

NEWSLETTER#15

IF YOU HAVE A COMPUTER MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS SAVED ON A BACKUP DISK. I LEARNED THIS THE HARD WAY WHEN I TOOK MY COMPUTER IN TO UPGRADE TO WINDOWS 98 AND GO ON LINE. DURING THIS PROCESS A VIRUS WIPED OUT SOME OF MY FILES AND PROGRAMS. THE WORST WAS THE MAILING LIST FOR THIS NEWSLETTER. I HAD TO TYPE IN (ONE FINGER ON EACH HAND) ALL THE NAMES FROM PAST MAILING LISTS, WHICH HAD TO BE CROSSCHECKED AGAINST YOUR ENVELOPES, WHICH YOU SENT TO ME WITH YOUR CHECK.

OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS IS (all lower case) reecer@gate.net AS OF NOW I HAVE BEEN BUSY WITH THE MAILING LABELS SO I HAVEN'T GOTTEN INTO THE NEW EXPERIENCE OF BEING ONLINE.

I MUST SAY AGAIN TO ALL OF YOU THAT WRITE TO ME WITH QUESTIONS - IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED AN ANSWER IT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T SEND A STAMPED & SELFADDRESSED ENVELOPE. I GET AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 50 LETTERS A WEEK AND ONLY ABOUT 10% HAVE A SASE ENCLOSED.

TO THE LOT OWNERS IN UNITS 11 AND 13 THE LETTER YOU GOT ABOUT A CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT DOESN'T EFFECT YOU AND THEREFORE NO ANSWER IS NEEDED. IT'S ABOUT THE AREA WHERE NO LOTS WERE SOLD.

I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT THE \$5,000 ASSESSED VALUE ON THE LOTS GETTING WATER FOR THE FIRST TIME WILL NOT HAPPEN THIS YEAR. WATCH YOUR PROPOSED TAX BILLS IN FUTURE YEARS AND IF YOUR LOTS ASSESSED VALUE GOES UP MORE THAN \$1,000 LET ME KNOW IMMEDIATELY SO I CAN GO TO THE MEETING TO VOICE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE INCREASE. I THINK AN INCREASE OF \$1,000 WOULD BE FAIR BECAUSE THAT'S ABOUT THE COST OF INSTALLING THE WATER LINES TO EACH LOT, WHICH IS AN IMPROVEMENT TO YOUR LOT.

ALSO ON YOUR TAX BILL IS *WEST FIRE MSTU* FOR \$12.00. I HAVE CHALLENGED THIS FOR MANY YEARS BECAUSE IT'S A TAX ON EACH LOT FOR FIRE PROTECTION EVEN IF NOTHING IS BUILT ON THE LOT. I'VE SAID TO THE BOARD, IF ANY OF OUR LOTS ARE ON FIRE LET IT BURN ITSELF OUT, BUT THEY STILL CHARGE \$12.00 FOR FIRE PROTECTION ON EACH LOT. THIS ISN'T JUST PORT LaBELLE LOTS BUT EVERY VACANT LOT IN THE COUNTY. ON OUR HOME THE TAX TO *WEST FIRE MSTU* IS \$40.00.

MANY OF YOU HAVE SENT INFORMATION ON *FLORIDA REAL ESTATE CONNECTION* AND NOT ONE LOT HAS BEEN SOLD BY OR BOUGHT BY THIS COMPANY IN ALL THE MANY RESPONSES I RECEIVED. SOME LISTED THEIR LOT OR LOTS IN 1995 AND GOT THE NEXT YEARS LISTING FREE AS PROMISED BUT THE COMPANY WON'T ANSWER CALLS OR LETTERS ABOUT THE PROMISE TO BUY YOUR LOT IF IT DOESN'T SELL. I'M NOT A LAWYER OR A REAL ESTATE BROKER SO I CAN'T ADVISE YOU WHAT TO DO BUT IT SMELLS FISHY TO ME.

