



THE HOUSE SPECIAL

Volume XXI, No.7

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July 2001



Board of Directors President, David Tilson

This is a relatively tranquil period in the life of Skyline House. This was evident at the Board meeting on June 21st when there was little or no controversy about any of the issues discussed.

Elevators

The rehabilitation of the elevators is proceeding more or less on schedule. The first phase of the work – overhauling the door mechanisms on all the passenger and freight elevators – has been completed. The next phase – replacement of the control mechanisms – is scheduled to start in January 2002. (The schedule is based upon the projected availability of reserve funds.) Based on recommendations by PPOC and Management, the Board approved a contract with the consulting firm of Lerch Bates & Associates to prepare bidding documents for the next phase of the work. The Scope of Work includes preparing a detailed list of specifications, analysis of the bids when received, recommending the contractor to do the work, and overseeing and inspecting the work of the contractor selected. The contractor probably will be selected by October.

Balconies

Repairs and seal coating of all balconies on the south side of the West building have been completed, and the north side of that building should be completed around the first week in July (weather permitting). There have been scheduling

problems due to a number of unexpected and unavoidable circumstances, but the work appears to be proceeding satisfactorily. It is a difficult and arduous task, but our contractor has been reasonably prompt in addressing all residents' concerns brought to his attention

Financial matters

The operating budget showed a comfortable surplus as of the end of May, and while delinquencies in payment of condo fees are up slightly, there is no cause for alarm. Management, working with the Financial Management Committee and the Treasurer and a CPA consultant, will be installing new accounting and Management software in the next month.

Redecorating

The interior designer has been selected and a design contract has been executed for redecoration of the main lobby as well as lighting on the entire first floor and window treatment of the windows in both galleries. The design will probably be completed by the end of July or sooner and will be presented to Management, the Ad hoc Decorating Committee and, to the residents soon thereafter. If completed soon enough, there may be Board action in July, but it is more likely that approval of the plan and authorization to implement it will take place in September. (There will be no Board meeting in August.)

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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 sent by e-mail to the Editor, dropped off at the Management office or the reception desk.

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EDITOR
Louise Albin

Spotlight By Starlight Summer Concert Series:

The free summer concert series, Spotlight by Starlight at Mason District Park, will begin on June 1st. The following schedule is sponsored by the Friends of Mason District Park. You'll find no better way to spend a summer evening!

Spotlight by Starlight is a free summer concert series. All performances at the amphitheatre located at 6621 Columbia Pike will be performed on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays and begin at 7:30 p.m. Performances for children on Saturday (not listed below) begin at 10 a.m. Shows are cancelled in the event of rain. The park telephone number is 703-941-1730.

JULY

- 1 - Annandale Orchestra
- 6 - German Band City of Fairfax
- 8 - U.S. Navy Band "Commodores"
- 11 - J. Kent Ashcraft Quartet
- 13 - Blues Society
- 15 - Fairfax Symphony Summer Band
- 18 - David Wright Quartet
- 20 - Double Decker
- 22 - Fairfax Symphony Summer Band
- 25 - Rick Whitehead Trio
- 27 - Blues Society
- 29 - National Concert Band

Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter

Students out of school for the summer need something to fill your time and at the same time help someone? The Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter needs volunteers to help with projects such as writing, editing, and formatting its newsletter; organizing donated items; and developing a computer database. For more information or to volunteer, call 703-820-7621.



General Manager Gusbey Silva

Seal Coating of Balconies

Seal coating of the South side of the West building is completed. It is estimated that all tiers on the North side will be sealed by the first week of July. Weather permitting, work on the South side of the East building (tier 06) is estimated to begin the first week of July. After completion of the West building, small repairs, where needed, will be done with a one-man basket. Tape used by the contractors to avoid water from entering the unit during the power washing, removed some of the original paint on the balcony doors. At this time, the balcony doors of the units on the South side of the West building will be repainted.

