

LAHA News

President's Letter

RUTH LEVINE, BOARD PRESIDENT,
#62 PARK LANE, 935-9433



April, 2002

I am writing this letter mid-March. We are having some light snow and have just had a few of the snowiest days of our

winter season. All in all, we probably all agree this has been a very mild winter.

The LAHA Board of Directors is working diligently to meet a June 1 deadline for completion of a revised reserve study. As our complex ages, it becomes apparent that repairs and replacements of major components are imminent. These items include fencing, parking lots, brick work, chimneys, tennis courts, swimming pools, irrigation system, etc. We, of course, dealt with the roofing issues and are funding for that.

As we look at preliminary scenarios, it

is apparent that the increase in our insurance premiums has significantly impacted our operating dollars in a negative way. I did some very basic math this morning that really opened my eyes as to why the impact is so great. In round numbers, we pay \$184 per month per home in dues (\$25 of that is set aside in an angled roof account). Our insurance increase is \$9.06 per month per home.

I recall a homeowner asking at our annual meeting why we increase dues at 5% per year, the maximum allowed by current by-laws. That homeowner thought it was an excessive amount. Obviously, 5% is not excessive nor is it adequate when we consider surprises and the increased costs of our vendors.

We, as your board and acting on your behalf, are reviewing our current and antiquated by-laws. We are hopeful that we will be able to reduce our 60-page document to something around 30 pages and bring us current with Minnesota legislation as it relates to town-

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Upcoming Events

**Pool Opens
May 25th**

**Amhurst
Garage Sales
June 8th & 9th**

**Gardening
Contest Judging
July 6th & 7th**

**Amhurst's
First Home &
Garden Tour
July 14th**

**National Night Out
& Amhurst
SummerFest
August 6th**

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Focus On Reserve Planning

The Association Board is deeply involved in the revision of the Association's reserve plan, also called a capital improvement plan. The four main variables in a reserve study are the selected replacement components, replacement dates, cost at replacement and projected income. The current revision, to be formally presented to the membership at this year's December annual meeting, is the fifth major study done by the Association. The last reserve study was performed by a consulting engineer, Mr. John Russo, in 1999. Prior studies were completed in 1998, 1996 and 1990. Our reserve plans are a major tool in long range planning to assure continued acceptable property value and appeal. The reserve planning process is part of the legally mandated responsibilities Amhurst Boards have in maintaining our investment.

Lohman's Amhurst uses a software package called WINRESERVE to assist in the calculations, cost factoring and determination of expected life of the reserve components. The Amhurst plans first identify what constitutes the capital improvement items or components; such as replacement of the west perimeter fence, flat roofs, chimney caps, garage doors and replacement of pool equipment. The angled roofs are part of a separate reserve plan specific to the replacement of the shake roofs. Many of the components have replacement cycles that are spread over many years such as parking lots.

“The reserve planning process is part of the legally mandated responsibilities Amhurst Boards have in maintaining our investment.”

Once the components are identified, expected replacement dates are determined and costs attributed to those items. A combination of technical knowledge, guesswork and history are used to determine replacement years. Want a good example of why these studies need to be revisited periodically? Our early reserve studies suggested that the shake roofs would last 40 years. Wrong! Closer to 20 years.

Once the component data are entered into the software, income projections are entered, and interest income is calculated with the application suggesting whether you have “not enough,” “just right” or “too much.” money. Sounds simple, doesn't it? It isn't. The board is now at a stage called the 'reserve tweaking' stage. The board directs its attention at determining when items need replacing, how long the replacement should take place, alternatives of replacement, what priority the component has and most importantly, how much money is needed to maintain the overall investment.

The Board is always open to your questions and your involvement in our mutual investment.

Annual Resident Garage Sales « June 8th and 9th

This year's Garage Sale is scheduled for June 8th and 9th from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Sort your stuff, price it right and open your garage door. Signs will be at the complex entrance and ads will be in the Star Tribune and Sailor.



