

Malibu East Dialogue

March 2000

Your Communication and Information Resource

Local Politicians at MECA social

Carol Ronen open house

By Betty Mayian

We were attending a private social party in the Windjammer Room and heard several of our local politicians state some of their concerns on the issues that are important to our city — especially here — in Edgewater.

We are so lucky to have our state senator, Carol Ronen, living in our building.



limits.

Harry Osterman was appointed to serve the remaining



Harry Osterman was appointed to serve the remaining months of Carol Ronen's term in the Illinois House of Representatives.

teeman. One of his duties is to make sure his area has enough well-trained election judges in order to have honest and efficient voting for the city, state and federal candidates and issues. Mike is also the son of one of our 48th Ward aldermen. His mother, Marion Volini, had that job in the late 1970s.

It was interesting to hear about the work that these office holders do. By them being accessible neighbors and citizens, we can call on them

whenever our concerns and questions need addressing. This is the essence of good old American democracy.



We are so lucky to have our state senator, Carol Ronen, living in our building.

months of Carol Ronen's term in the Illinois House of Representatives. He is a resident of Edgewater and has grown up here — and in politics. The late Kathy Osterman was his mother, and he spent a great deal of time with her as she served as alderman of the 48th Ward and as president of the Edgewater Community Council. He followed in her footsteps at ECC and also in politics. His concerns in office are to continue the work that Carol Ronen started and also to include his own pet projects of public safety and traffic flow, as they concern the well-being and safety of this area. I also heard him say that he is trying to find ways of getting help for senior citizens to pay the extremely high costs of prescription drugs.

Mike Volini is the 48th Ward commit-



Sandy Chaet, hosted the Carol Ronen open house.

We can hear on the news or in our daily paper about an issue that affects us — and then see Carol in the elevator and ask her about it. This is hands-on politics. Carol has particular issues that are close to her heart and conscience — for her, they haven't changed just because she moved from the Illinois House of Representatives to the Illinois Senate. The care of children is vital and includes early childhood education and child care. Child-care workers don't receive health care benefits at this time, and Carol sees this as an important concern that she has set her sights on in the Senate. As a breast cancer survivor, another is to get cancer-fighting drugs included within the prescription drug-group sales category. The third goal is to get an increase in the circuit breaker



Mike Volini is the 48th Ward committeeman.

Balcony tips

Do you have a green thumb? Does your balcony sparkle with life and color?

Most of us would-be avid gardeners suffer from contending with too much or too little sun, from wind that rips the leaves off of our tender sprouts, from downpours that drown our pots and break our will to plant another season.

If you have the talent to make your balcony plot look like a corner of Eden, please share your secrets with the Dialogue. Along with your planting tips, we'd like to print a picture of your high-rise garden.

MECA board meeting notes

by Elaine Winans



MECA board meeting Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2000

Attendance:

9 board members, 2 management representatives, 2 Standard Parking representatives and 8 residents

Absent: Jared Cloud, Allan Eckardt, and Richard Strauss

Presiding: President

OPEN FORUM 1

Standard Parking presentation by:

Roger Walters, Residential Division
Paul Gallinaro, supervisor for MECA

Resident comments and questions:

- 1) Resident complains of excessive speed by hikers, no horns on ramps and corners and no headlights.
Roger: We will maintain continual monitoring, and I will make this a priority with Tony and Paul, but progressive discipline can be made only if detailed complaints, including name or description, time and date, are made to the garage manager or the management office.
- 2) Resident: Where do the hikers come from, and why is there such a big turnover in employees and managers?
Roger: Usually they are not transferred from other buildings. We try to maintain length of service in a building. New employees come from advertisements, referrals and walk-ins. In the past six years, no MECA garage manager has been transferred to another building; they have either been promoted, left for personal reasons or received better positions outside the company.
- 3) Resident: The garage office seems rather large for this operation, and the manager seems to spend a lot of time on bookwork.
Roger – The office here is rather Spartan compared to comparable buildings. The manager will spend more time out of the office now

that his adjustment period is over.

