We replaced one of the two treadmills in the clubhouse. After doing online research I chose carefully of the several "nominated" by TI. I found some of these "Matrix" treadmills in use locally. Last year our local county government spent millions on a new recreational center 8 miles away. They had a dozen of this manufacture of treadmill in use, I viewed them there. I also understand that a local electrical utility uses them at their health center for employees. The Matrix treadmill we purchased and installed is commercial duty and features a tread belt that can be removed and turned inside out to expose a new running surface if the other surface becomes worn.

The subject of children's play came up at our April board meeting. There was a rule from the past that children could not play in the street. In a community such as ours with no connected sidewalk system where can they ride their bicycles and skate? Playing in the street is not my first choice, but kids need someplace for lack of a better term "to be kids" We don't encourage children to play in the street but we don't ban it as before either. Children should not use other residents' driveways and walkway in their play.

The water heater in my town home failed a few nights ago. We were away at church for just a couple of hours. Because we reside in a "middle unit" town home with a garage the design is such that the water heater is located in a utility closet upstairs. The majority of town homes in FLT are of this design. The other town homes that are end units and the ones without garages have the water heater located outside the vulnerable living area. The metal "safety" pan our water heater sits in is equipped with a drain. The plumbers mentioned to us, and in our case the drain couldn't keep up with the leak and the pan overflowed. We had some minor water damage even though we were only away a few hours. Occasionally check the pan your water heater sits in to make sure it is dry. You may want to consider replacing the water heater instead of waiting for it to fail and dealing with the results.

As the Plumber told us "The water heater was 10 years old, you got your use out of it" Even if your town home sits unused for periods of time as in seasonal use, the water heater is still full of water, the clock is ticking.

I negotiated a discount with Dan's Plumbing (239-334-1297) for all of FLT. This year if you replace your water heater, a 10% discount will apply. Just mention "Dave of Forest Lake" sent you. Dan's plumbing is on Angie's List. Otherwise check Angie's List or the BBB for other recommended providers.

Regarding water management, if any home is unoccupied, even overnight, make sure the main water shutoff valve, located near the garden hose connection at the front of your town home is turned off. Besides the water heater there are numerous rubber gaskets and plastic parts in your plumbing system that could spring a leak. Thousands and even tens of thousands of Dollars can occur due to an unattended water leak.

Another complication of our failed water heater was when I attempted to shut off the main water valve, it hadn't been turned off for years. Because of the disuse, and the emergency situation I had to use excessive force to move the lever to the off position. I managed to get the water off, but the valve broke internally in that we couldn't get the water back on. The main water valve had to be replaced at a cost of a couple of hundred more dollars. Make sure your main water valve operates. The valve should be turned off and on several times a year. If the valve does not move easily, you can try wriggling it back and forth, perhaps it will gradually "free up" again. Do not force the water valve, if you have to lean on the water valve or yank on it, stop, and call for professional help to get the valve working or replaced.

Again, if your town home is unoccupied even overnight, turn the main water valve off. The insurance our HOA pays for does not cover the interior of your town home. Many homeowner policies do not cover water damage and require a separate flood insurance policy to compensate for any water damage that may occur. The plumbers mentioned that even if you have insurance for water damage, the claim may be declined if the residence is unoccupied and the water supply is not turned off. Be sure to check your policy or talk to your agent about this.
I mention all this because I don't want you to go through what I did or worse.

More information about the dryer vents I wrote about last time. Until you can get your dryer vents professionally inspected and or cleaned, make sure the hose connecting the dryer to the vent system is metal which would be more resistant to fire than a plastic vent hose. When you do get someone to clean your dryer vent, if they don't bring a large ladder and clean out the vent from the roof as well as from the inlet behind your dryer, they haven't done the whole job.

To those that walk around Pine Oak Circle, walk your dogs and even those of you that smoke cigarettes outside, you are the sentinels of FLT. Report unusual activity, we are especially concerned about people unloading trucks and moving in (we are not concerned with people moving out) We don't want people moving in without being approved as we have been. If you see people moving in let us or TI know, we can check if they have been approved or not. Let's protect the quality of life in our fair community, our place in paradise.

Sent from Dave Dilny