

FEBRUARY  
2014



CAI's Large Homeowner Association of the Year for Northern California

# THE NEPENTHE NEWS

Bettsi McComb, Editor

A publication of the Nepenthe Association

## Consultant to Help Homeowners Write Master Plan for Grounds

At the January meeting, the Board approved the request of the Master Grounds Vision ad hoc committee for hiring consultant Kevin Wolf.

Kevin's primary role will be to serve as a facilitator at the homeowner forum to be held on March 22. He comes to Nepenthe with a wealth of experience and knowledge in consensus-based facilitation and strategic planning, making him an excellent fit for this project.

The ad hoc committee's mandate from the Board was to develop standards and practices for the grounds. The current landscape is still primarily as planned by the developer

and was implemented more than forty years ago.

That landscape model was created to sell homes. It was also implemented at a time when water conservation was not a concern.

Forty years later, Nepenthe is still living with the consequences of those design choices. The trees, planted in abundance to add lushness to a new development, are now fighting for root space under our turf and walkways— sometimes impacting the structures themselves.

The irrigation system, which was state-of-the-art at the time, is now quite outdated.

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GP Landscape installs new drip irrigation at clubhouse. See story on Page 3

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### Can you help us?

Behind the clubhouse, between the pool deck and the tennis court, is a monument to the memory of Bob Schonlank (1916 - 1980). If you know who Mr. Schonlank was, or who purchased and installed the monument, please contact the office.

# Nepenthe Home Listings

Address	Price	Beds/Baths	Status
316 Elmhurst Circle	\$349,900	3/2	Active
1322 Commons Drive	\$429,000	3/2.5	Active
5 Colby Court	\$349,900	3/2.5	Active
1197 Vanderbilt Way	\$399,900	2/2.5	Active
27 Adelphi Court	\$299,000	3/2.5	Active
1005 Vanderbilt Way	\$435,000	3/2.5	Pending

## December Budget Report

Actual year to date income of \$3,114,683 versus year to date budgeted income of \$3,000,744 produced a positive year to date income variance of \$113,939.

Actual year to date operating expenses of \$1,308,453 versus year to date budgeted expenses of \$1,258,236 produced a negative year to date operating expenses variance of (\$50,217). Much of this can be attributed to one factor: In January, 2013, the association paid \$54,000 for the roof clearing expense incurred in 2012. After that expense is factored out, the association actually experienced a positive variance in the amount of \$3,783.

### Other Information

Unpaid Assessments at December 31, 2013 were: \$28,282;

Prepaid Assessments at December 31, 2013 were: \$107,224

## December Cash Flow Report

Sources / Uses	Operations	General Reserves	Private Streets
<b>Beginning Balance 1/1/2013</b>	<b>354,215</b>	<b>3,158,799</b>	<b>224,354</b>
<b>Plus Income</b>	<b>3,112,770</b>		
Reserve Investment Income		(932)	2,845
Contributions to Reserve		1,715,868	17,040
Variance (research)	11		
<b>Less Operating Expenses</b>	<b>(1,308,453)</b>		
Reserve Funding	(1,732,908)		
Reserve Expenses		(1,221,232)	(15,035)
Due from Vendor	(151)		
Receivable from Management	(114)		
<b>Ending Balance 12/31/2013</b>	<b>392,810</b>	<b>3,685,063</b>	<b>229,205</b>

# New Landscape Approved for Clubhouse

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It's hard not to notice all the activity outside the clubhouse lately. At the December meeting of the Board, the Directors partially approved a bid from GP Landscape to remediate the area, install drip irrigation and plant new shrubs and ground cover.

At that meeting the Board agreed to have GP prepare the area for plantings, but to hold off adding the plants out of drought concerns.

Management was able to confirm in January that the City does not restrict drip irrigation and allows for new plant-

ings to be watered daily for 30 days to allow them to take root.

At the January meeting, the Board agreed to the planting portion of the proposal. The entire proposal for the clubhouse amounted to \$43,765— quite a bit less than GP's initial proposal of \$60,940 in May of 2013.

The savings are due to GP working with management and the Board's appointed committee of Pam Livingston and Ivan Gennis. Also, it was originally thought that the construction process would necessitate removing more of the liquid-

ambar in front. In the end only three of the six marked trees required removal.

GP was very cooperative in proposing changes and modifications to the original planting plan. They were sensitive to Nepenthe's concerns about overcrowding the landscape and in the end, they proposed 6 less trees, 1 less 15-gallon plant, 8 less 5-gallon plants and 1500 less 1-gallon plants.

