

PRESTON GRANDE VILLAS & TOWNHOMES

FALL 2011 NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2011

GRANDCHESTER MEADOWS, INC



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The Board of Directors has scheduled the 2011 Annual Home Owners Meeting for Monday October 24th at 6:30 PM in the back dining room of Biaggi's Restaurant. There will be food and soft drinks served after the meeting is completed. This will be great time to catch up with your neighbors so please plan on attending!

The neighborhood has seen a lot of recent changes to the surrounding Cary/Morrisville area and this can be good as well as bad. A new shopping center as well as more new housing are good signs of the great location even in a bad economy. However, this also means an increase in traffic and some changes in the traffic patterns of surrounding streets.

Regis Rulifson of the Prestonwood Master HOA has been instrumental in leading the effort to minimize the impact to the neighborhoods. Please contact him at rrulifson@nc.rr.com if you would like to receive his email updates and are not already on his distribution list. It would also be nice to let him know his efforts are appreciated.



The lawns were recently aerated, over-seeded, and fertilized to promote thicker lawns again by next spring. Although the neighborhood is irrigated, the cool season fescue still thins out each year due to the summer heat. The landscapers will skip mowing for a few weeks to allow the new seedlings a chance to fully develop.

Dear Neighbors,

I am so welcome to the fall weather this year as this long hot summer has taken a toll on all of us, as well as grass, trees, shrubs, and flowers.

As my term comes to a close, I thank you for the opportunity to work with a very caring HOA. We have enhanced our landscaping, restored beautiful wood garage doors, and constantly strive to improve irrigation and our overall surroundings. Please think seriously about serving on this HOA board. We meet about once a month or have our discussions by e-mail or phone. We have 2 board members leaving and need replacements. Please volunteer- it is a short 3 year term. With the exception of Larry Rothman- who the HOA CANNOT do without- his expertise is invaluable!!!

If you are a neighbor that received covenant papers in your doorway, please, please have them notarized and return to Fran Barsky (133 Grande) or Fran Koenig (151 Prestonian) before our meeting. This has gone on for far too long and we need a majority of signatures. Thank you for your cooperation.

See you at the meeting!

Fran Koenig
President
Preston Grande V&T HOA

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From the Community Manager:

Every newsletter presents the same challenge of conveying certain core principles of what it means to be a good neighbor while also understanding this means something different to everybody. I often find that it is easiest to share real experiences as illustration during home owner meetings. Unfortunately, it is far more difficult to write these out but I will try my best.

The hardest aspect about writing is that I have to start with one or two moments from twenty years worth of experiences and hope I achieve my goal. My very first experience of moving to Raleigh on my own to finish school in 1990 would also be one of my first true tests as a neighbor to another person. Although I had lived next door to people all my life, it had always been under the watch of a parent so respecting my neighbors was never really a "choice". It did not take more than a minute for me to understand that parent or no parent, the same rules applied.

As the real estate agent walked my friend and myself up to the newly purchased town home, the next door neighbors were starting to walk up their front steps to go into their home. This realtor knew the neighbors and stopped the woman who was in her late 60's in order to introduce us. The man had already gone into the house so the woman turned slightly to face us and said "all I know is you boys better not make any noise," before turning and walking into her house without another word. Later that evening when there were 40 or 50 college age students still out blocking the street at midnight I understood what may have made the woman a bit gruff with me earlier.

I must admit this introduction was a surprise considering I was expecting more "southern hospitality" than this one delivered. It would later come to my attention that this couple had been lead to believe by the builder that this would not be a community filled with college age students. However, at the same time, the builder promoted the close proximity to NC State. The University transportation system had a stop nearby which was one reason why I was moving there so I guess the

problem began with a builder trying to have it both ways. Regardless, I would soon after take a moment to go over to my new neighbors home for a more proper introduction.

I would become and remain friends with them for many years to follow and always tried my best to keep the noise to a minimum. This never caused me any inconvenience but even if it had I would have respected their desire for quiet. It is in this respect that people are different; the neighbors across the street just continued with the parties until they moved at the end of the next school semester. I could speculate as to why they ignored the impact of their behavior on their neighbors but it would be sufficient to say they didn't respond to their new independence in the same way as I had responded to mine.

In addition to quiet, my neighbor liked for the outside of the townhouse to be kept neat and clutter free. Again, this was certainly not an inconvenience to follow but there were always some other neighbors who couldn't keep things neat. It really just came down to the fact that it wasn't important to them to keep things neat. This is where it can get complicated because being quiet and keeping things neat are very reasonable expectations from your neighbors but what do you do when they don't share this opinion? What if your neighbor views their mess as a badge of honor?

I would later pursue a career as a community manager because I wanted to tackle this challenge head on without the traditional tactic used by other managers of calling a lawyer first. It may be naive and/ or too idealistic but I do still believe that if neighbors would just take the time to get to know each other and respect their wishes there would be far fewer conflicts. This applies to any number of issues including pets, parking habits, trash cans, or outside maintenance.

As your community manager I am often asked to intervene in a dispute between neighbors or to anonymously address a problem with a specific house. Although I can understand why people are less willing to speak to

their neighbor about a problem, I still ask if this has been tried before getting involved. The responses typically range from "I tried but they aren't getting it..." to "I thought that's what I paid you for..." Ironically, the offenders almost always respond back with "why didn't one of my neighbors just come and say something to me?" or "are you just driving around looking to justify your pay check?" Although the general responses are predictable, each situation is inevitably different and often disappointing.

The disappointment comes from watching as neighbors have only grown more distant from each other over the last few decades even though the area has seen incredible growth. People are far less willing to take the easy steps I had taken with my first real neighbors. There are many different answers given as to why people don't take the time anymore to get to know their neighbors. In fact, too many to list here but it would be sufficient to say that fewer people value the relationships they maintain with their neighbors and often turn in desperation to their home owners association to mediate a failing relationship.

It has been many years since I first set out to find a way to make a difference and I still come back to the realization that I can only encourage everyone to try to engage your neighbors before there is a problem. Just like every other relationship in your life there will be good moments and bad moments but the sum of the good moments will get you through the bad moments. If you do nothing to build the good moments than what will you be left with?

-David Robbins

Town of Cary Cultural Festival

On Oct. 8, come to Koka Booth Amphitheatre at 11 a.m. for the 5th NC Eid Festival commemorating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. This year's theme, Sacred Music. Parking and admission for kids under 12 is free; admission is \$5 for adults. • On Oct. 22, return Koka to experience the wonder of India at the 11th Cary Diwali held at 10:30 a.m. The theme is Sanskriti- Culture Transcending Borders and is free. Both festivals will offer food, music, dance, art, vendors and rich cultural history. For more, call 460-4963.