It is important that residents with tiled balconies inspect the condition of their tiles and try to remove stains prior to seal coating. The purpose of the seal coating of the tiled balconies is not cosmetic, it is to preserve the concrete slab from water damage. Tiled balconies are being power washed prior to seal coating and this procedure will eliminate dust and debris but most of the time will not remove previous stains.

An effort will be made to notify you at least five to seven days in advance before work starts on your tier. If there is a delay in the schedule, we will try to notify you two days in advance. Please take into consideration that if it rains, work cannot be performed. All items, including furniture, plants, etc., must be removed from the balcony prior to starting work. If you have plans to be out of town or away from your unit during the time your tier will be worked on, please make arrangements to remove all items from your balcony or patio. Any items not removed by the residents will be removed by the contractor at a minimum charge to the unit owner of \$250.00. All balconies and patios in the same tier will be seal coated on the same day.

Pool Season

The first month of this year's pool season is already over; we hope that you have enjoyed it. Sunset Pool is our new pool management company. We appreciate the good job they are doing.

Residents are reminded that complaints should be brought to the Management Office and not to the pool guard. When the Management Office is closed, your complaints can be made at the front desk, to the pool supervisor, or, if necessary, the Manager on call will be contacted.

Residents are reminded to supervise their children very closely and enforce the rules at all times. Pool guards should not have to constantly request the children to stop running. Parents not wearing proper swimming attire must refrain from entering the pool.

As a safety measure, effective June 25, 2001 residents and their guests must vacate the pool while the pool guard takes a half an hour lunch break on the sun deck. The pool gate will remain open during the guard's lunch break. Residents will not be allowed to enter the pool area from the sun deck during this time. We appreciate your cooperation.



Financial Management Committee Betty Weber, Chair

The Finance Committee met on June 19, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room.

The Document Review Subcommittee reported on its review of all funds paid out during the month of May. No issues were raised.

The Payroll Review Subcommittee is nearing completion of the development of a procedures guide for payroll accounting.

Management reported on the status of the balconies. Approximately one-quarter of the work has been completed. Work should begin on the East building around July 9th.

Management has received the final bill on the work done on the elevator doors in the amount of

\$23,400. Ten percent of the amount billed was withheld pending a final report from our consultants on the quality of the work completed.

Management filed a report with the Better Business Bureau regarding the unsatisfactory work done by Brothers Paving on the east parking lot. Management plans to consult with our attorney regarding other options we may have. Brothers provided a 10-year warranty on the work.

Modernization of the six (6) passenger elevators is scheduled to begin in 2002. Management wants to have the contract approved no later than September 2001. Toward this goal, Board approval for award of the consultant's contract to Lerch Bates & Associates was recommended by the PPOC. The consultants will write up the specifications for the elevator overhaul and oversee the work done by the elevator contractors. Questions regarding two clauses in the Lerch Bates proposal were raised. Pending clarification on these two issues, the FMC concurred with the PPOC's recommendation to the Board to approve the Lerch Bates' proposal.

It was noted by FMC members that there has been a noticeable increase in visitor traffic to our building since the end of the school year and the opening of the pool. Residents frequently notice young visitors hanging out in the lobby, around the area of the mailboxes and around the pool. In light of our past problems with vandalism, the FMC recommended that, as a deterrent, consideration be given to the addition of a guard on weekdays from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm for the next 9-10 weeks. The total cost to add a 40-hour shift would be approximately \$5,200. These funds can be made available out of the operating budget, since our year-to-date operating expenses are currently under budget.

As of May 31, 2001, we have a year-to-date net gain of approximately \$85,000. Our reserve account has a balance of approximately \$1.1 million. A summary of our year-to-date status is provided in the following chart.