- 4) Marcel Molins: What can you do to make the garage better? A study needs to be made on the numbers and scheduling of hikers and should have been made after the stairs were installed and the parking spaces were reconfigured.
- 5) *Roger: Paul and I will make a labor survey within the next 30 days.*
- 6) Tom Vaughan and Martina Molins expressed concerns over audits that do not match and errors in Standard

Please keep in mind that the meeting notes are not the official record of the MECA Board of Directors meetings. The official minutes are generally approved at the following meeting and may be viewed or copied in the management office.

- 7) Resident: A suggestion that the new door handles on the third floor becomes a standard and replaces the knobs on all garage levels.
- 8) Resident: Can we get individual homeowner's insurance through the company that Sudler has proposed for MECA group insurance?
Dean Lerner: Yes, and many owners prefer to have the same insurance company as the association.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- 1) *Financial statement*
Balance on hand, cash and reserves — \$2,927,938

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1) *Rules and Regulations*
The new no-smoking rule will be included in the March assessments and will be discussed during the

The new no-smoking rule will be included in the March assessments.

- 2) *Cable*
A letter on Jared Cloud's signature was sent to 21st Century concerning the channels that we are contracted

for. The method that 21st Century will probably use to trap the uncontracted channels may allow for residents to separately contract for additional channels.

3) *Commercial Property*

See report on page xx.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Items requiring board action

1) *Ratification of action during closed session*

A motion was made and passed — The Malibu East Board accepts the resignation tendered by Curtis Jacobson from his position as board member and secretary. Furthermore, the board censured Mr. Jacobson for conduct inappropriate and unbecoming an officer and board member of Malibu East Condominium Association.

2) *2000 exterior balcony and fascia repair bid approval*

Five companies returned bids. Our architects and engineers recommend that we accept the lowest bid, which is \$70,000 less than the closest to it. The bid from Golf Construction was unanimously approved in the amount of \$825,711 based upon the elements of measure that may change as stipulated by our engineers, Klein and Hoffman.

3) *Insurance renewal proposals*

Sudler's proposed multi-condominium association insurance package was moved after lengthy discussion to the Finance & Insurance Committee for further study. The board earnestly requests that Malibu East owners with condominium insurance experience join or assist the committee.

4) *Commercial property issues*

Notices went to all delinquent tenants. The leases will be enforced. Sudler does not have the expertise to assist us with commercial unit

The board earnestly requests that Malibu East owners with condominium insurance experience join or assist the Finance & Insurance

issues of rates and contract negotiations concerning market value of the square footage of our CU. We also have ADA issues, including accessibility to washrooms, the mall and to elevators. Klein and Hoffman will make a study to give us the information we need to make decisions in this area of improvements and ADA compliance. A motion was passed to allocate \$5,000 for this study. The board members will tour the CU as personal schedules permit. Sudler has submitted a proposal for contract addenda concerning the additional work that Sudler will be expected to do concerning the CU. This was tabled to the closed session.

5) Roof repair bid

Unit 45M is experiencing a roof leak. A proposal from Clark Roofing not to exceed \$3,000 was passed to correct this problem.

6) New uniform bids

Management will buy five new uniforms (one for each doorman). The janitors will wear the old jackets when they relieve the doorman.

7) Windjammer Room usage policy

The janitors will wear the old (doorman) jackets when they relieve the doorman.

8) Board vacancy

A motion was passed to fill the vacancy with an appointment by the board. The person chosen will serve until the September election.

9) Appointment of a new board member

Ila Chaiken (who was the first runner up in the last election) was nominated and voted unanimously as the new board member.

10) Election of secretary and assistant secretary

Larry Creter was elected secretary.

Judy Walker was elected assistant secretary.

Items not requiring board action

Ila Chaiken . . . was nominated and voted unanimously as the new board member.

