

# The house special

## Volume XXI, No.4

www.shuoa.org

## April 2001



## Report From our President David Tilson

At an executive meeting of the Board immediately after the adjournment of the Annual Meeting of the Association, the following officers were elected:

President Vice President Treasurer Secretary

David Tilson Budd Coutts Carol Cataldo Linda Councill

The Board agreed to set the third Thursday of each month as the regular meeting date. The next meeting will be on April 19 at 7pm in the West Card Room.

On behalf of all unit owners, I want to thank Charlie Roberts for serving as Inspector General and the group of volunteers who worked with him to administer the election. The following people worked hard and made it look easy:

Jack Herzig – Assistant Inspector General – West. Grace Krumwiede – Registrar – West Wayne Krumwiede – Registrar – West Joan Collins – Registrar – West Toska Prather – Registrar – West Law Henderson – Head Counter Jack Prather – Counter Helen Kumor – Counter Patrick Collins – Counter George Beams – Counter Helen Henderson – Assistant Inspector General – East Frank Baker – Registrar – East Margaret Jaffie – Registrar – East Rose Bravo – Registrar – East Rob Orben – Registrar – East Joan Coutts – Messenger – East Jean Orben – Messenger – West

The new Board has assumed office at a time of relative tranquility in the life of our Association. We have an excellent staff and we will do our best to keep things on an even keel.

Mike Moore, the former editor of our newsletter and former President of the Association, was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on Wednesday, March 28. I worked closely with Mike for a number of years and had great respect and affection for him. All of us will miss him.

But we are indeed fortunate to have Louise Albin volunteer to edit our newsletter. We very much appreciate her willingness to serve.

#### 2001 Official Count:

Linda Council	22.514%
James R. Loome	17.428%
Gladys Ponce-Manrique	17.121%
Bob Busby	15.549%

OFFICE DIR	<b>ECTORS</b>	
PRESIDENT, David Tilson	805 W	998
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#### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS/CO-CHAIRS**

#### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

COVENANTS, David Kafka	210 W	820-0195
FINANCIAL MGT, Betty Weber	102 E	820-3582
PHYS PLANT/OPS, George Beams	710 E	<b>578-9507</b>
And Kurt Bedenbauh	1004 E	671-8930
RECREATION, Tony DiSalvo	502 E	824-1958
SEC, FIRE & SAFETY, Bob Busby	102W	931-7322
CHIEF ENGI	NEER	

Greg Grimm gregg@shuoa.org

#### EDITOR

Louise Albin 903 W 379-1645 lalbin@metronets.com

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE HOUSE SPECIAL welcomes brief comments from its readers. Limit your letters to 250 words or less and include your name and unit number. The Association Board reserves the right to refuse incorrect or improper statements.

Information for THE HOUSE SPECIAL may be dropped off at the management office or the reception desk.

Published by: Skyline House Unit Owners' Association. Inc., 3711 South George Mason Drive, Falls Church, VA 22041-3711

**Printed by: Curry Printing and Copy Center** Alexandria, Virginia



8-7254

1-3165 iuoe.org

8-7519

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## **EDITOR** Louise Albin

I think I have stepped into very large shoes. I will try to follow Mike's fine example and hope that I don't disappoint you.

The contributions from Committees and letters to the Editor may be sent by e-mail, computer disk, or hard copy placed in my box at the front desk. Due date is by the  $20^{\text{th}}$  of each month.

I will not make textual changes to contributions. However, I may make changes in the organization of your written word if it is needed for clarity and will correct punctuation or spelling if it is detected.

The following is submitted with permission from Mike's wife. I thought you might enjoy the poem.

#### *My Dream Prayer*

*My dream is to someday flay a plane* Thru spacious skies of wind and rain To be aloft where troubles trend May never reach my lofty den Chorus: *Fly a-long my little two winged bird* To parts I've never heard *Oh fly a-long fly a-long my only* Pride and Jov *Like roaming cow boy on fly a-long* 

*My dream is to travel far and high Far from the cities' dismal eye* To sing and shout with all my might No one complaining well that's all right (Chorus)

Let God decide where I may roam And just that place I will call my home And if per chance that I should die I know my soul will remain to fly (Chorus)

Mike's dream was written when he was in the 6th grade. This was his song, his dream. and his life.



