

HERON RIVER NEWSLETTER



HERON RIVER
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

MAY/JUNE 2025



President's Message

Serving on a Board of Directors is not for the faint of heart. It takes up quite a bit of time, energy and sometimes even offers some sleepless nights – with no breaks, nor vacation time. That really should not be how it is, but that is definitely the norm here in Heron River. The pay is limited (haha). The best you get, if you are lucky, is feeling like you are making good decisions for the best interest of the community. Sometimes those days are hard to imagine.

When I was first appointed to the Board of Directors (in late 2023), the Board would meet almost weekly at the library, at the fire station, or at the community center. Most of these meetings were not noticed to the community. It took quite a bit of time to get caught up on all of the things that were required of a community like ours. So we met. Did we always have meetings the correct way? I'm not sure. But every meeting we had was done in good faith in an attempt to learn about the community and to have a meeting of the minds to get things done.

This community has many facets, and parts of it are still under development. Some days it took hours of research on the part of most Board members to find the documents required to run the Association. And to be honest, there are still many documents that we didn't find or don't have, yet we continue to search in an attempt to make decisions in the best interest of the community.

And let's discuss the bylaws. Our bylaws are confusing, repetitive, sometimes contradictory and definitely a bit archaic – even for our past two attorneys to decipher. I'm dating myself here a bit, but let's face it, when was the last time someone you know used a telegraph for communication? (Bylaws Section IV, 4.10):

Section 4.10 Other Regular Meetings. The Board of Directors shall schedule regular meetings. Should said meeting fall upon a legal holiday, then that meeting shall be held at the same time on the next day which is not a legal holiday. Notice of regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be given to each Director, personally or by mail, telephone or telegraph, at least three (3) days prior to the day named for such meetings, unless the time and place of such meetings is announced at the organization meeting, in which case such notice of other regular meetings shall not be required.

We are all human. Often, after long periods of hard work without a break, tiredness sets in, personalities emerge, and if you have watched Survivor, you know that sometimes the fatigue gets to you. And it can create opportunities for one – even those with the best of intentions – to take things personally.

And yet, for me personally, one of the most challenging aspects of this year was stepping into a role I hadn't anticipated – one that continues to stretch me as I learn and grow. The role of president is a tough one. It requires one to make quick decisions, understand the rules – HOA, state and federal (or seek input from an attorney when you don't understand or are challenged + even attorneys can get it wrong), preside over Board meetings, know when to call Board meetings, promote collaboration among Board members, coordinate with PM, officers and committees to ensure day to day items are carried out, provide leadership during conflicts, examine and reexamine the consequences of those decisions – good or bad – long after they are made and take the heat for all Board decisions – because you can't please everyone all the time. The list goes on and on. The role is tough and until and unless you are in those shoes, you don't truly understand.

I could go on and on and tell you all of the challenging things that took place this year. But for now, I'd rather focus on what makes Heron River the community that it is. What makes our community a great place, and reminds us to show up daily to serve, is the beauty of the landscape, the endless walking paths, the facilities – though dated (with improvements scheduled for Summer/Fall 2025), and the 100+ volunteers – on committees such as Water + Ponds, Social, Pool, Landscape, Safety + Preservation, Welcome, Library, Facilities, Sports Courts, and Finance – who show up – many daily – to ensure that this community keeps running.

The ponds are not always full, the chairs are not always in line at the pool, we don't always have BINGO every month, the trash is not always put out every week at the clubhouse (oh yes it is), and the grass is not always green, but when it is (or isn't) you can be sure you have people in the community who show up as the HEART of Heron River to make it the place we love.

So here's the truth: Serving on the Board isn't glamorous. It's hard, thankless work most days. But it's also a reminder of what makes this place worth it – the neighbors who wave on their walks, the committee VOLUNTEERS who give their time without being asked twice, the small wins that come after long conversations. Heron River doesn't run on perfection, it runs on heart. And I'm proud to be one small part of that. By: Flo W.

Monthly HOA Meeting

The Board of Directors' meetings take place on the third Thursday of the month at 6pm in the clubhouse. These meetings are for the Board to discuss necessary business and are open for association members to attend and listen. Additional special meetings may be called by the Board of Directors, as needed, for them to conduct additional business that may arise.

Landscape Committee

With spring in full swing, your Landscape Committee has been hard at work. We ask for your patience as Brightview, East to West, and the committee troubleshoot the typical issues that seem to crop up (pun intended) each year, i.e. broken drip lines, an abundance of weeds, faulty valves and solenoids. Ever notice how these problems seem to arise after 5pm and on weekends?