Did You Know?

Sandy Rozman, #63 Somerset (and board member Barb Kronson's sister), was on the Homeowner's Rental Unit Committee in 1985.

Bill Meyer became the first part-time manager in 1988.

BIFF, Amhurst portable toilet, was first put to use in 1987.

Meredyth McCarthy, #61 Somerset, was instrumental in the choice of the decorative concrete block walls way back in 1989. The first replaced wall was at Newport.

St. Louis Park's EVERGREEN AWARD and the prestigious Community Associations Institute **Association of the Year Award** was presented to Amhurst in 1992.

Mute Swans made their home in the Amhurst ponds during the summer of 1994.

\$98,180. Average price for a 2 Bedroom, 2 Bath in 1998.

\$152,565. Average price for a 2 Bedroom, 2 Bath in 2001 WOW!



Know Your Windows

They look easy enough. You take them out, you give them a nice wash, and you put them back in their tracks and shut them tightly. It is now you realize you have one of the sections reversed and you just locked the windows with one of the locking clasps between the two windows. Darn! Yes, this did happen and to a professional window washer. The fix was to break the glass. When you remove your window sections, be careful to reinstall them properly.

CLOSE TIGHTLY. The windows are able to keep water out only if all windows are closed tightly and latched. If the windows are exposed to heavy rain and you leave the outer window open, and close the inner window, you could experience major staining and damage to the wall board below the window.

REMOVING THE SCREEN. If you are removing the screen, be very gentle. If the aluminum frame bends, it cannot be straightened. When a screen is properly installed, there is a tight fit along the vertical left edge of the screen in the window screen track. When removing the screen, push gently on the right edge of the screen. You will feel the screen disengage from the tight fit it has with the center window frame track.

When installing the screen, you might need to tap the left edge of the screen frame into the window track. You can also push the edge with your fingers. You will feel it snap into the center track.

REPLACEMENT WINDOW SCREENS AVAILABLE FROM THE ASSOCIATION:

\$36.00

(Measure width and call. Screens delivered to your door and your homeowner account invoiced)

Homeowner's Maintenance

Check List is available on our Web Site. In fact, lots o' stuff is at the site. Check out past newsletter articles, calendar of upcoming events, the **FACT SHEET, THE DATA SHEET**) which is information for realtors, closing agents and mortgage companies) and much more. You can sell items at the site, start a discussion with other homeowners and check out links to the city. There is much to peruse at **www.neighborhoodlink.com**. Just type in 55426.

Important Maintenance & Safety Activities:

- 1) **Test smoke detector each month.**
- 2) **Change furnace filter each month.**
- 3) **Have chimney cleaned every few years.**
- 4) **Have duct work and dryer vents cleaned ever few years.**
- 5) **Clean dryer lint trap before each use.**
- 6) **Lubricate furnace motor once each year.**
- 7) **Check washer and dishwasher hoses each year for wear.**
- 8) **Tighten nuts and lubricate moving parts on garage door annually.**
- 9) **Check household wiring annually.**
- 10) **Have a home fire escape plan.**



THE 'STUFF COLUMN

BY JOHN O. DIZON
Association Manager

Dirt, Rock & Chips

Black dirt, chips and rock will be available for your small landscape and gardening projects. This year's rock selection will be the multi colored stone called river rock that is normally around most of the air conditioners.



Remember, major projects may need the approval of the Board prior to beginning. Dirt, chips and rock will be behind the bus shelter.



Why We Do What We Do

I have always been amazed by the vast range of expectations and assumptions made by our residents. This goes for maintenance activities, thoughts on one's neighbors behavior, the role of the association, my role and more.

Why do I bring this up? To suggest to all that if you are wondering about why we do what we do, when we do it, how we do it, and with whom we do it...don't wonder or assume! Just give me a call and I would be most happy to offer you an explanation.

