



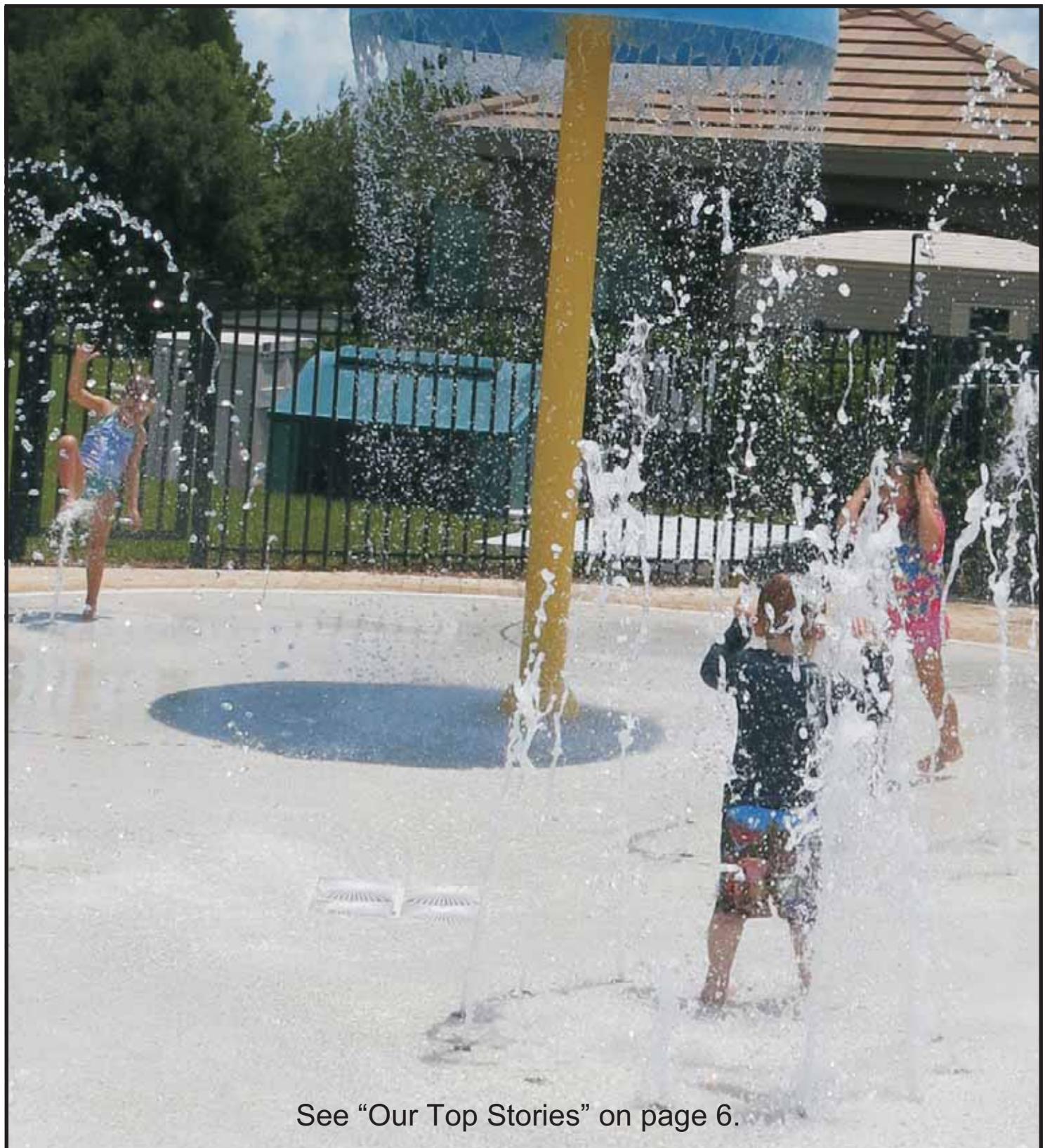
The Ballantrae Communicator

The newsletter of the Ballantrae community boards in Land O' Lakes, FL

Autumn 2018

16 pages

Vol. 11, No. 2



See "Our Top Stories" on page 6.

Fire Rescue 37 near Ballantrae now hosts Squad 1 ...



Shown above is Squad 1's behemoth Special Operations vehicle, which weighs in at 31 tons fully loaded. At left vehicle is plugged in when not out on a call to keep equipment, meters, batteries and an onboard 12KV generator fully charged.



Not an inch of space was wasted when Pasco Fire and Rescue staff designed what would go where in this vehicle that cost \$657,000 fully-equipped.



These self-contained, heavy duty balloons inflate to raise weight from a victim.



A more powerful "Jaws of Life" is also more useful (and quieter) because it is cordless.



Front bumper contains winch and other most-used tools for immediate retrieval.

... provides Pasco with diversified Special Ops rescue unit

By Jim Flateau
Communicator Editor

How can a beast of a fire rescue vehicle, weighing in at 26 tons and carrying five more tons of high-tech equipment, be built for speed?

Do what the **Pasco Board of County Commissioners** did. Entrust the design of this \$657,000 Special Operations vehicle to the men and women of **Pasco Fire Rescue** who will be staffing and using it.

That's still a challenge for what is the largest vehicle in Fire Rescue's fleet, at 8'4" wide, almost 39 feet long and nearly 11 feet tall.

The vehicle is designed to respond to all special operations that traditional firefighters are not equipped to handle. That includes rescues in confined spaces, structural collapses, hazardous material incidents, rope rescues, vehicle extrications, road rescues, and trench rescues, said Pasco Division Chief William Lingo who heads up Special Operations.

Dubbed Squad 1, this first Special Operations vehicle and its four-person crew have been sharing space since July 16 with the ladder and ambulance crews' five personnel on-duty at Fire Rescue 37, less than a mile east of Ballantrae on SR54.

The Division Chief, who helped design similar vehicles in Tampa, said stationing the first unit near Ballantrae gives it the best access to the entire county.

He also noted Station 37 is one of the county's largest firehouses and has among the county's best-trained staff.

Pasco Fire Rescue employees ensured that their design of the vehicle carries the equipment that they need. They ensured that it is stowed in what they know is the most readily-accessible and useful location for each piece.

The vehicle was designed for speed:

- A 12KV onboard generator is operated from the vehicle's cab. There is no wait to offload and power up a generator to get equipment and lights working.
- Hydraulic tools and extrication equipment are stored in the front bumper, as well as a winch with 100 feet of cable. "It speeds up deployment of cutters and spreaders," a special ops squad member explained. "Speed results in better patient outcomes. The quicker we can get to that equipment, the better our chances of saving a life. That's what it's all about."
- Space on the roof of the vehicle stores readily available high angle rope rescue equipment, hazmat suits and decontamination gear, confined space breathing apparatus and a water rescue Zodiac inflatable boat that carries a

stretcher and two rescue personnel.

- A series of electronic hydraulic Genesis cordless tools, such as the "Jaws of Life," are portable, and power up with the switch of a button. They are not restricted by the reach of power cords or the availability of fuel containers.

- 3-4 ports on each side of the vehicle power up a portable winch, instead of having to move the truck to accommodate the typical single permanent winch on a vehicle.

- Computer and TV equipment on the vehicle will eventually allow it to serve as Fire Rescue's on-site Command Center during an incident.

- The equipment used to fight a fire is located together on the passenger side of the truck – meaning the vehicle can be angled close to a fire with the driver's side facing the flames. All necessary equipment is readily available but

protected, like the crew, on the side of the vehicle facing away from the blaze.

Division Chief Lingo said, "I'm proud to be here and have the opportunity to make this equipment a reality. The staff is professional, fun, eager to learn and undergo training every day. They all want to serve the county to the best of their ability and are doing a fantastic job. They're capable of doing anything that needs to be done."



Squad 1's nickname, "the stray dogs," comes from the fact that while it is housed at Station 37, it has no permanent home area because their work takes them throughout the county, and even outside of it on mutual aid calls.

The vehicle itself was featured in April at the Fire Department Instructors Conference in Indianapolis, the largest gathering of its type in the nation to show off new equipment. Six departments placed immediate orders while at the meeting for vehicles exactly the same as Pasco's Squad 1.