## Letters To The Editor

On March 27, 2001, the Fairfax County Historical Society honored Hachaliah Bailey (the founder of Bailey's Crossroads) with a marker. The marker is located adjacent to the gazebo between Old Navy and Staples. Mason District Supervisor, Congressman TomDavis, and others attended the ceremony.

Submitted by Tony DiSilva.



From The General Manager Gusbey Silva

## **Balconies Seal Coating**

We are in the process of selecting the contractor for the seal coating of the balconies. The work is scheduled to begin in early May with an estimated duration of 10 weeks. If you are considering tiling your balcony, now is the time to do it. If you wait until the seal coating is completed, unit owners will be required to remove the seal coating prior to tile installation. The balcony must then be resealed at the unit owner's expense. Management must approve all balcony floor coverings in writing prior to installation.

#### **Fire Safety**

A list with the names and unit numbers of the residents who require assistance due to a physical condition to evacuate the building in case of a fire is posted in the Fire Room for the use of the Fairfax County Fire Department. This list is updated monthly. Please contact the management office if you want your name added to the list or to verify that your name is listed.

#### **Safety Awareness**

Officer Josh Brown from the Fairfax County Police Department has accepted our invitation to host a Safety Awareness Seminar in April for the residents of Skyline House. Notice will be posted on the bulletin board announcing the date and time.

## Storage Bins

Last year we built a total of 16 additional storage bins, 7' high, 8' long, 3' and 10' wide. All of them were rented immediately. If you are interested in renting a storage bin, please call Tania at the management office. We have enough room to build an additional 16 to 20 storage bins.

#### **Elevator Doors Rehabilitation**

The door rehabilitation of the East and West Passenger elevators is completed. Door rehabilitation of the garage elevators is now in progress. Freight elevators will be completed by the end of April. While the freight elevator door rehabilitation is in progress, one of the passenger elevators will be assigned for move-ins and moveouts.

#### **Occupancy Limits**

Virginia Senator Leslie L. Byrne presented a Senate Bill, in January 2001, which would reduce the occupancy limits in the State of Virginia. Senate Bill 925 did not pass through Congress; if you are interested in writing to Senator Byrne to support and encourage further efforts in securing its passage, you may send your letter to:

> Senator Leslie L. Byrne P.O. Box 2612 Falls Church, VA 22042-0612



## Finance Committee Betty G. Weber

The past year has been a challenging and productive year for the Financial Management Committee. Working in cooperation with management and the accounting office, we saw implementation of a number of initiatives that will result in improved management of the Association's financial resources. Some financial accomplishments include:

- A change in investment strategy to increase income from investments.
- Establishment of several financial subcommittees to oversee various accounting activities including payroll, accounts payable and receivable, and inventory,

• Installation of new accounting software and development of an accounting policies and procedures manual.

This past year has been the first year since 1997, when I first became a member of the FMC, that I have felt confident that our books accurately reflect the financial status of our Association. This improvement is due, in large part, to the expertise, dedication and untiring efforts of our General Manager, Ms Gusbey Silva, and our accountant, Ms Tycia Haight. The Association is most fortunate to have found Ms. Silva and had the wisdom to acquire her services as our General Manager. We have just completed our 2000 audit. Although we don't have the final audit findings, the draft letter to management also commends management on the excellent state of our accounts.

Although our operating expenses for last year came in well under budget, we undertook two major unanticipated reserve expenditures that we had hoped to delay for several years-the balcony and elevator repairs. This resulted in considerably greater reserve expenditures than we had planned for the year. We had planned to conduct maintenance repairs and replacements in the amount of \$373,000 and ended up spending over \$677,000 from the reserve accounts, in addition to Special Assessment expenditures of \$712,000, for a total of \$1.4M in repair/replacement expenses for the year 2000. Further, we have over \$758 thousand in reserve expenditures planned for this next year including:

- The re-keying of all external locks;.
- Rail packing and seal coating of balconies;
- Repair/replacement of the heat exchangers;
- Air Balancing in both buildings;
- Switch Gear Maintenance;
- Lobby furniture and lighting rehabilitation on the first floor, and
- The continued overall renovation of the passenger and freight elevators.

