

Quick Neighborhood Bits You Should Know

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT – VOLUNTEERING

President's Message
 Candace Masquelier—SVE HOA President

Recently, I've given a lot of thought to the volunteers at SVE. There is no question that our many volunteers provide all of us with an improved way of life here in our chosen community. This happens through the sharing of time and talents *now* as a result of the expertise and experience gleaned from former careers and volunteering in other venues. In speaking with residents in other retirement communities, I have learned that SVE is known for its many volunteers. Obviously, those volunteer hours have provided the opportunity for SVE to keep the annual dues assessments on the far low end of the scale when compared with other 55+ active adult communities. The other members of the SVE HOA Board and I applaud all those who have given of themselves as volunteers over the years.

It appears, however, that we are at a crossroads. Many of SVE's most enthusiastic and hardworking volunteers are ready to "retire" from the positions they currently hold and often have held for numerous years. In addition, we have several new volunteer opportunities. Unfortunately, the people needed to take over some of these areas are not making themselves known. Following is a list of just a few of these positions that are currently in need:

Pancake Breakfast Chair(s): Ed and Paula Malone will be retiring from this position at the end of this coming Pancake Breakfast season and would like to train a couple (or two individuals) to take over, one for kitchen operations and the other for dining room operations. Although Ed announced his intention to retire more than a year ago, no one has stepped forward.

Fiber Arts Building Committee: One or two volunteers would serve as liaisons with the architect, the contractor and the members of the Fiber Arts Committee in planning, developing and eventually building a Fiber Arts Center, should this project receive final approval from the SVE HOA Board. Although the opportunity to serve on this Committee was announced several months ago, no one has come forward to even inquire about serving.

Volunteer positions at the Library, Bingo and the Office are always open.

Audio-visual tech volunteer positions may be available. Training will be provided.

Garage sale volunteers (twice a year)

Election volunteers

It is my belief that there are only three options if these and other volunteer positions cannot be filled through our current residents:

Cease providing these amenities.

Increase the annual dues assessments to be able to hire people to take over these positions.

Revamp the way these events are managed.

Neither of the first two options is a positive move. For example, doing away with the Pancake Breakfast would remove a major social event during the winter months and, having attended several of these over the years, I have witnessed the enjoyable interactions of many of our residents on these occasions. It's far more than pancakes! I, for one, would not be in favor of cancelling these events.

Increasing the annual dues assessments would place a hardship on many of our residents. The other members of the Board and I have heard many in our community voice concern about future increases due to current projects. It is much more likely that we will need to increase the dues because we cannot obtain needed volunteers than it is that increases will be necessary due to upcoming projects. Please read that last sentence carefully. I am NOT saying that there are imminent upcoming dues increases. I AM saying that the lack of volunteers might force us into hiring more staff which would then eventually lead to increases.

Finally, the only other option I can think of would be to change the way major events, such as the Pancake Breakfast and the Liaison position with the proposed Fiber Arts Center, are managed. Perhaps dividing the duties amongst several persons would be more enticing to volunteers. For instance, Ed Malone could train three or four sets of people who would either divide up the duties each month or would each take a two or three month block to serve as Co-Chairs before handing the duties off to other volunteers for another two or three month block. This would preclude two people from having to serve as Co-Chairs for the entire winter season. This would, of course, require that six to eight people step forward to be trained for these positions.

The Liaison for the Fiber Arts Center Building Committee would work much the same if we could divide the duties of this position among two or three volunteers.

One last couple of thoughts: Statistically, 39% of our residents are over the age of 80. While many are still able and willing to volunteer, most of them have already given many years of volunteer service and we need to look to the other 61% to step forward to keep our community running smoothly.

As I said at the beginning, this article is simply food for thought. The other members of the SVE HOA Board and I would be happy to hear any other ideas or suggestions you might have. In the meantime, please consider volunteering in any of the many areas where SVE can use your assistance.

How about you?

OCTOBER COMMUNITY MEETING

OCTOBER 16—12:30PM

OAKWOOD ROOM—SOUTH COMPLEX