1) MECA letterhead

Larry Creter presented a package of several variations. The board approved a new letterhead logo with one seagull and a font similar to our outdoor sign. Some suggested layout changes will be reviewed at the next meeting. The proposed letterhead for the Malibu Captain's Walk was sent to the CU Committee for study.

2) Unit sales

13A	\$280,000
26C	\$182,500
39D	\$175,000

3) Garage report

Claims

Approved:	1
Denied:	0
Total:	1

Waiting lists

Single self-park:	67
Tandem self-park:	6
Second car:	5

Monthly parkers

Valet:	306
Tandem:	81
Single:	142
Preferred:	5
Engineer:	1
Motorcycle:	3
Total:	538
New monthlies:	3
Cancellations:	6

NEW BUSINESS

1) Braille signs in elevators

A study will be made for other options.

The meeting ended at 11:15 p.m. and went into closed session.

Commercial Unit Committee

By Jack Winans

The CU Committee met in the Community Room Thursday, Feb. 17. The open meeting, chaired by Judy Walker; was attended by a dozen owners, including several board members.

An open discussion brought forth many diverse views as to immediate, short-term and long-term plans for the commercial unit, including:

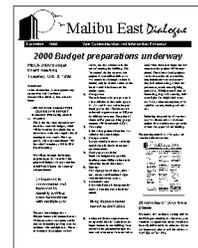
- ◆ ADA compliance
- ◆ Garage access
- ◆ Security
- ◆ Legal issues
- ◆ Use of the unrented space
- ◆ The feasibility of attracting a financial tenant
- ◆ The effect on the residential area with increased traffic in the CU
- ◆ Reducing energy costs through double doors and windows
- ◆ Replacing electric heat and air-conditioning with less costly gas
- ◆ Moving the front wall to the sidewalk.
- ◆ Signage
- ◆ Access to commercial unit managerial expertise

The committee decided that an engineering survey was necessary prior to making any plans and will make a proposal to the board listing the areas that need to be studied.

Extra copies of the Dialogue

We have received complaints from residents about missing their copy of the Dialogue, which is delivered to their door. If you have a need for an extra copy of the Dialogue, please get it from the extra copies that are in the management office. Please do not take your neighbor's copy.

Thanks,
The Dialogue staff



Community Calendar

by Rose Wandel



AMERICAN LUNG ASSOC.

Quit Kit

The American Lung Assn. Of Metro. Chicago is offering a "Quit Kit" with tips to quick quitting of smoking. The kit includes a list of clinics in the Chicago area to assist. Call 312-243-2000 or see the group's web site at: www.lungusa.org

BERGER PARK CULTURAL CENTER

6205 N. Sheridan Rd.
312-742-7871

Romantic Interludes

Italian and French arias
Dinner performance, limited seating
Mar. 19, 3 p.m.

\$20, seniors – \$15

"An Apology for the Course and Outcome of Certain Events: Delivered by Doctor John Faustus on This His Final Evening"

Fri/Sat – 8 p.m. thru Mar. 25
\$10 or pay what you can.

EDGEWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY

CAPS 24th Dist. Beat #33SD
Come meet our beat police.
Wednesday, Mar. 1, 7 p.m.
(1st Wed. of every month)
1210 W. Elmdale
312-744-0718

NORTH LAKESIDE CULTURAL CENTER

Neighborhood Music Consort
With Bonnie Tipton Long
Mar. 4, beginners – 9 a.m.,

advanced – 10 a.m.

Call for registration and fees.

Author to Actor

Readings by actors from the works of memoir writers.

Mar. 5, 3 p.m. – Free

Tai-chi & Sumi-e

Meditation and ink brush painting

Mar. 11 & 25, 9 a.m. to noon

Call for registration and fees.

A concert for classical guitar

Joseph Pecoraro

Mar. 12, 3 p.m.