In response to requests from the Board of Directors and owners, we have estimated reserve contributions required for the next three years (through 2004) based on **currently** known requirements. It appears that our current level of **reserve** contributions may be sufficient and we may not have to increase the reserve budget further, unless unanticipated contingencies develop.

As of the month ending Feb. 28, 2001, all special assessments levied in 1999 have been paid except for approximately \$62,000 dollars. This is being paid in monthly installments by homeowners who chose to obtain a loan through the Association. Thus far, we have had to write off only \$10,900 of the special assessment to bad debt.

Collections of late payment of regular assessments and the legal fees engendered by those collections during 2000 were considerably improved over 1999. This is due, in part, to the aggressive actions taken by our general manager and the accounting department to track delinquencies and promptly file liens when owners are non-responsive to late notices. For the year 2000 regular assessments, we wrote off \$24,500, or approximately 1% of our annual budget, to bad debt. This is well below the average industry rate of delinquencies for both the special and regular assessments. Accounts are written off only when our attorney advises us that the fees have become uncollectable through bankruptcy or other event that makes it impossible for us to collect the monies due.

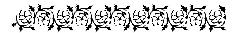
For those who are interested, a summary of last year's budget and expenditures is available. Be sure to pick up your copy at the front desk.

Finally, on behalf of the Association, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognize and thank all the members of the Financial Management Committee for their tireless contributions during the past year and without whose help we would not have accomplished all that we did. Thank you:

> Sophie Anderson Helen Henderson Grace Krumwiede Helen Kumor

Fran Price Charles Ruby Liza Ruiz and Bill Miller

Regarding the Association's financial health, you may rest assured that the FMC will continue to tell you what you **need** to hear, not what you **want** to hear.





## Physical Plant And Operations Committee George Beams And Kurt Bedenbaugh

The Committee met on March 8, 2001. The following subjects were discussed:

- a) Balcony Repair Package: Management invited Jeffrey James of Gardner Engineering to give a presentation to the Committee and residents about the proposed balcony repair package, content, project description, including contractor's responsibility, and specifications. Mr. James agreed to provide additional information to the committee prior to issuing the package to contractors for cost proposals. Gardner Engineering's role will be to provide oversight construction and management throughout the entire length of the project.
- b) <u>Elevator Door Rehabilitation</u>: Repairs to the East and West passenger elevators are completed. Adjustments will be performed by Millar Elevators to correct minor problems over the next three to four months. Rehabilitation to the garage elevators is scheduled for completion by the end of March.
- c) <u>Crow Eradication</u>: Management met with the District Supervisor of the US Department of Agriculture to address concerns of how to eliminate the crow problem in our neighborhood. Three other properties had expressed no interest in the program, and the USDA recommended waiting until early next

winter since the crows usually migrate elsewhere for the summer.

- Building Inspection: One member of the PPOC d) and Management conducted several walkthrough inspections in both the East and West buildings. The areas focus on the condition of the walls, interior finishes, and doors. An extensive amount of wallpapering will be required to replace damaged wall surfaces, painting of doors, and replacement of doorbells Management peepholes. will pursue and obtaining cost estimates for the repairs.
- e) <u>Maintenance Log</u>: In February, there were 15 reports filed. Management resolved 10 of these items; four were referred to Millar Elevators regarding elevator corrections at doors, and one was resolved by a resident.



## Security, Fire And Safety Committee Robert Busby

The SF&SC met at 7:00 PM on Wednesday night, March 14, 2001, in the West Card Room.

We had a special treat in that Chief Floyd Ellmore of the Baileys Crossroads Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Station Ten (703-820-2345) and his entire fire crew were present for the SF&SC meeting.