THE INSTALLATION OF THE WATER LINES IN UNITS 1 THRU 9 IS JUST ABOUT COMPLETE WITH PHASE 3 (UNIT 102) TO START IN 1999. NO SEWER LINES ARE PLANNED UNTIL AN AREA GETS AT LEAST 50% BUILT. THE COST OF PUTTING IN SEWER LINES EXCEEDS THE AMOUNT OF MONEY LEFT IN ESCROW AFTER PAYING FOR THE WATER LINES. ANY MONEY LEFT IN YOUR ESCROW ACCOUNT WILL CONTINUE TO EARN INTEREST WHICH STAYS IN YOUR LOTS ACCOUNT. SHOULD YOU SELL OR GIVE THE LOT TO SOMEONE THE ESCROW ACCOUNT GOES WITH THE LOT. I UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR SALES CONTRACT CALLS FOR WATER AND SEWER LINES TO BE INSTALLED. THE COMPANY THAT MADE THOSE PROMISES NO LONGER EXISTS SO WE MUST DO THE BEST WE CAN WITH WHAT IS LEFT TO WORK WITH. WITHOUT THE ESCROW MONEY I DON'T THINK THE WATER LINES WOULD EVER HAVE BEEN INSTALLED. WITHOUT THE ESCROW FUNDS IT WOULD HAVE REQUIRED A PRIVATE INVESTOR TO BUY THE UTILITIES FOR \$4,500,000 PLUS INVEST ABOUT \$10,000,000 TO PUT IN THE WATER LINES AND HOPE THAT ENOUGH OF THE LOT OWNERS WOULD BUILD AND BECOME CUSTOMERS.

THE PRESENT SEWER PLANT WAS BUILT IN 1973 AND TAKES CARE OF THE EVERYTHING NOW IN PORT LaBELLE BUT ISN'T LARGE ENOUGH TO SERVE ALL LOTS AS IT'S AT ABOUT 50% CAPACITY NOW.

NOW THAT YOU KNOW YOU CAN BUILD ON YOUR LOT I'M GETTING A LOT OF QUESTIONS ON FLORIDA HOMES. I WILL BE GETTING INFORMATION TO YOU IN THIS AND FUTURE NEWSLETTERS ABOUT WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM LIVING IN A TROPICAL CLIMATE.

ALL LOTS IN PORT LaBELLE ARE ABOVE THE STREET FOR VERY GOOD DRAINAGE AND ALLOW YOU TO BUILD EITHER A MASONRY OR WOOD FRAME HOME. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT YOUR BUILDING PLANS TO THE COUNTY BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICE TO GET A BUILDING PERMIT. THE PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS ARE INTENDED IN PART TO INSURE THAT YOUR HOME WILL SURVIVE A MAJOR STORM OR HURRICANE. THE COUNTY REQUIREMENTS ARE THE "MINIMUM" BUILDING CODES SO I WOULD ADVISE YOU TO SPEND A FEW EXTRA DOLLARS TO INCREASE THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF YOUR HOME.

THE SIMPLER THE SHAPE OF THE HOUSE THE MORE RESISTANT IT IS TO THE FORCES OF WIND. WHEN CHOOSING THE DESIGN OF YOUR HOME AVOID HIGHLY ANGULAR DESIGNS - NOOKS AND CRANNIES ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO WIND DAMAGE. A HIP ROOF SLOPING IN FOUR DIRECTIONS IS BETTER THAN A GABLE ROOF SLOPING IN TWO DIRECTIONS BECAUSE THE HIP ROOF OFFERS SMALLER AREAS FOR THE WIND TO ATTACK. AVOID LARGE WINDOWS FOR TWO REASONS, FIRST THEY LET IN MORE OF THE HOT SUN AND SECOND GLASS DOES NOT OFFER THE STRUCTURAL STRENGTH OF OTHER BUILDING MATERIALS.

WE WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND CEILING FANS IN EVERY ROOM AS THIS WOULD REDUCE THE TIME YOUR AIR CONDITIONER WILL HAVE TO RUN. FANS OPERATE MUCH CHEAPER THAN AN AIR CONDITIONER BECAUSE THEY USE LESS ELECTRICITY.