Gazebo Reservations

You may reserve the Gazebo for private gatherings. Strangely enough, the Gazebo gets very little use. In the past, the Gazebo has been host to weddings, receptions, birthday parties, club meeting and even an Association board meeting or two. Interested in reserving it for this spring or summer? Check out the FACT SHEET or give me a call for further information.

Accessibility Access

The Board has submitted a grant request to the City of St. Louis Park for the construction of a wheel chair accessible ramp to the Gazebo. Each year, the city offers 'official' neighborhoods the ability to apply for grants. The Gazebo was built with funds received from one of these NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION GRANTS.

If funded, I will be asking for some volunteers to assist with a little 'sweat equity' as required by the city's grant requirements.

We will hear from the city by the end of April. The lack of wheel chair accessibility to the Gazebo was brought to the board's attention by homeowner, Susan Euler, of #70 Amhurst.



Yard Waste Disposal

You may leave certain gardening waste at the pool shed for disposal. Place your yard waste (only plant material) in strong plastic bags, and leave at the pool shed. Please, not too heavy and don't tie the bags. I must take all material out of the plastic bags in order to dump at the Yard Waste Disposal Site in Osseo.

Please...

NO SOD

NO ROCK

NO FIREWOOD

NO DOG POOP

NO PLASTIC

POTS

Just dead plants, weeds and small branches.



Remember, the lawn crew does a clean up in the spring and removes most leaves in and around your home. Do not bring bags of leaves to the pool shed. Please let the crew remove them.

Need some help getting the yard waste to the pool shed? Give me a call and I can assist.

Welcome New Residents

- Jason & Sara McNutt** 22 White Oak
- Heidi Hingeveid & Michael Jung** 43 Park Lane
- Laura Causin** 92 Park Lane
- Sonia Saleh** 10 Amhurst
- Daniel Fink** 141 Amhurst
- Gail Liebl** 73 Rockwell
- Vern & Pat Severson** 30 Newport



St. Louis Park Senior Program Upcoming Activities

**4th Annual Aging With Ease:
Healthy Choices for Seniors-
A Health Information Event**

Friday, April 12, 10:00 am-2:45 pm

An event designed to raise the awareness of commu-
nity services available in St. Louis Park for seniors.

Lenox Community Center, 6715 Minnetonka
Blvd.

\$2. Limited seating. Tickets are required.

**SLP Senior Program Fund Raising
Event-Spaghetti Dinner &
Musical Entertainment**

Friday, April 19, Serving 5:00-7:00 pm

Catered by Piazza's Italian Ristorante with entertain-
ment by Jim Rhodes and The Klinger family and
friends.

Lenox Community Center, 6715 Minnetonka
Blvd

\$7 ahead of event or \$7.50 at the door.
Children under 12, \$4.
Additional parking in church lot.

Spring Rummage Sale

Wed, May 1, 8:00- 4:00 & Thu, May 2,
8:00-2:00

Donations accepted April 22-30

Lenox Community Center, 6715 Minnetonka
Blvd

New days this year!

Swing Into Summer 2002

Thursday, June 13, 3:30 Registration;
4:00 Entertainment; 5:30 Dinner

\$14 per person. Cash bar available.
You must register by June 5.
Event at Holiday Inn

CALL 952-928-6444 TO REGISTER OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

WITH GREAT SYMPATHY
Pat Leary, formerly of #91 Somerset.
passed away March 16th.
Pat was instrumental in Amhurst beginning its
recycling program in 1990 and was one of our
first community gardeners.



(Continued from page 1)

homes and condominiums. We will keep you apprised of our findings as we get deeper into the process.

We are committed to keeping Amhurst in prime condition. We will do everything necessary to assure our home values continue to keep pace with the market. However, because of budget constraints and limited resources, you may notice some things are not being done that we have always taken for granted. Our landscape budget is dramatically cut for summer 2002. While we will maintain our property in a responsible way, we will not be doing "extras" and projects that can be postponed without a negative impact visually, will be delayed.