Chief Ellmore explained how Baileys Crossroads Fire personnel would respond to any emergency at Skyline House Condominiums. Chief Ellmore handed out a brochure on high-rise fire safety (copy will be printed in the next newsletter) and explained the procedures Skyline House unit owners should follow if a fire is observed or reported at Skyline House.

1. If the fire is in your unit, leave your unit immediately.

Do not try to put out any fire by yourself. Close the door behind you as you leave your unit.

If you are not able to leave your unit, go to a room in your unit as far away from the fire as possible, close the door, call 911 and let the 911 dispatcher know you can not get out of your unit and where you are in your unit. Call 911, not Skyline House management. Skyline House management personnel may not be able to do anything for a resident in the event of a fire due to limited resources. That is why we have the Fairfax County emergency services.

If you are in your unit and you hear the fire alarm announcement reporting there is a fire on your floor, but you do not see smoke, smell smoke or see fire, stay in your unit. **Remember** the fire alarm announcement is reporting a fire on your floor or the floor above or below your floor. Even though the fire alarm announcement is telling you to leave the building, you may be safer where you are. <u>You must make the decision to</u> <u>stay where you are or leave the building</u>.

The units at skyline house are constructed in such a way that most fires will be contained in the unit or hall way where they occur. That is why you need to keep all the doors closed when a fire is reported.

2. Pull the fire alarm on your floor as you leave your unit so your neighbors will know there is a fire.

Do not try and go door-to-door alerting your neighbors about the fire. Let the fire alarm do that.

## Do not under any circumstance return to the area where the fire is located

3. Go to an area in your hall as far away from the fire as possible and use a neighbor's phone to call 911.

If there is smoke in your hallway, go to the stairway and walk up one flight or down one flight and use a neighbor's phone to call 911. If there is smoke in your hallway and there is no fire or smoke in your unit you, may not want to leave your unit.

## It is your decision as to where you should be (as long as you are away from the fire and or smoke) in the event of a fire.

You do not have to evacuate the building if you are safer where you are than if you tried to evacuate the building.

4. If you know you will need assistance in the event you have to evacuate your unit, inform Skyline House management who you are and what your unit number is. Your name will be placed on a list in the fire control room. The list will be used by the fire department to evacuate you in the event your unit or floor has a fire.

If you are elderly or have a problem evacuating the area where a fire is reported, get to an area away from the smoke and fire and wait for assistance from the fire department. You must use your own judgment in the decision to evacuate or stay in place.

5. Do not use the elevators in the event a fire is reported.

All elevators will automatically return to the bottom floor and shut down until the fire emergency alarms have been cleared by the fire department.

One of our (Skyline House) elevators will run off the emergency generator, but this elevator should be used by the fire department for emergency evacuation and movement of fire personnel only. Elevators that run off of the emergency generator can This information be risky during a fire. was not verified during the meeting and is only mentioned now after discussion with Chief Ellmore. Chief Ellmore contacted Mr. Donald Smith with the National Elevator Inspection Services, who does all the inspections for Fairfax County, regarding the question of one elevator that would operate even in the event of a fire. Mr. Smith advised Chief Ellmore that one elevator at Skyline House will run off the emergency generator.

6. The fire phones located throughout Skyline House labeled for use by fire department only are for fire fighter use only. However, if a resident is in need of assistance during a fire, the resident can use the fire department emergency phone. This phone will connect the resident to the fire fighters in the building (only in the building) fighting the fire.

The Skyline House residents who were present at the meeting were able to get all of their questions to Chief Ellmore answered.

Chief Ellmore indicated that his unit responds mostly to emergency calls at Skyline House but has responded to several calls in the past.

Chief Ellmore stated several times that Skyline House Condominium is a very safe place to live when it comes to fires. The Fire Department responds to emergency calls with the fire engine and an ambulance in order to have a six-minute response time to any emergency call. If the ambulance is busy, the fire crew has a medic and emergency equipment on the fire engine to handle the emergency situation until the ambulance arrives.