Division Chief Lingo said it took a lot of input from staff to design and equip the vehicle. "Now we're figuring it all out and what we can tweak to make it even better in newer equipment. So we're basically doing a lot of field testing."

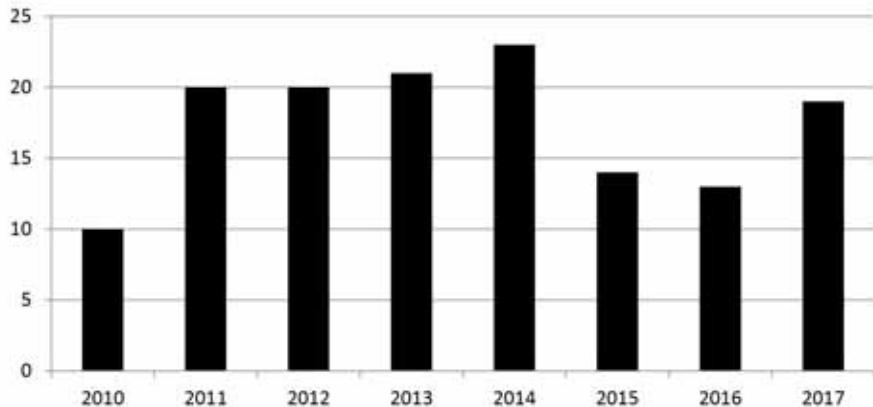
He said that, as Pasco continues to grow at a rapid pace, such special operations vehicles are even more necessary. He expects to add two more in the future, one each on the east and west sides of the county.

Meanwhile, the Division Chief and crew members have their list of additional equipment they would like to see added to the Squad 1 vehicle.

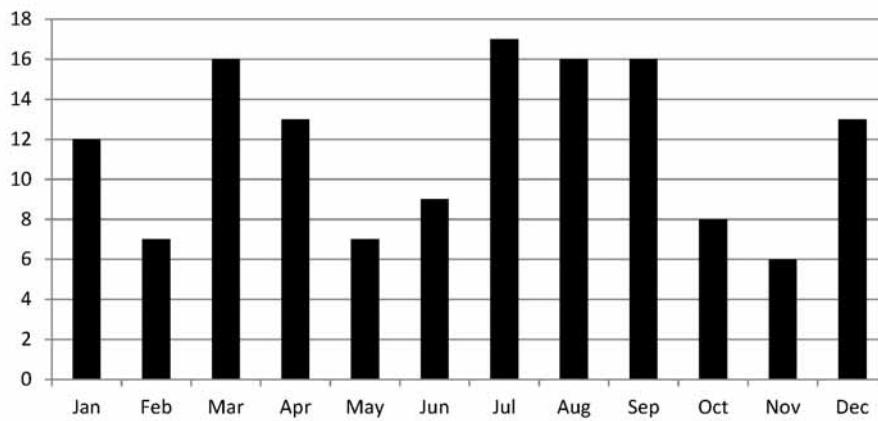
A member of Squad 1, who did not want to be identified but seemed to be speaking for colleagues as well, told *The Communicator* that "We are very thankful to the Board of County Commissioners, Fire Chief (Scott) Cassin, and the community for their support, and their investment in this piece of equipment. Ours is a growing community and county. We needed this. Thank you, all!"

Pasco data says don't try to beat the traffic light at SR54 ...

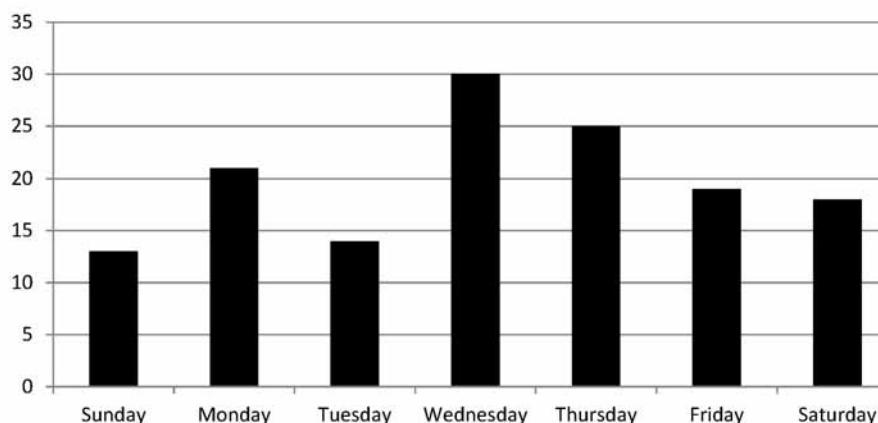
INTERSECTION SUMMARY REPORT 2010 – 2017 BREAKDOWN OF CRASHES BY YEAR BALLANTRAЕ BLVD & SR 54



INTERSECTION SUMMARY REPORT 2010 – 2017 BREAKDOWN OF CRASHES BY MONTH BALLANTRAЕ BLVD & SR 54



INTERSECTION SUMMARY REPORT 2010 – 2017 NUMBER OF CRASHES BY DAY OF WEEK BALLANTRAЕ BLVD & SR 54



Pasco Traffic Operations Division is the source for chart data

Pasco Traffic Management data shows that the traffic light installed at the intersection of Ballantrae Blvd. and SR 54 in March 2010 has had the desired impact.

Annual data at left on 140 accidents between 2010-17 shows a small increase and then a recent decline in the number of accidents by year.

But those numbers pale compared to the increase in vehicles passing through the intersection.

The average number of vehicles passing through the intersection daily has increased approximately 30 percent from 2010 to 2017.

In this same period, the number of crashes each year has stayed the same or declined due to the installation of the light, say county traffic staff.

The county's complete Ballantrae Blvd./SR54 traffic studies are posted on the "Other Documents" page of the CDD's website at ballantraecdd.org.

There have not been any fatalities in accidents at Ballantrae's entrance.

Traffic officials explained that one of the key values of a traffic light is to minimize the number of "angle crashes" occurring at higher speeds.

For example, prior to the light, Ballantrae traffic sped up to exit left onto eastbound SR54 – and collided with east and westbound SR54 traffic going even faster. The same occurred when eastbound SR54 traffic competed to turn left into Ballantrae with motorists trying to exit left out of Ballantrae onto SR54 eastbound.

That led to many higher speed accidents with angular collisions.

By comparison, most other motorists were slowing down in lanes and preparing to turn left or right onto SR54 as conditions allowed.

Different drivers slow down at different distances or speeds. So traffic experts expected to see an increase in in-line accidents, but at lower speeds and with fewer fatalities.

Data from 2010-17 showed there were 100 slower-speed "straight ahead" accidents. There were only 17 "angle" collisions turning left, and six turning right.

The data is a reminder to motorists not to try to "beat the light" when exiting or entering Ballantrae Blvd. 

... or the 2-way ‘stop’ signs at the new Tower Road crossing

Vehicle at right ran the Ballantrae Blvd. northbound stop sign at 5:45 p.m. on July 11 and collided with the vehicle below that was traveling eastbound on Tower Road, according to the accident report filed by the Florida Highway Patrol. The FHP did not report any serious injuries in connection with the 2-vehicle mishap.

Tower Road traffic does not have to stop at the intersection, the FHP noted. This is the first reported accident at the two-way stop intersection that only opened last year.

Communicator editor Jim Flateau asked county traffic officials on July 20 if those two facts – a two-way stop controlling a new four-way intersection – might benefit from additional signage that would warn motorists on Ballantrae Blvd. that cross traffic on Tower Road doesn’t stop.

Jack King, Pasco’s Traffic Operations Manager, responded in just two days.

