

The House Special



Volume XXVI Issue 9

Skyline House

September 2006

Board of Directors

President, Norman Baker

The next Board of Directors meeting will be Wednesday, September 27th. The enclosed calendar also notes the September dates of our many important Committee meetings. As in the past, there were no Board of Directors or standing Committee meetings in August so I will take advantage of space created by the lack of Committee business reports in this month's issue to address other matters of interest.

Before doing so, I know I speak for the entire Board and community when I express condolences to Vice-President Maria Elena Schacknies on the sudden, unexpected death of her husband, Siegbert Schacknies, on August 20th. General Manager Gusbey Silva and I recently met with Maria Elena and Bert in their home to discuss the Bailey's Crossroads Revitalization plan and its impact on our immediate area. Bert was informed and animated about how important it was for the Skyline area to be well represented in the process and was making himself and Maria Elena available to ensure representation. His background in urban planning and transportation (among others) was to prove invaluable in the process. It was my understanding that Bert was also considering volunteering for the PPOC where his expertise would prove helpful as well. He will be missed.

Where is the House Special Newsletter?

For some time now, the Newsletter has been disseminated by mailing copies to the nonresident owners and then placing stacks of copies in each mail lobby and at the front desk for all other residents to pick up at their leisure. It has come to my attention that, for a very long time now, on a monthly basis, there are many residents who, apparently, do not pick up a newsletter. This is of great concern as our newsletter provides information that is important to everyone, owners and renters alike. Readers find important information such as schedules of monthly business meetings and recreation events, financial and budget matters, emergency procedures, good neighbor volunteers, overall building related matters, and much, much more. Although residents cannot be forced to read the newsletter, we can certainly make a better effort to ensure that a newsletter finds

its way to every resident. Therefore, effective with this issue, Management will disseminate the newsletter via the front desk unit boxes. A color-coded newsletter tag will be placed in every front desk unit box and removed when a resident has picked up their copy of the newsletter. Mid-month, the staff will contact those residents who still have a tag remaining in their box and inform the resident that there is a newsletter to be picked up at the front desk. It is important to all of us that all residents read the newsletter – an informed community is a better community. I hope this new procedure, along with the new e-mail delivery system, will improve the number of residents who routinely read the newsletter. To sign up for House e-mail see Tania Saib in the Management Office.

I have heard from one person kind enough to offer to assist with the newsletter but we still need one or more volunteers to serve as Editor/Co-Editors.

New Recreation Committee Chair

As many of you know, Tony DiSalvo has Chaired the Recreation Committee since March 1995 and, prior to that, served as co-Chair since July 1991. For some time now, Tony has been calling for someone new to step forward and assume the duties of Committee Chair. I know we certainly heard him loud and clear during his reports at the 2005 and 2006 Annual meetings and the article he provided for the most recent August House Special began “Just one more reminder - looking for a new chairman for the Recreation Committee.” Well, there is good news! I am pleased to announce that Christine Dozier has volunteered to serve as Chair of the Recreation Committee and, at long last, relieve Tony of the duties he has carried out so faithfully for so many years. The Board approved Christine’s nomination in late August and a transition meeting was held with Tony, Christine, the General Manager, and me on August 25th. Tony will remain a member of the Committee and will also continue to accept magazines at the front desk for donation to Alexandria Hospital. Christine promises to try to reinvigorate recreational activities at Skyline House and has already shared many exciting ideas with the Board. She will need support. The current Committee now consists of just five individuals. The next Committee meeting will be October 11th at 7:00 pm in the West Card Room. Please mark your calendar and make it a point to attend and consider joining the Committee. Everyone’s ideas will be welcome. You can help Christine make a difference.

The next TGIF will be September 8th at 6:30 pm in the East Party Room. Come thank Tony for all his hard work and meet and congratulate Christine on her new position.