Account	2001 YTD Actual	2001 YTD Budget*
Total Income	1,297,602	1,251,267
Total Expense	1,212,095	1,251,267
<i>Net Income (Loss)</i>	85,507	0
Account	2001 YTD Actual	2001 YTD Budget
Replacement Reserve Fund		
<i>Ending Balance Replacement Reserve</i>	711,589	641,892
Periodic Maintenance Fund		
<i>Ending Balance Periodic Maint.</i>	279,315	279,315
Working Capitol Fund		
<i>Ending Balance Consultant Fund</i>	89,608	89,608
Consultant Fund		
<i>Ending Balance Consultant Fund</i>	9,562	9,562
Contingent Fund		
<i>Ending Balance Contingency Fund</i>	---	25,827
Special Assessment Fund		
<i>Ending Balance Special Assess. Fund</i>	33,970	33,970
Total Reserves		
<i>Ending Balance Total Reserves</i>	1,124,044	1,080,174
<i>*Represents average monthly budget divided by twelve).</i>		

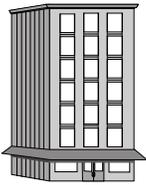
The next FMC meeting will be held on July 17, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room.



**Tycia Haight, Bookkeeper
Automatic Debit**

The Skyline House Unit Owner's Association offers automatic debit to all owners to have their Condominium fees automatically deducted from their checking or savings account each month. This is a great way to ensure that your condominium fee arrives on time each month and is especially convenient for those who travel or who do not live on the property. Debits are processed each month between the 3rd and the 5th via computer. If you are

interested, included in this month's newsletter is an insert to fill out and mail back to the Accounting Office. If you have any questions regarding automatic debit, please contact me at 703-578-4855 x304 or email: tycia@shuoa.org.



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

The Committee met on June 14, 2001. The following subjects were discussed:

- a) Elevator Door Rehabilitation: Millar Elevator Company completed the repairs on the itemized deficiency list submitted by Lerch Bates & Associates.
- b) East Driveway French Drain Performance: Brothers Paving Company has failed to answer Management's request to honor the warranty given on the work performed in August 2000. On Thursday May 17, 2001, Management filed a complaint with the Better Business Bureau. A certified letter was sent to Brothers Paving informing them that a complaint was filed and legal action would follow.
- c) Seal Coating of Balconies and Patios: The contractors are near completion of applying the seal coating to the West Building balconies. Seal coating of the East Building balconies is estimated to begin the first week of July. Commercial Roofing, Inc. is taping the opening around the doors to make a watertight seal before the power wash is performed and prevent unpleasant odors from entering the owner's unit when the sealer is applied. Due to the age of the paint, the duct tape, once removed, is peeling the paint

Management learned that a unit owner was not able to move balcony plants from the apartment back to the balcony for one month because the seal coating application was not completed. The

resident's plants have died. Management will not be responsible for replacing any plants.

Management will arrange for window washing of each building after the work on the balconies is completed.

- d) Engineering Services from Lerch Bates & Associates for Elevators: Management has requested from Lerch Bates & Associates a cost proposal for preparation of the scope of work, specifications, and supervision to upgrade and modernize the six (6) passenger and garage elevators. Funds for this project are budgeted for the year 2002. The PPOC unanimously approved the recommendation to honor Lerch Bates' proposal in the amount of \$15,950.00.
- e) East Building Freight Elevator Load Test: Gusbey said the East freight elevator had undergone a load test, which passed on Friday (June 8, 2001).
- f) Security Contract Renewal: Management is in the process of looking at three cost proposals. The proposals received were recognized as being very high. Management clarified that the problem remains an issue with the Association and that the funds offered to hire a security company at \$17,000 is not high enough to attract other companies.
- g) U.S. Mail Chutes: Kurt Bedenbaugh raised a concern about the mail chutes being clogged with envelopes. Other PPOC members acknowledge that clogged chutes have been an on-going problem in the West and East buildings. A proposal was raised to seal off the chutes completely at both buildings. No action was taken on this matter.
- h) Property Inspection: The next building inspection is scheduled for June 27, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. to inspect the light fixture replacement in the West building and cutting of the trees at the Pool/Terrace level.