You may have noticed the drip irrigation as it was being installed. This state of the art system comes equipped with

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Year End Report on 2013 Goals

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The Nepenthe Board set 12 goals for the Association last year. It accomplished eight of the goals, made substantial progress toward two others, and failed to reach two of the goals:

**End the year with at least \$75,000 in the Operating Fund.** The Association ended the year with approximately \$393,000 in the Operating Fund, including \$96,000 in prepaid assessments.

**End the year with at least \$2,861,962 in the General Reserve Fund.** The Association ended the year with approximately \$3,700,000 in the General Reserve Fund.

**End the year with at least \$102,163 in the Private Streets Reserve Fund.** The Association ended the year with approximately \$230,000 in the Private Streets Reserve fund.

**Refurbish the clubhouse and cabanas.** The \$2.4 million project is not quite finished because planning and permitting took longer than expected. The work itself, however, is on time and on budget. Work on the clubhouse should be completed next week, with furniture and art to be

delivered shortly thereafter. Work on the cabanas should also be completed in February.

**Meet with Realtors to discuss marketing.** A board member and members of the Outreach Committee met with Realtors who handle most of the home sales in Nepenthe. The committee asked for and received board permission to develop a Nepenthe promotional brochure that will be available for display in all homes for sale. The brochure should be printed within a few weeks.

**Clean up the common area.** Most homeowners cooperated with the board's request to comply with the CC&Rs by removing all personal items from the common area, except for home security signs and garden hoses in alleys. As a result, the grounds are more attractive, safer and easier to maintain.

**Develop an annual maintenance schedule.** Management developed checklists for the periodic inspection of operating equipment, furniture, locks, drains, etc. This will ensure that all components are functioning properly.

Monthly inspections have begun.

**Recruit at least two candidates to run for each available board seat.** The Nominating Committee recruited three candidates to run for two seats on the board.

**Achieve at least a 50% voter turnout for the board election.** 47% of homeowners voted in the May election.

**Adopt Standards and Practices for the Nepenthe board and officers.** The board adopted written Standards and Practices for the Board, but has yet to draft Standards and Practices for Officers.

**Adopt Standards and Practices for Nepenthe Committees.** The board did this, clarifying expectations about the appointment, terms and role of committees.

**Adopt Standards and Practices for Communication.** The board did this, clarifying standards for communication between the board, homeowners, committees, management and vendors.

# Nepenthe Annual Election: Candidates Wanted

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The Annual Election of the Nepenthe Board of Directors is rapidly approaching with the Annual Meeting to be held on **Wednesday, May 28th**.

This year two Director positions will be up for election.

## ELECTION SCHEDULE

**Monday, March 17** - Names of Board candidates due to the Nominating Committee.

**Wednesday, March 19** - Candidates' statements and pictures due to Office (for April newsletter and Ballot packets)

**Wednesday, March 26** - Board meeting – Slate of candidates' names presented

**Mid-April** – *Candidates' Forum* for Nepenthe homeowners

**Late-April** - Election Committee mails Ballot packets, including statements and pictures, to homeowners (to be returned

no later than May 28)

**Wednesday, May 28** - Annual Membership Meeting and Election – 5:00 p.m.

(ballots counted and election results announced)

If you are interested in running for a position on the Board, please contact Will Vizzard, Chair of the Nominating Committee, by e-mail ([vizzardw@gmail.com](mailto:vizzardw@gmail.com)) or by phone at 923-9308.

## Clubhouse Project Owes Debt of Gratitude

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The culmination of many years of work is coming to a close and clubhouse/cabana renovations are almost complete.

While it has taken many years and many hands to get to this place, there are two gentlemen in particular who deserve special mention.

Ken Luttrell and former Nepenthe owner Dave Digardi stepped up to the plate

in a truly impressive way. It is important to recognize their priceless contributions.

Board treasurer Will Vizzard had this to say: "Although Ken Luttrell and Dave Digardi both were already actively volunteering their time as members of the Architectural Committee, they readily agreed to serve as members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Infrastructure Remodeling. As the Board representative

on the committee, I am particularly aware of the debt that Nepenthe owes Ken and Dave. Their extensive expertise and experience in construction and many hours of volunteered time, at every stage of the project from selecting the architect and contractor through the final check off, assured the project would come in at budget and on time."

## Clubhouse Plantings...

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copper root intrusion suppression technology. The system overall will be so much more efficient than the old sprinkler heads.

