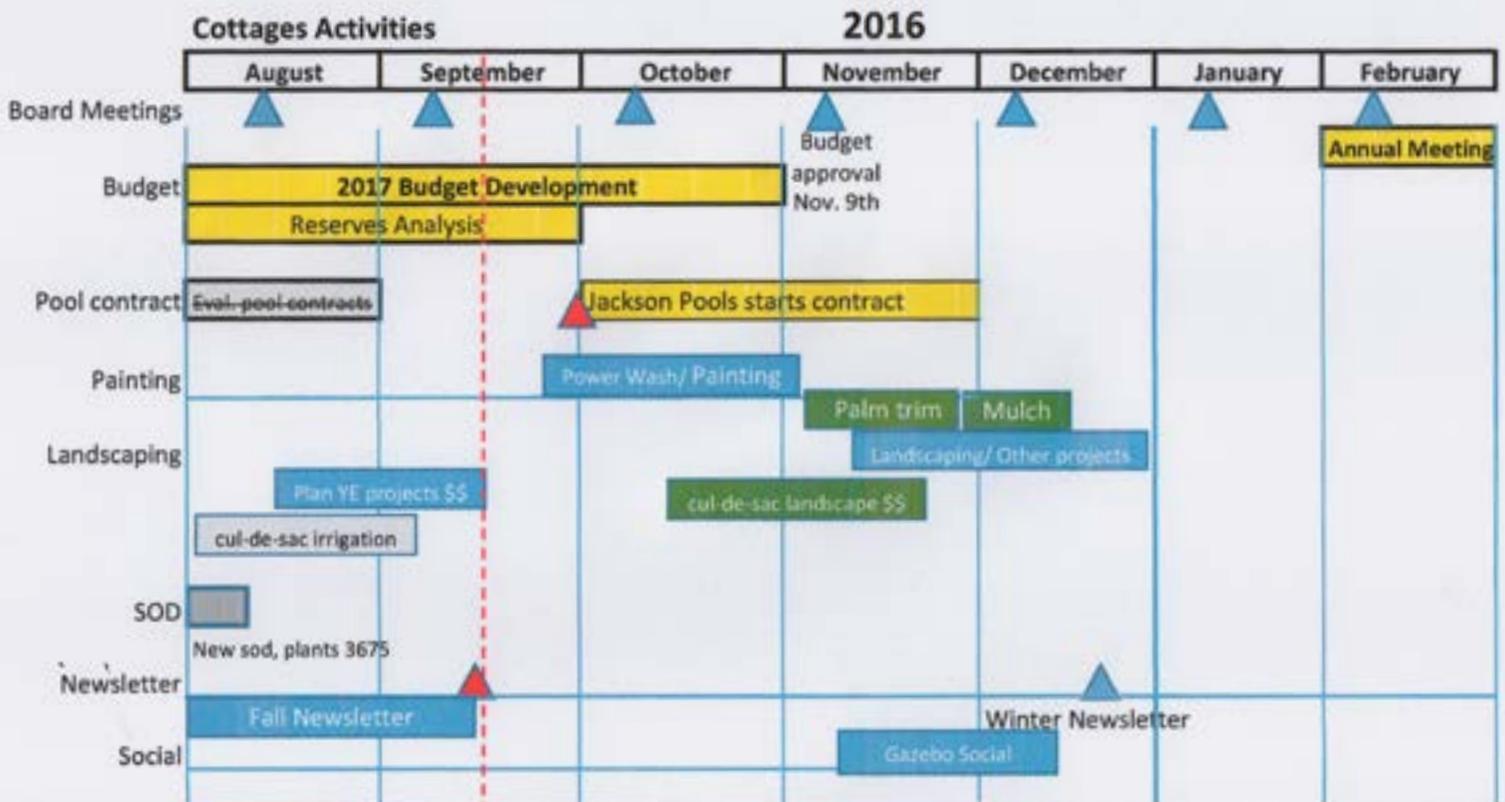
# More plants, less mulch, save money

Ground cover plants were installed at 3675 by Tim Franson to reduce the amount of mulch required.



This area was all mulch and was not attractive. The plants will fill in and require much less mulch.