**Security, Fire
And Safety Committee
Robert Busby**

No meeting was held in June; therefore, no report. The next meeting will be on July 11th at 7:30 p.m. in the West Card Room.



**Recreation Committee
Tony DiSalvo
Chairman**

The Recreation Committee met on June 13th in the West Card Room. A short meeting was held, but nothing new was decided upon because of the lack of new members. The Flea Market was discussed.

The Flea Market held on Wednesday, June 20th, in the East Party Room was a great success for some who had reserved a table, but not for others. Sellers always like to go home with an empty table and full pockets. As for the chairman who had a table, it was a trip to the Salvation Army to deliver unsold merchandise. It appeared that the Skyline residents who attended enjoyed themselves. A discussion will be held later for another flea market next year.

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 next TGIF is scheduled for Friday, July 6th, 6:30 p.m., East Party Room.

COMING EVENTS:

TGIF, Friday, July 6, 6:30 p.m., East Party Room
TGIF, Friday, Aug 3, 6:30 p.m., West Party Room



**Good Neighbor Committee
Co-Chairs**

Toska Prather 703-379-7849
Virginia Wallace 703-671-7648

Good Neighbors for July 2001

Sher Cuzzivoglio 703-379-1395
Betty Weber 703-820-3582

HELP WANTED!

We're out for blood – some new blood to keep our Good Neighbors program alive. Some of our long-time Good Neighbors are, regrettably, no longer able to serve. Some have moved away; others are now unable to drive.

We try not to ask anyone to serve more than one month each year. Any of our members will tell you that the small services they provide does not cause much of an imposition on their time. The most frequent requests are for picking up a prescription at a nearby pharmacy or giving someone a ride to a doctor's appointment. We need volunteers who can offer help in the daytime or evenings.

Please call either of our Co-Chairs if you wish to continue offering this helping hand to our Skyline House neighbors.



**Ad hoc Decorating Committee
Jean Orben, Chair
Carroll Thompson & Louise Albin**

On June 6th, Mrs. Joan Clarke came to Skyline House and signed the amended lobby design contract in our Manager's office and received the initial payment. Mrs. Silva signed the contract for Skyline House.

A window treatment for the gallery drapes is now a part of the contract, as is lighting for the galleries and residential hallways on the first floor. We hope to present the final design to the Board at its July 19th meeting.

We offer the Board our formal thanks for approving the selection of Mrs. Clarke. We feel quite confident that Skyline House will benefit from her knowledge, professionalism, and experience.



Covenants Committee David Kafka

No meeting was held in June; therefore, no report. The next meeting will be on July 18th at 7:30 p.m. The Covenants Hearing will be held on July 24th at 7:00 p.m. Both meetings will be in the West Card Room.

Community Relations Committee Jim Loome

Last month we solicited signatures of people interested in serving on a Community Relations Committee.

We have four potential members (all women). I have written to them asking that they confirm an interest in membership. I have also asked each of them for more suggested names. When I have a group and can get them together, we will meet and organize. I hope this will happen before the next Board meeting on July 19th.

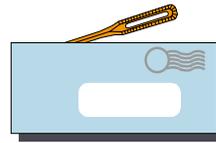


The Chief Engineer Greg Grim

Satellite Dish Owners

Is your satellite dish grounded? Connecting your dish to the balcony rail or the wall does not ground your dish. Grounding protects your equipment from static, lightning, etc. If you don't know if your dish is grounded, contact your installer and have them check it and ground it if necessary. I haven't seen a single dish grounded on any balcony. Refer to your dish owners' manual.

Moen Faucets become hard to open and close over a period of time. If your faucet is hard to open or close please call the Management Office and arrange for a repair, it's less than \$20 per faucet and a worthwhile investment.



Letters To The Editor

At the second regular meeting of the 21st Board of Directors on June 21st, I expressed the idea of issuing a directory for unit owners of all residents, office directors, Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs and members, and the Management Office.