The plants will be a mixture of familiar faces and new friends. It wouldn't be Nepenthe without Pittosporum, Nandina and Japanese Maples, but residents will also enjoy seeing Rubus Emerald Carpet ground cover, Tom Thumb Flax and Japonica Mountain Fire. GP has confirmed that barring any unforeseen



**Rubus Emerald Carpet**

shortage of plants, the landscape will be installed by mid-February.



**Mountain Fire**



**Tom Thumb Flax**

# FEBRUARY 18, 2014

## NEPENTHE MASTER GROUNDS BRAINSTORM SESSION

### Brainstorm Session #2 for Nepenthe Master Grounds Vision

The Nepenthe Board has established an Ad-Hoc committee to develop a Master Grounds Vision for the grounds and landscape we all love. In March we will conduct a professionally facilitated Vision Workshop for the entire Nepenthe community.

The Ad-Hoc committee invites you to a **brief Brainstorm session on February 18** to garner your insight on grounds issues in order to make the most of a community-wide all day Grounds Vision Workshop planned for Saturday, March 22, 2014 from 9 am to 3 pm. Be part of the Vision! Mark your calendar for 2/18 and 3/22.



Ad-Hoc Committee for the Master Grounds Vision

**Join Us**

**February 18, 2014**

**6:00 to 7:00 pm**

**Main Clubhouse**

**The Vision and**

**Master Grounds**

**Program will define  
our Community for  
years to come**

**No one knows better  
than you how to**

**involve our  
neighbors**

**RSVP:**

**NEPENTHE OFFICE**

**929-8380**

**QUESTIONS:**

**PAM LIVINGSTON**

**802-6361**

**PJLRGL@GMAIL.COM**

# Taking Aim at Mailbox Issues

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It is no secret that Nepenthe has been plagued recently by mail thieves. According to a recent article by the Associated Press, there has been “a surge in thefts from mailboxes across the Central Valley” with “more than 2,100 people [victimized],” and unfortunately we are not immune from this scourge. The good news, however, is that “more than a dozen postal inspectors and investigators [have been] brought in from around the country to track thieves.”

Management and the Board have also been working to ensure the security of the mail. Four homeowners were appointed at the last Board meeting to an ad hoc committee to focus on the issue and make a recommendation to the Board. The Architectural Committee has also contributed by recently approving a

new style of locking mailbox that is a little larger than prior approved models. As with the other approved mailbox styles, the new mailbox is available locally and you can simply bring it to the office and our friendly Facility Administrator Roger Work will gladly install it for you.

The Sacramento Police Department has also stepped up to the plate to help Nepenthe and at management’s request, has increased daytime patrols to deter thefts during the afternoons. As always, our security team, Stonegate Protection, continues to vigilantly watch over us at night to discourage night thievery. Despite the extra patrols, however, no one can be everywhere at once of course, so we are still encouraging residents to report any suspicious activity and break-ins that occur. Please see the bottom of the arti-

cle for the number to the Sacramento Police non-emergency line, and the Mail Fraud Department. The more reports that are submitted, the greater the chances are of catching the perpetrators.

The committee will also be looking at the possible use of community, cluster style mailboxes. Currently mailboxes are a homeowner responsibility. In order to make the switch to community boxes, mailboxes would have to become an association responsibility. This means that in order to cover the additional expense of purchasing, installing and maintaining these community boxes, the cost would have to be passed back to the homeowner in the form of a potential increase in dues and/or a special assessment. It may be more affordable for homeowners to

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## Consultant...

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In spite of the recent automation of the system, distribution continues to be a problem with some areas getting too much water and others not enough.

Awareness of the need for conservation of our precious resources, like irrigation water, has grown by leaps and bounds. This topic must be part of any conversation having to do with landscaping.

These are just a few of the many challenges facing the ad hoc committee. One could also say that the change in demographics is another. Many of the original owners still live in Nepenthe. The community has more retirees than it did in 1973. These owners may be more interested in gathering spaces or

lighting than the residents were when the community was brand new.

Kevin’s job will be to work with the ad hoc committee and the community at large to help define what will best serve Nepenthe now and in the future.

The ad hoc committee has scheduled March 22 for an all-day forum for the purpose of allowing homeowners the opportunity to talk about what they want to see in the landscape. Kevin’s role will be in helping all parties communicate effectively and with purpose. Afterwards he will assist the committee to distill all the information into a workable plan that can be put before the Board for consideration.

Additionally, there will be a brief brainstorming session for interested parties on

February 18 at 6:00 PM. This session will be more focused on making the larger event on March 22 successful—gathering attention for the event, exploring methodology and so forth. All homeowners are welcome to attend.