Skyline House Library

If you have never visited the lending Library in the East Building Penthouse, you should do so. You will find an amazing inventory of books (mysteries, biographies, fiction and non-fiction), audio books, videos and even children’s books that can be borrowed at no cost. The library, staffed by volunteer residents, is open most Monday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. It is certainly one of the hidden gems of Skyline House and you will be glad you discovered it. Save gas and time spent on a trip to the local public library. Save the money you plan to spend on that next book. Visit the Library. You never know what you might find and it is just an easy, inside stroll, from your unit. Many thanks to the dedicated volunteer librarians who help make the library available to us all.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

The Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) has been ably Chaired for some time now by George Beams. Although he continues to loyally serve, George would very much like to pass the torch to someone new. The PPOC reviews, oversees, and makes recommendations to the Board on the operations, maintenance and proposed changes to the buildings, equipment, and grounds. If you have any background in engineering, construction, architecture, mechanics or other related experience, your community needs you to serve on the PPOC.

Please contact Norman Baker at nbaker@fjc.gov or 703-671-6759



Management

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

End of the Pool Season but Not the End of the Sunning Season

The swimming pool will officially close for the season at 8:00 pm September 4th. A few tables, chairs and lounge chairs will remain available on the sundeck area for those who would like to continue to take advantage of the abundant September sunshine.

East Building North and South Façade Restoration

The remaining work needed on the wall located between tiers 6 and 7 will be completed during the first week of September. The remaining work needed on the wall located between tiers 4 and 5 will be completed during the third week of September.

The work on the tiers: 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10, started during the first week of August. The completion of the façade repairs on these tiers is estimated between the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007, weather permitting. The form boards installed in these units at the end of July will be removed some time during the month of December.

Unfortunately, the repair process imposes a real inconvenience on the residents of units on the side of the building being worked on. The drilling, which is very noisy, occurs in two separate phases: first, to remove the bad concrete and, second to remove the brick above the spandrel in order to replace the existing flashing. The penthouse party rooms are available weekdays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm to help you escape the noise while the repairs are being done near your unit.

Keep in mind the façade repairs also generate a high volume of dust and debris. Taping windows and doors with masking tape will help prevent some of this from entering your unit. Please keep your doors and windows closed while the work is being performed and do not access your balcony during that time.

The remaining tiers in the East Building, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 01 will be completed during the fourth phase of the project, scheduled to begin in March 2007.

Garage Painting

The painting of all cinder-block walls and vertical concrete columns in the garage will begin on September 11th in the lower C Level and will continue upwards. During this time residents will need to park their vehicles three feet away from the wall or railing that is to be painted. By September 8th, tape will be strung in the garage to indicate to residents how far into their parking spaces to drive their vehicles. This will not apply to vehicles parked in certain spaces on Garage Levels A and B, where there are no walls or concrete columns to be painted.

A determination whether or not to paint the ceilings of the A, B and C levels will be made after all the walls and vertical concrete columns are painted. If it is determined that the painting of the ceilings is necessary, that project will be done during Spring 2007.

Resident Vehicle Registration

Rule 18 E. 6. Of the Rules and Regulations states “All vehicles...parked in the garage or outside spaces on a regular basis, shall display the Skyline House registration decal issued by the Association.” **If you park inside or outside on Skyline House property, register your car with the Association and display the sticker on your vehicle window as instructed or risk having your vehicle towed at your own expense.**



INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

Fire Alarms and False Fire Alarms

The Skyline House fire alarm system is connected to a central receiving panel that is monitored 24 hours a day by a private company. When a fire alarm sounds, the monitoring company immediately knows which device is activated in which building. A call to the Fairfax County Fire Department is placed immediately. Every call is taken seriously by the Fire Department and is responded to within minutes.

Fortunately, the cause of most fire alarms is not fire, but something else. Causes can be accidental (somebody bumping into a fire alarm device or a worker spray painting, sawing/sanding wood, or welding too close to a smoke detector), unintentional (dust or insects which the detector identifies as smoke, a detector too close to a kitchen area, or water that leaks into a detector), mechanical (a malfunctioning detector--usually when a new one is being installed, during an electrical storm, or a faulty wire), or **MALICIOUS**.

