

# The House Special



Volume 28 Issue 4

Skyline House

April 2008



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President, Norman Baker**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Board of Directors election were held March 25, 2008.

Maria Elena Schacknies and Charles Roberts were elected to the two 3-year seats on the Board. As I did in my report that evening, I extend thanks to the other two candidates, Toska Prather and Isabel Cruz for their willingness to serve. In the Board's organizing meeting, Evelyn Haught was re-elected Secretary, Julie Campbell was re-elected Treasurer, Maria Elena Schacknies was re-elected Vice-President, and I was re-elected President. Budd Coutts, John Warner, and Charles Roberts will serve as Directors.

I regret, you will not find in the report I presented that evening and included below, recognition of five dedicated volunteers who add to our quality of life at Skyline House—those who operate our library. Thus, I do so here:

The Barbara Michelman Library located in the East Penthouse is run entirely by volunteers and is open every Monday from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Thank you to Carol Cataldo, Marcelle Fay, Virginia Fissmer, Nilda Viqueira, and Alina Gonzales who work so hard to keep it open and up to date.

The library welcomes book donations as well as audio books, DVDs and videos.

### Important Notice

#### **Multi-Day Dislocation Of Vehicles In Our Garage**

The Management Report in this issue contains estimated schedules (April through mid-June) for the repair/sealing of the garage decks when cars must be removed from the garage **FOR SEVERAL DAYS ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS.**

You are responsible for removing your car so the repair/sealing can be completed. If your car is not moved at the appropriate times, it will be towed at your expense.

## **President's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

Good evening. Welcome to the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Skyline House Unit Owner's Association. My name is Norman Baker. I am the current President of the Board of Directors on which I have served the past five years in three capacities. Thank you for attending this evening. Thanks also to everyone who cast their vote in this year's election and to all who voted early.

I would especially like to offer my personal thanks, the thanks of my fellow Board members and of the entire Association to owners Isabel Cruz, Charles Roberts, Toska Prather, and Maria Elena Schacknies, all of whom volunteered to be candidates for the seats on the Board to be filled by this election. You are commended for your involvement. I cannot encourage strongly enough the two who are not elected to please remain involved by joining one or more of our Committees. They and we need you.

I and the Board thank everyone on the election committee (as well as the many other volunteers who helped) but especially, I wish to thank its Chair, Sonya Livingston for the long months of effort required to perform the essential annual function of organizing and conducting the election. I extend condolences to Sonya on the recent loss of her father and note her loyalty to all of us that she is even present here tonight.

I also wish to thank former Board Treasurer Wayne Krumwiede for agreeing to serve as Inspector General for this election.

I am happy to report that the overall state of our Condominium and Association is excellent and that our financial status is quite sound. Board Treasurer, Julie Campbell, will provide more detail on our financial health shortly.

Before hearing from her and the Chairs of our other key committees, ad hoc committees and neighborhood groups, I would like to briefly mention some of the highlights and accomplishments in our community over the past 12 months and acknowledge many of those who assisted in making them happen.

### **2007 was a good year for Skyline House. Here are just a few highlights:**

Completion of the final phase of the multi-million dollar, 4-year Façade Repair Project and the related East building landscaping rehabilitation.

Installation of the Electronic Access Control System (key fobs).

New brickwork installed in the front circle drive.

A Management negotiated group-buy-pricing on residential window pane replacement.

Appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee to survey residents and develop a Landscape Design for our front circle garden area.

Asphalt resealing of the East & West parking lots.

Painting of the ceiling beams on the B and C levels of the garage.

Painting of all unit entrance and common area doors.

An expanded recycling program recently including fluorescent light bulbs and batteries.

Many successful social events sponsored by our reinvigorated Recreation Committee.

The hiring in May 2007 of Tycia Haight as Deputy General Manager, Terezinha Shaw as Accountant, and Alice Rodrigues as Administrative Assistant, and, the hiring in Nov. 2007 of Luz Stella Gomez as Resident Services Coordinator.

### **Here are just a few of the projects to occur in 2008:**

Replacement of the energy management system controlling the air conditioning and heating of most common areas including the Penthouse card and party rooms.

Repair/Replacement of sound insulation and flooring in both party rooms.

Implementation of the Ad Hoc Committee's front circle landscape design.

Efforts by an Ad Hoc Decorating Committee to provide cohesive planning and direction for redecoration of public areas budgeted to be addressed in upcoming years.

