

# The House Special



Volume 27 Issue 4

Skyline House

April 2007



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and election of two members of the Board of Directors were conducted on Tuesday, March 27, 2007.

Four residents were candidates for the two, three-year term, seats on the Board. Although there was a better voter turnout than many times in the past, it is important for everyone to know that only about 40% of the eligible voters in our Association actually voted. Put otherwise, 60% of our owners chose not to play even a simple role, casting a ballot, in the very important governance of our Condominium. For those that did make the effort to vote, your Board, your Association, and your neighbors, thank you for being a conscientious Skyline House citizen.

I and former Board member Budd Coutts were elected to the two Board seats. In the Board's organizing meeting later that evening, Evelyn Haught was elected Secretary, Julie Campbell was reelected Treasurer, Maria Elena Schacknies was reelected Vice-President, and I was reelected President. Toska Prather, John Warner and Budd Coutts will serve as Directors.

As I did in my report that evening, I extend thanks to the other two candidates, Marina Veljanovska and Tricia Kurban, for their willingness to serve.

What follows are the reports I and Treasurer Julie Campbell presented that evening.

### **President's Report Presented At The Annual Meeting**

I am pleased to report that the overall state of our Condominium and Association is excellent and that our fiscal status is quite sound. Our Treasurer's report and that of the Financial Management Committee will provide details on our financial health.

I would like to mention a few of the positive happenings in our community over the past 12 months and acknowledge some of those who assisted in making them happen.

+ Election procedures were slightly modified with hope that the changes would encourage more owners to participate in the elections that are so important to our governance. Preliminary evidence appears we were successful. We will know for certain post election.

In addition, I believe for the first time, the votes for this election will be counted by a private vote counting service with much experience in that field.

I know the Chair of the Covenants Committee will have more to say about all of their efforts shortly, but I would like to offer the Board's and the entire Association's thanks to the many volunteers --- especially the election committee's chair Sonya Livingston --- for the long months of effort required to perform the essential annual function of organizing and conducting the election of new Board members. I also wish to thank Charles Roberts for agreeing to serve as Inspector General.

+ Resident Bob De Mayo volunteered to serve as chair of our important Fire, Safety and Security Committee after it had gone far too long without a Chairperson.

+ Residents Betty Turner and Nadyne McKelvey volunteered to serve as Co-Chairs of our Recreation Committee replacing Christine Dozier who briefly and ably served in 2006.

+ A modified guest parking registration policy and other related changes were implemented resulting in a decrease in abuse of our guest parking and a noticeable increase in guest parking spaces our guests now find available when they visit.

+ A new e-mail information dissemination system was implemented so owners and residents can receive the newsletter, bulletin board notices, under door memos and other information items via their personal and office computers. Registration for this free service has been encouraging.

+ The format of our newsletter was modified and various efforts were made to gather data about its readership numbers which were found to be quite impressive.

+ To enhance the appearance and brightness of all levels of our garage but especially some of the inherently darker areas, all walls and columns of the A, B & C levels were painted and the ceiling beams will be painted this year.

Also, a more frequent bulk light bulb replacement system was implemented in the garage so we will no longer be relying on old/dimming bulbs to first go out before being replaced.

+ The east and west bike storage rooms were redesigned and a new registration was implemented.

+ 35 common area doors were changed from traditional key locks to electronic key fob locks to provide greater convenience and security for our residents. Relying on the skills of our Chief engineer Greg Grim and Assistant Engineer Tettie Moore to pull all of the wire for this project saved the Association many thousands of dollars. The system is to be activated soon.

+ All of the West building (phase I & II) and Phase 3 of the East building facade repairs are now completed. Phase 4 (the final phase) is now underway in the East building. This week marks the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of this 4 year project which began March 22, 2004.

+ A group purchase is being negotiated for unit window pane replacement. This program will be announced soon.

+ Expanded recycling options were pursued and are being implemented.

+ The 2007 condo fee increase was held to 2.5% while reserve contributions were increased from 1.5% to 2.25% . Reserves of around \$2 million are now forecast by 2009.

That is by no means an all inclusive list but I think it is certainly an impressive example of how our community continues to grow and improve.

This positive governance and maintenance of our community, buildings and grounds would not be possible without the active participation of many owners and our wonderful in-house management and staff.

