



# Region 7 Review

A monthly publication for the members of IPSSA, Inc. – Region 7

June 2008

## IPSSA, INC. REGION 7 Board Officers

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## Empty Pools

**[Editor's Note:** Below are e-mails between IPSSA region directors and **Ray Arouesty**. I have deleted the names of the innocent to protect them from litigation in the event this information gets in the wrong hands.

Per **Chuck Gough**: "Hey, guys, just don't drain pools."

See **Arouesty's** article, *Property in foreclosure? Don't drain the pool*, in **THE IPSSAN**, June 2008, p.1.]

**From:** [deleted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008 1:32 pm  
**To:** Ray Arouesty  
**Subject:** Empty pools

Ray,

I've drained a few pools for realtors and banks. The pools are currently empty. Now I'm getting calls to drain more pools and leave them empty. I do make sure the pools are secure, i.e., locks on gates fencing etc... I also make the customer aware that this practice is very bad for the finish of the pool as well as the safety issue. I'm willing to bet that many IPSSA members are doing the same thing I am doing.

Is there a disclaimer you could come up with, similar to the acid wash disclaimer?

If I turn this work down, I may miss out on other work provided to me by these clients. Many of them are management companies, realtors, inspection companies and banks.

What are some other options IPSSA members have? John

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Ray Arouesty](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008 1:36 pm  
**To:** [deleted]  
**Subject:** RE: Empty pools

I would not do this unless the bank and/or realtor signed an indemnification agreement whereby they agree to defend you and pay all sums for which you are legally liable as a result of property damage and/or injury as a result of the draining. I would also insist on an additional insured endorsement from the realtor or bank's carrier naming you on their policy if you are sued in connection with the empty pool.

I doubt any realtor or bank would be willing to do this, and I therefore expect that any service technician would be involved in any ensuing litigation.

Ray Arouesty  
Arrow Insurance Service  
40 West Cochran St., Suite 112  
Simi Valley, CA 93065  
(800)833-3433 Fax: (805)955-9535

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [deleted]  
**To:** [Ray Arouesty](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008 5:53 pm  
**Subject:** RE: Empty pools

John,

I had an experience with this. I drained the pool, advised the realtor about all the hazards and such.

The neighbor went into the back yard at night DRUNK!!! and fell in the pool. Stayed there all night passed out, his family found him the next morning. He had a key to the gate and was watching the property for the absent owners. I did have a signed waiver from the realtor about damage -- not as complete as Ray indicates but not personal injury liability. I service the pool next

door and across the street, that's how I found out about the story. As luck would have it the realtor forgot who he hired and misplaced the field invoice.

I still hear about this story and still my response is, "OH REALLY? I hope everyone is okay," as I dash to the truck and leave the neighborhood. I know how you feel about not wanting to lose the additional work, but it is real risky business. I don't know what the answer is. Bob

## Calendar of Events

- **Independence Day**, Fri., July 4.
- **R7 Board Meeting**, Wed., July 23, 7:00 p.m., SCP Conference Room, 5648 Copley Dr., San Diego (858-467-9495).
- **B.O.R.D. Mtg.**, Sat., Aug. 2, Region 10, San Jose. Contact IPSSA executive office, [ipssamail@aol.com](mailto:ipssamail@aol.com) or 888-360-9505.
- **R7 Board Meeting**, Wed., Oct. 22, 7:00 p.m., SCP Conference Room, 5648 Copley Dr., San Diego (858-467-9495).
- **B.O.R.D. Mtg.**, Sat., Nov. 1, Las Vegas, with planning meeting Oct. 31. Contact IPSSA executive office, [ipssamail@aol.com](mailto:ipssamail@aol.com) or 888-360-9505.



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## Empty homes increase hazards of West Nile virus

By [Susan Abram, Staff Writer](#)

Article Last Updated: 06/05/2008 11:15:30 PM PDT

Requests to fight West Nile virus doubled last month as a spike in home foreclosures led to thousands of abandoned swimming pools and tougher economic times pushed pool maintenance to the bottom of homeowner priority lists.

And what's the county's key weapon on the front lines against the mosquito-borne disease?

A tiny silvery fish, known as *Gambusia affinis*, which has a Pac-Man-like appetite for mosquito larvae that thrive in stagnant water.

In May, the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District received 288 requests for service, up from 145 in May 2007. The agency is using the silvery mosquitofish on a record number of homes amid skyrocketing foreclosures, including an increase of more than 200 percent in the San Fernando Valley since spring of 2007.

The need for more fish comes as West Nile virus - passed on to humans, horses and birds by mosquito bites - has made its appearance earlier than its usual summertime entrance.

"All of the evidence is pointing to a very active West Nile season," said Truc Dever, spokeswoman for the vector-control agency.

While health experts can't predict the problem's intensity this season, state figures back up the local numbers.

As of Wednesday, 18 California counties have reported cases of West Nile virus this year - including in a crow found in Woodland Hills last month - up from just nine during the same period last year, said Vicki Kramer, chief of the California

Department of Public Health's Vector-Borne Disease Section.

While no human cases have been reported so far, known bird deaths from West Nile have quadrupled from 25 to 100. And state officials attribute the increase at least in part to foreclosures, saying they have identified abandoned pools through aerial photography.

The virus is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes that feed on crows and other birds infected with the disease. Most mosquitoes do not carry the virus, and most people bitten by mosquitoes don't become infected with West Nile.

Though the disease cannot be passed on from human to human, the American Red Cross has seen an increase in the presence of the virus among potential blood donors. There were 29 potential donors statewide who tested positive for the virus last year, up from 14 in 2006.

Increasingly, vector-control agents called out to homes bring along mosquitofish, knowing they're probably going to need them.

Many trips are to foreclosed homes or homes of financially strapped residents who can keep their front yards manicured to give the appearance of economic stability, but have surrendered their swimming pools to algae and slime.

"These fish have proven their weight in gold," said Ron Helo, a senior vector-control agent who makes house calls.

Aetna Street resident Karo Karapetyan called the Los Angeles County Department of Health about the abandoned pool in the neighborhood because of the abundance of mosquitoes and the bites he got. The department contacted the vector-control agency.

Because the home was abandoned, Helo had access to the pool. But vector-control officials are facing the challenge of determining when they can and cannot enter the backyard of a foreclosed, bank-owned home. Foreclosures have hit

an estimated 4,000 L.A. County homes with backyard pools.

Dever said her agency is working with health officials, real estate agents and banks to legally enter the backyards.

"The health and safety code gives us a certified authority if there is a public health risk, but if it's an occupied home, the residents have a right of privacy," Dever said.

To make sure residents know their pool might be a health risk, vector-control agents have been working on Saturdays, when owners or renters are likely to be home.

"If the gate is wide open and we know the home is vacant, if we can tell the pool is breeding mosquitoes," Dever said, "we will go in there."

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## Hint from Heloise

Here's a solution for getting white resin patio furniture clean and white again. Mix together:

- ¾ cup regular household bleach
- 1 tablespoon of power or liquid laundry detergent
- 1 gallon of water

Before using, test the solution on a small, out-of-sight spot to make sure it will not harm the finish.

Now, put on a pair of rubber gloves to protect your hands and, using a soft-bristle brush or sponge, apply the solution to a small area at a time. Leave this on for 5 minutes or so, then rinse well.

The Soap and Detergent Association recommends using an all-purpose, nonabrasive cleaner and a soft cloth for everyday cleanings of white resin patio furniture.

**[Editor's Note:** The tragic fires last fall left nasty gunk on everything. I tried this on my resin furniture, using TSP all-purpose cleaner instead of detergent, and it really worked!]