\$5, \$3 – members and seniors

Memoir-writing workshop

With Nancy Beckett

Mar. 25, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. – Free

Memoirists readings

Mar. 26, 3 p.m.

6219 N. Sheridan Rd.

773-743-4477

NORTHTOWN LIBRARY

Story Times

For toddlers up to 35 months old.

10 a.m. Mondays thru Apr. 24

Preschoolers, 3-5 years old

1:30 p.m. Mondays and

10:30 a.m. Tuesdays

Call to register

312-744-2292

6435 N. California Ave.

SWEDISH AMERICAN MUSEUM CENTER

Virgins, Violins and Weddings

An exhibit of 29 folk paintings.

Tue/Fri & Sat/Sun – 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

\$4, seniors – \$2, children – \$1

Scandinavian dance workshop

Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 – 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Social & folk dances

Partner not necessary

Price per class:

Class members – \$8

Non-members – \$12

All-classes package:

Members – \$35

Non-members – \$55

Candle-making workshop

Mar. 4, 10 a.m.

Members – \$20

Non-members – \$25

(registration required)

Herring breakfast

Catered by Wikstrom's

Menu: fried herring, Swedish meatballs, potato sausage, rotmos and more

\$10 – call for reservations

Mar. 19 – noon

5211 N. Clark St.

773-728-8111

Ongoing THEATER/SHOWINGS

LIFELINE THEATRE

"The Two Towers"

A J.R.R. Tolkien adaptation of the adventures of two hobbits, Frodo and Sam.

Fri/Sat – 8 p.m.

Sun – 3:30 p.m.

Thru May 7

Adults – \$18.50, students/seniors – \$15

6912 N. Glenwood

773-761-4477

RAVEN THEATRE

Á View From the Bridge"

A story of a longshoreman obsessed with his niece and his demands for respect from his household.

Thu/Sat – 8 p.m., Sun – 3 p.m.

Thru Mar. 5 — \$20

"Sophie's Stories"

An adaptation of favorite bedtime stories of a 5-year-old.

Sat/Sun – noon

Thru Mar. 12 — \$7

6931 N. Clark St.

773-338-2177

MECA EVENTS/MEETINGS

Dialogue Committee meeting

Wednesday, Mar. 15

7:30 p.m. — Community Room

MECA board meeting

Tuesday, Mar. 28

7:30 p.m. — Windjammer Room

Leave event and meeting notices at the desk for the Dialogue.

Letter to the editor

Feb. 2, 2000

Cable TV contract

This is an urgent request for the Board not to sign the very limited Option A Cable TV contract. This would be prohibitively restrictive, giving unit owners no options to upgrade for 5 years, particularly with new cable stations and programming entering the market at an astoundingly rapid pace.

We are, after all, now in the 21st century. Please do not deny us all the choices it will have to offer. Think to the future.

The survey was submitted to the owners during the height of the holidays and that probably accounts for the poor response (less than 50%) and with only a 6 vote difference (107 to 101), for all purposes a tie vote. Therefore, the Board should not feel bound to close the door on all present and future unit owners, for 5 years, and eliminating all options for changes or individual purchases.

The cost of Option B, even with increases, is still a bargain! The price difference is minimal, 1st year only \$4.98 a month more and for the 5 year Option B, averaging it over the 60 month period, it amounts to only \$8.82 a month more.

One of our biggest concerns is that this restrictive contract for such a lengthy period would seriously affect the marketability of our units since a new owner would have no free choice to upgrade and broaden cable coverage. I, for one, would never consider purchasing in a building without greater cable service. While the Board purports to desire Malibu East to be known as the prime building on Sheridan Road, this would reduce us to one with the most minimal cable opportunities, even the 4 + 1's have better choices.

We feel the Board would be grossly negligent if they sign Option A cable contract by denying present and future owners the opportunity to stay current in the ever-expanding cable TV and technological race.