Governance begins with your elected Board of Directors. But the Board could not do all of the things assigned to it without the assistance of important committees: the Physical Plant and Operations Committee, chaired by George Beams; the Financial Management Committee, chaired by Winny Joshua; the Covenants Committee, chaired by Joe Livingston; and the Fire, Safety, and Security Committee, chaired by Bob De Mayo. I already mentioned, Sonya Livingston, chair of the Election Committee and its many volunteers.

Still all is not strictly business.

Contributing significantly to the quality of life in Skyline House are the Recreation Committee, as I mentioned, now co-chaired by Betty Turner and Nadyne McKelvey; the Neighborhood Watch Group, coordinated by Judith York; and the Good Neighbors Group, coordinated by Toska Prather and Ernest Loyola.

The actual work of keeping Skyline House an attractive and desirable place to live is done by 27 staff members who are ably led by Gusbey Silva, our General Manager, and her Deputy, Darryl Hall. The maintenance and engineering staff, led by Chief Engineer Greg Grimm and his assistant, Tettie Moore, maintain all the mechanical and electrical systems in our buildings and, as necessary, supervise and assist Marcello Quisbert in providing excellent in-unit repair and maintenance services. Betty McLaurin, leads our housekeeping staff, all of whom do a first-rate job of keeping our buildings and grounds neat and clean. Our long-time in-house Head Painter Antonio Palacios and his assistant Arturo Melendez in addition to continuing to perform their regular duties --- have been for the past several years, heavily involved in the in-unit details of ceiling and window prep and restoration related to the facade repairs and also the painting of the garage. The Management office staff consists of three very able persons: Tycia Haight the Association's Accountant, Tania Saib our Resident Service Coordinator, and Terezinha Shaw, the Administrative Assistant. You should also know that Joyce Routt does an excellent job as our chief web site developer.

I am confident that all of you share my strong feelings of appreciation for the excellent services all of our staff provide to our community.

In closing, I want to express my appreciation to fellow Board members: Maria Elena Schacknies, (who has continued to valiantly serve our community as Vice President despite a great personal tragedy and loss), Julie Campbell our Treasurer; Evelyn Haught, who recently assumed the duties of Secretary after a member serving in that role left the Board; and Directors Toska Prather and John Warner. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with you this past year. To all of my fellow unit owners, I feel confident in asserting to you that your "House" is well managed and well-governed and will continue to be served conscientiously and responsibly by Management, staff, and the new Board.

### **Treasurer's Report Presented At The Annual Meeting**

This evening marks the completion of my first year serving as Treasurer and will begin my second year on the Board. This has been a year of learning how the committees, management office and the Board tie everything together in what we know as the Association. These past twelve months have passed rather quickly. As many of you will recall I had only lived here one year prior to running for election to the Board of Directors. I again thank you for electing me as your representative.

## **2006 Annual Audit**

Each year, per the by-laws, an independent audit is performed on the financial records of the Association. Our auditors for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2006 are Goldklang, Cavanaugh and Associates, P.C. This CPA firm has performed our annual audit since 1999.

Over the past number of years, the auditor's have been able to give a favorable opinion of the Skyline House financial statements. This is also the determination for 2006. What this means to us as the Board of Director's and individually as unit owners is the assurance that the financial statements for last year present fairly, in all material respect, the financial position of Skyline House in accordance to generally accepted accounting principles.

After the auditor's recommendations had been reviewed and accepted by the General Manager and me the final adjustments were made to the financial statements and we ended the period with a net operating income of \$122,171.

On December 5, 2006 the Board passed a Deferred Assessment Resolution based on the recommendation of Goldklang, Cavanaugh and Associates, P.C. to apply all or part of the excess assessment income to the following year's assessments. Based on this resolution these funds have been placed in the Replacement Reserves account.

## **Annual Budget**

Aside from this being our home, this is also a business with a budget of \$3.5 million; ninety-two percent of this amount is assessment funding from the homeowners, the remaining eight percent is from other income. It is your money that the Association is spending for the benefit of all residents. The operating budget must provide for payroll, administrative costs, utilities, maintenance of the common facilities, supplies, service contracts and fund the annual contribution to the reserve accounts. Funding the Reserve accounts alone for 2007 is nearly \$1.2 million, which is thirty-three percent of our annual income. Our second largest cost is payroll at thirty percent; followed by utilities at thirteen percent and the remaining twenty-four percent is a combination of administrative, maintenance, supplies and contract costs.