AFTER ALL THIS I WILL TELL YOU THAT WE HAVE LIVED HERE IN PORT LaBELLE SINCE 1973 AND HAVE NEVER HAD WINDS OVER 60 MPH OR MORE RAIN THAN THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM COULD HANDLE.

OUR LOCAL ELECTRIC PROVIDER IS FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT (FPL) WHO IS MAKING PLANS TO CONVERT FROM 1950s ERA GENERATING TECHNOLOGY USING BOILERS FIRED BY OIL TO CLEAN-BURNING NATURAL GAS. THIS \$500 MILLION POWER PLANT UPGRADE IS A TWO-YEAR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT STARTING IN 1999 WITH STARTUP BEGINNING IN 2001. AS YOU DRIVE ON HWY 80 ABOUT TWO MILES EAST OF I-75 YOU WILL SEE TWIN SMOKESTACKS BELCHING SMOKE THAT IS VISIBLE FOR MILES. THE NATURAL GAS WILL ELIMATE THIS ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FPL VISIT THEIR WEB SITE AT www.fpl.com.

AS IV'E TOLD YOU BEFORE IT'S 32 MILES EAST TO LAKE OKEECHOBEE AND SOME OF THE BEST FISHING ANYWHERE. THE FAMOUS ROLAND MARTIN MARINA IS ON THE LAKE AND HAS SEVERAL BASS TOURNAMENTS ALREADY SCHELUDED FOR NOV. 20, JAN. 9, FEB. 3, MARCH 1 AND APRIL 1 WITH THE TOTAL PRIZE MONEY FOR THE NOV. 20-21 TOURNAMENT AT \$90,000. THE TELEPHONE IS 941-983-3151 FOR THEIR MARINA, RV PARK AND MOTEL.

FOR THOSE OF YOU THAT HAVE ASKED ABOUT JOBS AND WAGES IN THE AREA HERE IS AN ARTICLE PRINTED IN THE FT. MYERS NEWS-PRESS.

NEWS-PRESS, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1998 7B

State's unemployment low, but so are wages

from the perspective of a salaried or hourly worker, Florida is a low income state," Nissen wrote in the report's summary.

Per capita income in Florida from dividends, interest and rent is about 48 percent higher than it is in the country as a whole.

Real average wages in Florida have been essentially flat in real dollars for the past 16 years, the report said.

Average weekly earnings of manufacturing workers in Florida rose from \$392.23 in 1992 to \$457.71 in 1997, a 16.7 percent increase.

But the average yearly wage measured in constant dollars to adjust for inflation rose by only about \$1,000 from 1980 to 1996.

And labor wages in Florida have been between 10 and 13 percent below the national average wage since 1980, according to the report. The most recent figures show Florida wages in the fourth quarter of 1997 were at 89.6 percent of the national average.

The study also said that median household income in Florida has also dropped when measured in constant dollars. Adjusting for inflation, real median income for a family of four in the state has dropped 15.4 percent since 1980, the study said.

The Associated Press
MIAMI — The state's unemployment this Labor Day is below the national average, but workers here receive lower pay than their counterparts in many other states, according to a newly released study.

The report also showed that personal income is on the rise overall in the state, but that pay for Florida's hourly workers has been stagnant for more than a decade.

The study was conducted by Florida International University's Center for Labor Research and Studies.

Seasonally adjusted unemployment in Florida was 4.4 percent in May, when the study data was collected. That's below the average U.S. unemployment rate of 4.8 percent.

The study, conducted by center researcher Bruce Nissen, concluded that total personal income rose 6.3 percent from 1995 to 1996 and rose another 6.4 percent from the fourth quarter of 1996 to the fourth quarter of 1997, far ahead of inflation, which has been below 2 percent.

But the study's author also pointed to some negative news for laborers.

