



Edelweiss Maintenance Commission

209 Goat Creek Road • Winthrop, WA 98862 • Tel 509-664-7888

Fall/Winter 2018-19 Newsletter

Message from the General Manager:

'All the leaves are gone, and the sky is grey, I've been for a walk on a winter's day....' Well, not quite winter yet, but it doesn't take much to reckon the winter season is closing in on us. The first tentative snow is falling just now, it's freezing at night and there's compact snow and ice on Washington Pass. Time to break out the puffer jackets.

Now the news . . . First of all – have a look at the header above - **209 Goat Creek Road** – our old address – it's baaack! – at the Cluster Box Units (CBUs) at the campground parking lot. Sorry to keep changing addresses on you every 12 years, but it's the cost of progress. So send your cards and letters to the new address. The CBUs were christened recently by a motley group who gathered to lift a cup and to hear a reading of the unofficial motto of the USPS, paraphrased from the writing of Herodotus, an ancient geek– *“Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”* Unless it's foggy, or cold.

Thanks to everyone who helped build the concrete pad and then helped attach the boxes to it. And thanks to you who agreed to give up your old rural box in favor of a new shiny CBU box. No longer will you be risking life, or even limb, while checking your mail next to the Mazama speedway. On the down side, there is no longer a backstop for folks sliding down the entrance and skidding across Goat Creek road. Maybe some straw bales? And, for those of you who haven't asked yet, your box number is not needed for your address. Your street address is enough. The postal carrier knows which box is yours. So do I, in case you forget.

Water system upgrade – It took a bit over three summer months to install 2500 feet of new 4-inch water line (in financial cooperation with OCEC) from East Fawn Creek Road, along Highland Meadow and

Homestead Roads to Cassal Road. The work was complicated by picking around unmarked electric lines, avoiding old zig-zag sewer lines that must have been installed by the 'Gang who Couldn't Dig Straight' and the usual encounters with boulders big enough to have their own gravity.

Despite those obstacles, the excavation and installation came in only about \$8,000 more than we had planned for, which in the Methow is somewhat of a miracle. The project resulted in the OCEC's power lines being comfortably encased in conduit and Edelweiss' water lines being replaced with C-900 pipe, a product which will likely last way longer than any of us, and which is buried at least 5 feet deep, so that freezing should never be an issue.

A special thank you is due to those homeowners who were inconvenienced by the excavation project during the summer. This kind of work is never pretty, and your patience was appreciated while the roads resembled a gravel pit, and when we never knew when we would have to turn your water off.

Reserve fund, budget, assessments, etc. – I won't go into a long explanation* regarding the reserve fund/budget analysis that the Board of Directors tackled this past year. You all have been bombarded with updates on the process. But to summarize - -

Because the State of Washington has 'strongly suggested' that all Home Owners Associations should maintain a reserve fund capable of dealing with unforeseen expenses, the Board hired a professional consultant, Jeff Samdal, to analyze Edelweiss' ability to respond to a financial crisis. Mr. Samdal submitted a report which laid out the capital funds necessary for Edelweiss to have a comfortable financial cushion, not only for immediate unexpected expenses, but also for likely future major expenses.

Feeling that a more transparent system of financial reporting was in keeping with good community awareness, the Board sent out a series of

communications detailing those funds necessary to continue to upgrade our water lines in cooperation with OCEC as they upgrade their power lines, and also the capital necessary to begin to build up the required reserve fund. Then, following a meeting at the Mazama Community Center on September 15th, the Board asked the community, to vote on two assessments, \$300.00/year for the water system upgrades, and \$230.00/year for the reserve fund. Each of these would continue for a period of ten years, with a 3% increase each year, in order to keep up with inflation. In addition, the Board called for a vote on two changes to the Bylaws. One would clarify that an email vote was equivalent to a mail-in vote, and the other would establish that for the year 2020 and beyond, yearly association dues will be increased by the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) or 5%, whichever is greater.

148 votes (only 50% of the property owners) were received for the three measures. The results were:

144 'yes' votes (97%) for the Bylaw change

142 'yes' votes (96%) for the \$300 assessment

128 'yes' votes (86%) for the \$250 assessment

Thus all three measures passed overwhelmingly.

Thank you! to all of you who are cognizant of the fact that it takes dollars to continue to provide the services required to keep this community functioning.

The Board also decided that the budget approval process would be much more open by introducing the proposed 2019 budget in time for the community to approve (or disapprove) the budget at a meeting held at the end of October. This, replaced the traditional meeting in February, when no one in their right mind felt the impetus to gather in freezing temperatures at the campground, to approve a budget which was already a month and a half into its year.

The budget for 2019 was sent out to all members early in October and the meeting to approve it was held at the Mazama Community Center on October 27, 2018. After a brief discussion, the budget was approved unanimously by the community members present. It has been posted on the Edelweiss website.

*(OK - I guess that was kind of long after all!)

Winter Driving – It's an old saw, but we'll remind you anyway. Edelweiss roads can be a challenge in winter, but if you're properly equipped and use reasonable care, you should make it through to spring without breaking anything. Four wheel drive is best. Snow tires are a must. Chains can be a life-saver. Slow is good – fast is bad. And tell your visitors, friends and family, that they might not make it to your house in their 1997 rear-wheel-drive Chevy. We do

our best to keep the roads plowed and sanded, but at times conditions get the better of us and it may become a bit dicey to get around safely. That's the time to stay home and read about the weather in St. Thomas.

Invoices for 2019- Well, it's a sad and inevitable fact that invoices for the year 2019 will be littering our mailboxes soon after the new year. For those of you who wish to spread out the payments, the dues and fees can be paid in intervals. And for those of you who wish to pay it all at once and be done with it - - thank you!

1 - The first installment will include amounts in arrears, association dues, the first snow plowing charge (\$150.00), and the water system upgrade assessment (\$300.00). This will be due no later than February 15, 2019.

2 - The second installment will include water and garbage fees, plus the reserve assessment of \$250.00, all due no later than April 15, 2019.

The final snow plow payment will be due one month after it is invoiced in May. This final amount will be calculated on the basis of all the snowplowing/sanding related charges that remain, (after the first \$150.00 billed in January) divided by the number of Edelweiss homes.

Late Payers – We wish there weren't any. So, please don't be one. And maybe this year everyone will pay their dues and fees promptly. Be aware that the vast majority of property owners are consistently up to date with their payments. They are the ones on the front lines of keeping Edelweiss in good financial health. So be one of them! Plus, it's a bunch more work to send out late payment notices!

Anyway, dues, and fees more than one month in arrears will be subject to accumulated interest at the rate of 10% per annum, plus a late fee of \$20.00 per month, both of which will continue to accrue until the balance is paid. Property owners with balances unpaid by September 15, 2019 will be subject to lien. 'Nuff said.

Finally- Acting for The Board of Directors and Management of Edelweiss I'd like to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and, for 2019 - a safe and prosperous New Year.

Because of all of you and your support, working with and for the Edelweiss community is a kind of rewarding privilege that most folks don't get to enjoy.

Thank you for that!

Dick Volckmann