# A lot is happening at The Cottages



## *Painting to start end of September*

### *Both the trim and stucco house body to be painted*

The Cottages board has contracted with Elias Brothers to start the painting of the Cottages 41 homes earlier than planned. The painting contractor had a cancellation and asked if we would be willing to start earlier. Joe Sidoti is doing a good job of negotiating a new contract and because of the big cost advantage it makes sense to go ahead with the project at this time. ***Both the trim and stucco house body will be now be painted together.***

*I want to make  
The Cottages  
great again!*



Joe Sidoti

Secretary / Maintenance

Elias Brothers will power wash, prep and paint previously painted wood shutters, fascia, wood railings, privacy fences, gates, and exterior of overhead and entry doors and cases. The total time for completion will be about two to three weeks depending on rain delays. Joe Sidoti will be interfacing with Elias during the painting process to resolve problems.

REMINDER: Owners are responsible for the removal of furniture, plants, rugs or articles on lanais. Owners are responsible for cleaning soiled lanais. Elias Brothers does not pressure clean lanais. Repairs such as woodpecker holes & rotted wood that have not been made prior to painting by the resident will be repaired by Elias Brothers and charged to the owner.

A small trailer (paint and tool storage) and port-a-potty will be located at the end of one or both of our cul-de-sacs.



## House trim and stucco body painting Homeowners Responsibilities

Houses in the Cottages will have the outside trim and stucco painted starting September 22nd. There are a few areas that may need attention from homeowners in preparation for the painters such as repairs, moving cars, manual opening of garage doors, etc. Please read the important information below which outlines the details. Homeowners that are away from the Cottages may need to make arrangements with their home watcher or handyman for assistance, if necessary. Thank you for your cooperation.

### ***Painting Project Coordination:***

Joe Sidoti will be the Cottages liaison between residents and Elias Brothers. Residents should direct any questions or concerns to Joe. Elias Brothers will provide a Supervisor who will be at the job site daily, and who will cooperate with Joe Sidoti (239) 293-4410 [Patworthington37@comcast.net](mailto:Patworthington37@comcast.net).

### ***Deteriorated, Rotted Wood:***

Deteriorated, rotted wood not repaired by the homeowner prior to painting will be replaced by Elias on a time and material basis at the homeowner's expense. Cost will be \$25 to \$65 per lineal foot depending on location (higher locations cost more). Joe Sidotti will be notified prior to Elias doing any repairs.

### ***Woodpecker Holes:***

Woodpecker holes not resident repaired prior to painting will be repaired by Elias Brothers at \$25 per hole at the homeowners expense. FYI, some residents have used a pre-mixed stucco (not foam) to repair holes if you are doing it yourself. Lowes sells a large tub of pre-mix stucco for \$7.

### ***Garage Doors:***

After painting some paint may seep into the garage door edges and cause the door to stick the first time the doors are opened after painting. This could cause damage to the garage door openers. Owners should manually open overhead garage doors the first time after painting to break the paint seal. Elias Brothers will assist if necessary, but will NOT be held liable if damages occur. Homeowners not in residence should contact their home watch company for assistance in opening the garage door safely.

### ***Windows:***

Due to the nature of this project, glass will become contaminated from the pressure cleaning of the trim prior to painting. Elias brothers will not be responsible for detailing glass. Paint drips that may have accumulated on glass will be cleaned by the Elias Brothers clean up crew.

### ***Automobiles:***

Elias Brothers requests Cottages residents cooperation in removal of all cars from driveways and around buildings prior to commencement of work. This is to protect your cars from paint over spray.

### ***Landscaping and Trees:***

Elias Brothers will paint around any landscaping and trees that interfere with painting.

NOTE: Power washing and painting may cause leaf damage to some of the plants, but they will grow back. Elias Brothers will have their landscaper replace any plants that sustain damage beyond that.



# Cottages hires new pool service Jackson Pools to service pools

Jackson Pools has been awarded the Cottages pool service contract for our 41 homes effective October 1, 2016. What we found is that most residential HOA pools are serviced individually by separately hired contractors. The Cottages is one of the few that contract pool service for the entire HOA. We looked at quotes from three contractors and Jackson looked the best. We contacted three Jackson references and as expected they were all very positive. Two other bids were for the same price but their references were not as strong. Jackson does primarily commercial pool cleaning but they also do residential pools. However, the same cleaners that do the commercial pools will also do our pools. Commercial pools must meet rigid Florida state standards and Jackson cleaners are trained in pool chemistry balance in order to pass frequent state inspections. Our pools do not come under state inspection requirements but we hope to share the benefits of the Jackson cleaners training. Their personnel are paid higher wages and as a result Jackson has lower employee turnover. Mike Basile is the overall Operations Manager and Jessica Brillhart is the pool Service Manager reporting to Mike. Mike has been in the pool business for 18 years. The Board met recently with Mike to clarify services.