Chief Ellmore mentioned that each sprinkler head in Skyline House is individually activated. This means that it takes the heat from a fire to activate the sprinkler. Just because one sprinkler is activated does not mean the sprinkler adjacent to the activated sprinkler will activate. It was also mentioned that the Skyline House sprinkler system is checked by the Fire Marshall's Office yearly.

Chief Ellmore will be happy to return at any time to talk to Skyline House residents about Fire Safety. Other Safety and Security issues were not discussed at this meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

## Information from the Editor's Desk Copied from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, Public Affairs Section

## **B**alcony Barbecues and the Law

"... Using most barbecue grills on balconies is unsafe and against the law.

Fairfax County Fire Prevention Code prohibits the use and storage of any device that uses flammables such as gasoline, charcoal lighter, liquefied petroleum gas or propane on the balcony. These restrictions are enforced for two reasons: there is always the danger of the fire getting out of control and rapidly spreading to the living areas, and the smoke given off by these devices can be harmful – even fatal. You cannot control the direction the wind will blow the smoke. Lethal smoke could be building up in your neighbor's unit without you ever knowing it.

Fairfax County Fire Prevention Code F-318.1, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 28, 1987, specifies that "No charcoal cooker, brazier, hibachi or grill or any gasoline or other flammable liquid or liquefied petroleum gas-fired stove or similar device shall be ignited or used on the balconies or within 15 feet of any apartment building or other structure with similar occupancy."

The only cooking device permitted to be used on the balcony of an apartment or condominium is one "using either electric or natural gas as a fuel source and listed by a recognized testing authority." Additionally, "the device must be designed or approved for the use of lava rocks or permanent briquette only."

Electric cords should be placed where they will not be subject to physical damage. If an extension cord is used, it should be three-wire grounded and of the proper size to carry amperage or wattage of the electric grill.

The Code further states that "Management of such occupancies which have balconies shall notify their tenants in writing of the Code requirement when the tenant initially occupies the apartment and periodically thereafter as may be necessary to ensure compliance."

Violators of this Code are subject to punishment by imprisonment not to exceed 12 months or by a fine not to exceed \$1,000, or both. Each day the violation continues after a service of notification is deemed a separate offense.

Use of any other type of grill is allowed if it is located at least 15 feet from any building or structure.

So when the urge strikes to enjoy a freshly grilled steak, remember to follow these guidelines for **safe and legal outdoor cooking.**"



## Recreation Committee Tony DiSalvo Patricia (Tish) Linsinbigler

I would like to thank my co-chair Patricia (Tish) Linsinbigler for all the work and time that she spent on the recreation committee. At the end of March, Tish and her husband departed for Florida. Thank you again, Tish.

The Committee did not meet in March

Concerning the Italian Night Dinner held in February, I would like to thank my wife Nancy who assisted prior to the event. Thanks to co-chair Tish, Margaret Jaffie, Nadyne McKelvey and Carrol Thompson who assisted in serving dinner and with the clean up afterwards.

If you are a resident and have not attended the monthly TGIF, make this your first and meet your neighbors, and to make it easier, you are requested **NOT** to bring a plate of hors d'oeuvres, just your own liquid refreshment.

The Recreation Committee will meet on Wednesday, April 11, West Card Room, at 7:00 p.m. Come join, we can always use new members.

The next TGIF is scheduled for Friday, April 6, 6:30 p.m., West Party Room

## **COMING EVENTS:**

Rec. Com. Mtg. Wed. Apr. 11, 7:00 p.m., West Card Room TGIF, Fri., May 4, 6:30 p.m., East Party Room



Good Neighbors Committee Co-Chairs Toska Prather 703-379-7849 Virginia Wallace 703-671-7648

Good Neighbors for April 2001

Betty Badavi 703-671-5216 David Shandloff 703-931-0911

The Good Neighbors are available to assist all residents who are in need of temporary help due to illness or an emergency. Please call on them if a need arises. If any one wishes to join the Good Neighbors, Please call one of the Co-Chairs.