## **Replacement Reserves**

Adequate funding of the Replacement, Periodic Maintenance and Consulting Reserves is paramount to the preservation of the building. This is a long-term commitment to the financial health of the Association and the pocketbook of the unit owners. The Financial Management Committee, General Manager and Board are committed to the planning and execution of a long-term replacement reserve program.

Every five years a reserve study is conducted to establish where we stand at that point in time. This study is intended to answer three fundamental questions; 1) what will it cost the Association to repair or replace its common elements? 2) When will the common elements wear out? And 3) how will we pay for these capital projects? The next study will be conducted in 2008 for implementation in 2009. The reserve study is based on known facts and assumptions prepared by an independent professional. Many things can change over time that may affect the original estimates and the monthly reserve contribution. You will be happy to know that our reserve account has been steadily funded based on the recommendations of the reserve study prepared in 2003.

## **Delinquent Assessments**

One of many reasons that we are successful as an Association is that our level of delinquent assessments is well below the industry recommended maximum of five percent (5%) of annual assessments. As of December 31<sup>st</sup> our assessments receivable balance was less than one percent (1%). We have fair, but very aggressive collection policies that have served us well throughout the year. You can see that those policies protect all of us.

## **Vision for the Future**

At the end of December, the property was eighty-two percent (82%) owner occupied. This figure has been constant within 1 percent (1%) throughout the year. That is 458 units out of 556 are occupied by the owner(s). With the majority of the owners living on the property, shouldn't we collectively be evaluating and planning now to determine our needs and desires are for the future? As I mentioned earlier we have a solid operating budget and effectively plan for the maintenance of the building with reserve funding but I believe there is more that should be considered to protect our investment in our homes.

## **Unfunded Initiatives**

During the course of the last few months, the FMC, Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC), General Manager and the Board have discussed the topics of a vestibule in the west building mail lobby, having an energy audit conducted, installing solar panels, making our buildings "green" or environmentally friendly, improving the lighting in the garage, and installing a sidewalk in the west guest parking to name a few. What many of these topics have in common is that they would be a capital expenditure in excess of \$10,000. This figure is the current limit per the bylaws established in the late 1970's when the operating budget was less than \$500,000.

## **A Changing Condo Market**

Is our investment in Skyline House at risk as a result of new condo communities that offer 21<sup>st</sup> century amenities? There are many more condominium units today than 2 years ago very close to our door. Who is our competition? We have come so far to ignore the challenges that face us.

## **The Way Ahead**

How does the Association move forward? We need to prioritize the needs of the community over desires that do not benefit the majority of the membership. We can move forward by establishing consensus and buy-in from the membership.

## **What You Can Do**

Volunteer to serve on a committee, attend committee and board meetings. A few hours per month by many can achieve realistic solutions. The future of this association, this business, this building needs your help to move forward.



# **Management**

## **General Manager, Gusbey Silva**

## **East Building North & South Façade Restoration**

The remaining of work needed on tiers 3, 4, 9 & 10 is estimated for completion by the middle of April, the work on tiers 2 and 8 was completed the end of March 2007.

The demolition on tiers 12, 13, 14 & 15, began on Tuesday, February 20, 2007 and will be completed during the first week of April 2007, the remainder of the work on these tiers, including the concrete placement, flashing replacement brick installation and pointing is estimated for completion prior to the swimming pool opening, scheduled for Saturday, May 26, 2007.

The demolition on tiers 01, 11 & 16 began the end of March and will be completed by the middle of May 2007, weather permitting. The reminder of the work on these tiers is estimated for completion by the end of August 2007, weather permitting.

## **Access Control System**

The installation of the wiring needed for the Access Control was completed during the first week of March. The contractor started the installation of the hardware needed on each door included in this project on Friday March 2<sup>nd</sup>. This phase of the project was completed on Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

We still have about 10% of residents who have not picked up their new key/fob, however, the blue key is no longer working; residents who are out of town would need to use the Main Lobby entrance in order to access the building, until they pick up their new key/fobs at the Management Office.

Notices were posted advising residents on how to use the new access control system, please take into consideration that you would only need to use the PUSH TO EXIT if the sensor fails and the magnetic lock does not get released allowing you to open the door to exit.

## **New Recycling Procedures**

The implementation of the new recycling regulations in the East and West Buildings was finally achieved after several negotiations with our contractor who finally agreed on allowing us to continue to use the totters which originally were going to be discontinued. Due to the lack of space in the West Building recycling room and loading dock area it was not possible to accommodate larger containers. Effective this month residents no longer have to separate newspapers from the rest of their recycling materials.