If you have time on the 18th, you are encouraged to attend and the committee especially hopes that residents will clear their calendars for Saturday, March 22 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

This will be the time to bring all ideas and thoughts to bear on the subject of Nepenthe’s landscape vision going forward. Lunch will be provided. It will be necessary to RSVP so arrangements for food can be made in advance. Please call the office to have your name added to the list.

# February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Architectural Review Committee 9:30 AM
2	3	4	5 Outreach Committee 6:00 PM	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Cut off for Board Packet submissions	13 Grounds Committee 4:00 PM	14	15
16	17	18 Brainstorm Session-Master Grounds Vision 6:00 PM	19	20	21 Board Agenda published	22
23	24	25	26 <b>Board Meeting 5:00 PM</b>	27	28 Cut off for newsletter submissions	1 Open House to Celebrate Clubhouse Remodel 2:30 PM



**NEPENTHE MANAGEMENT**

Temporary Office:  
Dunbarton Cabana  
150 Dunbarton Circle  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Phone: 916.929.8380  
Fax: 916.929.1773  
E-mail: nepenthe@fsresidential.com

Office Hours:  
Monday—Friday 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM  
Saturday—Sunday (Winter) 9:00AM to 1:00 PM  
Saturday—Sunday (Summer) 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

*We're on the Web!*

*NepentheHOA.com*

**Management Staff:**

Betsi McComb, General Manager, [betsi.mccomb@fsresidential.com](mailto:betsi.mccomb@fsresidential.com)  
Sierra Campbell, Associate Community Manager, [sierra.campbell@fsresidential.com](mailto:sierra.campbell@fsresidential.com)  
Sarab Liebman, Administrative Assistant, [sarab.liebman@fsresidential.com](mailto:sarab.liebman@fsresidential.com)  
Roger Work, Facility Administrator, [nepenthe@fsresidential.com](mailto:nepenthe@fsresidential.com)  
FirstService Residential Customer Care Center: 1-800-428-5588  
PayLease (Auto pay assessments): 1-866-729-5327 or [support@paylease.com](mailto:support@paylease.com)

**Other Important Contacts:**

Stonegate Protection (patrol): 1-888-774-0035 or [security@stonegateprotection.com](mailto:security@stonegateprotection.com)  
Power Outages: 1-888-456-SMUD  
Nepenthe Insurance: Farmers Insurance, Ryan DeShong, 916-636-0115

**Board of Directors:**

Otis Turner, President, [otisturner@hotmail.com](mailto:otisturner@hotmail.com), 916-927-3575  
Bo Grebitus, Vice-President, [bogrebitus@gmail.com](mailto:bogrebitus@gmail.com), 916-803-0756  
Marcia Britton-Gray, Secretary, [mcbmd@comcast.net](mailto:mcbmd@comcast.net), 916-929-3858  
Will Vizzard, Treasurer, [vizzardn@gmail.com](mailto:vizzardn@gmail.com), 916-923-9308  
Ivan Gennis, Member-at-Large, [ivan.gennis@gmail.com](mailto:ivan.gennis@gmail.com), 916-564-3007

**Committees of Nepenthe**

- Architectural Review**—Ken Luttrell  
*Meets 9:30 AM on the 1st Saturday of the month*
- Elections**—Yvonne Del Biaggio
- Finance**—Gregory Crissman  
*Meets every other month*
- Grounds**—Pamela Livingston  
*Meets 4:00 PM on the 2nd Thursday of the month*
- Insurance, Legal & Risk Management**—Bill Newbill  
*Meets ad hoc*
- Outreach**—Nancy Arndorfer  
*Meets 6:00 PM on the 1st Wednesday of the month*

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*Contact the office for the locations of the committee meetings.*

**Mailboxes...**

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purchase and maintain their own individual mailboxes.

Not only is cost an issue, but the physical impact these boxes would have must be considered as well. Any landscaping that surrounded the boxes would be at risk of being trampled by increased pedestrian traffic. Increased vehicular traffic can be an issue as well. Finding a location to install the mailboxes can be delicate, as the homeowners closest to the cluster boxes may experience a negative impact from this increased traffic.

The ad hoc committee is looking

at a number of possible solutions—from cluster mailboxes to lobbying our elected officials. If you would like to get in touch with the committee to make suggestions, please contact the office and we will connect you.

If you would like a copy of the full text of the Associated Press article on mail theft, please drop by the office. And, as previously mentioned, if you are the victim of mail theft and/or fraud or see any suspicious activity, please call the **Sacramento Police Department Non-Emergency** line at **916-264-5471** and the **USPS Mail Fraud Reporting** line at **877-876-2455**.