Yours truly,

Marilyn Chase

Letter to the editor: Response to M. Chase

By Jared R. Cloud

Cable Committee Chairman

I'd like to thank the owners who wrote to the Board of Directors recently for their comments regarding the results of the cable survey. As you all know, the vote was very close, but the majority of owners voting preferred to remain with the more limited lineup of channels under the current contract and pricing, rather than sign a new contract with the expanded selection of channels we now have at the higher price offered by 21st Century.

The Board of Directors and the Cable Committee spent a great deal of time negotiating with 21st Century, and presented the owners with what 21st Century told us was their best offer. The Board itself was divided between those who wanted to continue with the current contract (45 channels at \$11.60/month) and those who wanted the new contract (91 channels plus premiums, at an increased price). The Board discussed the issues raised in the owners' letter in several open meetings, including at the Annual Meeting, and in executive session. Because of the strong feelings aroused by the cable issue, we determined that the best way to resolve the matter was to put the question to the owners. Following the final offer tendered by 21st Century at the end of November, the cable survey was sent to the owners in order to meet a December 31, 1999 deadline imposed by 21st Century. After the survey was sent out -- but before it was collected -- there was an open meeting for the owners and the Board to discuss the cable options, at which many of these issues were again raised.

It is important that the owners understand that Malibu East is receiving cable service under a five year contract (for 45 channels at \$11.60/month) that was automatically renewed on September 30, 1999, because neither party had given notice of termination. The Board cannot now disregard the will of the owners, as expressed in the response to the survey, and sign a new contract that would cost the owners hundreds of thousands of dollars over the next seven years.

The Board of Directors remains willing to negotiate with 21st Century. I urge all concerned residents, on both sides of the issue, to continue to speak out at Board meetings and by writing letters to the Board or to the Dialogue, and let us know your opinions.



What's happening around the building

by Vito Senese
MECA Association Manager

Since the "Ground Hog" has seen his shadow, it looks like we will have six more weeks of winter and your building staff will continue to keep the interior and exterior of the building looking like spring instead of winter. The building staff will begin to paint the balcony railings on the north side of the building as soon as weather permits. Notices will be issued to all residents on the north side of the building soon regarding the balcony railing painting project.

The Board of Directors and various committees have been very busy with the purchase of the commercial unit as well as finalizing plans for the 2000 projects. The exterior balcony and fas-



On Jan. 31, 2000, our MECA legal representatives closed on the commercial unit (Captain's Walk) at Chicago Title and Trust. Shown are MECA residents and volunteers: attorney Fred J. Stoesser (far left), attorney Martina Molins (third from left) and MECA Treasurer Thomas C. Vaughan (far right). The attorney for the seller was Rob B. Heinrich of Heinrich & Kramer (second from left). The seller was MTL Insurance Co., formerly known as Mutual Trust Life Insurance Co. and the new owner is Malibu East Condominium, our association.

SPECIAL NOTICE
The exterior balcony and fascia project is scheduled to begin on Monday, March 6, 2000.

cia project is scheduled to begin on Monday, March 6, 2000. The project will include the east side of the A and B units as well as the columns on the northeast and southeast corners of the building. The project will take several months to complete, and updated construction notices will be issued to residents during the entire project as well as being posted on cable channel 95.

Request

Mr. Steve Somen took a picture of MECA that was used on the cover of the 1980s Dialogues. If you are in possession of a copy of this photo pictured at the right of this article (not the Dialogue cover), please contact the Dialogue.

Thank you

A great big thank-you goes to the anonymous residents who responded to our request for pre-1997 Dialogues and Pro-Tech cable listings.

The cable listings will be of assistance to the Cable Committee in negotiations with 21st Century.

We are reviewing past editions of the Dialogue and will reprint articles of general interest. We also are analyzing present and past Dialogue policies relative to advertising and "letters to the editor."