Please instruct your contractors not to place any material they are disposing of in any of the totters placed in the loading dock area for the recycling program.

## **Exercise Room & Swimming Pool Shower Facilities**

We are requesting the residents' cooperation in taking extra care when using our shower facilities, as recently we have experienced water leaks into the Accounting Office due to water seeping onto the bathroom floor from the showers stalls. Please ensure that the shower door is tightly closed while showering.

## **Garage Trash Containers**

Please take into consideration that the trash containers located in the garage by the building doors are provided to place the trash into the container and not around or on top. Please be considerate of your neighbors who have to deal with a dirty and messy environment when coming home due to boxes and empty containers left on the floor by the building entrance door from the garage. The Housekeeping Staff takes pride of the up keep of the building and they need your cooperation on this matter.

## **Vehicle Decals & Registration**

Every time you replace your vehicle license plate please inform Management. This will allow us to keep accurate records of all vehicles kept in Skyline House database and in case of an emergency we will be able to contact you.

## **Lighting Improvements**

In order to improve the lighting in the garage all fluorescent 48" light tubes in the A, B & C levels of the garage were replaced at the end of March. Management will continue with the bulk replacement of all light tubes every two years, as recommended by the lighting supplier, in order to obtain the maximum lighting possible from each bulb on a consistent basis. Based on the same principal, the light bulbs of the fixtures located in front of the passenger elevators in every floor of both buildings, were replaced early March and will continue to be replaced every 12 months. This measure was taken in order to improve the lighting in the passenger elevator lobbies of the residential corridors.

## **SKYLINE HOUSE E-MAIL NEWS DELIVERY**

More than 150 residents/owners have now signed up for electronic e-mail delivery of Skyline House information items including bulletin board notices, under the door notices, Committee announcements and The House Special newsletter. It is so easy to do! Just stop by the Management Office and register your e-mail address. It will be used only for sending you notices like those described above. Don't miss any announcements ever again. Receive them right in the convenience of your own home. **SIGN UP TODAY.**

## **AUTOMOBILE OIL LEAKS**

Not only are oil leaks on our property unsightly, the oil eventually makes its way onto other parking spaces, onto the roadway, and into our buildings. It also deteriorates the concrete. If your car is leaking oil you are urged to have your car repaired at once and contact Management to have your space cleaned. If you are routinely witnessing ongoing leakage in a parking space, please report it to Management as soon as possible.

## **Slow Down and Use Your Lights**

Please use extreme caution when driving in the garage. Also please remember to always use your headlights, the illumination helps pedestrians as well as other drivers see you sooner which will allow them more time to exercise additional caution so you do not meet one another by "accident." The posted speed limit in the garage is 5 miles per hour. Since the average vehicle weighs 3,000 lbs, the faster it moves the longer it takes to stop. We are asking all drivers to please **SLOW DOWN** while driving in the garage and outside around the property. If a child darts out from between parked vehicles he/she can be struck and killed and if a vehicle backs out of a space it will be struck in the rear where the fuel tank is located and may cause an explosion/fire. These are the catastrophic consequences we face by speeding in the very limited driving space of which we all make daily use.

## **Overhead Mirrors in the Garage**

Slow down and you will notice that there are overhead mirrors located on the garage ceiling at the up/down ramp. Please use these mirrors to check for pedestrians and oncoming vehicles as you approach the ramps. These mirrors are a great safety device and allow you to see areas not directly in front of you. Slow down and use the mirrors!!

## **Guest Parking**

Please, for the sake of our guests, reduce or better yet, cease your personal use of guest parking spaces. Ask yourself before parking in a guest space, "do I really need to take up this space even though it is for only a brief amount of time?" Promise yourself, if you forget to remove your car in the allowed amount of time, you will be understanding when you find your vehicle has been towed at your expense.



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Chair, Wynfred Joshua

Every March, as is customary, we give our residents a report on Skyline House's financial activities of the past year. Financial Management Committee members have been quite active in 2006. We worked hard to implement our mission of overseeing the financial and budgetary issues and making recommendations to the Board. Thanks are due to the dedicated members of our Committee, our Treasurer, and the General Manager and her staff who labored diligently to see us through the various projects.

Our condo's budget essentially consists of two parts: the operational budget and the reserves. The operational budget covers the day-today activities and routine expenditures. Our management has done a superb job in identifying savings. For example, we switched insurance companies and are now with one that gives us a similar policy at a lower rate. To be sure, the increase in the appraisal of our property from \$129 to \$203 million impacted on the premiums, but we still had savings. We investigated the unexpectedly high water bill for the East Building and were able to solve that. Because of efficient management, operational expenses went down almost \$70,000 this year notwithstanding the raise in salaries for our staff.