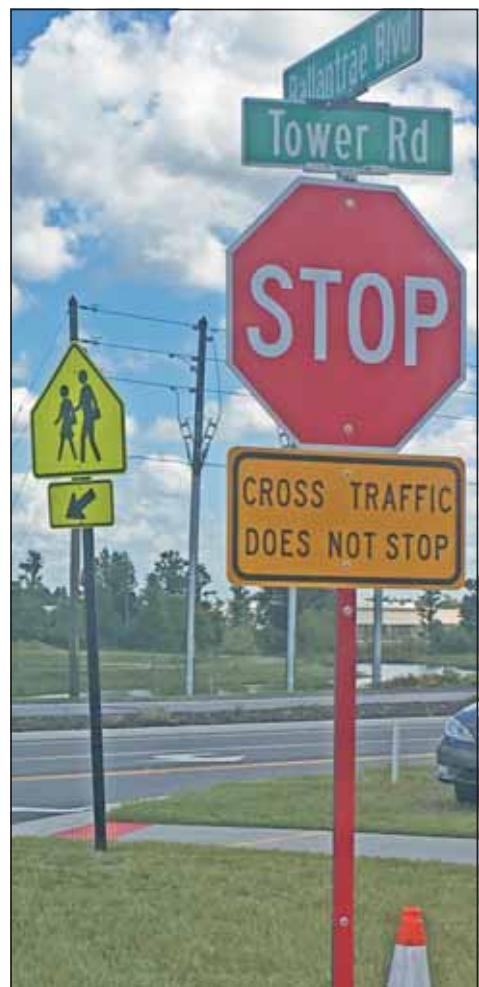
In an email, he wrote, “We have work orders in progress to supplement the stop sign posting on the northbound approach. This will include installation of a larger stop sign and adding a ‘red’ bright stick for better recognition of the stop condition.”



He added, “We will be adding a supplemental sign to the northbound/southbound stop signs as you suggested that ‘Cross Traffic Does Not Stop’. A larger ‘stop ahead’ sign will be added to the northbound approach, too. The pedestrian crossing signs will be changed to school crossing signs at the intersection to emphasize the school walking route.”

He continued, “After checking with our Planning Department, once the 2,000 units of the Bexley North MPUD are completed, and upon passing a signal warrant study, Bexley would be responsible for signal construction at

this location. Traffic Operations also plans on observing conditions at the location once the school year begins to see if further changes are needed.”



It is hoped motorists traveling north or south on Ballantrae Blvd. will observe larger stop signs, warnings that crossing traffic on Tower Road doesn’t stop at this intersection, and signs emphasizing a school crosswalk.

Residents can be heard at upcoming CDD, HOA meetings

Ballantrae CDD Board meets every month

The CDD Board of Supervisors will continue to hold most of its regular monthly meetings on the first Mondays of the month for the new fiscal year that begins on Oct. 1.

Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. at the clubhouse.

The last meeting of this fiscal year avoids the Labor Day holiday by being scheduled for the second Monday, Sep. 10.

Meetings scheduled for the 2018-19 fiscal year are:

Oct. 1	Nov. 11	Dec. 3
Jan. 7	Feb. 4	Mar. 4
Apr. 8	May 6	Jun. 3
Jul 8	Aug. 5	Sep. 9

Residents are invited to comment on agenda items at the start of the meeting. Any CDD non-agenda items can be brought up after all agenda items have been discussed.

The evening meetings are designed to maximize the number of people who can attend and participate in the Board's meetings.

CDD meeting dates are also posted online at the CDD's website at ballantraecdd.org, on the bulletin board at the clubhouse and in all village entrance bulletin boards.

All meeting agendas and minutes are also posted to the website in advance of each meeting. 

Ballantrae HOA Board meets monthly

The Ballantrae HOA Board of Directors will meet in 2018 on these second Tuesdays of the month starting at 7 p.m. at the clubhouse:

September 11	October 9
November 13	December 11

HOA members are always invited to attend and participate. To contact the HOA Board, go to ballantraehoa.com or "Ballantrae HOA" on Facebook. 

Our top stories

Pasco Fire Rescue shows off Special Operations vehicle now housed near Ballantrae: [Page 2](#).

Fire Rescue Squad 1 recognizes growth around Ballantrae and throughout Pasco County: [Page 3](#).

SR54 traffic volume is up, but accidents are down at Ballantrae Blvd: [Page 4](#).

Motorists are reminded that Tower Road traffic doesn't stop at the Ballantrae Blvd. crossing: [Page 5](#).

CDD Board enters into a trespass agreement with the Sheriff to police community property: [Page 7](#).

Bexley Elementary combines individual student strengths to improve school's overall energy: [Page 8](#).

CDD Board adopts "no increase" budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year: [Pages 9-11](#).

A quarterly report on Ballantrae home sales: [Page 12](#).

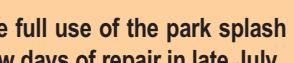
Next community garage sale is Oct. 13: [Page 12](#).

Park play area cover poles removed for safety and cost reasons: [Page 13](#).

CDD Board sued over a claim that its website isn't ADA-friendly: [Page 14](#).

Here are reminders of the dangers lightning poses outdoors in Ballantrae and elsewhere: [Pages 15-16](#).

On the cover

Younger residents make full use of the park splash pad before it closed for a few days of repair in late July. 

Straiton HOA next meets on Oct. 24

The Straiton HOA Board of Directors' last quarterly meetings for this calendar year will be held on Oct. 24 at the clubhouse beginning at 7 p.m.:

All members are invited to attend and participate.

You can reach the Straiton HOA Board via email at straitonhoa@gmail.com or by visiting its homepage at straitontownhomes.com. 

The Ballantrae Communicator

The Ballantrae Communicator is published quarterly by the Ballantrae Community Development District Board of Supervisors, with occasional contributions from the board of directors of the Ballantrae Homeowner Association and the Straiton Townhomes Homeowner Association.

Members of all organizations are welcome to suggest story ideas. Email them to the editor at jfplateau@ballantraecdd.org.

Send all email to The Communicator to the Chair or via "snail mail" to the Chair via the clubhouse at 17611 Mentmore Blvd. in Land O' Lakes, FL 34638.

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The CDD Board hires off-duty FHP troopers to, among other things, monitor traffic as shown here at the intersection of Ballantrae and Mentmore blvds. None were working on July 12 when a road rage incident occurred. News reports said it started on SR54 and ended here about 3 p.m. when one motorist allegedly fired a round from a handgun through the rear passenger window into a back seat of a second vehicle. No one was injured in either vehicle, at Ballantrae Park (at left) or at the day care across the street (at right). The alleged shooter was arrested.

CDD adds to law enforcement coverage in Ballantrae

The CDD Board has entered into a no-cost trespass agreement with the Pasco Sheriff's Office ((PSO)). It empowers on-duty deputy patrols to monitor CDD property and to respond to complaints about illegal activity there.

The agreement covers activity in Ballantrae Park and the amenities located there, plus at the Ayrshire gazebo. If Straiton's HOA signs an agreement allowing the sheriff to use its privately-owned streets to implement the agreement, it will also extend to cover the CDD's pool in the midst of the town homes as well.

The agreement responds to resident complaints about misuse of those areas after they close at sunset each night. The Sheriff's Office will prioritize its response with other pending calls.

The CDD Board's trespass agreement policy document states:

"The District's goal is to clear the District Property from sunset to 7 a.m. daily of those individuals that are breaking the law, including, but not limited to, disturbing the peace, underage drinking, littering or dumping of property, public lewdness, use of the pools after hours, loud abusive or vulgar language, violation of Pasco County curfews, and other applicable ordinances and applicable state laws. The District has no intention for this policy to result in barring anyone quietly and otherwise legally sitting on a park bench or walking through the park."

It continues, "The District desires to empower and authorize the Pasco Sheriff's Office and other applicable law enforcement agencies to issue trespass warnings or otherwise remove violators from District Property in accordance with that

agency's established procedures. The law enforcement officer has absolute discretion and judgment in issuing trespass warnings or otherwise removing violators from the District Property."

To file a complaint against misuse of CDD property, call the Sheriff's non-emergency number: (727) 847-8102.

CDD already hires FHP, HOA pays PSO

The trespass agreement augments two paid agreements already in place:

- The CDD Board has an agreement to employ off-duty Florida Highway Patrol troopers to work on a part-time basis monitoring community property during daylight hours when properties such as the park and pools are open. The CDD budgets \$50,000 annually for this service.
- The HOA Board has an agreement with the Pasco Sheriff's Office to employ off-duty deputies to monitor residential streets and neighborhoods, generally during nighttime hours when most criminal activity occurs. The HOA budgets \$20,000 annually for this service.