Workers and occupants need to be aware of what activity will likely set off a fire alarm via a smoke detector. In several cases, however, it was beneficial a fire alarm went off as it called attention to a situation that could have been very damaging if not identified.

A **MALICIOUS** false alarm occurs when a person intentionally sends in a false report of a fire. This causes emergency crews to expend time and effort in responding to a non-existing situation. False alarms can kill. It has been documented by national fire agencies that numerous fire departments responding to false alarms have been involved in accidents that resulted in firefighters being injured or killed and vehicles and equipment damaged. They were also delayed from responding to real emergencies where lives really were at stake. False alarms also create apathy towards real fire alarms, causing occupants to not take the next, possibly real, alarm seriously.

False fire alarms are extremely rare here at Skyline House and malicious ones even more rare. However, mid-morning Thursday, August 10th, a malicious false fire alarm in the East building sounded when a pull station by the east stairwell on the 14th floor was purposely activated for no legitimate reason. Although it was known to be a false alarm soon after it sounded, rules prohibit turning off an alarm before the fire department authorizes it. The fire department responded promptly, as they always do, but concerned residents (some sick and elderly) had already begun to evacuate their homes climbing down the many flights of stairs. This false alarm not only put these residents at risk, it also could have delayed the response of the fire department to another alarm causing damage and potential loss of life. It is this kind of alarm that causes the most concern and is severely prosecuted whenever possible.

The August 10th false alarm is under investigation and all findings will be submitted to the Fairfax Police for action. Also, necessary steps are being taken in conjunction with the Fire Department to better assist in identifying violators.

§ 18.2-212 A. of the Virginia Code states:

Calling or summoning ambulance or fire-fighting apparatus without just cause; maliciously activating fire alarms in public buildings; venue.

Any person who without just cause therefor[e], calls or summons, by telephone or otherwise, any ambulance, or fire-fighting apparatus, or any person who maliciously activates a manual or automatic fire alarm in any building used for public assembly or for other public use, including, but not limited to, schools, theaters, stores, office buildings, shopping centers and malls, coliseums and arenas, regardless of whether fire apparatus responds or not, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

“HOUSE” HINTS

PEST CONTROL

The Association contracts for weekly pest control service for all common areas and also, on a first come first serve basis, for up to eight individual units. The service is performed every Thursday. If you are experiencing a problem in your unit with ants, spiders, etc. you may sign up for this service at the front desk. **There is no cost to you.**

CHECK THE BULLETIN BOARDS

Bulletin Boards are located in the mail lobby areas of both the East and West buildings. Make a point to check them every day. Important information for you will be found there. True, there is not something new every time you stop to check, but by making a habit of checking at least once a day, you will ensure you never miss an important notice.

USE YOUR HEADLIGHTS

Always remember to turn on your headlights while driving in the garage. This will not only help you more easily see other cars and pedestrians, it will also help others to see your car. Thus, with such a small effort, you immensely improve your odds of avoiding an accident in the garage.

SLOW DOWN

The speed limit in the garage is FIVE (5) miles per hour. Please obey it.

NEW HOT WATER HEATERS

New hot water heaters can be purchased in the Management Office and delivered and installed by the in-house engineering staff. Don't wake up to a cold shower or, even worse, wait until your old water heater springs a leak and you end up paying for water damage in your unit and many units below you. A new, energy efficient, water heater will also save you money on your electric bill. Take advantage of this in-house service and replace your old water heater today.

TGIF* Gathering

**6:30 pm, Friday, September 8th
East Party Room**

After serving as Chair of the Recreation Committee since 1995 and co-Chair since 1991, Tony DiSalvo will host his last TGIF in that capacity this evening.

Christine Dozier has volunteered to take on the duties of Recreation Committee Chair, and the Board has approved her nomination to that post.