Most of the financial activities involve items listed in the Reserve Budget. This covers periodic maintenance and replacement of the various components of our condo. We contract for a study of these components every five years and may change projections as a result. Meanwhile this committee together with PPOC also reviews the reserve schedule every year. Our immediate aim is to increase the reserves to at least \$2 million as befits a building of our size and standing. We hope to reach this by 2009.

Our main financial project this year remained the façade repairs. We finished the West Building façade last year and are now well into doing the East Building. We had unexpected additional charges. Because of the major expenses for the façade repairs we had to postpone some key projects from 2006 to 2007, such as the renovation of the circular driveway and the sealing of the garage decks.

In 2006 we started the establishment of a keyless access control system. We are replacing the blue security keys with a system that uses small fobs which are electronically controlled. Part of the system was paid in 2006; subsequent wiring was started by our own engineers in early 2007. It is now about to be completed and by having our own engineers doing the wiring, we are saving some \$40,000.

We supported a proposal to inspect and test the structural aspects of the garage. We do this every two years. It is critical to ensure the structural integrity of the garage. We do not wish to be caught with major repairs to the garage as we were some years ago when we levied a special assessment on owners to cover the repairs. We have been budgeting funds to cover these inspections and possible repairs.

We resumed painting the garage white in order to protect the cement and to provide more light. The 2006 budget covered the hiring of a part time painter to do this. Because we did not want to remove the cars, we did not paint the ceiling and beams. We will do the beams, however, this year. Management has assured us that this can be done without harming parked cars.

There have been several other projects we reviewed, supported and, if appropriate, recommended to the Board. Each one of these was designed to maintain the smooth operation of our establishment, to keep our buildings in good shape, or to enhance our living environment. This costs money; it is where your condo fee goes. We are blessed, however, with having an effective management and a good collaboration among those who are involved with the financial aspects of Skyline House.

To summarize our financial status for 2006: Our total income was about \$3.5 million. Our regular expenditures were about \$2.2 million, and contributions to the Reserve Budget were some \$1.15 million. Much of that was used to fund reserve projects, notably the façade repairs. Unlike 2005 when we ended the year with a small deficit, we concluded this year with a surplus of roughly \$124,000 which will be used to build our reserves. For 2007 we were able to arrive at an overall budget that required only a modest increase of 2.5% in our condo fee. We can assure you that Skyline House's financial condition is healthy and we will seek to keep it that way.

The Committee's next meeting will be on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 PM in the West Card room.



## **COVENANTS**

**Chair, Joe Livingston**

The 2007 election for two members to the SHUOA Board of Directors was a success.

Our congratulations to Norman Baker and Budd Coutts, and our thanks to Tricia Kurban and Marina Veljanovska who also were candidates this year.

Our thanks to those members of the Covenants Committee who supported the Election Committee in this most successful election.

As expressed in my report at the Association's annual meeting, all of the volunteers did a great job.

Shortly, the Election Committee will submit a detailed report on the election and it will be made a part of the next Covenants Committee report. However, we can report now that voter participation was over 38% of the total number of Unit Owners.

Lastly, and as always, a reminder to all Unit Owners/Residents, please accept the standing invitation to join and or attend the meetings of the Covenants Committee.

The Committee will not meet in April. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 7:00 PM in the West Card room.



## **PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS**

**Chair, Vacant**

The next meeting of the Committee will be on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

George Beams, our long-serving Chair of the Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC), has moved out of Skyline House to the nearby Goodwin House. His departure leaves this extremely important Committee without a Chairperson.

### **PLEASE VOLUNTEER**

**Our Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) is without a Chairperson.**

**The PPOC reviews and makes recommendations to the Board on the operations and maintenance of, and proposed changes to, the buildings, equipment, and grounds.**

**If you have even a little background in engineering, construction, architecture, or mechanics, your community desperately needs your help. Even if you do not have any related experience, but are interested in helping please step forward.**

**If you can help,**

**Please contact Norman Baker at [nbaker@fjc.gov](mailto:nbaker@fjc.gov) or 703-671-6759**

What follows is the PPOC Chair's report presented at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Major Skyline House Projects Completed Since the 2006 Annual Meeting**

The first phase of the East Building façade repairs.