No comment was made whatsoever by the Board and/or the Management. Therefore, I take the liberty of raising this proposal in "The House Special," hoping that Management will consider this matter and take appropriate action.

Submitted by Salem Omeish, #905W

This is the third annual submission dealing with price indexes for Skyline House condominium units, the most recent of which appeared in the June 2000 House Special.

Prices for Skyline House condominium units increased by 10.7 % in 2000, the largest one-year percentage increase ever. As a result, the average price level rose to approximately that which existed in 1993 (the year during which housing prices fell sharply in the general area), as shown in the table following table.

The numbers in the table are weighted average price indexes that take into account virtually all sales from 1987 through 2000. They are constructed in basically the same way as the Bureau of Labor Statistics calculates the Consumer and Producer price indexes. The indexes are based on prices that have been adjusted for the differences in floor levels and unit size. They differ from those published in The House Special in prior years for three reasons. First, 1987 is used as the base year instead of 1981. Second, additional data, not previously available, have been used. Third, an enhanced methodology for calculating the indexes has been employed.

1987 = 100.0	1992 = 120.3	1997 = 99.1
1988 = 110.1	1993 = 106.7	1998 = 95.5
1989 = 119.1	1994 = 106.7	1999 = 97.2
1990 = 122.9	1995 = 106.9	2000 = 107.6*
1991 = 122.5	1996 = 99.9	

* = Preliminary

Submitted by Jerry Lagace, 806#, 703-578-4682

**Skyline House Sponsors
AARP DRIVER SAFETY PROGRAM**

**Take AARP 55 ALIVE
Driver Safety Program**

Refresher Course

For motorists age 55 and older.

- **Learn how to avoid driving hazards**
- **No tests!**
- **Auto insurance discounts
(consult with your insurance agent)**

WHERE? Skyline House
West Card Room

WHEN? July 30 and 31, 2001
(From 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. each day)
(ONE HOUR OFF FOR LUNCH)

Minimum: 10 people
Maximum: 30 people

To inquire or register:

Call: 703-998-0251 **Wayne Krumwiede
Volunteer Instructor**

A \$10.00 registration and material fee covers all materials. At the end of the course, you will receive a certificate to submit to your automobile insurance company to receive a premium discount. This is in accordance with a January 1, 1985 Virginia law that requires insurance carriers to grant a premium reduction for a period of three years.

From the Mason District Government Web Site:

Reminder on Auto Decals

If you live in Fairfax County and own a motor vehicle, you must buy a county vehicle decal within 60 days of the date of your vehicle purchase or your move to the county.

For more information concerning the purchase of county decals, call the Central Tax Information number at 703-222-8234. In addition, residents may also obtain tax information by visiting the

Department of Tax Administration (DTA) Web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/dta.

DTA has full service tax counters open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Thursdays when the hours are extended to 6:30 p.m.

Tips for Deterring a Burglar

The Fairfax County Police Department offers a wide range of crime prevention services to citizens on how to avoid being the victim of a crime against property such as a burglary. Here are some steps you can take to make your home a less likely target for property crimes:

Recognizing a Con Artist

A con artist is usually a person who is a good actor and has the ability to gain someone's trust in a short period of time. The typical con artist is seldom violent and usually has a great sense of timing. The victims are usually older, female, and in most cases live alone. The best rule to follow is a simple one: "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

There are several types of schemes that con artists attempt including: home improvements; postal frauds; bank related schemes; gypsy type crimes, and 900 and 809 telephone numbers.

Here are some other crime prevention rules to follow:

- Do not trust strangers who offer instant cash.
- Do not give out your credit card number to anyone who solicits by phone.
- Be wary of home repair schemes.
- Never purchase anything that you have not seen.
- Be alert when you shop by mail and stay away from chain letters.
- Destroy all applications for credit cards you get in the mail so no one else can use them.
- Check out charities before contributing. For information about charities soliciting over the telephone, call the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-552-9963 and verify if it is a valid charity. Also, have the charity send you literature in the mail before you contribute.
- Be attentive to key words or phrases such as: cash only, today only, contest, last chance or left over material.