Upgrading the in-house cable TV service.

Repair and sealing of the concrete on the elevated garage decks.

Replacement of the lobby and connector corridor roof.

### **The Association's Board and its Committees**

Our condominium governance structure is set forth in our bylaws which, in turn, are legally-based on the Virginia Condominium Act. The decisions made by your elected Board of Directors are critical in affecting the quality of life in this community and include among many other things, approving budgets (which set your condo fee), approving contracts to expend funds and perform repair and upkeep of buildings and grounds, approving rules and regulations to which all residents must adhere, and establishing and adjusting a policy framework for Management to ensure that the quality of service to residents is as high as possible, that the maintenance of our buildings and grounds is excellent, and that our finances are handled properly.

The Board would not be able to do all of these things without the assistance of four key committees and their dedicated members: the Physical Plant and Operations Committee, chaired by Al Lambert; the Financial Management Committee, chaired by Winny Joshua; the Covenants Committee, chaired by Joe Livingston; and the Security, Fire, and Safety Committee, chaired by Bob De Mayo. I have already recognized, Sonya Livingston, Chair of the Election Committee and its many volunteers. There are three other Committees or groups that contribute significantly to our quality of life in Skyline House: the Recreation Committee, chaired by Betty Turner; Neighborhood Watch, coordinated by Judith York; and Good Neighbors, coordinated by Toska Prather and Ernest Loyola. And, this year and last, as I mentioned, also two Ad Hoc Committees as well. You should also know that Joyce Routt does an excellent job as our chief web site developer.

The actual work of keeping Skyline House an attractive and desirable place to live is accomplished by 20 full time staff members ably led by our General Manager, Gusbey Silva, and her Deputy, Tycia Haight. These include:

the engineering and maintenance staff, led by Chief Engineer Greg Grimm and his assistant, Tettie Moore, who maintain all the mechanical and electrical systems in our buildings and also provide superb in-unit repair and maintenance services;

the housekeeping staff Supervised by Betty McLaurin and her assistant Gerardo Carranza, who do a wonderful job of keeping our buildings and grounds clean and neat;

the office staff which consists of three very able and professional persons: Terezinha Shaw, Accountant, Luz Stella Gomez, Resident Services Coordinator, and Alice Rodrigues, Administrative Assistant;

and finally, the dedicated front desk staff who, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, serve and look out for all of us in many different ways.

I know everyone shares my strong feelings of appreciation for the excellent services Management and staff provide to this community.

Finally, I want to express appreciation to fellow Board members: Vice-President Maria Elena Schacknies, Treasurer Julie Campbell, Secretary Evelyn Haught, and directors Toska Prather, Budd Coutts and John Warner. It was an honor and pleasure to serve with you this past year. I feel confident in asserting to all unit owners, your condominium is well-governed and well managed and will continue to be served conscientiously and responsibly by Management, staff, and the Board and its committee. Thank you.

Thank you for attending this evening. I encourage everyone, and ask that you encourage your friends and neighbors, to attend committee and Board meetings and learn first hand about the decision-making processes in your community. Most committees meet once a month in the West Card Room and the meeting agenda is posted on the bulletin boards.

## **Treasurer's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

This evening marks the completion of my second year serving as Treasurer and begins my third year on the Board. I hope my report will reassure you the Association's funds are managed wisely. Let's take a look at how we did in 2007 and where we are at present.

**2007 Annual Audit** Each year, per the by-laws, an independent audit is performed on the financial records of the Association. The CPA firm Goldklang, Cavanaugh and Associates, P.C. are the auditors for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2007 and have 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 year is no exception. What this means to us as the Board of Directors 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 with generally accepted accounting principles.

After the auditor's recommendations were 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 loss of \$4,716.

**2008 Annual Budget** Aside from this being our home, this is also a business with a budget of \$3.6 million; 92% of this amount is assessment funding from the owners, a portion of the remaining 8% of income is from in-unit maintenance (the largest share) followed by investment interest then rental of Association owned parking and storage and a few other revenue sources. The operating budget must provide for payroll and benefits, 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 2008 is slightly over \$1.2 million, which is 33% of our annual income. Our second largest cost is payroll and benefits at 30% followed by utilities at 13%. The remaining 24% is a combination of administrative, maintenance, supplies and contract costs. These percentages were the same for 2007.