Jackson is planning to have the Cottages pool cleaning split up over 2 different days so that the technician is in our neighborhood twice a week on Wednesday and Friday. It is not certain yet if it will be odd & even or east & west. They will notify residents each week of services performed.

The following information is from the Jackson website: [www.jacksonpoolservice.com](http://www.jacksonpoolservice.com)

- Voted #1 Pool Company in Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero & Naples five years in a row
- Over 65 years experience
- Highest level of State Licensing (CPC1456458)
- All required insurance; general liability, worker's comp and vehicle
- Certified service and repair technicians, friendly and knowledgeable staff
- Service and repair staff on call 24/7 including all holidays
- In-house construction, repair, and service staff to ensure quality work.

*At Jackson Pool Service, we recognize the importance of having a clean and healthy pool, and are dedicated to giving the best pool service and maintenance every day. We are voted "Best Pool Service" in Southwest Florida, and service over 1000 pools each week.*

***As with any new contractor, the honeymoon is great, we just hope the marriage lasts!***

# Pool water level problems

A possible problem for residents that head north for the summer months is that pool service contractors will not be responsible for adding water to pools with low water levels due to insurance requirements. Many residents turn the water to their houses off when they leave to prevent house leak damage. Low water levels can cause the skimmer to start drawing air resulting in damage to the pool pump. Although there is considerable rain during the summer months there is still a chance that the high heat could at times cause enough evaporation to cause the levels to drop below the skimmer intake. Several homes have had this problem this summer.

There are several reasons pool cleaners are reluctant to turn on the main water supply:

1. **Insurance** - pool contractor insurance will not cover them for any water damage due to leaks in the house due to the water being turned on by their employees.
2. **Time** - filling the pool with several inches of water takes considerable time and the cleaners cannot wait that long. Cleaners have turned water on in the past with the intention of coming back to that house but sometimes they could forgetting and leaving the water running resulting in extremely high water bills. Forgetting to turn the main water supply to the house back off could result in undetected leaks occurring and causing considerable damage.

## *Possible Solutions*

### **1. Inform Residents**

Pool cleaners take action to inform Resort Management for resident contact and corrective action. Resort Management would need to have current contact information for all residents and/or home watch contacts.

### **2. Skimmer Intake Valve**

Pool cleaners could temporarily shut off of the skimmer intake valve (if available) so that water is only drawn by the intake at the bottom of the pool. Residents then need to take corrective action as soon as possible.

### **3. Home Watch**

Residents might ask home watch people to check pool water levels every week. If levels are low they could turn water on, fill pool and turn water back off. However, this requires the home watch person to wait around or come back after a period of time which could be a problem.

#### 4. **Automatic water leveler** (approx. \$60)

Keeps an eye on water levels so you don't have to. Easy assembly and adjustable to your desired water level. The supply water stays on at all times when the Pool Sentry is in the pool. As the float drops, the water turns on. When the float reaches its set height, the water shuts off. Because the hose is under constant water pressure, **it is essential to use a heavy-duty, reinforced garden hose** (not included). Rated to 200 psi working pressure and 750 psi burst strength.

- Automatically maintains water level so you don't have to
- Attaches to reinforced garden hose
- Automatically shuts off after reaching your predetermined water level



**Auto leveler**

#### 5. **Hose timer** (approx. \$30)

The hose timer hooks to your garden hose. When water is needed, the timer is turned on for a selected amount of time. **A heavy-duty, reinforced garden hose is required.** House water needs to be turned on for pool cleaners to set the hose timer. If water is not turned on someone authorized by the resident like the home watch person would need to turn the water on.



**Hose timer**

Jackson pools can provide water timers (\$28.50) or have an autofill installed. They will set up each customer in their system for repair. Residents can pay for equipment or repair services with credit card or check at the time of service.