The swimming pool deck seal-coating.

The installation of the access control system.

The painting of walls and columns in the garage.

The garage structural inspection.

### **Projects Pending or About To Commence or In The Pipeline**

Circular drive renovation.

Driveway and parking lots asphalt sealing.

Any repairs recommended in the garage inspection report.

Garage decks sealing installation.



## **SECURITY, FIRE, & SAFETY**

**Chair, Robert De Mayo**

What follows is the report of the Chair of the Security, Fire and Safety Committee (SFSC) presented at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>.

The Committee's next meeting will be Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>

Summary: This past 12 months, the SFSC was very busy in diverse areas; we had two main issues come before the committee for disposition, we connected with other Skyline condominium SFSC's, coordinated closely with our own Neighborhood Watch, and were involved in supporting local law enforcement.

1. Major Topic: Skyline House Periodic Security Update – New Key Fob Entry Procedure: Early last year and in response to Board tasking, the SFSC evaluated and assessed several proposals for an security access upgrade, that is, the use of key fob transmitters as a replacement for our traditional security access keys. In addition to normal meetings, an "extraordinary" SFSC session was held with residents which proved lively and, by all reports, extremely informative and well-received. At that session, the need to move forward on the key fob issues was explained to a large audience of residents and an extensive Q&A period was held, eventually followed by a FAQs posting by the management office. The SFSC then selected one proposal as its final recommendation to the PPOC; it moved forward eventually to the Board for adoption and approval. The results of that labor are about to be realized when we activate our new and modern key fob security access system in the next few weeks.

2. Major Topic: Unauthorized Access through the West Lobby Door: Another major topic given to the SFSC last year to evaluate was a reported security concern on the West Building Lobby door entrance. This concern stemmed from observations by both management and residents alike that individuals who were unauthorized to enter Skyline House freely were gaining access by scooting into the West Lobby as residents exited. Apparently, their unauthorized entrance, which circumvented our Front Lobby Desk entrance procedures, was caused by two factors: first, the automatic access device holding the West Lobby door open for an unnecessary amount of time after a resident had exited; and second, a lack of a challenge by exiting residents on persons attempting entry

to Skyline House (a) without access keys in their hands, and (b) unknown to the exiting resident(s).

This issue turned out to be one with many complex aspects, and a hot button, emotional topic for some residents. At the least, this issue got what I consider a good airing and lengthy discussion at the SFSC with many residents. SFSC findings were that the West Lobby door did reveal a flaw in our security access procedures, but no more so than any other automatic door access in the complex; it was just more *visible* to most people. The SFSC recommended to the Management Office that the timer on the West Lobby door be shortened, as well as the timers on all other automatic security access doors in the Skyline House complex. While this resulted in a minor trade off of convenience to residents, it will inhibit – due to a quick closing door - unauthorized persons from scooting inside as a resident exits. All other matters concerning the West Lobby were referred to the PPOC for action. As a final note on the security aspect of this issue, the SFSC also published an entreaty in the House Special. It was simply stated by the SFSC that despite senior age, gender, cross-cultural, or whatever inhibitions apply to challenging unknown persons attempting to gain entry into our buildings, each resident of Skyline House has a shared responsibility for each other resident as a “good neighbor”. Therefore, any resident who tacitly permits an unauthorized access to go unchallenged thereby diminishes the personal security of us all.

### 3. Other Issues:

(a) Speeding in the garage continues to be a problem, albeit a minor one. Residents were urged to keep an eye out and report violators. Neighborhood Watchers have been a great help in monitoring the situation. Mr. Hall of our Management Office recapped at one meeting the prohibitions on speeding in our parking garage and the consequences if caught.

(b) Only one serious fire incident was reported to us and it was handled routinely by the Management Office. All around Fire Safety Awareness in Skyline House was emphasized this month as was the testing of ceiling smoke detectors (i.e., if residents had the specific model that required battery checks).

### 4. Related SFSC Activities:

(a) From the SFSC, this chairman has personally supported the “National Night Out” activities last year of our Skyline House volunteer corps of Neighborhood Watchers. We have offered our forum for the Watch coordinator, Ms Judith York, to raise awareness on any pertinent issues her corps of watchers may wish. We on the SFSC view the efforts of the watchers to be a commendable “good neighbor” effort where shared responsibility for each others’ well being in Skyline House is clearly demonstrated on a daily basis. I will continue to support the watchers in 2007.