Troopers and deputies are each paid \$40 per hour for their work, with troopers paid \$50 per hour on holidays.

By comparison, the Sheriff's Office reports that the cost for Ballantrae to hire a deputy full-time would be \$127,000 in the first year, dropping to \$100,000 in subsequent years after certain equipment costs are covered.

Both existing agreements allow off-duty uniformed law enforcement officers to act with full policing powers while on-duty in Ballantrae. In the event of an emergency, on-duty CDD troopers will respond to incidents in residential areas just as on-duty HOA deputies will respond to any on community property.

The HOA's goal is to have deputies perform law enforcement duties in residential areas during nighttime hours after most people have gone to bed.

Deputies look out for gangs of youths that descend upon neighborhoods, as they have in Ballantrae, to steal what they can from unlocked vehicles.

CDD troopers monitor traffic on Mentmore and Ballantrae blvds., where they have ticketed motorists for speeds in excess of 70 mph.

They also monitor use of the Ayrshire gazebo and Straiton pool, activities in Ballantrae Park and use of its amenities.

Troopers also assist in the enforcement of all CDD park rules. Those include assisting pool monitors in restricting access to pools to residents and guests. They keep out uninvited nonresidents and youth gangs that once overran the park pool and chased some residents out of using facilities they pay for. The presence of troopers is believed to have contributed a few years ago to the need to expand the parking lot to accommodate the increased usage of park amenities.

Bexley school combines individual strengths so all thrive

By Vicki Wolin, Principal
Bexley Elementary School

The journey of opening a school has been all that we have hoped for and more, as **Bexley Elementary School** enters its second academic year as the Ballantrae community's northern neighbor.

From watching the building emerge into the beautiful structure that now stands, to feeling the school come alive when all of our students arrived – each step has been an unforgettable memory that will last a lifetime.

The journey continues into our second year as we embark on the goal of unleashing our strengths to help our school move forward. The first year was spent building the culture of Bexley and working to learn each staff member's strengths.

This year, we look forward to learning how to use our individual strengths to continue to make Bexley Elementary thrive. We have also included a strengths finder survey for our 5th grade students to help them understand and use their natural talents as well.

When our students first arrived in August 2017, Bexley took the first breath of life!

Seeing their smiling faces and watching their engagement in 21st century learning was so energizing for all of us.

Each event through the year was an exciting reminder that we blossomed from a dream into the reality of a “real school.” Watching the official ribbon cutting opening the school, listening to our students’ beautiful singing and amazing instrument playing at the grade level concerts, seeing the joy and laughter during our Spring Carnival, and sharing the bond with families during events such as All Pro Dad’s Breakfast and Muffins with Mom were just some of the highlights of our first year.

We are now a living, breathing school filled with hope and dreams. A school filled with



Photos courtesy of Bexley Elementary School

laughter and learning. A school filled with endless potential for **EVERY BULLDOG. EVERY DAY.**

As we move into the 2018-19 school year, we stand on the foundation built during our first year. An unshakable foundation that believes in every child. A foundation that believes in each other and engages all students. We look forward to the endless possibilities and the hope and engagement we will ignite for every student. As our journey continues into year two, one thing that will always remain is our vision that we developed together at the beginning of last year.

Believe. Engage. Succeed. Every Bulldog. Every Day! 



Ballantrae Communicator | Autumn 2018

CDD Board adopts ‘no-increase’ budget for FY2018-19

The CDD Board on Aug. 6 adopted a 2018-19 budget that keeps assessments at levels set in the 2008-09 budget.

Here’s a breakdown of the \$1,683,065 in total net assessments to be collected from landowners in the 2018-19 fiscal year that begins on Oct. 1:

- \$1,024,660 to be collected for Operations and Maintenance. All O&M expenditures are listed on pages 10-11. **An expanded version of this budget** is posted on the CDD’s website at ballantraecdd.org. It includes four pages that briefly explain every line item in the O&M budget. That version of the proposed budget can be found at the Minutes & Spending tab as the second item under Budgets.
- \$557,421 for debt service. That pays for the capital construction of community-owned structures such as the clubhouse, entrance and village monuments, the underground stormwater collection system, etc.
- \$100,984 representing the six percent in fees collected by the county. Landowners can avoid paying four of that six percent by early payment of assessment fees.

Next year’s budget also allocates \$114,460 from other sources than new assessments. The lion’s share is \$111,648 expected to rollover from unspent funds in the current fiscal year.

An important part of landowners’ assets is shown in the dedicated reserves chart on page 11. It shows, for example, that a proposal to add \$175,000 to the Park Development Reserve next year will raise it to more than \$960,000.

The CDD Board has said that, when that reserve exceeds \$1 million, it could begin planning for a new clubhouse and conversion of the existing one into a free fitness center for residents. That now seems a lot closer to reality than when the fund was created and seeded with \$241,000 in 2011.

With all of its planning, CDD budgeting is no more an exact science than when residents write their family financial plans. Both are subject to costs that aren’t known exactly when the plan is written.

For example, the Board will save \$6,000 between this and next fiscal year on engineering costs. That’s vendor Stantec’s contribution toward repairs that started in August to a storm water structure in Ayrshire. There’s no way to apportion that savings between the two years.

The Board also faces costs of up to \$100,000 to remove invasive plants from the wetlands that can, among other things, damage private property. Talks have not yet advanced to when that work will begin. But it will probably start in 2018-19. The first-year cost is not yet known. 

Ballantrae Community Development District Adopted Budget

Fiscal 2018-19 Assessment Schedule for Operations & Maintenance, Debt Service & County Fees

2018-19 Adopted Budget	O&M Expenditures	Debt Service	Total
CDD Assessment Collection (Net)	\$1,024,660.00 ¹	\$557,420.94	\$1,582,080.94
Pasco 6% Fee (on Gross)²	\$65,403.94	\$35,580.06	\$100,984.00
Total Gross Collection	\$1,090,063.94	\$593,001.00	\$1,683,064.94
<hr/>			
Residential Classification	Annual Assessment 2017-2018	Annual Assessment 2018-19	Increase/Decrease \$ %
O&M - Townhomes	\$668.68	\$668.68	0.00 0.00
Debt Service - Townhomes	\$364.09	\$364.09	0.00 0.00
Total - Townhomes	\$1,032.77	\$1,032.77	0.00 0.00
O&M - Homes with frontages from 40 - 50 feet	\$1,194.08	\$1,194.08	0.00 0.00
Debt Service - Homes with frontages from 40 - 50 feet	\$650.16	\$650.16	0.00 0.00
Total - Homes with frontages from 40 - 50 feet	\$1,844.24	\$1,844.24	0.00 0.00
O&M - Homes with frontages from 65 - 75 feet & Commercial	\$1,349.31	\$1,349.31	0.00 0.00
Debt Service - Homes with frontages from 65 - 75 feet & Commercial	\$734.68	\$734.68	0.00 0.00
Total - Homes with frontages from 65 - 75 feet & Commercial	\$2,083.99	\$2,083.99	0.00 0.00
<hr/>			
¹ Budgeted 2018-19 O&M spending on page 10 at line items 3-4 includes \$114,460 from sources other than assessments shown here.			
² Six percent fee is discounted based upon when payment is made. The earlier payment is made, the greater the discount up to 4%.			