"In contrast to the optimistic picture painted by per capita income figures,

MANY OF YOU ASK ABOUT THE COST PER SQ. FT. TO BUILD A HOUSE IN FLORIDA. THE COST PER SQ. FT. IS ONLY A GUIDE BECAUSE EVERY HOUSE WILL HAVE AIR CONDITIONING, A KITCHEN AND PROBABLY TWO BATHROOMS WHICH ARE MAJOR COSTS IN BUILDING REGARDLESS OF THE SQ. FT SIZE OF THE HOUSE.

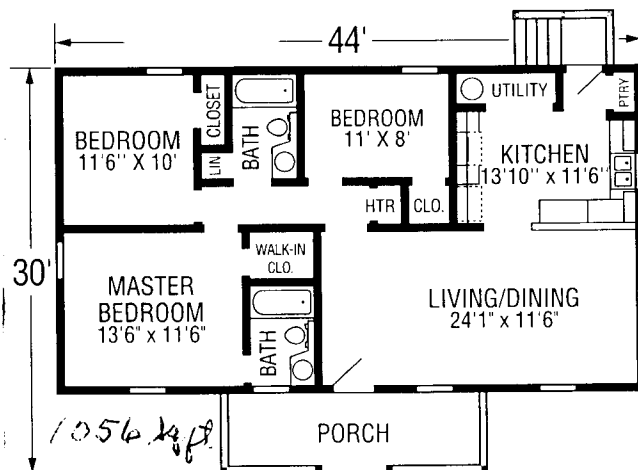
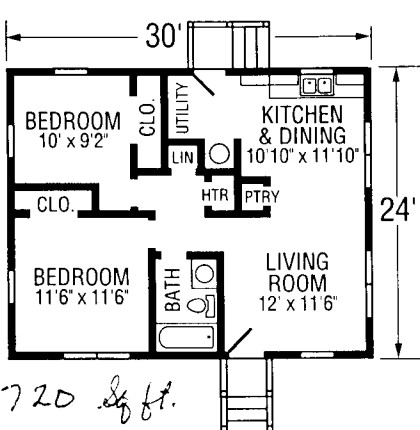
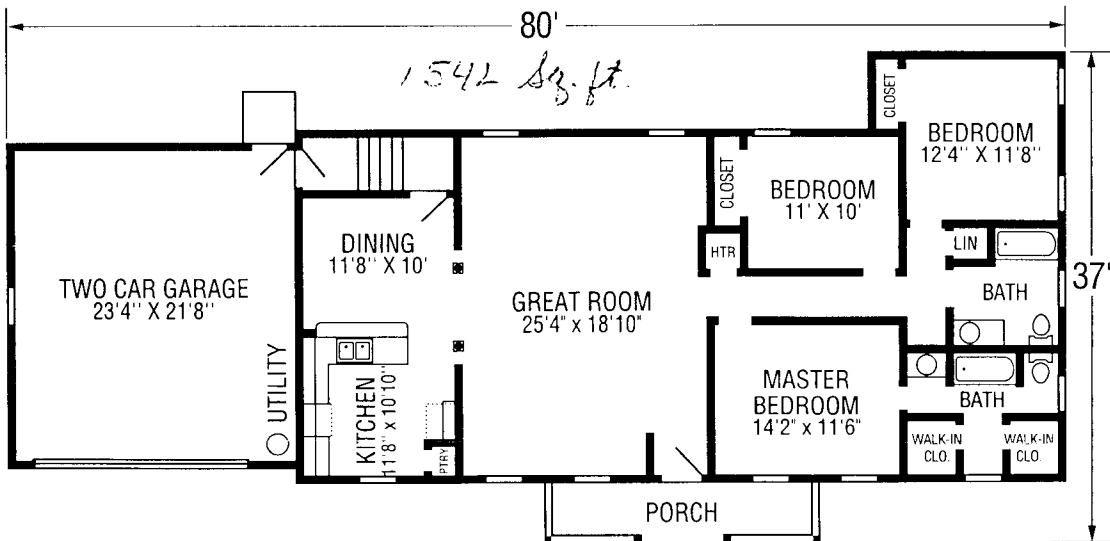
ENCLOSED ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF FLOOR PLANS AND FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT BARBARA WHOSE NUMBER IS ON THE BUSINESS CARD.



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