#### 6. **Water levels**

The best water level is at one-third to one-half above the bottom of the skimmer inlet opening. This will provide optimum skimming of floating debris off the pool surface. If the water is too high too much water will be drawn into the skimmer from below the surface. If the water level is below the skimmer inlet opening the skimmer will suck air into the lines potentially causing damage to the pump.



# Website News



Kiki Scovel  
Webmaster

## *Website traffic still high!*

The number of visits to The Cottages webpage ([www.cottagespl.org](http://www.cottagespl.org)) has remained strong with 910 “hits” from July 1-August 21. We have received visits from places around the world including Beijing, Amsterdam, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Brazil and Rio.

There is no way to tell who visited our page from these far away locales but it will fun to find out if any of our residents were in these locations this summer. We are truly an international community!

A Cottage residents real estate sale page will be added to the website this fall. This page will include a direct link to your realtor’s listing. Please email or call me if you wish to have your Cottages home sale posted on the webpage.

Kiki Scovel  
[cottagespl@gmail.com](mailto:cottagespl@gmail.com)

<http://www.cottagespl.org>

A sign for 'The Cottages' featuring a teal border and the name in a cursive font, set against a background of a sunset over a beach. The sign is flanked by two stone pillars.

The  
Cottages

# Finances

## 2017 Budget Process



**Dennis Lowe**  
Treasurer

Our goal is to create a budget that:  
provides security of our property values;  
enhances living experience through a beautiful community;  
keeps our annual assessment at a reasonable cost; and  
ensures that we are competitive with other communities.

Each section of the budget goes through the following steps:

1. Using the past budget and the actual expenses during the past year our Resort Manager, the Cottages Treasurer and the Board discuss anticipated needs for operating expenses for the upcoming year.
2. Reserve items are studied for updating (which includes the replacement cost and remaining life) to insure that money will be available when needed for repair or replacement.

A presentation at a Board meeting of each section of the budget includes:

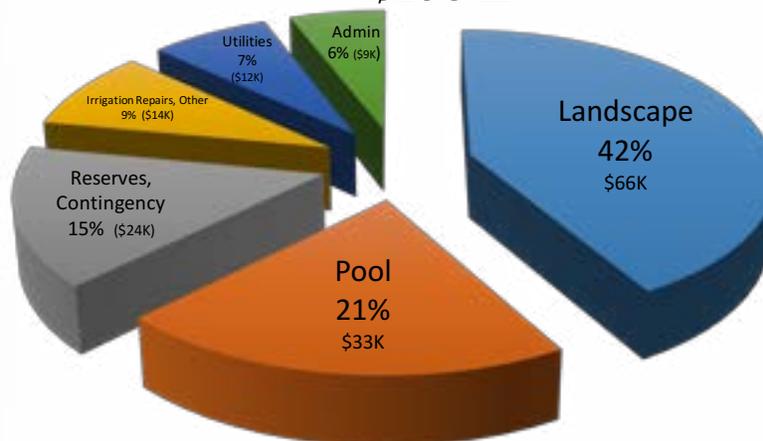
- A. Anticipated Operating Expenses
- B. An explanation for increases or decreases in the Operating Expenses
- C. Anticipated requests for money that will be made during the upcoming year for money from the Reserve Account.

After all sections of the budget have gone through the process outlined above the Final Budget, containing all sections, is presented for review. During the process previously explained, it is possible some changes were made in individual sections.

At a budget approval meeting in November the Board will discuss the final version of the Budget and discuss any changes they feel are appropriate to accomplish the goals stated in the beginning of this article. At this meeting the Board will approve a Final Budget for 2017. The success of this process used to create previous budgets speaks for itself. We are financially very sound and with this diligent approach we plan to be financially sound in the future.