**Replacement Reserves** Adequate funding of the Replacement, Periodic Maintenance and Consulting Reserves is a long-term commitment and is paramount to the financial health of the Association and the preservation of our buildings. The Financial Management/Physical Plant and Operations Committees, 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 this year for implementation in 2009. The 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 our reserve account has been steadily funded each year based on the recommendations of the study prepared in 2003. The reserve projects from 2004 through 2007 seemed perpetual with a total cost of approximately \$5.6 million. Our 2008 reserve projects will be less than \$600,000. Funding will continue based on our reserve study schedule and we will begin seeing a rise in our reserve fund balance by the end of 2009.

**Delinquent Assessments** One of the many reasons we are successful as an Association is that our level of delinquent assessments is well below the industry recommended maximum of 5% of annual assessments. At December 31<sup>st</sup> our assessments receivables were less than 1%. We have fair, but very aggressive, collection policies that have served us well throughout the year. You can see those policies protect all of us. However, 2007 was not a banner year for some of our owners. The Board held hearings for several owners who were more than 60 days past due in paying their assessment. In the first quarter of 2008 we have held hearings for four delinquent owners.

**Owner/Renter Occupancy** At the end of 2007, the property was 82% owner occupied. This figure has been constant within 1% throughout 2007 and is consistent with last year.

### **Guest Parking Request**

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.

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

Just over 300 residents, owners and nonresident owners have now signed up for e-mail delivery of the Skyline House newsletter, "The House Special." It is so easy to do! Just stop by the Management Office and register your e-mail address. It will be used for sending you only the newsletter. Don't ever again miss important newsletter announcements such as the Garage Repair schedule included in this issue. because you were away from home. Receive them promptly and conveniently via personal e-mail.  
**SIGN UP TODAY.**



## **MANAGEMENT**

**General Manager, Gusbey Silva**

### **Garage Repairs and Maintenance Project Requiring Vehicle Dislocation**

This project is scheduled to start on April 8, 2008, on the North West side of the garage, to perform the concrete repairs needed in the specific areas marked by the contractor, WDP, in their report submitted in early 2007. The repairs will require the removal of all cars parked above and below the areas to be repaired while the repairs take place. Notices will be sent to each unit involved at least a week in advance.

The contractor estimates that these repairs will take approximately two weeks per phase, as follows:

North side of the West Garage (upper A, B, C and D levels) the first two weeks of April

South side of the West Garage (lower A, B, C & D levels) the second two weeks of April

North side of the East Garage (upper A, B, C and D levels) the first two weeks of May

South side of the East Garage (lower A, B, C and D levels) the last two weeks of May

After all the concrete repairs are completed, the contractor will proceed with the installation of the Seal Coating. The preparation, sealer application and cure time will require three days. All cars parked in the area being treated must again be removed from the garage during this process. The contractor has estimated the following dates to complete the seal coating application:

West and East A Level, during Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 30<sup>th</sup>-June 1<sup>st</sup>.

West B and C Levels, during Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>,

East B and C Levels, during Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>.

Each phase involves the removal of cars from about 150 spaces at a time. Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) will provide us with the parking spaces needed during these dates. Weekends were selected due to the fact that these are the best dates for parking availability at NVCC. Transportation will be provided to and from NVCC during specific times of the day while this project is being performed.

### **Balcony Floors Power Washing**

West Building balcony floors will be power washed April 1 through April 11, 2008.

The power washing of the East Building balcony floors was completed during the last two weeks of March, 2008. The balcony floors in this building had not been done since the spring of 2005 due to the façade repairs completed during 2006 and 2007.

### **Window Washing**

East Building windows will be washed between April 15 and 18, 2008. The West Building windows will be washed between April 22 and 25, 2008. This year the contractor has agreed to wash all balcony windows, at no extra charge, in order to remove any dirt that could have originated from the power washing of the balcony floors. The contractor made this offer due to the fact that the window washing was scheduled immediately after the balcony floors power washing was completed. Please follow the instructions posted on the bulletin boards for assistance with screen removal/replacement.

### **Cable TV**

Cox has confirmed, in writing they will allow the use of their wires by an alternative provider. We are currently making the necessary arrangements to complete this step.

Due to the fact that not every unit was originally wired by Cox, all units were inspected in March 2008 to find out if the Cox wires are inside the unit. This information was needed to determine how many units would need wiring.