BALLANTRAЕ CDD - STATEMENT 1
FY 2019 ADOPTED BUDGET
GENERAL FUND (O&M)

		FY 2014 ACTUAL	FY 2015 ACTUAL	FY 2016 ACTUAL	FY 2017 ACTUAL	FY 2018 ADOPTED	FY 2018 YTD - FEB	FY 2019 ADOPTED	VARIANCE 2018-2019
1 O&M REVENUES:									
2 LANDOWNER ASSESSMENTS (NET)		\$ 914,879	\$ 912,049	\$ 1,031,399	\$ 1,028,461	\$ 1,024,660	\$ 995,650	\$ 1,024,660	\$ -
3 EXCESS FEES CARRYFORWARD PREVIOUS YEARS		-	-	2,791	1,822	2,791	-	2,812	21
4 CARRYOVER FROM PREVIOUS YEARS (FUND BALANCE FORWARD)		7,912	7,411	9,272	10,042	79,516	-	111,648	32,132
5 OTHER INCOME							4,730	-	
6 O&M TOTAL REVENUES:		922,791	919,460	1,043,462	1,040,325	1,106,967	1,000,380	1,139,120	32,153
7 O&M ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURES:									
8 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS									
10 SUPERVISOR STIPENDS		10,675	11,600	15,000	10,400	14,000	5,800	14,000	-
11 NEWSLETTER - PRINT & MAILING		965	1,291	1,612	3,618	10,000	4,421	10,000	-
12 WEBSITE SERVER & NAME		-	-	168	686	880	300	880	-
13 PUBLIC OFFICIALS LIABILITY INSURANCE		5,369	2,500	2,658	2,500	3,300	2,500	3,300	-
14 MANAGEMENT SERVICES									
15 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES		5,000	5,000	2,938	-	-	-	-	-
16 DISTRICT MANAGEMENT		30,000	30,000	34,908	43,950	53,200	22,165	53,200	-
17 FINANCIAL CONSULTING SERVICES		5,000	5,000	10,121	-	-	-	-	-
18 ACCOUNTING SERVICES		15,000	15,000	5,439	-	-	-	-	-
19 ENGINEERING & LEGAL SERVICES									
20 DISTRICT ENGINEER		29,985	11,637	15,949	14,775	18,000	1,400	18,000	-
21 DISTRICT COUNSEL		16,220	15,745	37,433	12,113	17,300	2,992	17,300	-
22 ADMINISTRATIVE: OTHER									
23 ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT		3,200	3,400	3,600	3,500	3,600	-	3,700	100
24 DISCLOSURE REPORT		1,100	1,000	-	-	1,000	-	1,000	-
25 TRUSTEES FEES		3,771	2,200	3,771	3,771	3,775	-	3,772	(3)
26 PROPERTY APPRAISER FEE		150	150	150	150	150	-	150	-
27 LEGAL ADVERTISING		1,133	953	2,033	645	750	167	750	-
28 ARBITRAGE REBATE CALCULATION		650	650	650	-	650	-	650	-
29 DUES, LICENSES AND FEES		1,088	1,057	225	609	1,200	189	1,200	-
30 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTINGENCY		-	-	685	-	5,000	-	5,000	-
31 O&M ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:		129,306	107,183	137,340	96,717	132,805	39,934	132,902	97
32 INSURANCE									
34 GERNERAL LIABILITY		6,856	5,724	5,000	10,449	-	3,025	6,003	3,177
35 PROPERTY CASUALTY		4,188	5,354	3,519	-	5,077	-	6,277	9,709
36 INSURANCE TOTAL		11,044	11,078	8,519	10,449	8,102	12,280	12,886	4,784
37 UTILITY SERVICES									
39 ELECTRIC UTILITY SERVICES		20,920	20,221	20,651	22,580	21,000	7,247	23,000	2,000
40 ELECTRIC UTILITY - RECREATION FACILITIES		14,543	14,591	12,302	10,345	15,500	3,955	15,500	-
41 ELECTRIC STREET LIGHTING		102,180	102,449	100,576	99,289	103,500	34,376	103,500	-
42 UTILITY - WATER - CLUBHOUSE & POOLS		7,484	8,610	13,527	12,947	10,500	2,061	14,000	3,500
43 STORMWATER ASSESSMENT		911	866	1,105	1,128	2,200	1,751	2,200	-
44 UTILITY SERVICES SUBTOTAL		146,038	146,737	148,161	146,289	152,700	49,390	158,200	5,500
45 LAKES/PONDS & LANDSCAPE									
46 LAKES/PONDS: CONTRACTS									
48 AQUATIC CONTRACT		22,800	22,800	22,800	22,800	22,800	9,500	22,800	-
49 LAKES/PONDS: OTHER									
50 FOUNTAIN REPAIRS & MAINTNANCE		-	7,591	905	1,249	1,500	5,897	3,000	1,500
51 MITIGATION AREAS: MONITOR & MAINTAIN		1,570	-	-	-	1,500	-	1,500	-
52 LAKE/POND REPAIRS		8,850	2,400	15,150	-	10,000	-	10,000	-
53 INSTALL/REPLACE AQUATIC PLANTS		-	-	4,750	-	5,000	-	5,000	-
54 LANDSCAPING: CONTRACTS									
55 LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT		247,385	174,507	154,246	149,856	144,240	48,077	144,240	-
56 LANDSCAPE - SECONDARY CONTRACTS		-	-	-	-	-	-	31,212	-
57 LANDSCAPE OVERSIGHT/MANAGEMENT		6,000	6,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
58 LANDSCAPING: OTHER									
59 IRRIGATION REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE		9,313	12,897	9,493	14,424	12,000	7,588	14,000	2,000
60 REPLACE PLANTS, MULCH & TREES		15,395	25,946	24,567	33,955	77,712	26,824	36,500	(41,212)
61 SOD & SEED REPLACEMENT		-	400	1,259	1,540	10,000	-	10,000	-
62 LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT		-	-	12,305	-	10,000	5,924	-	(10,000)
63 EXTRA MOWINGS DURING RAINY SEASON		-	-	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	-
64 RUST PREVENTION FOR IRRIGATION SYSTEM		9,600	10,400	10,185	10,380	10,380	3,460	10,380	-
65 FIELD MISCELLANEOUS (INCLUSIVE OF TRAPPER)		-	-	2,441	13,568	13,000	50	13,000	-
66 LAKES/PONDS & LANDSCAPE TOTAL		320,913	262,941	258,101	247,772	323,132	107,320	306,632	(47,712)
67 STREETS, SIDEWALKS, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS									
68 STREETS & SIDEWALKS									
70 ENTRY & WALLS MAINTENANCE		-	350	-	2,118	2,000	-	2,000	-
71 STREET/DECORATIVE LIGHT MAINTENACE		-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000	-
72 SIDEWALK REPAIR & MAINTENANCE		2,600	-	-	-	1,500	-	1,500	-
73 MAINTENANCE STAFF									
74 EMPLOYEE - SALARIES		55,555	70,289	73,503	72,535	79,480	27,824	79,480	-
75 EMPLOYEE - P/R TAXES		4,437	5,938	8,698	6,343	6,083	3,723	6,833	750
76 EMPLOYEE - WORKERS COMP		3,612	3,243	3,300	4,959	3,960	536	3,960	-
77 PAYROLL PROCESSING FEES		-	-	820	1,505	1,900	652	1,900	-
78 EMPLOYEE- HEALTH & PHONE STIPENDS		4,800	10,000	7,200	7,052	9,600	4,000	9,600	-
79 MILEAGE		1,267	847	580	556	1,100	228	1,100	-
80 STREETS, SIDEWALKS, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS		72,271	90,667	94,101	95,068	106,623	36,963	107,373	750
81 CLUBHOUSE & SAFETY & SECURITY									
83 CLUBHOUSE & MISCELLANEOUS									
84 PARK/FIELD REPAIRS		-	2,094	3,365	362	2,000	8,668	2,000	-
85 CLUBHOUSE FACILITY MAINTENANCE		9,598	6,969	2,256	4,672	9,000	134	9,000	-
86 CLUBHOUSE TELEPHONE/INTERNET/FAX		3,816	3,933	4,028	3,908	4,200	1,796	4,200	-
87 MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES (INCLUSIVE OF DEBIT CARD)		3,419	2,153	1,031	5,854	3,500	779	3,500	-
88 POOL/FOUNTAIN/SPLASH PAD MAINTENANCE		10,067	10,169	8,163	19,325	7,200	3,311	10,000	2,800
89 POOL PERMITS		-	-	705	705	750	-	750	-

BALLANTRAЕ CDD - STATEMENT 1
FY 2019 ADOPTED BUDGET
GENERAL FUND (O&M)