## Covenants Committee David Kafka

## ANNUAL REPORT

The Covenants Committee has completed a successful year.

- We rewrote the swimming pool attire rule.
- We ensured the integrity of the garage decks by prohibiting vehicles with fluid leaks from parking in the garage and damaging the deck surfaces.
- We freed up parking spots in the visitor's parking area by more vigorously enforcing the parking rules.
- Towed more vehicles for illegal parking than ever before, thus sending a statement that we mean business.
- Made residents aware that their automatic headlights on their vehicles did not always turn on upon entering the garage. In such instances, they must turn their lights on manually.

The one area in which I feel the Committee did not make much headway was convincing residents it is in their best interests to report in writing any and all infractions of the rules that they observe.

I do not understand the reluctance to report problems that, if made known to management, could be acted upon swiftly in a manner that would be fair to all and relieve a lot of the stress that goes with living in a small community.

Too much time and energy is wasted in conversing among ourselves about perceived problems when, if reported to management, the problems might be solved quickly and peacefully.

Please use the "Incident Report" forms at the front desk and let management and the Committees handle the problems.

Finally, the Covenants Committee is charged with conducting an annual election of officers. Let me thank all the volunteers who performed so well and gave of their time to make the necessary arrangements for a successful meeting. Everyone deserves our wholehearted thanks. I especially want to applaud Gusbey Silva and Nadyne McKelvy, two people whose initiative, hard work and dedication drove this election to its successful conclusion.



## The Chief Engineer Greg Grimm

#### Suds Alert

Almost all washing machine detergents are now super concentrated or labeled "ultra." These detergents are highly concentrated and require very little detergent to clean your clothes. When too much detergent is used in front or top loading washing machines, the water drains into the pipes causing excess suds on the lower floors. These suds back up into the kitchen sinks and, sometimes, other drains in the units on the bottom floors. In severe cases, suds can overflow from the drain or sink onto the floor of the affected units.

## Please help us eliminate this problem by doing the following:

If you have a front-loading washing machine, you should **NEVER** see suds any higher than the very bottom of the glass in the door, and when your washer does its final rinse, you should see **no suds** on the door seal, or at the bottom of the glass. If you do see suds, you are using too much detergent. Also, when this happens your clothes are not thoroughly rinsed. Once your clothes are dry and you wear them, you may experience itching caused by the residue from detergent.

On top loading machines it's a little harder to tell when you've used too much detergent. When using "ultra" detergents (super concentrated), use about 1/3 of the recommended amount. During the wash when you raise your washer lid, you should see very little suds on top of the water.

With either type of washing machine, remember if you're using too much detergent, it's very likely that someone on the bottom floor will experience some suds in his or her unit in one or more drains. Although this may not affect you directly, think about the people who live on the bottom floors and how it will affect them.

PLEASE NOTE: There have been reported violations in the placement of satellite dishes on the balconies of some units. *PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED FCC RESTRICTIONS ON THE PLACEMENT OF SATELLITE DISHES.* 

LOST AND FOUND: Any item found in the area of Skyline House or garage should be turned in at the front desk.

LOST: A tennis racket and can of tennis balls was possibly left on the desk in the mail area of the West Building.

FOUND: A black and copper cane was found in the West Party Room on the night of "Meet the Candidates." It may be claimed in the manager's office.

## SPECIAL EVENTS AT SKYLINE HOUSE

## **APRIL**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00	3	4	5	<b>6</b> TGIF 6:30 P.M. WCR	7
8	9 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 ECD	10	<b>11</b> RECREATION COMMITTEE 7:00 P.M., WCR	<b>12</b> PPOC 7:00 P.M. WCR	13	14
15	16 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00	17 FIN MGT 7:00 P.M. WCR	18	<b>19</b> BOARD 7:00 P.M. WCR	20	21
22	23 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00	24	25	26	27	28
29	<b>30</b> LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 ECB					

Skyline House Unit Owners' Association, Inc., 3711 South George Mason Drive Falls Church VA 22041-3711