We have received proposals for bulk programming from Dish Network and Direct TV. Cox and Washington Cable expressed desire to provide a quote for bulk programming also. These proposals will be presented to the respective committees and to the Board of Directors for their recommendation and approval during the April, 2008 meetings.



## **INFO FROM THE ENGINEER**

**Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm**

### **Unit Door Keys**

We have noticed that there are still several units that have never changed the lock to their unit door. These locks, although they do work, are keyed to a master key system. This means that although you have keys, there's a single key that is different from yours that fits all these locks and will open your door. We strongly recommend that anyone who has an original key for their unit door that they have their lock replaced. These locks use Corbin/Ruswin keys. Medeco, MultiLock, and any other brand are not part of this system. If you are unsure of what type of lock you have, stop by the office and they can tell you by looking at your unit key. If you have one of these original locks and would like to change it, call the Management Office or if you prefer your locksmith.

### **Unit Door Closers**

We have noticed that there are several units that do not have closers on the entry doors. Either the door closer was removed by a resident before you, or you may have removed yours yourself. The National Fire Code requires that your unit door shut and latch automatically when you exit the unit without you having to pull it closed. Again, if you want to re-install your door closer, call the management office, or your contractor.



## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**Chair, Wynfred Joshua**

### **Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

As is customary at the Annual Meeting, we report to the Skyline House community our share in the functioning of our condo. Our mission is to oversee the financial and budgetary issues and to advise the Board accordingly.

Beyond working on the preparation of the annual budget, there are two types of activities with which we deal: First, there are the operational budget expenditures. These involve the day to day activities and routine expenses. We have very few problems here, in large part due to our efficient management staff.

Second, we oversee the accounts for items listed in the Reserve Budget. This covers periodic maintenance and replacement of the various components of our condo. The items involved run the gamut from the roof to the driveway, from the boilers to the wiring, etc. Last year we saw the end of the multiple year façade repairs project. This will free up funds for fixing the balconies which we expect to start next year. A key effort this past year was the renovation of the circular driveway when we worked closely with PPOC. Our committee saw to it that the 2007 budget had sufficient funding for redoing the driveway, but in the middle of the project we discovered a problem. The surface had been weakened by buried debris from the days the House was being built and it needed to be strengthened. So we still had to take measures to cover unexpected expenditures.

There were a host of other projects for which we reviewed the finances. We report on these and on our monthly income and expenditures in our newsletter. For the entire year we had an income of more than \$3.5 million; our expenditures were almost \$2.4 million plus roughly \$1.2 million for our reserve contribution. We ended the year with a small loss of \$4,716. A major financial goal remains building our reserves; we hope we will reach about \$2 million for our reserves by the end of next year.

The FMC's contribution would not have been possible without the dedicated effort of our members. Allow me to introduce to you our members although I am sure you know most of them: Rose DiFonzo, Grace and Wayne Krumwiede. Al Lambert, Nadyne McKelvey, Jean Orben, Salem Omeish, Fran Price, and Liza Ruiz. This is a stellar group of volunteers, always ready to give their time to our condo effort. It is an honor for me as chairman to work with you and I thank each one of you for your willingness to serve. I would also like to single out Julie Campbell, Treasurer and Board Liaison to our Committee. Her comments and advice at our monthly meetings are always helpful and we appreciate this very much.

Our meetings are generally held at 7:00 PM on the third Monday of the month. I strongly urge you to join us. It is here where you can influence what happens to your condo fee. We would welcome your comments and questions.

**The FMC will meet in the W. Card Room at 7:00 p.m. Monday, April 21, 2008.**



## **PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS**

**Acting Chair, Al Lambert**

### **Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

Mr. President, members of the Board, ladies & gentlemen: good evening!

On behalf of the Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC), I would like to say "thank you!" to all residents who have allocated time (in the past or presently) to participate as a committee member or visitor during our monthly meetings.

In that regard, I want to publicly recognize the current members: Winny Joshua, Cecil Williams, Nadyne McKelvey, Salem Omeish, Liza Ruiz, Evelyn Haught (Board liaison)

The PPOC has a charter to provide oversight of the operation and maintenance of the buildings, equipment and grounds of Skyline House.

Some of the responsibilities encompass the following:

- Provide oversight for, and make recommendations on contracts such as consultants, service providers and repairers. (energy management analysis & landscaping).