This spring also brings some changes to our community's services. During a Meet-and-Greet on April 3, Hawkeye Landscaping met with Creekside residents to introduce themselves, answer questions, and address concerns. In addition a number of projects have been initiated in the past couple months. Here is an update on many of those projects:

1. Tree Mapping Project – Knowing that it is vital for the community to understand its assets in order to anticipate future needs and costs, a census of all of the trees in the development was completed and submitted for the reserve study and the benefit of the board.
2. Spring Beautification Project - The Heron River section captains have been rounding up lists of areas in need of improvement. Special attention will be given to Heron River's entrances.
3. Identifying dead and missing trees and stumps – We now have a map of all stumps, missing and dead trees. Bids are currently being collected for the removal of the dead trees and all stumps.
4. Pruning – We anticipate scheduling tree pruning in the coming weeks. (Brightview is limited in how high they can prune so an arborist must be contracted to do anything above that limit.)
5. Gophers – Now that the weather has warmed the little varmints are having a field day. Efforts are in the works to deal with the issue.

As a reminder, please report all issues related to landscaping directly to East to West. You'll find where you can "Request Maintenance" or report an concern at this link <https://easttowestpropmgmt.appfolio.com/connect/>

by Mary Ann Fraser

**Pool
Opens**



MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

Money Matters

In June 2024, I joined the board and became the Treasurer for the Heron River HOA. Since then, I've spent a lot of time reviewing our finances, questioning financial matters with our previous management company and trying to get things dialed in. In doing so, I determined portions of our reserve funds were not well invested – earning zero interest, that our community was lacking a reserve study and long-term financial planning, and there is much confusion surrounding the Creekside neighborhood's maintenance fees. This update is intended to bring members up to speed regarding these and other matters.

Reserve and Operating Funds

In 2024, the HOA collected \$955,680 in assessments. \$229,200 of this total was transferred into our reserve fund accounts. This year, we have transferred the first quarter reserve funds of \$57,300, bringing our total reserve funds to \$573,760.

Our reserves have been held at Chase Bank and Idaho Central Credit Union. However, total accounts at both of these institutions are only federally insured up to \$250,000 and the offer limited offer limited investment opportunities.

To maximize the growth of our money, better diversify funds, and keep our balances from reaching the \$250,000 threshold at traditional banking institutions, a good course of action was to seek the services of an investment company. To that end, we've succeeded with opening an account at Raymond James, Financial Services. Our financial advisor is Dan McQuestan, who has several years of experience and has managed the investments for the Hidden Springs HOA for over 10 years. Due to us being an HOA, Dan offered to not implement the 1% management fee typically charged for the managing of accounts. However, in 2026, a small annual fee of \$75 will be implemented.

Recently, we moved \$296,000 from ICCU to Raymond James, thus closing the ICCU account. This money is structured into laddered CDs of various terms earning us overall growth of 3.8% to 4.0%, with varying maturity dates. Unfortunately, with the downturn in market rates, all interest earning investments have decreased over the last couple of months, but our growth is still good.

At Chase, we had \$111,271, in our reserve checking account earning no interest, and we moved \$60,000 of this to Raymond James. This money has been invested in a money market account, where it remains liquid, earning interest and readily available should the need arise. Another \$25,000 from this account was moved into a 2 month CD, leaving approximately \$26,000 in the reserve checking account.

Additionally, we invested \$136,000 of reserve money in a two-month CD at Chase, that matures on May 17, 2025. Upon its maturity date, the plan is to move this money to Raymond James for additional investments and/or laddering of our CD's.

As future money is transferred from the operating to reserve account, our goal will be to continue to move money to Raymond James for investing purposes.



For an HOA a checking account is a must for our operating account. Unfortunately, most checking accounts earn zero interest as is the case for Chase bank. Exploring options of other banking institutions may allow us to find a checking account to possibly earn a bit of interest. Most property management companies dictate to the HOA where they prefer the banking accounts to be, including our past management companies. However, with East to West we have the flexibility to choose which banking institutions we want to use for our needs, which offers us choice.

Investment Policy and Reserve Study

Heron River has never had an investment policy. However, in the coming weeks, with Dan McQuestan's assistance, the Board will be working on developing one with us. Dan has created an investment policy for the Hidden Springs HOA, which they have successfully implemented for some years now. Additionally, Heron River's developer has provided us with a sample investment policy which will be reviewed for the creation of our policy.

A reserve study is a comprehensive analysis of an association's assets which identifies future maintenance and replacement needs and develops a financial plan to address those needs. A reserve study acts to guide the current and future boards to ensure adequate reserve funds are set aside to cover the ongoing maintenance of the community. If reserve funding is inadequate, additional assessments may be required to be paid by homeowners to maintain the association's assets. Heron River has never had a reserve study done.