		FY 2014 ACTUAL	FY 2015 ACTUAL	FY 2016 ACTUAL	FY 2017 ACTUAL	FY 2018 ADOPTED	FY 2018 YTD - FEB	FY 2019 ADOPTED	VARIANCE 2018-2019
90	SEASONAL LIGHTING	8,000	9,000	26,200	10,700	10,000	19,078	20,000	10,000
91	PEST CONTROL	-	-	755	955	520	200	520	-
92	CLUBHOUSE EXTERIOR FURNISHINGS	-	-	-	3,255	-	-	-	-
93	CLUBHOUSE CLEANING	-	-	-	66	-	-	-	-
94	CLUBHOUSE MISCELLANEOUS	6,877	10,712	7,297	635	17,500	204	7,500	(10,000)
95	SAFETY & SECURITY								
96	PART-TIME LAW ENFORCEMENT DETAILS	38,590	35,760	41,960	35,120	50,000	9,240	50,000	-
97	SALARY FOR SUMMER MONITOR AT BOTH POOLS	14,978	13,420	16,911	19,741	23,500	-	23,500	-
98	EMPLOYEE P/R TAXES	1,215	1,128	1,388	1,882	2,000	-	2,000	-
99	EMPLOYEE WORKER'S COMP	1,226	1,030	1,111	-	1,300	-	1,300	-
100	VIDEO SURVEILLANCE	95	-	185	-	-	-	-	-
101	SECURITY - OTHER (GATE SERVICE)	-	3,974	2,497	1,000	842	1,000	-	-
102	CLUBHOUSE & SAFETY & SECURITY	97,881	96,368	119,329	109,677	132,470	44,252	135,270	2,800
103									
104	O&M CONTINGENCY								
105	O&M Contingency	25,318	6,618	13,997	-	34,257	-	44,257	10,000
106	O&M CONTINGENCY TOTAL	25,318	6,618	13,997	-	34,257	-	44,257	10,000
107									
108	TOTAL EXPENDITURES BEFORE OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)	802,771	721,592	779,548	705,972	890,089	290,139	897,520	7,431
109									
110	EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPEND.	120,020	197,868	263,914	334,353	216,878	710,241	241,600	24,722
111									
112	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES AND (USES)								
113	RESERVES TRANSFERS OUT-OTHER FINANCING USES								
114	EMERGENCY RESERVE	100,000	25,000	-	-	-	-	20,000	20,000
115	ASSET RESERVE	69,458	50,000	-	50,000	41,878	-	46,600	4,722
116	BILL PAYMENT RESERVE	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
117	PARK DEVELOPMENT RESERVE	110,150	110,150	175,000	140,150	175,000	-	175,000	-
118	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES AND (USES)	379,608	185,150	175,000	190,150	216,878	-	241,600	24,722
119									
120	O&M TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,959,832	1,621,716	954,548	896,122	1,106,967	290,139	1,139,120	32,153
121									
122	NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	(259,588)	12,718	88,914	144,203	-	710,241	(0)	(0)

Ballantrae CDD's dedicated reserves continue to grow

CDD assessments were last raised in August 2008. That's when landowners supported the Board's plan to raise assessments to establish reserves promoting the goals and financial interests of our landowners.

The reserves also benefit home property values. Buyers, Realtors and lending institutions look favorably when writing mortgages in communities that fund and grow such reserves. That's because reserves reduce the need for constant annual increases in assessments and avoid unexpected, mid-year special assessments to cover unanticipated costs.

Reserves described below are in part funded through the Board's 2015 refinance of debt that then totaled \$8 million. After the CDD received an "A" rating for its financial health, the bond interest rate was reduced from 6 percent down to 3.529 percent. That saved landowners about \$125,000 a year in interest payments that was applied to O&M spending. That savings will reduce interest payments on the bonds by a total of \$2.5 million over the next 20 years. The Board and developer M/I Homes also agreed that the developer would accept a 2015 payment of \$200,000 in full satisfaction of the \$1 million M/I was owed over 20 years for money the developer put into Ballantrae beyond bond revenue.

The four reserves benefitting landowners and presented in the chart below are:

- Park Development: It is designed to eventually pay to build a new community clubhouse and to convert the existing one into a community fitness center.
- Asset Reserve: There are capital projects that we know need to be done periodically, like re-roofing the clubhouse, relining the pools, etc. This reserve schedules that work.
- Emergency Reserve: Unexpected natural disasters and unanticipated emergencies do occur. This reserve helps us be prepared to respond to them.
- Bill Payment: The fiscal year begins Oct. 1 but the CDD Board does not receive collected assessments until late November. This reserve helps bridge that gap. 

Reserve Balance Summary	FY 2017	FY 2018 Adopted	Total FY 2018	FY 2019 Adopted	Total FY 2019
Park Development	610,035	175,000	785,035	175,000	960,035
Asset Reserve	354,676	41,878	396,554	46,600	443,154
Emergency Reserve	226,864		226,864	20,000	246,864
Bill Payment Reserve	<u>150,678</u>		<u>150,678</u>		<u>150,678</u>
Total	1,342,253	216,878	1,559,131	241,600	1,800,731

HOME in Ballantrae

SALES

This article lists some, but not necessarily all, of the real estate transactions completed in Ballantrae in April-June. This list is designed to give readers an idea of the number and location of sales plus the range of sale prices.

Ayrshire

- 3010 Downan Point Dr., 4 bedrooms/ 3 bathrooms/ 2 garage bays, 2,697 sq ft., sold 4/17/18 for \$295,000.
- 17907 Ayrshire Blvd., 5/3/2, 2,260 sq ft., 5/22/18, \$264,900.

Braemar

- 17844 Glenapp Dr., 4/3/2, 2,366, 4/16/18, \$276,000.
- 3547 Braemar St., 4/3/3, 2,642 sq. ft., 6/28/18, \$310,000.

Castleway

- 4022 Duke Firth St., 5/3/2, 2,260 sq. ft., 4/2/18, \$259,900.
- 3941 Duke Firth St., 4/2/2, 1,825 sq. ft., 4/9/18, \$234,500.
- 3927 Duke Firth St., 4/2/2, 1,584 sq. ft., 6/15/18, \$215,000.
- 3947 Stornoway Dr., 4/2/2, 1,825 sq. ft., 6/29/18, \$130,000,

Cunningham

- 3548 Olde Lanark Dr., 5/3/2, 2,260 sq. ft., 4/30/18, \$257,900.
- 3900 Olde Lanark Dr., 4/2/2, 1,825 sq. ft., 5/11/18, \$215,000.
- 3821 Beneraid St., 4/2/2, 2,186 sq. ft., 5/14/18, \$260,000.
- 3708 Olde Lanark Dr., 4/2/2, 2,424 sq. ft., 6/27/18, \$215,000.

Lintower

- 17539 Sandgate Ct., 4/2.5/2, 2,652 sq. ft., 5/8/18, \$289,900.
- 3337 Lintower Dr., 3/2/2, 1,275 sq. ft., 6/29/18, \$195,000.

Straiton

- 2910 Lochcarron Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,846 sq. ft., 4/6/18, \$192,000.
- 2928 Lochcarron Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,572 sq. ft., 6/29/18, \$176,000.



County workers continue with upgrade to lift station on Ballantrae Blvd. south of Castleway entrance. Work includes pouring a concrete base to stabilize the structure, installing new above-ground piping, adding a new electrical panel and other work. Similar work is expected to be performed later this year at the county's other lift station across from the Ayrshire entrance.

Home sales (continued)

- 17436 Stinchar Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,755 sq. ft., 4/9/18, \$179,000.
- 2943 Girvan Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,846 sq. ft., 5/4/18, \$185,000.
- 3024 Girvan Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,768 sq. ft., 5/29/18, \$197,000.
- 2935 Girvan Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,768 sq. ft., 5/31/18, \$186,000.
- 2846 Girvan Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,846 sq. ft., 6/15/18, \$192,000.
- 2848 Girvan Dr., 3/2.5/1, 1,548 sq. ft., 6/22/18, \$167,500.

Next garage sale will be Oct. 13



The Ballantrae HOA Board has set permanent days for the semi-annual community garage sales that allow residents to plan for them far in advance.