(b) As the SFSC Chairperson, I began attending the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings held at the Mason District Police Headquarters each month. The CAC is a community group to promote awareness of what condominiums and home-owner associations, as well as local law enforcement, are doing regarding area and neighborhood security and safety issues. At each meeting, the first hour is usually devoted to information-sharing or education of citizens on various topics such as cyber/computer-crime and personal safety. The second hour or so is usually spent in open discussions with or briefings from local law enforcement; I personally met Capt Dittmer, the Mason District Commander - who cited the Skyline House/Plaza/Square representation at the CAC - and plan to continue attending these monthly sessions whenever I can. I’d like to note that one of our dedicated Skyline House Neighborhood Watchers, Mr. Ernest Loyola, has been attending the CAC for a long while now and has been bringing back important news items to share. On behalf of the SFSC, I extend a warm “Thank You” to Mr. Loyola for his stalwart “good Skyline citizen” efforts.

c. At the January 2007 CAC meeting, I met my SFSC Skyline Plaza and Skyline Square counterparts; we pledged to support one another and work cooperatively on security, fire

and safety issues of mutual interest to our Skyline communities. A first “combined” SFSC event was held on March 14, 2007, at the Skyline Plaza. Our Community Police Representative, Officer Kinney, gave a 90 minutes slide plus Q&A presentation on our Mason District Crime Statistics over the past two years and compared such things as auto thefts, robberies, larcenies, and other related offenses. Trends up and down were noted and discussed with an audience of over 35 attendees, including three of us from Skyline House and a two from the Square. Of note to us at the House, street robberies were up considerably but not in our immediate neighborhood; the closest areas of such a spike in crime were in the Culmore section of Leesburg Pike, the Landmark area in Alexandria, and the 6000 block of Leesburg Pike. We hope to host a similar combined and meaningful event such as this at Skyline House later on this year. Similarly, we will work with our Neighborhood Watchers in coordinating this year’s National Night Out for all three communities. It has been an interesting year!



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

**Coordinator, Judith York**

The Personnel Resources Division in partnership with the Criminal Justice Academy hosted an Open House/Career Fair and Open Test for the position of Police Office 1 and Cadet on Saturday, March 24, 2007 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Visitors had the opportunity to tour the Criminal Justice Academy, view displays from the specialty units and interact with officers from the Fairfax County Police Dept., Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office, Vienna and Herndon Police Departments, Animal Control and personnel from the Public Safety Communications Dept. At a former presentation in December 2006, there were 70 police applicants. If you are interested in attending future similar events and would like further information, you may call 703-246-7567 or e-mail [Janice.mihelarakis@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Janice.mihelarakis@fairfaxcounty.gov).

Our next two dates for Mason District police station meetings are:

April 3	6:30pm	Neighborhood Watch Coordinators
	7:30pm	Citizen’s Advisory Committee
May 1	7:00pm	Neighborhood Watch Training
	7:30pm	Citizen’s Advisory Committee

Officer Carolyn Kinney, one of our two local police officers, sent information to us concerning an increase in street robberies in the area served by the Mason District Police Station. The trend started last October and includes some areas in the neighborhoods of Seven Corners, Culmore/Baileys Crossroads, Annandale and Landmark.

Crimes committed from last October have been analyzed and show these traits: (a) the suspects are usually repeat offenders which means they have been involved in more than one robbery; (b) the suspects are familiar with the area and possibly live in the neighborhood or adjoining neighborhoods; (c) crimes are committed between the hours of 6 p.m. and 2 a.m.; and (d) the robbery rate is highest between 10 p.m. and midnight. Please be aware of your surroundings and heed your instincts if something seems amiss.

Take the time to read up on the latest crime information sent by Officer Kinney to all Fairfax County neighborhood watch groups, including Skyline House and our sister buildings Skyline Plaza and Skyline Square. This crime information is kept in the green binder at our front desk. Feel free to phone me, Judith York, on 703-671-2267 if you are interested in joining our Neighborhood Watch Program. It’s a great way to meet people, get some exercise and become familiar with the layouts of the East and West Buildings – with the primary goal of keeping us all safe.

## GOOD NEIGHBORS

Good Neighbors will assist residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency.

### APRIL GOOD NEIGHBORS\*

**ALINA GONZALES 703-379-5391**

**OFELIA LEONORE 703-820-3673**

(\*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.