In 2024, we contracted with North Star Reserves, a professional organization to provide the community with a reserve study. The first draft of this study has been completed and can be found on the Heron River website under the protected documents section. As your Treasurer, I have spent many hours working on revisions to the draft. Those revisions have been submitted to North Star. I'm hopeful we will reach a final product soon and we can begin the implementation of the study.

I'd like to note, previously in 2021-2022, the board had obtained the services of North Star Reserves to obtain a reserve study. Unfortunately, due to various challenges encountered, this study was never finalized by the board, nor implemented.

It is essential for this and all future boards to have a working knowledge of the study and implement it accordingly. Reserve studies should be updated from time to time depending what the status of the community is. The financial success of Heron River will be dependent on how we invest our money and use the reserve study as a guide to maintain our community.

Creekside Maintenance Assessment

In addition to regular HOA assessments, the owners of the 57 homes in the Creekside neighborhood pay \$305 per quarter for "Maintenance Fees." This fee is to provide for snow removal, landscaping, and fence maintenance services. The language pertaining this Maintenance Fee is included in Amendment 7 of our CC&Rs.

Currently, Creekside residents pay annually \$69,540 in Maintenance fees. Last year, the cost for providing Creekside maintenance services was \$71,280 resulting in a deficit of \$1,740. In an attempt to prevent any additional deficit, the Board worked hard to negotiate contracts to provide the same services for less money in 2025. As a result, the 2025 budget for Creekside maintenance is set at \$62,265, which will result in an anticipated surplus of \$7,275.

There has been several years when the Creekside maintenance fee fund, at years end has had a deficit and several years when they have had a surplus. To date, it does not appear any board has ever levied assessments for any Maintenance fee deficits dating back to Creekside's inception in 2014. Additionally, our governing documents are not clear as to what authority exists as to how Creekside matters should be addressed or resolved.

To resolve this issue in the future, Heron River members would need to vote to make revisions to Amendment 7, which governs Creekside. This would allow for changes to Creekside's Maintenance Fees, adding or removing covered services and giving the 57 affected homeowners the authority to make those decisions for themselves.

Other Matters

During the transition from CAM Management to East to West, several issues have been discovered which require remedy to resolve. This includes missed vendor payments and/or payments that were not made timely, the March financials not balancing properly, the first quarter financials not balancing properly, as well as missing invoices. East to West, is working through financial discrepancies and once resolved they will manually upload our financials into the Appfolio portal. The board will then be able to access and run reports from the portal including: the general ledger, balance sheets and income statements. The Finance Committee and myself are assisting as able in verifying financials and resolving issues as needed.

There has been some discussion of placing our financials on our Heron River website under protected documents for all residents to review. In the past, some prior boards (or board members) didn't agree with this approach, while others did. Before considering this further, the finance committee and myself believe we need to resolve reconciliation issues for accuracy purposes.

In addition, we believe that the presentation of the reports should be updated, if possible. Our previous management company advised this was not possible, but with the assistance of East to West and Appfolio, we will be discussing the possibilities of accomplishing this.

Recently, we paid \$10,438.54 for repairs to the East Preserve pond and fountain. This money has been allocated to come from our reserve money for pond repair.

In April 2025, our monthly service contract for ponds with Aquatechnex increased from \$1932.42 to \$2,000.33.

By: Rhonda L.



Annual HOA Meeting | MAY 15

If you cannot attend the meeting, please consider giving your proxy to a friend or neighbor to count towards the quorum number needed and cast your vote.

Adult Water Aerobics & Pool



DAYS: Monday, Wednesday and Saturday

TIME: 10 to 10:50am depending on weather

SKILLS NEEDED: None, just an open mind and a desire to exercise and have fun!

EQUIPMENT: Please bring a 2.5 inch noodle (no thicker or thinner). **Optional:** water shoes, webbed gloves and water weights for more resistance

INSTRUCTORS: Sue Tracy. She'll go on vacation and miss some classes. She would love to have a substitute that has some experience teaching exercise classes. Let her know if you're interested.

SIGNUP: Sue will put this activity on Signup Genius so that she knows how many are attending and you'll know if she's instructing.

This class is informal and so much fun! We exercise to music and generally have the pool to ourselves. You don't have to know how to swim as most of the exercise is done with our feet touching the bottom. In early summer the water is warmer than the air so don't let cool mornings scare you off. The more, the merrier!

For more info, contact Sue (208) 284-3798



We're looking for a few people to help with the short time it takes to open the pool each morning.

It only takes 15 minutes. Season is from roughly Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Volunteer as little as one day a week.

Greg can work around your vacation plans.