Techniques for Handling Annoying or Harassing Phone Calls

Anyone can be the victim of annoying or harassing phone calls. These may include random calls by pranksters or sales representatives that may be too forward or obtrusive. Most can be prevented or avoided by learning and using some simple techniques to decrease the potential for victimization.

1. Use your phone on your terms. If the caller doesn't speak or if you simply don't feel comfortable talking to the caller, hang up. You are not obligated to speak to anyone.
2. Ask the caller's identity or affiliation. If the caller refuses, hang up. Some "silent" callers are looking for a response and may want you to become scared or angry. Don't give them the satisfaction.
3. If the caller asks, "Who is this?" or "What number have I reached?" don't answer. Instead ask, "Whom do you want?" or "What number were you calling?" If the call is not legitimate, that will probably end it.
4. Don't give out any information unless you positively recognize the voice. Under no circumstances should you give the names of others living with you to someone who doesn't already know them.
5. If you have children, instruct them not to talk to strangers on the phone. Teach your children to ask for the caller's name and number so someone can return the call later.
6. Other techniques that may be useful in some circumstances include blowing a police whistle into the phone or tapping the disconnect button and stating: "Operator, this is a call I wanted traced."

The bottom line is, if you don't feel comfortable speaking to someone, hang up. Don't give out information and don't respond to questions unless you want to. If you feel you are the victim of malicious or threatening calls, contact the Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131

The Swimming Pool is Open FAIRFAX COUNTY

- Forbids the wearing of hard-soled street shoes on the pool deck.

- Only bathing shoes or sneakers are permitted.

SKYLINE HOUSE

- Forbids the wearing of swimming attire on the lobby level.
- Access to the pool shall be made from the "G level elevator to the "M" level.
- **ONLY** appropriate bathing attire is permitted in the pool.
- Neither flotation devices nor inflatable toys to keep your child afloat are allowed in the pool.
- Diving in the swimming pool is not allowed.
- Stay out of the water during rain or a thunderstorm.
- Talk with your children about observing the rules of the pool before they enter the water.

Farmer's Market is Open

A farmer's market, located at Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia pike, Annandale, is open on Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The market features fresh fruit, vegetables, plants, and baked goods.

The market closes for the season in late October. For a 24-hour recorded message on market locations, call 703-324-5390. For other markets information, call 703-642-5173.

**You think we have trouble with Crow's?
Check this out!** *From Washington Post Foreign Service*

Tokyo's Winged Bullies

City Fights Losing Battle Against Invading Flocks of Aggressive Crows

TOKYO – Exterminator Yasuke Hazu, 20, glided up the branches of a towering gingo tree on the playground of a kindergarten in Tokyo. In moments, a tangle of wire hangers that had been a nest for crows tumbled down – a small blow in the city's losing war against crows.

Other great cities battle rats or pigeons. But the scourge of Tokyo is crows. Large, black, winged bullies with a chilling caw and a look-you-in-the-face, beady-eyed arrogance.

Normally, the crows are but a menacing presence, rarely violent. But in the spring nesting season, they aggressively defend the territory around nests built in trees and utility poles,

swooping down on unsuspecting intruders walking below.

“People are scared by these crows,” said an exterminator hired by the city government. “They are big, black, with a big beak, and kind of scary.”

Through May, the Tokyo government had commissioned the exterminators to dismantle nearly 259 nests, disposing of 642 chicks and 93 eggs in the process.

In addition, the city government and its wards have distributed nearly 50,000 blue nets that people are supposed to place over garbage bags to keep the birds out. And the governor of Tokyo has publicly suggested a more personal approach to the problem.