It's simple: Garage sales will now be held on the second Saturdays of April and October from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

That means the next garage sale will be on Oct. 13. In 2019, sales will be held on April 13 and Oct. 12.

After each garage sale, the HOA hopes to have a Goodwill Industries truck parked at the clubhouse parking lot to accept certain unsold and unwanted items. Goodwill does not accept, for example, bedding (box springs, mattresses, frames).

Do not leave items at the park unless the truck is present! Otherwise, the CDD must pay maintenance staff to haul dumped items to the county landfill and pay dumping fees. In the meantime, CDD maintenance staff isn't performing the duties for which you pay them.

Data provided by Team Solkin

Park play area poles removed, for safety and cost issues

The CDD board recently voted to spend \$4,500 to remove the six poles holding up the cover above the children's play area in Ballantrae Park – rather than spending \$20,000 both to have them straightened plus buying and installing a replacement cover.

Without the cover, the Board was concerned about the stability of the free-standing poles.

The board noted it had already spent close to \$4,000 on repairs, mostly due to cover wind damage and vandalism that included cuts into the cover fabric and burns through it. They had to be repaired to stabilize the cover.

The Board also compared the cover structure to those across Ballantrae Blvd. at the day care. They noted those cover structures were not as tall and were protected on three sides from wind damage by taller trees and a building. The day care also does not appear to have vandals climbing the poles and damaging the covers.

The Board noted that, within the next few years, it expects to plan for a new clubhouse and converting the existing one into a free fitness center for residents. Potential sites for the



The poles that held up the cover above the children's play area in Ballantrae Park were recently removed. Note inside of circle the thin flange at base of pole that held it in place at ground level with six large screws.

new clubhouse are the areas now occupied by the children's play area and/or, possibly, the volleyball court.

Board members agreed it did not make sense to spend \$20,000 in landowner funds on cover repairs if the play area might be relocated and/or replaced in just a few years.

Some parents say they would support a relocation of the play area if for no other reason than to distance it – and their young children – from the off-color shouts and obscene remarks sometimes emanating from some of

the users of the basketball court.

Board members also noted there was presumably more support for the covers to be replaced than that expressed by just the one couple who came and spoke at a Board meeting on the issue. The couple said that, among other reasons, the covers were important to prevent children from burning their legs going down the slides. While Board members empathized with the parents' concerns, they believed they were overridden by safety and cost issues. ☀

Parking is never permitted on the three S's

Sod, Streets & Sidewalks

Sod Parking on the sod or landscaping of any property in Ballantrae is prohibited. This means the road verge between the street and sidewalk of each property is also off limits to vehicle parking. The HOA has and will continue to fine any homeowner that allows vehicles to park on non-paved surfaces visible to any neighboring homeowner within the Ballantrae community.

Streets It's against HOA and Pasco County law to park on any street within the Ballantrae community without a permit issued by Pasco County. Pasco County Sheriff's deputies have been ticketing vehicles for parking in the right-of-way within the community. Most offenders are parking overnight, parking for extended periods of time or obstructing traffic within the community. Be a good neighbor and save yourself a ticket at the same time by parking in your garage or driveway.



Sidewalks Our beautiful community has miles of sidewalks that shouldn't be obstructed or occupied by parked vehicles. Not only is it against HOA, county and state law, it becomes a safety hazard when pedestrians are forced off the sidewalk on to our community's busy streets. Remember to take into special consideration children or citizens with handicapping conditions that depend on the availability of an unobstructed path.

The Ballantrae HOA wants to thank the residents who follow these important rules to help make our community a safe and enjoyable place to reside.

CDD sued because of claim its website is not ADA-friendly

A lawsuit has been filed against the Ballantrae CDD Board because of a claim its website is not ADA-friendly.

This matter has been referred to the District's insurance carrier and an attorney (paid for by the insurance company) has already made an appearance on behalf of the District.

The District's attorney requested a shade (or closed) meeting with the CDD Board, to be held Monday, Sept. 17, at 6:30 p.m. at the clubhouse. By law, the shade portion of that otherwise public meeting is not open to the public. That's because it will include discussion of the Board's legal strategy for a pending lawsuit.

According to current information, it appears that it is recommended that websites, among other things, be developed to enable the disabled to use special programs to have the entire website read aloud or to have text read on a Braille reader pad.

Ballantrae is the only Pasco CDD

among the two dozen CDDs statewide that the same Miami plaintiff and attorney are suing alleging their websites aren't ADA-friendly.

So far, no one has identified a fully ADA-friendly website operated by even one of the 650 CDDs in Florida.

Shortly before the lawsuit was filed, the CDD Board began discussions on how it could convert to an ADA-friendly website.

The Board came up with three options it is currently exploring:

- The first – and most expensive – would be to convert to ADA-friendly the existing site at ballantraecdd.org.

In technical terms, that website has approximately 27 pages. Experts say it costs an average of \$700 per page to convert an existing web page to ADA-friendly.

After that, prices vary to convert the many PDFs and other documents on the site to ADA-friendly. Some prices range up to \$3 per page. There

are hundreds of such pages on the Ballantrae CDD website.

- A second option would be to create a new, ADA-friendly website of only one or two pages.

That website would be populated with only the few documents state law mandates be available on a CDD website. That's about 10 percent of what is on the existing website. The documents would all be ADA-friendly

That would mean some documents, now available for free on the CDD website, would only be available, if at all, from the district manager whom the law allows to charge for making or distributing copies.

- The third option would be to have district manager DPFG use its website template to create a new CDD website. Sharing with others the cost of the template and its management would help reduce some costs.

It, too, would severely limit the documents available to residents. 

Murphy's Law affirmed ... and beaten!

CDD maintenance staff didn't really need affirmation of Murphy's Corollary, roughly translated as "If anything can go wrong, it will – and at the most inopportune time."

They were busy working at the end of June to get park amenities ready for the Fourth of July celebrators who would fill them. But instead:

Breaks started to appear in the floor of the park pool Marcite lining. It was closed on Monday, June 25.

It took four garden hoses the next two days to pump water out of the pool to accommodate floor repairs.

Repairs (shown at lower right) were completed on Friday for \$600.

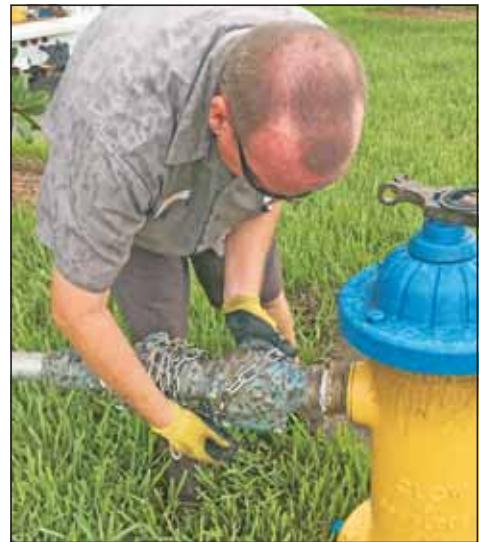
That afternoon, the CDD used a fire hydrant meter from the county (at right) and a 3-inch hose to refill the pool by 8 a.m. on Saturday

Of course, it rained later Saturday morning, requiring the pool be closed only a few hours after it reopened.

But it was open for a nice July 4th!

Then, extensive repairs also had to be made in late July to the splash pad surface (below left).

Repairs were covered under warranty at no cost to landowners. 