### 2016 Budget Breakdown

**\$158 K**

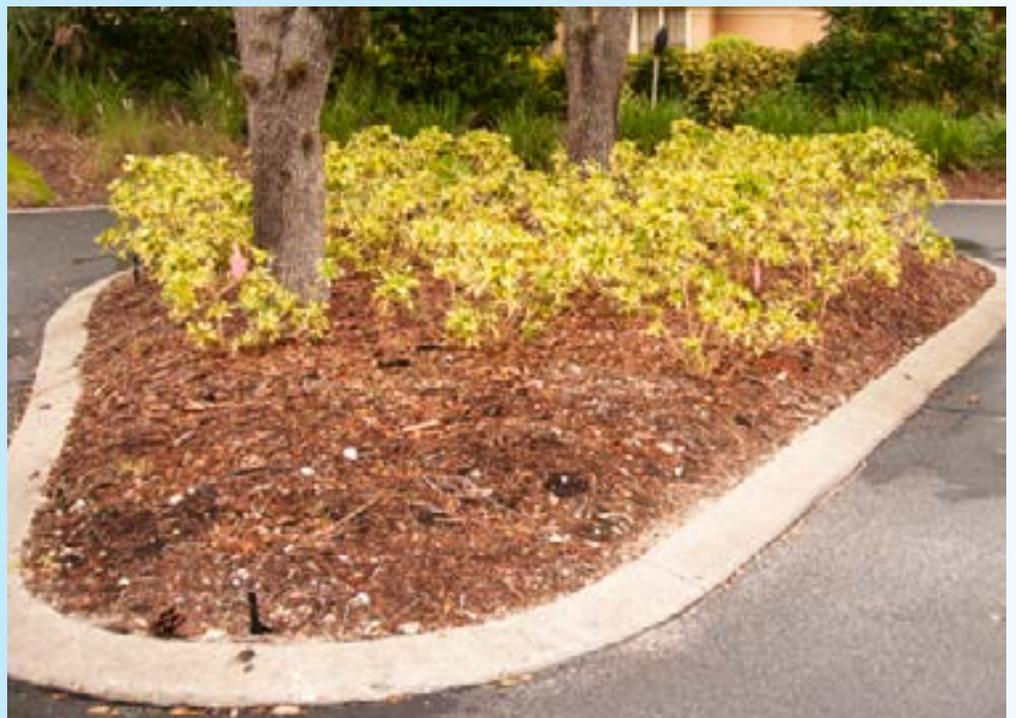


# MYSTERY VALVE FOUND!

Dan Geist has found the mystery valve controlling irrigation water to the cul-de-sac on the west side. After considerable searching with a wire tracker the control valve was located under 6" of soil and grass across the street from the cul-de-sac. This valve was not operating for many years and only the hardiest plants survived in the cul-de-sac.



Now that the cul-de-sac sprinklers are working the Landscaping Committee will start making plans with Green Acres to upgrade the plants in this area and eliminate the amount of mulch put down in areas like these every year. This will add to the Cottages curb appeal because many visitors and prospective buyers cruise around Olde Cottage Lane evaluating our neighborhood.