We are still missing editions of the Dialogue from the '70s, early '80s and some 1990s and 1991s. If you have copies from these periods, please bring



Owner residents

By Editor Jack Winans



While updating the mailing list for out-of-building owners, I noticed a very positive trend. Several out-of-state owners moved back into the building, and five units that were owned by non-resident owners were sold to owners who moved into the building.

Only 40 (8%) of MECA's 498 units are occupied by renters. Only 35 or 7% are owned by people who do not live here (some of our resident owners own several units in the building). An article in a 1990 Dialogue quoted a then-current rate of 15% that was termed a great improvement over a previous rate of 25%.

Save on energy: Experts give advice on conservation

By Neil Warner

(A partial reprint from the March 1985 Dialogue at the request of several residents.)

Malibu East residents can make significant reductions on their electric bills, and it doesn't even require a lot of time or effort. That was the central message given by two Commonwealth Edison representatives, Bill Gearing and Ron Sisco, at a Jan. 22 discussion in the Windjammer Room before a disappointingly small gathering of about 25 residents.

The most talked-about subject at the meeting was the question of whether it is more economical to heat a unit in Malibu East with baseboard heaters or the central furnace. Although both men said there was no easy answer to that question, they did provide several guidelines.

If you are planning to spend several hours primarily in one room of your unit, it is most cost-efficient to use the baseboard heater in that room and turn down the thermostat on the furnace. In addition, you can keep more of the warm air in that room and the cold air out if you close the doors to the rooms that aren't being used at that time.

On the other hand, if you and your family are using several rooms at the same time, you may want to rely primarily on the furnace for a more even distribution of heat throughout the unit, although the area of the room nearest the window will be somewhat colder than the rest of the room, particularly if the outdoor temperature is very cold. To alleviate these cold spots near the window, you can turn the baseboard heater on at a low level. In most instances, using both the furnace and the baseboard heaters in combination is most economical and provides the most even distribution of heat, Gearing and Sisco concluded.

Although it is impossible to completely seal out all outside air from a unit, the two men said any barrier between the window and the inside of the unit would help, including the use of clear plastic sheets, the taping of crevices around the windows with duct tape, or using even curtains or blinds.

Gearing said residents should check their electric bills to make certain their rate designation number was followed by the letter "A" because it designated a multiple-dwelling unit and thus provided a lower rate. If your bill doesn't contain the suffix "A" under rate, contact Commonwealth Edison.

When are you really parked?

by Jack Winans

We've all experienced it — those mysterious cars parked blocking the garage entrance and our front door, usually with no driver in sight. Are they really parked in that "no-parking" area? Here's the test.

You're not really parked if:

- you left the motor running. I'll just be a minute.
- you left your parking lights or emergency blinkers on. It indicates that you're going to return soon.
- you left a passenger in the car. They can tell people that you're not really parked and will return soon.
- you left a note in the window advising others of your location. If your car really has to be moved, they can easily find you.
- you are waiting for someone. Hopefully they'll be out in a few minutes.



In the meantime, I'm not really inconveniencing those cars that have to carefully maneuver around me. If they're having a problem, they probably need the driving practice anyway. As for those residents who need to drop off or pick up their elderly parents, be patient, I'll be right back — can't you tell by the above!

Reminder

By Jan Alex

(Reprinted from the March 1985 Dialogue.)

According to the Declaration of the Condominium Association (Article VII, paragraph H), "No type of washer or dryer or other laundry equipment shall be installed in any residential unit." The reason being that the drain risers were not built to withstand the additional water and soap suds from individual machines and there is the chance of a malfunction which could cause severe damage to neighboring units and common elements. An example of what can happen occurred a few weeks ago when a washer malfunctioned and froze on the "fill" cycle. Before the water could be stopped, flooding caused water to run between the walls and seep into several units from the low 20s down to the sixth floor where it bottomed out. Some newly decorated hallways were also affected. The owner of the washer will incur all charges for any and all damage to both neighboring units and common elements.