For more information or to sign up, email Greg Wheeler g.wheeler2001@gmail.com

Upcoming Events



1: Happy Hour from 5:30 to 7pm
5: Cinco de Mayo
5: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
6: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm
9: Lunch Bunch from 11:30am to 2pm
11: Mother's Day
12: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
13: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm
15: Heron River Annual Meeting
19: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
20: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm
22: Bingo from 6 to 9pm
26: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
27: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm

2: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
3: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm
9: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
10: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm
14: Heron River Garage Sale 8am to 2pm
16: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
17: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm
19: HOA Board Meeting from 6 to 8pm
23: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm
24: BOD Workshop from 10am to 12pm
24: Mah Jongg from 1 to 4pm
26: Bingo from 6 to 9pm
30: Cribbage from 1 to 3pm



For additional details on
events, go to
heronriverhoa.com



Bunco!



Heron River residents...Are you interested in playing bunco?

WE HAVE TWO GROUPS THAT PLAY THE FIRST MONDAY AND THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT THE CLUBHOUSE. CURRENTLY, THERE IS AN OPENING FOR THE MONDAY AND TUESDAY NIGHT GROUPS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A REGULAR BUNCO MEMBER OR WOULD LIKE TO BE A SUBSTITUTE, PLEASE REACH OUT TO LAURIE BERTULEIT AT

LAURELBERTULEIT@GMAIL.COM

MONDAY GROUP: MAY 5TH AND JUNE 2ND AT 6PM

TUESDAY GROUP: MAY 6TH AND JUNE 3RD AT 6PM

EASTER 2025!!

The Easter Party at Heron River was a wonderful success, thanks to our amazing volunteers for their hard work and dedication, and to all our residents for their generous donations. We truly couldn't hold these events without your valuable contributions—thank you all!



SAVE THE DATE!!



Calling All Cooks!



Tana Crance is doing it again! This time she's working on a Heron River Cookbook. Get out those favorite family recipes and send them to her at tanacookbook@gmail.com by July 1st. Five recipes per person. Word format preferred.

Annual Chili Cookoff October 18th

SAVE THE DATE



Last year's Chili Cookoff was a very successful and fun event. We're still in the planning stages for this year's event and need a few volunteers to help. Please contact Tana Crance at Tana.crance@gmail.com if you would like to work on this event. The call for contestants will be sent out in early September.

Heron River Lunch Bunch



HRLB is a lady's luncheon group that meets at our Community Center the second Friday each month from September through June. Usually taking a break in the summer time.



March

The luncheon theme was Mardi Gras and our hosts were Mary Pavey, Barb West, Kelley Lea and Claudine Goff. They did a marvelous job planning a Cajun/Creole menu and transforming the CC into a festive party.

April

Due to a snowstorm that cancelled our February luncheon, the April luncheon theme was Galentines! The hostesses were Ruth Beck, Darcy Horton, Carol Fleischer, Cherlyn Allen and Judy Zacharda. The menu was Italian, and attendees participated in the Guess the Baby game, How Many Cinnamon Hearts game and a Trivia quiz!

May

The May luncheon will be on the 9th. The theme will be "Flower Power."

If you aren't a member of HRLB, and you'd like to attend our luncheons, please contact Tana Crance at Tana.crance@gmail.com.

Holiday Boutique

This is the 4th annual boutique for Heron River!

It's successful because we have a lot of talented artists within Heron River and the surrounding community. There are always a lot of unique gifts to get you in the holiday spirit!

Purchase anything from the boutique and you'll be entered to win a special basket (two available) filled with wine, cocktail napkins, stationary, lotions, gift card and/or more.

We still have a few spaces available for crafters or artists. Sell your items and take home some Christmas cash!

Contact Sue Tracy at (208) 284-3798 if you're interested in participating.



*Date: Saturday,
November 8th
Time: 10am - 3pm
(Heron River residents get to
start shopping at 9am)*



Heron River Crafters Decoupage Flower Pots

Our neighbor, Sabrina Hart, hosted a Decoupage Flowerpot Class at the CC on April 18th. Participants decorated a 6-inch pot and saucer with festive paper napkins. They turned out great!

If you're not a member of the Heron River Crafters, but would like to receive invites, please contact Tana Crance at Tana.crance@gmail.com. Also, if you have a talent that you'd like to share with your neighbors, please contact Tana to setup a class.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

HERON RIVER'S ANNUAL NEIGHBORHOOD YARD SALE

JOIN US!

JUNE 14TH

**Lots of great
stuff for sale!**

8AM - 2PM

9800 W. Gloxinia St.

Yard Sales will take place at individuals home residence. Drive around and take a look at the great items for sale!