# Irrigation News

## *Water usage reduced dramatically*

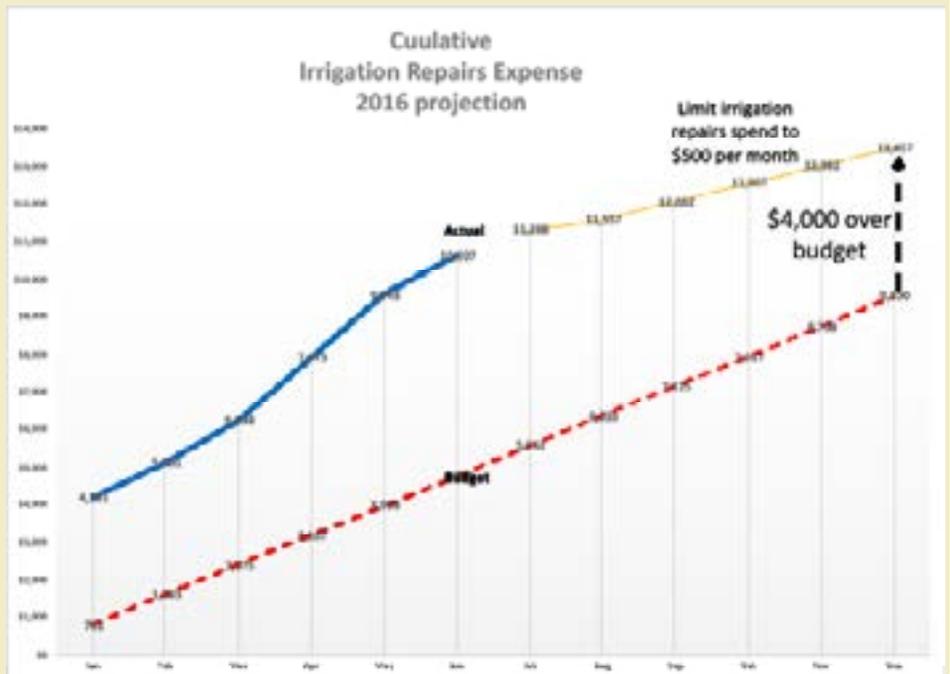
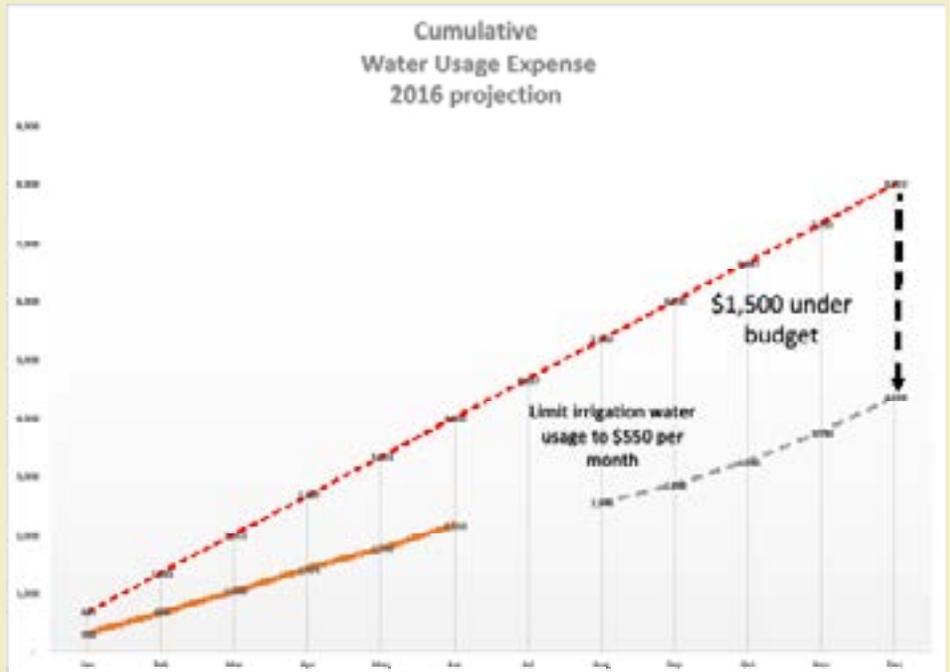
**D**an Geist has done a lot of good work in getting our water



Dan Geist  
President  
Bradford Solutions

usage under control. Dan has uncovered many areas where sprinklers were not operating and

made repairs necessary to get these areas green again. The grass along the south side of The Cottages facing Pelican's Nest hole 12 is looking good. Many valves were not operating and there were many leaks that needed to be fixed. The master control valve and the rain sensor are working well. As shown in these charts our water usage and costs are well below budget. However, the cost of the many required irrigation repairs are running over budget, but the reduced water usage costs will offset these costs somewhat. The irrigation system repairs are a necessary cost that will pay dividends into the future.



# *Landscaping improvements*

*Green Acres & Bradford Solutions are helping to make "The Cottages Great Again!"*

Green Acres' Steve Kubicsek and Bradford Solutions' Dan Geist have been working hand-in-hand with the Landscaping Committee to improve the look of the Cottages. In the past 11 months that they have been with the Cottages they have helped us to make significant improvements.



**Steve Kubicsek**  
President Green Acres

## *Two oak trees removed*

At the request of the owners at 3691 and 3660, the Pelican Landing Design Review Board approved the removal of one live oak tree from each of their properties. Each of these properties had more than one oak, and these trees were unnaturally crowded and consequently were not doing well. This limited removal does not presage a general removal of oak trees!

Live oaks are a protected native species that may not be removed without prior approval from the PLDRB. The 58 oaks that border Olde Cottage Lane add a great deal to the look and character of The Cottages, providing a tree canopy that distinguishes us from most other communities.

Although the oak tree roots can be a nuisance when they interfere with driveway pavers and irrigation system components, it is imperative that we do our best to accommodate these gentle giants, which house so many birds, provide shade, and create the unique look and feel of The Cottages.