We are asking again that if you have any ideas related to cost savings, or would like to assist the board with financial planning suggestions, please feel free to contact any board member.

**AMHURST HOME & GARDEN TOUR
SCHEDULED FOR JULY 14th.**

Do you fall into one of these two categories?

x Your neighbor just renovated their home and you are dying to check it out.

y You just finished renovating your home and you are dying to show it off.

If so, you will be interested in **Amhurst's First HOME & GARDEN TOUR**, Sunday, July 14th from 11:00 am- 3:00 pm.

If you would like your home to be part of the tour, complete the form below and return it to the Association. You will hear more about the tour in the coming months. This is not the Annual Gardening Contest. Judging for The Annual Gardening Contest will take place the weekend of July 6th.

✂

Your Name:	Court Name & Court Number:
Briefly Describe What You Will Be Showcasing:	
<p>Your Name and Address will be listed in the collector edition of the HOME TOUR Map & Summary and your home will be adorned with a HOME TOUR sign.</p> <p>For more information, please reach the Association.</p> <p>Please return this form to the Association. Registration deadline June 15th.</p> <p>You may also email the above information to jodizon@msn.com</p>	



Amhurst Real Estate Activity

BARB KRONSON, # 14 AMHURST
COLDWELL BANKER BURNET, 952-924-6224

Amhurst is on the same 'band wagon' the rest of the real estate market is. Prices are sky rocketing. It truly is a sellers market. One seller stated it was actually enjoyable selling their home. Asking prices are easily obtained and the process is normally rather quick.

Three Amhurst properties have been sold or are pending sale.
2-Two Bedroom Two Level homes sold between \$152,900 and \$155,000 (editors note: Avg. price in 1998, \$98,000)
1-Three Bedroom One Level, Two Bath home is pending at \$169,000.

We, along with the rest of the metropolitan area, are enjoying the highest property values ever and Amhurst is selling amazingly well. Waiting buyers abound.

In the year 2001, the average list price of a townhome/condo unit sold for \$135,700 in St. Louis Park. We have enjoyed higher prices than the median in our neighborhood. I believe this is due in a large part to the desirability and look of our neighborhood. We have managed to keep our complex up and maintain the aesthetic beauty of Amhurst. There are many anecdotes of prospective buyers who specifically want to move into Amhurst because of its feel and look!

The way to keep our neighborhood appreciating is to continue to maintain common areas and the structures so prospective homeowners will want to be part of our community. Also important in maintaining 'curb appeal' is the strength of the community spirit of its citizenry. We must strive to maintain Amhurst as a neighborhood and not a townhome complex. One has heart and one is nothing more than a grouping of aging buildings.

The Board of Directors is interested in learning more about the demographics of Amhurst.

Please complete the survey below and return to the Association within 5 days.

NOTE: WE DO NOT ASK YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS!

Renters: Do not complete. For Owners Only. All data collected will be used in an aggregate form only!

# OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD			AGES OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD									
# OF WORKING ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD			AGES OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD									
# OF RETIREES IN HOUSEHOLD			# OF YEARS LIVING AT AMHURST									
# OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 IN HOUSEHOLD			I CONSIDER MYSELF A PERMANENT RESIDENT.	YES	NO							
PRIOR TO LIVING AT AMHURST, I LIVED IN A (S) ___ SINGLE FAMILY HOME; ___ APARTMENT; ___ TOWNHOME/CONDO; OR: ___ OTHER. ___ # OF YEARS AT ABOVE.				RATE YOUR OVERALL LEVEL OF SATISFACTION LIVING AT AMHURST (1 - HIGHEST). CIRCLE CHOICE.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PRIOR TO LIVING AT AMHURST, I LIVED IN A ___ SINGLE FAMILY HOME; ___ APARTMENT; ___ TOWNHOME/CONDO; OR: ___ OTHER

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING. PLEASE RETURN IMMEDIATELY.