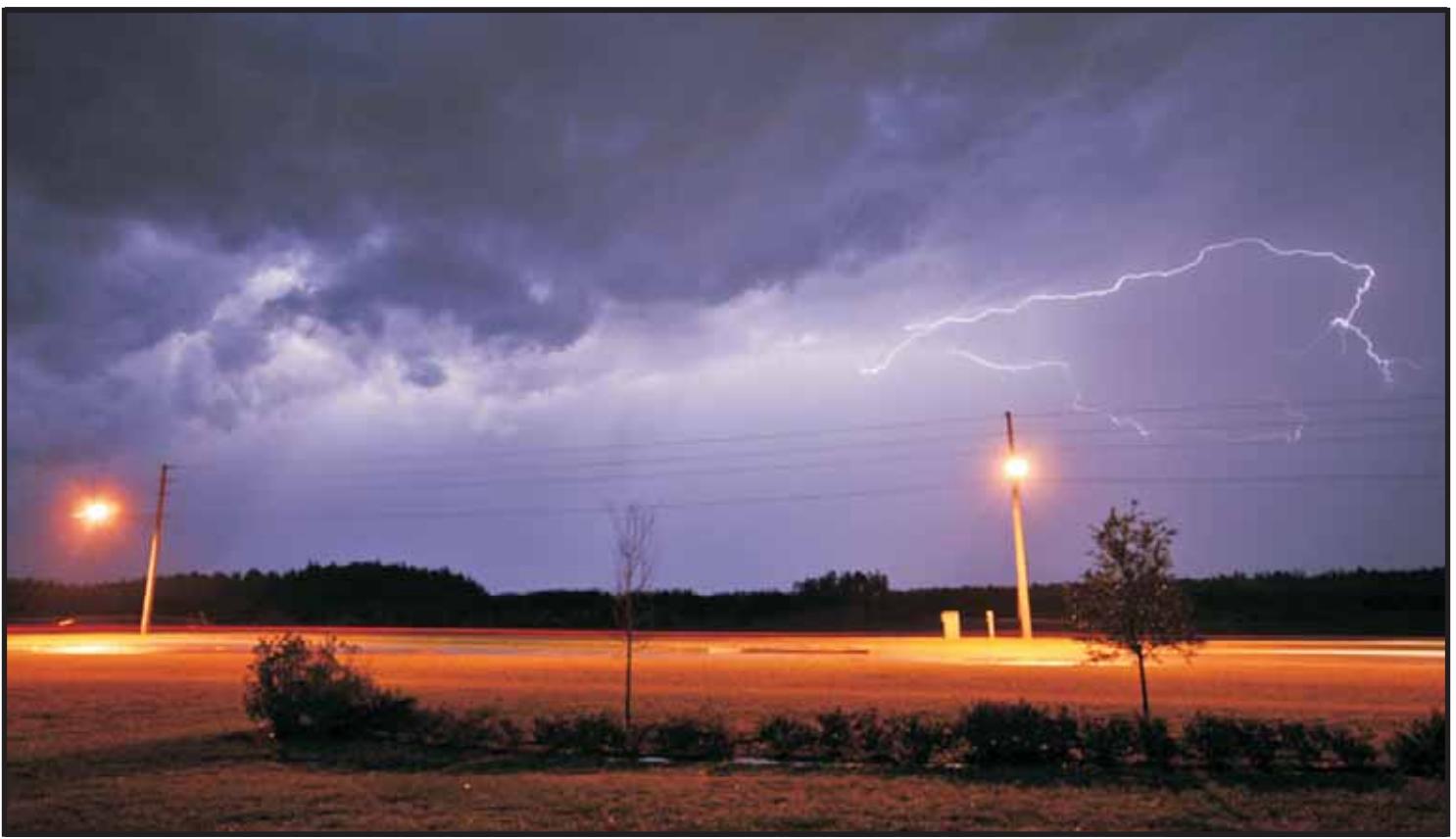


PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID HICKS OF SWAN VIEW TOWNHOMES

'It was a dark and stormy night' in Ballantrae

This archival photo shows a thunderstorm in 2008 above Ballantrae, in background behind tree line. It was taken from Concord Station on the south side of Mentmore Blvd. Later construction of homes on the north side of Mentmore near Ballantrae filled in this open space.

Lightning myths versus facts affect safety in Ballantrae

Florida is arguably “the lightning capital of the U.S.” But that depends upon the way you count ... or argue.

According to the **National Weather Service** (NWS):

- Texas had an average of 2,929,012 cloud-to-ground lightning flashes from 2008-17, more than doubling Florida’s 1,170,979 over the same period.
- But Florida has far less land mass than Texas. So those same numbers translate into 20.4 lightning strikes per square mile in Florida, compared to a paltry 11.0 in Texas.

Florida averages 4.7 deaths annually from lightning strikes, the NWS says, which average five times the heat of the sun or 300 million volts of energy.

But there were already five lightning-related deaths this year in Florida by the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

Those statistics are all good reasons for Ballantrae residents to know and respect the differences between myths and facts when it comes to lightning.

Not surprisingly, most of the myths and facts listed about lightning by the NWS can be applied directly to the safety of residents of Ballantrae. They include:

- *Myth:* Some people think lightning never strikes twice in the same place. As a result, they are safe in the CDD pools, Ballantrae Park and other outdoor areas after one lightning strike in the area.

Fact: Lightning often strikes the same place repeatedly, especially if it's tall (like a park tree), pointy (like the clubhouse roof), or an isolated object.

- *Myth:* Some residents believe there is no justification to close the Ballantrae pool just because of a lightning strike in a thunderstorm miles away.

Fact: Lightning often strikes more than three miles from the center of the thunderstorm, far outside the rain or thunderstorm cloud. “Bolts from the blue” can also strike 10-15 miles from the thunderstorm.

- *Myth:* If outside in a thunderstorm, such as in Ballantrae Park, you should seek shelter under a tree to stay dry.

Fact: Being underneath a tree is the second leading cause of lightning casualties. Better to get wet than fried!

- *Myth:* If you're caught outside during a thunderstorm, you should crouch down to reduce your risk of being struck, even if you are on the pool deck or in the park.

Fact: Crouching doesn't make you any safer outdoors. Run to a substantial building or hard topped vehicle. If you are too far to run to one of these options, you have no good alternative. You are not safe anywhere outdoors!

- *Myth:* If thunderstorms threaten while you are outside playing a game, like in the park or in a pool, it is okay to finish it before seeking shelter.

Fact: Many lightning casualties occur because people do not seek shelter soon enough. No game is worth death or life-long injuries. Seek proper shelter immediately if you hear thunder.

Continued on page 16

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
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TAMPA FL
PERMIT #1741



Ballantrae Communicator
17611 Mentmore Boulevard
Land O' Lakes, FL 34638

... Lightning myths versus facts affect safety in Ballantrae

Continued from page 15

- *Myth:* If trapped outside and lightning is about to strike, I should lie flat on the ground.

Fact: Lying flat increases your chance of being affected by potentially deadly ground current. If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm, you should keep moving toward a safe shelter.

- *Myth:* Rubber tires on a car protect you from lightning by insulating you from the ground.

Fact: Most cars are safe from lightning, but it is the metal roof and metal sides that protect you, not the rubber tires. Remember, convertibles, motorcycles, bicycles, open-shelled outdoor recreational vehicles and cars with fiberglass shells offer no protection from lightning. When lightning strikes a vehicle, it goes through the metal frame into the ground. Don't lean on doors during a thunderstorm.

- *Myth:* A lightning victim is electrified. If you touch them, you'll be electrocuted.

Fact: The human body does not store electricity. It is perfectly safe to touch a lightning victim to give them first aid. This is the most chilling of lightning myths. Imagine if someone died because people were afraid to give CPR!

- *Myth:* If you are in a house, you are 100 percent safe from lightning.

Fact: A house is a safe place to be during a thunderstorm as long as you avoid anything that conducts electricity. This means staying off corded phones, electrical appliances, wires, TV cables, computers, plumbing, metal doors and



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID HICKS OF SWAN VIEW TOWNHOMES

Archival 2008 photo of thunderstorm over Concord Station.

windows. Windows are hazardous for two reasons: wind generated during a thunderstorm can blow objects into the window, breaking it and causing glass to shatter.

- *Myth:* Structures with metal, or metal on the body (jewelry, cell phones, Mp3 players, watches, etc), attract lightning.

Fact: Height, pointy shape, and isolation are the dominant factors controlling where a lightning bolt will strike. The presence of metal makes absolutely no difference on where lightning strikes. Mountains are made of stone but get struck by lightning many times a year. When lightning threatens, take proper protective action immediately by seeking a safe shelter. Don't waste time removing metal. While metal does not attract lightning, it does conduct it so stay away from metal fences and railings – like those around the pools and park amenities in Ballantrae! ☺