To prevent this situation from reoccurring in the future, PLEASE do not install washers or dryers and, if you already have them in your unit, PLEASE do not use them. We have newly decorated and well-maintained laundry facilities for your convenience.

Never be late again

Dean Lerner, AMS, CMCA

Senior Account Supervisor
Sudler And Company

It's no secret that MECA owners can avoid late fees being charged to their account by making sure that their monthly assessment payments are on deposit in MECA's lockbox account by the 15th of each month. I was on vacation, I had to go out of town on an emergency, the post office lost it, I didn't get the statement, I got the statement late and even the dog ate it are all familiar excuses, but they may not prevent late fees from being charged. So what can you do to guarantee you will never be late again? Just sign up for SNAPP!

What is SNAPP? SNAPP stands for Sudler and Company's Automatic Payment program. How does it work? On the fifth business day of each month Sudler and Company electronically transmits "automatic debit" orders to LaSalle Bank for each unit that participates in SNAPP. LaSalle Bank then electronically transmits automatic debit orders to each owner's bank, and the funds are electronically transmitted directly into MECA's lockbox account. As long as an individual's account has "cleared" funds in their account when the debit order is received by their bank, their MECA account is paid for the month. The entire process can take up to three days or as quickly as one day.

What does "cleared" funds mean? A deposit to your bank account in the form of a check is not considered available cash until the check clears the bank from which the funds are to be drawn. Each bank may have different rules for when personal checks, payroll checks, foreign bank checks, etc., are considered cleared. Check with your bank to understand its policy.

What happens if an account does not have sufficient funds to cover the SNAPP order? If your account does not have sufficient funds when the SNAPP order is made, an NSF order is returned to Sudler and Company. The MECA office is notified and an automatic \$25 NSF charge is placed against the account. Once the unit owner is informed of the NSF, he/she may send a check (with the coupon) to the bank lockbox to cover the NSF. If the check clears the lockbox before the 15th of the month, there will not be any additional charges levied against the account. If the check clears the lockbox after the 15th, a \$50 late fee will also be charged to the account.

What if there is a charge on my account that I do not agree with? SNAPP is set up so that the full amount of the charges on each statement will be SNAPPED. So what do I do? Contact the on-site office and indicate what you disagree with. If a mistake was made, the office will issue a credit. Your next month's statement will reflect the credit by reducing the amount that will be SNAPPED.

How do I sign up for SNAPP, and if I sign up, how can I stop it? Contact the on-site office for the forms. Follow the instructions and return the completed application and account information. It will take approximately 30 to 45 days before SNAPP begins. Once your participation in SNAPP starts you will still get a monthly statement. However a reminder indicating that your payment will be made through SNAPP will appear just above the return coupon. Anyone can withdraw from SNAPP by notifying the office (in writing) by the first of any month. Participants in SNAPP who are selling their units must cancel SNAPP two months prior to the sale or they will be required to escrow two months of assessments before the closing can take place.

Sign up for the program and you will never be late again even if you're on vacation!



Dear Etta Kitt

I take my dog to a nearby empty lot that is weedy and unkempt. I don't pick up my dog's doo-doo when I go there because I'm not messing up the sidewalk or anyone's manicured lawn. Anyway, it's such a yucky thing to have to pick up poop and I don't see why it's so important. Still, I get verbal abuse from other dog owners saying that I'm putting their dogs in peril! What's that all about?



Speaking of picking up...

Pick up that poop NOW!!! You're not living in the country, pal. We all share the occasional empty lot when we're lucky enough to find one in our neighborhood. You shouldn't have to step in a nasty pile to learn why it's so critical to pick up after your pooch. But there's actually more at stake here than just keeping your shoes (and your neighbor's shoes) clean.

Feces left on the ground can pass on diseases like hookworm and other parasites. Rats also find feces delicious to dine upon and will congregate where it is plentiful. Of course, they leave a trail of fleas and assorted diseases for your pup to pick up too.