- Recommend/evaluate suggested changes in the design and appearance of structural aspects of the common elements (doorways, interior decoration, landscaping).
- Review and recommend action to the board on, unit owner requests for changes in appearance or structure of common elements. (installing handicapped railings, visibility windows in access doors, lighting in the pool area)
- Assist the board, management and financial management committee in establishing parameters and costs of large scale acquisitions (boilers, pumps) and the replacement of systems central to the operations of Skyline House (façade repair, new roofs, paving of the driveways, elevator renovation).

In reviewing 2007 committee actions, the scope of involvement on projects has included:

- Recommendations on the circular drive renovation which included installing driver pavers in lieu of a concrete surface along with a suggested color and design pattern.
- Reviewing cost proposals for garage structural repairs/proposed future inspections.
- Recommending a chloride test to determine salt penetration in the concrete slabbing of the garage and applying a sealant to prevent further deterioration.
- Discussing options and providing recommendations to improve the security and environmental conditions of the west mall lobby entrance door
- Commencing a discussion of concerns and issues associated with the future balcony railings upgrade.
- Reviewing cost proposals, installation options and milestones for upgrading the in-house TV antenna.
- Reviewing options for the interior painting of the garage levels.
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the board on environmental projects such as recycling and exterior/interior lighting to reduce costs and improve security.

The committee is also a resident forum to answer the five Ws (who, what, when, where, why) on the appearance, modification and operations of the buildings, equipment and grounds. It is at our meetings where an exchange of ideas, identification of issues, concerns and other relevant factors are examined to formulate sound recommendations to the Board. To this end, the PPOC has historically, and will in the future, through volunteer owner participation, partake in making Skyline House a sound financial investment and well maintained, aesthetically pleasing, wonderful place to call home.

**The PPOC will meet in the W. Card Room at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, April 10, 2008.**



## COVENANTS

Chair, Joe Livingston

### Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

First, let me thank those resident/ owners who stood for election for the Board of Directors and congratulations to those who were elected to the Board in 2008.

Second, on behalf of the members of the Covenants and Election Committees, I wish to thank those unit owners, the Board of Directors, and the management staff for their continued support of the work of these committees during the past year.

These committees meet regularly or as needed. Their work generally is reflected in recommendations to the Board. We do our best but we hasten to recognize that there is room for much improvement.

We have tried to keep you informed of the work of these committees in the House Special, which we recommend as must reading. However, very briefly, I would to mention some of our responsibilities, along with some modest achievements, and a few of our setbacks.



We review the association's rules and regulations, and make recommendations to the Board of changes or modifications, deemed beneficial. At present, this review is ongoing. We did not achieve our goal to complete this work prior to this annual meeting. Our recommendations will be presented to the Board for consideration as soon as possible. As part of its consideration, and before any final action is taken, the proposed changes will be published in the House Special for comments. Your comments or questions will be addressed before final action is taken by the Board.

Another responsibility we have is to conduct the election for the Association's Board of Directors. It is through the work of the dedicated members of our Election Committee that we believe, the Association's members exercise their right of self governance. Under the watchful eyes of the committee members, an Inspector General, and the vote tabulation by an Independent Vote administrator, we are confident that our elections are conducted fairly and in full compliance with our election procedures.

In 2008, we hope to complete the training of members of the committee to serve on hearing panels to address serious or repeated infractions of the Association's rules and regulations. Since there is substantial support of and adherence to the Association's rules and regulations, we trust that the use of such panels will continue to be infrequent.

In closing, again, my thanks to all the unit owners and residents who support our work and the work of all the other committees of the Association.

**The Covenants Committee will next meet May 21, 2008.**



## **SECURITY, FIRE AND SAFETY**

**Chair, Robert De Mayo**

### **Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

The Skyline House Security, Fire & Safety Committee (SF&SC) has completed yet another busy year which has been replete with both challenges and opportunities. Over the past year we have addressed the following issues:

#### **On Fire Safety:**

Last year, the committee put a call out to residents to check their in-house smoke detectors for both active sensors, current batteries, and even, wired hookups to an electrical power supply. Feedback received by both the Management Office and the committee indicated that our cautions were heeded – some detectors were discovered detached from electrical power and inoperative due to unit renovations over the years; some detectors were replaced by owners.

Information on replacement smoke detector models was published in the House Special. Residents were urged to - at the least – look up at the ceiling and “press to test” the button on the smoke detector! Captain Colbert of the Bailey's Crossroads Fire Department recommended that all units have at least one working smoke detector!