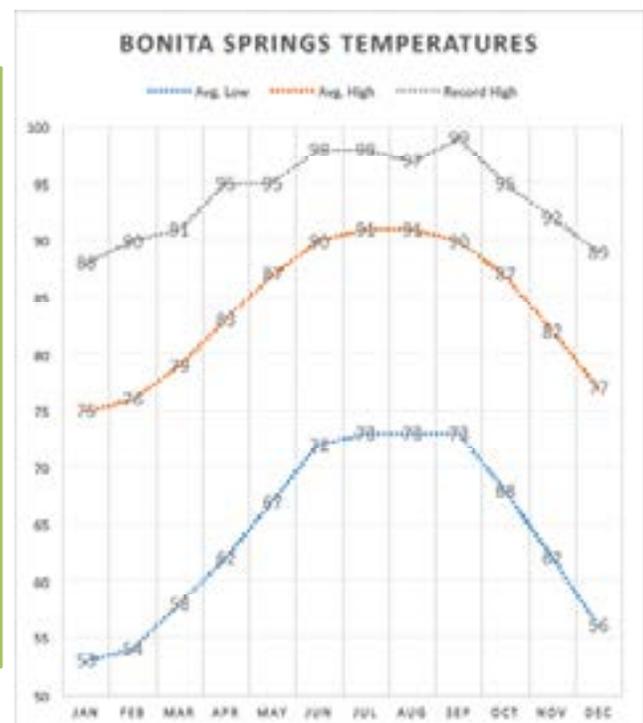
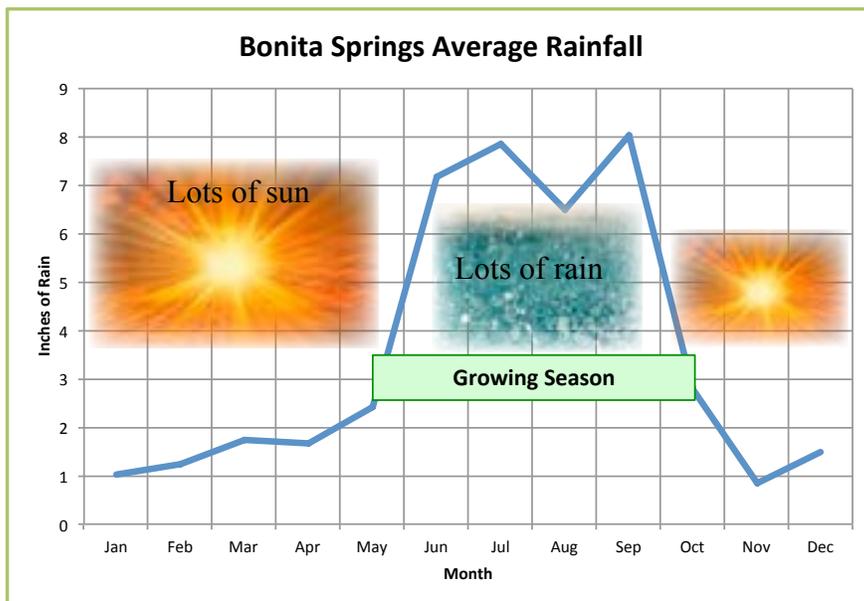
## *Mailbox search postponed*

The Cottages search for mailbox alternatives has been postponed until 2017.

The high level of activity during 2016 has left no time to address mailboxes. However, we are fairly confident that the Board will have to propose a mailbox funding assessment which will require a residents' vote.

Kris can be contacted at: [kcaldwell@resortgroupinc.com](mailto:kcaldwell@resortgroupinc.com) (239) 649-5526

## *Dry season approaches, temperatures start dropping*





Angry clouds rolled  
over the Cottages  
this summer



**Donna Lowe**

# Social Activities



**Judy Maish**



*Mark your calendars!*

**The Social Committee is currently planning a get-together at the Gazebo for December 7th.**

## *2016 Cottages Board*



**Joanna Wragg**  
President/  
Landscaping



**Joe Sidoti**  
Secretary/  
Maintenance



**Dennis Lowe**  
Treasurer/  
Newsletter



**Kris Caldwell**  
Resort Management