## MAGAZINES FOR ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL

This is just a reminder to bring your magazines to the front desk so Tony DiSalvo can deliver them to Alexandria Hospital. Please do not hold the magazines for long periods of time before doing so as they become outdated. The magazines are much appreciated by the Hospital volunteers. Any questions call Tony at 703-824-1958.



## INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

### Cooling Season

Springtime is here and so is cooling season. Make sure to test your heat pump to insure that the air conditioning is working. This is the time of year we recommend a tune-up for your heat pump. Also, remember to change your air filters. New filters can be purchased at the front desk for **\$1.50** each (make sure you note the size of your filter). The Management Office also has limited sizes of 3M filters (which collect even more fine dust particles than those filters at the front desk) for around \$20.00 each.

### Trash Chutes

Please make sure that everything that you put down the trash chute is either in sealed trash bags and also that it weighs enough to actually fall all the way down the trash chute. Several residents are putting plastic bags, and similar items into the chute and the updraft from the exhaust fan pulls them to the very top of the chute where they clog up the fans. This causes odor problems for everyone.

### Kitchen/Bathroom Drains

Please, only put food waste and water down your drains. It has happened in the past, and it happened again in late March --- someone put potting soil down the drain of their kitchen sink. Every time this happens, the drain riser gets clogged on the bottom floor causing severe wastewater backups to the bottom floor units. Please, only put food waste and water down the drains and keep your neighbor on the bottom floor flood free.



# RECREATION

Co-Chairs, **Betty Turner and Nadyne McKelvey**

The Recreation Committee met on Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. There were three committee members and two residents in attendance. The two February events were reviewed --- the Super Bowl Party on Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup> and the TGIF (Thank Goodness It's Friday) gathering which was held on Friday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. The attendance at both of these events was low. After some discussion the committee decided to move the TGIF socials back to the first Friday of each month with the exception of April (a holiday conflict) and the December Holiday Party which is traditionally held on a Saturday night.

The Recreation Committee hosted "**Coffee in the Lobby**" on 'Over the Hump' Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. This was our effort to remind residents to VOTE and also to generate some interest in our committee. We were encouraged with at least one parent who indicated her desire to become involved and assist with the children's activities. Also some newer residents voiced an interest in learning more about the committees in general and a desire to become involved.

An attempt to organize a **Children's Easter Egg Hunt** Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> was cancelled due to a lack of participation/interest. Other children's activities are being considered.

Please keep an eye on the bulletin boards for more information.

We will be hosting the regular

**"Thank Goodness It's Friday" social on Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**  
at 6:30 PM in the West Party Room. Why not start the weekend off right by just relaxing with your neighbors and enjoying the views from the Penthouse. Please bring finger foods to share and your own beverage. We will provide coffee and ambiance.

Mark your calendars **NOW** for a **POOL SIDE FAMILY PICNIC** on Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. This will be in conjunction with the pool opening for the 2007 season and the Memorial Day holiday. A cook-out is being planned. The Recreation Committee will provide hamburgers/hotdogs and ask the residents to bring a dish to share, i.e. your native dish, perhaps a dessert, casserole, whatever you feel comfortable bringing and your own beverage. This will be a **FAMILY** affair...swim; get acquainted with other residents, etc. We plan to start around 4:00 PM. The lifeguards close the pool and leave at 8:00 PM. but that doesn't mean that you must go home: stay and chat. In order to purchase the correct quantity of food, a sign up sheet will be placed at the Reception/Front Desk. We ask that you respond to this invitation by listing your name, unit # and the type of food you plan to bring (dessert, salad, casserole, etc). Check the bulletin boards for more information.

The Recreation Committee has a special email address that you're welcome to use to contact us regarding any questions or comments you might have. The address is: [recreationcommittee@yahoo.com](mailto:recreationcommittee@yahoo.com). We encourage your participation as a committee member or for a specific activity. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in the West Card Room. Hope to see you there!

## 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.



# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## APRIL 2007

(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	3	4	5	6	7
8	9  Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	10	11  Security, Fire & Safety Comm. 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	12  Physical Plant & Operations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	13  TGIF 6:30 p.m. W. Party Room	14
15	16  Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	17  Recreation Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	18  Security, Fire & Safety Comm. 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	19	20	21
22	23  Financial Mgt. Comm. 7:00 pm <u>W. Card Room</u> Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	24	25  BOARD MEETING 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	26	27	28
29	30  Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse					
<b>GOOD NEIGHBORS: ALINA GONZALES (703-379-5391) &amp; OFELIA LEONOR (703-645-2702)</b>						

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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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