#### **On Security:**

After a poor showing by the replacement Security guard company last summer, the committee approved both terminating their contract and hiring another company. By all reports, the new security force has worked out very well to date and the committee welcomes feedback from residents on their performance at any of our meetings.

The committee acknowledges the tireless, oversight efforts of Ms Tycia Haight of the Management Office to ensure we have a responsive security guard force.

The issue of “unauthorized access through the West Lobby Door” received a very thorough airing at our meetings. The bottom-line: As is the case with any of our access doors, any resident who tacitly permits a stranger attempting access into our building – without even a verbal challenge – diminishes the personal safety of us all.

In response to a resident complaint, the lack of adequate security lighting and pedestrian visibility in the vicinity of the Metro Bus stop near our front lobby was investigated. Management took quick steps to have overhanging tree limbs cut back and brighter lighting installed to remedy the situation.

- The committee publishes a periodic notice called "Crime Watch" which is posted on our Bulletin Boards. It alerts residents to incidents of crime or security issues focused only within our Mason Police District. Some topics covered were: pickpockets active in our local restaurants, gang signage on sidewalks that turned out not to be gang signage, and incidents of robberies in the Culmore area.

### **On Safety:**

Speeders in the garage – especially speeders without headlights activated - continue to be an issue. All residents were urged to report violators to the Management Office for prompt follow-up actions. Resident reports and observations are also always welcomed at our monthly meetings.

At the request of residents, the committee took action and contacted our Mason District Traffic Police on the issue of seedy-looking, "junk cars" parked on South George Mason Drive in front of our buildings. Citations were issued and some cars were eventually towed or removed. We are monitoring the situation periodically and welcome any pointers from interested residents.

An issue concerning "Signage" on our Skyline House grounds was voluntarily taken up by the SF&SC from a safety perspective. One Yield sign was moved for safety visibility. The evaluation of other traffic and parking signs is still under review and recommendations will be made to the Management Office for any corrective actions, as necessary.

Auto traffic was observed violating the cautions of School Buses stopped at our Metro Bus stop on several occasions. The committee quickly contacted our Community Police Officer on the violations; Fairfax County Police responded and were seen monitoring the situation for several days.

### **Other Activities:**

The committee reached out and established contacts with the Skyline Plaza Security Committee. I also attended their NW training session presented by our Mason Police District Community Officer.

The collaboration between the SF&SC and the Skyline House Neighborhood Watch is solid and enduring. From our perspective, we urge more resident participation with our in-house Neighborhood Watch group – it only takes a few hours per month to be an active member of this elite group.

Last fall, the committee joined with the Neighborhood Watch leaders in observing our "National Night Out" in our Front Lobby area and emphasized community solidarity for increased safety awareness.

Finally, both the committee and the watchers continue to attend and support the Fairfax Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) which meets monthly at our Mason District Police Station. Topics of interest are covered by guest speakers and wrap-ups are presented by the Police Public Affairs Coordinator.

In order to maintain a high level of security awareness in our local community, we continue to maintain active contact with our own Community Police Officer via e-mail. In addition, representing the interests of Skyline House, we attended a key Fairfax County Police event - the 12-hour Citizens Police Academy (CPA) held at a local community center. There we met and mingled with our own local police officers, and then received insights into annual crime and public safety statistics presented by the Fairfax County Police Chief.

It has been an active and interesting year for the SF&SC. We look forward to continuing to serve as the watchdog of resident's security, fire and safety interests and needs.

**The SF&SC will meet in the W. Card Room at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 9, 2008.**



# Ad Hoc Committee Front Circle Landscape Design Project

Chair, Maria Elena Schacknies

## Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

On behalf of the members of the committee, Philip Cohen, Heide Fechtman, Alina Gonzalez, Jean Orben, Grace Krumwiede, Marilyn Silver, Dale Turner, Gladys Manrique and myself, Maria Elena Schacknies, we are proud to report that the implementation phase of the circle will be completed on April 15, 2008.

Special thanks goes to Evelyn Haught who served as Horticultural Advisor, to Phil Cohen who worked on the preparation of the questionnaire and the many drafts of the request for proposals, and to Heide Fechtman who created the visual for the design and who drove me to Annapolis to find the planter that the committee selected for the octagon. Thanks also to General Manager, Gusbey Silva for the implementation phase. We all look forward to enjoying the new design for years to come and we hope the residents of Skyline House will be pleased with the work accomplished by all concerned.