Please come say thank you to Tony for all his hard work throughout the years and to meet and congratulate Christine.

If you have not attended one of the monthly TGIF gatherings before, make September 8th your first. To make it easy, you are requested NOT to bring a plate of hors d'ourves, just your own liquid refreshments.

ALL ARE WELCOME

***Thank Goodness It's Friday**



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Coordinator, Judith York

The "National Night Out" (NNO) program of Tuesday, August 1st was a great success. We started at 8:00 pm and finished at 10:00 pm. The pedestrian bridge across S. George Mason Dr. never looked more beautiful with the luminaries (candles glowing through small brown bags) lighting up both sides of the bridge. I would like to personally thank all the (volunteer) participants, especially our young volunteers who helped set out the hors d'oeuvres in the lobby and, more importantly, raced from the lobby to the bridge with bottles of water for our hardworking adult volunteers. With the hot, humid weather and the breeze on the bridge, it was no easy task to keep the candles lit, but we did, and Skyline House volunteers really did "light up the night" in solidarity against drugs and crime. If anyone is interested in seeing pictures from the different communities on the NNO program, the Mason District Police Station has two display boards from that evening in their lobby. My thanks also go out to Joyce Osborn, Coordinator of the Neighborhood Watch Group at Skyline Plaza, who provided us with a banner celebrating the National Night Out, and also arranged the display of two banners on the bridge.

Many students have returned to school already while others will return after the Labor Day weekend. Please stay alert in the congested traffic areas to protect our students as they walk to and from the bus stop areas and to their schools.

The Mason District meetings, which are open to all interested parties, will be on September 5th and October 3rd at the Mason District Center, at the following times:

6:30 pm Neighborhood Watch Coordinators
7:00 pm Neighborhood Watch Training
7:30 pm Citizens Advisory Committee

Due to many of our Neighborhood Watch volunteers traveling we are in need of more participants to patrol the buildings and grounds. If you are interested in helping to keep Skyline House safe, please give me a call on 703-671-2267. We are an informal group and volunteers walk a minimum of one hour a week, at their convenience, with a companion or on their own. Although the Neighborhood Watch Group (NWG) holds no meetings, we are a part of the Security, Fire and Safety Committee, chaired by Bob De Mayo, and attend that Committee's meetings. Please consider joining the NWG, and the Security, Fire and Safety Committee. "Making the rounds" as a NWG participant is a great way to get to know your neighbors, keep fit, and keep your community safe.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Good Neighbors are available to assist all residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency.

AUGUST GOOD NEIGHBORS*

ERNEST LOYOLA 703-671-0384

MARYANNE SOLLACK 703-845-9325

(*GOOD NEIGHBOR CONTACT INFO CAN ALSO BE FOUND ON THE CALENDAR PAGE)

Good Neighbors always welcomes new members to assist those in need. If you are interested in serving your neighbors, please call Coordinator Toska Prather or Ernest Loyola. Their contact information is listed in the newsletter directory on the calendar page.



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2006

(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4 Library Closed	5	6	7	8 TGIF 6:30 pm E. Party Room	9
10	11 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 pm East Penthouse	12	13 Security, Fire, and Safety 7:00 pm W. Card Room	14 Physical Plant & Operations 7:00 pm W. Card Room	15	16
17	18 Financial Mgmt 7:00 pm WCR Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 pm East Penthouse	19 Covenants 7:00 pm W. Card Room	20	21	22	23
24	25 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 pm East Penthouse	26	27 Board of Directors 7:00 pm W. Card Room	28	29	30
GOOD NEIGHBORS: ERNEST LOYOLA (703-671-0384) and MARYANNE SOLLACK (703-845-9325)						

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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 inappropriate statements. Information for THE HOUSE SPECIAL may be sent by e-mail to the Editor, dropped off at the Management office or the front desk attention EDITOR.

ACTING EDITOR --- Norman Baker 915W nbaker@fjc.gov 671-6759

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