The exterminators are ordered out only on cases of attacks on people. That still leaves them with plenty of work; there have been hundreds of reports of birds swooping down on people during the spring nesting season. Crows usually attack from behind, kicking or pecking at the victim’s head. They have had 10 to 20 that have drawn blood.

It estimates there were 7,000 crows living in Tokyo in 1985, and 21,000 as of the latest count. A bird watchers’ group says the number is probably 30,000. In the wild, the role of crows as scavengers is fine. In the city area, they have a huge, ample garbage supply and no natural enemies like an eagle or hawk. So they just increase.

This crowd of new neighbors is not subtle. Crows travel in mobs, swooping into an area with a triumphant racket. They are brazen, and increasingly unafraid of contact with man or beast. They stare down dogs, and are alleged to snatch small kittens. Try to shoo them away, and they may take one or two sullen hops; then stop defiantly.

The species here is the tree-loving jungle crow, and they have taken over some of Tokyo’s central parks. Mothers gather up their children when the flocks rumble back to their roosts overhead. The caw feeds superstitions: “Three crow cries, and someone has died,” goes one. “See a crow, take three steps back,” goes another.

Nests in utility poles have led to five blackouts in the past two years, according to an official of the Tokyo Electric Power Co. Linemen arrive to find a roasted crow beneath the shorted lines. The company has tried a variety of umbrella-like devices and obstructing wires to discourage crows.

They all turned out not to work. The crows are too smart, maybe smarter than the power company.

“Crows have huge forebrains in comparison with other birds,” said Shigeru Watanabe, a psychologist who oversaw experiments at Keio University in Tokyo to see if crows recognized people. “They are smarter than pigeons but dumber than us.”

That sometimes seems debatable. The crow explosion has occurred because impeccable Tokyo puts its garbage out in peckable plastic bags each night, and cannot seem to figure out that garbage dumpsters or cans would keep out the crows.

When recycling started here in 1992, requiring separation of different kinds of trash, the government insisted people use relatively transparent bags. So on garbage collection day, rows of clear vinyl bags offer crows a smorgasbord. The crows prefer bags that seem to contain wet or pinkish contents, promising a treat for the flesh-loving scavengers. Before the garbage collectors arrive, the birds have pecked through and strewn the garbage across the street.

So, too, the noise problem is partly a self-inflicted injury by humans. Complaints about crows rocketed to 1,298 last year, from 511 the year before, partly because the increase in the crow population means so many more crows are living close to people. And crows greet the sunrise with a raucous hello, a din that drives people out of bed.

Since Japan stubbornly refuses to adopt daylight saving time, the deafening noise starts at 4:30 a.m., rather than a slightly more civilized hour. Is that the sound of crows laughing through their beaks?

Even the attacks during nesting season can be partly blamed on the linguistic shortcomings of the victims, said Michio Matsuda, an ornithologist and author of “Why Crows Attack.” If more people talked crow, he said, there would be fewer such incidents.

“There’s a lack of communication here,” Matsuda said. “Crows send many signals. When the salary man going to work or the mother with a baby goes under a tree with a nest, the crows give nasty cries to say, ‘Please leave our living circle.’ But city people miss the sign. It’s a problem for the crows. They are perplexed, and they send more signals that are ignored. The only thing they can do is, be more aggressive.”

***SPECIAL EVENTS AT
SKYLINE HOUSE
July 2001***

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 FCR	3	 4 Independence Day	5	6 TGIF 6:30 P.M. ECR	7
8	9 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 FCR	10	11 SECURITY 7:00-8:00 WCR	12 PPOC 7:00 P.M. WCR	13	14
15	16 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 FCR	17 FIN MGT 7:00 P.M. WCR	18 COVENANTS COMMITTEE 7:30 P.M. WCR	19 BOARD 7:00 P.M. WCR	20	21
22	23 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 FCR	24 COVENANTS HEARING 7:00 P.M. WCR	25	26	27	28
29	30 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 FCR	31				

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