Cleaning up after a dog isn't hard. And it requires nothing more than keeping a plastic bag in your pocket at all times.

Just open the bag and put your hand inside it (wearing it like a mitten). Pick up the doo-doo. Then turn the bag inside out over your hand. Voila! Tie the bag shut and drop it in the nearest dumpster.

Carry an extra bag with you and offer it to any other owner you spot who needs one.

Condensed from a series of articles from the David R. Lee Animal Care Shelter, City of Chicago

'Town Crier' announcement

We welcome all new residents to the building, including:



If you have information concerning talented or famous MECA residents, please contact the Dialogue.

Balcony Man by Scott Virzi

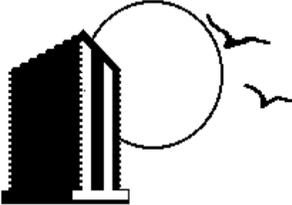


Reach 500 units here plus 42 more condominiums!



MECA MARKETPLACE

Advertisement design FREE!
Clipart and layout included



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Balcony gardening

with Barbara Lee

There are three concepts to discuss for a successful balcony garden to occur.

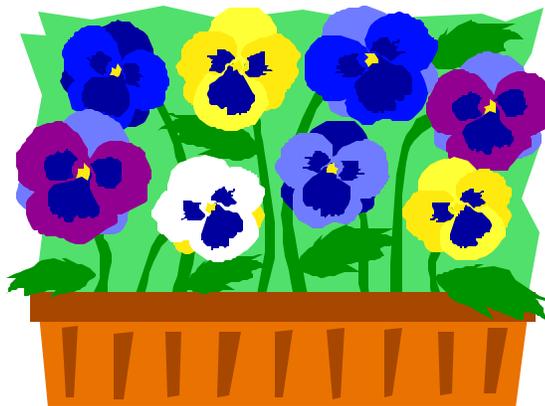
First, choose containers that have holes in the bottom and drainage dishes underneath to retain the excess water. Plastic or terra cotta retains water while clay pots tend to dry out faster.

Second, create a good soil mixture to retain moisture and provide aeration and nutrition. This is accomplished by obtaining sand, peat moss and soil. A mixture of 1/3 of each will provide an ideal medium. All three can be purchased from most building supply outlets or retail flower shops. Be sure the peat moss is of good quality and devoid of sticks and heavy plant material. For best results, obtain professional potting soil and add sand.

Third, are chemical additives and nutrients. If you use the 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 mixture you don't need to add nutrients. However, if you add a plant growth additive, such as Peter's All Purpose Plant Food or Miracle Grow, remember this: You have changed the chemistry of the original soil mix and must continue to use the additive season after season until the soil is completely used up. Do not mix soils ... if you are growing peppers or tomatoes (which can grow on our balconies), refrain from using that soil with flowers. Some growth stimulants for flowers, which will make them bloom over and over, will hamper a plant from bearing fruit, such as a pepper or tomato ... all the plant would do is flower. Each packaged plant food will show three numbers, i.e., 20-20-20. These represent the three nutrients commonly used — nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium. Nitrogen promotes leaf growth, phosphorus is for roots and potassium for flowers or fruit. For flowers an equal amount of nutrients is recommended while tomatoes would have a 6-6-10 combination. Usually a general nutrient supplement will work with all your balcony soils, but consider using the best combination for optimum growth.

Next issue — how to choose which flowers are best for your balcony.

Barbara Lee Engel holds degrees in Botany, Horticulture and Environmental Biology and has been a contractor with Amlings as a floral designer and garden expert.



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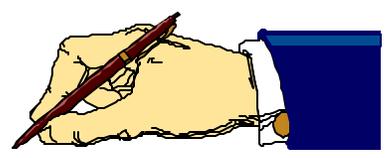
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The Malibu East Condominium Association **Dialogue** is published by resident volunteers to promote communication among owners, residents, Board of Directors, management and staff of the Malibu East Condominium, 6033 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660.

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