# Ad Hoc Decorating Committee

Co-chairs, Alina Gonzalez and Maria Elena Schacknies

## Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

The Ad Hoc Decorating Committee (AHDC) composed of Heide Fechtman, Goldy Kamali, Bryan Stukes, Cheryl Robinson, Virginia Fissmer, Phil Cohen, Evelyn Haught, Maria Elena Schacknies and myself, Alina Gonzalez, was appointed by the President of the Board to create a décor that, while being implemented over a multi-year period, will result in a cohesive look that will remain attractive and welcoming for a long time.

During the first working meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup>, the committee came to a consensus on the type of decoration it thought best suited for Skyline House: simple, classic, durable and with a consistent look.

The committee met again on March 13<sup>th</sup>. An inventory and assessment of the Main Lobby Galleries and Main Lobby have been started and will be finalized by April 22<sup>nd</sup>. This process will help the committee determine what needs to be replaced, what could be refurbished or kept as they are. The expectation is for the committee to produce a Request for Proposal to be submitted to a number of potential contractors outlining the work to be performed in the weeks to come.

We are striving to create an environment that will be inviting, gracious and welcoming, and we need your help. We invite all residents to attend and to contribute their ideas.

**The AHDC will meet in the W. Card Room at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 22, 2008.**

## GOOD NEIGHBORS

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

Services provided are typically short term and in the local area. For example, picking up mail or prescriptions or making small grocery purchases.

Anyone experiencing a medical emergency should call 911 immediately.

## APRIL GOOD NEIGHBORS

**JULIA BATES 703-845-0746**

**TOSKA PRATHER 703-379-7849**

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

## **TGIF\* Gathering**

**6:30 p.m., Friday, April 4, 2008**

**West Party Room**

Bring a plate of hors d'ourves to share, and your own liquid refreshments.

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

**\*Thank Goodness It's Friday**



## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

**Coordinator, Judith York**

### **Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

I would like to thank the Neighborhood Watch volunteers as well as all volunteers who participate in events and meetings for the Skyline House community, and also my thanks to our Skyline House management and staff who are so hardworking and efficient.

1) Back in March 2001, after several acts of vandalism were reported to the office, a memo was sent to all residents. Several people responded and formed a group, which became the Neighborhood Watch Program. This was not the original Neighborhood Watch Program but it was resurrected as a way to combat vandalism and keep the buildings in good condition by having residents patrol the area. Initially, we had 55-60 volunteers but we are now down to about 20 volunteers. Winter is always an unpopular season to walk so I am hoping that with spring presently upon us, our volunteers will start walking again and we will gain some new recruits. Please let me know if you are interested in joining the Neighborhood Watch Program. In May 2009, when my husband retires, I will step down as Coordinator of the Neighborhood Watch Program so if anyone would like to work with me and eventually take over as Coordinator of the Neighborhood Watch Program, I will be happy to spend the next few months showing you how the program is run. We have a very simple program and good volunteers.

2) Our Fairfax County Police Officers are excellent and work hard with the local community; which results in a low crime rate compared to other areas, especially when one considers the population vs. number of police officers. Officer Courtney Thibault and Officer Chip Conner are the local community officers and they keep us up-to-date with crime in our area via e-mails. I e-mail this information to our volunteers who are on the internet and update the "Fairfax County Neighborhood Watch" folder kept at the front desk for those who are not on the internet. Please read through this folder at your leisure – the security guards also read this folder to keep abreast of incidents.

3) Mason District Meetings at the Mason District Police Station. The schedule for the 2008 meetings is also filed in the folder kept at the front desk. Meetings of the Neighborhood Watch Coordinators, the Training of new volunteers, and the Citizens' Advisory Council are held on the first Tuesday of the month. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m. The address is 6507 Columbia Pike (703-256-8035).

If you are interested in our Skyline House Neighborhood Watch Program and can spare an hour a week, call me at 703-671-2267. I will be happy to tell you about our program, which was started again in 2001 and has continued to the present time. Thank you.



# RECREATION

Chair, Betty Turner

## Chair's Report Presented At The March 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

2007 was a busy year for the Recreation Committee (RC). Our committee is responsible for planning and implementing events to enhance fellowship and socialization among Skyline House residents. The most attended event was the **Memorial Day Pool Opening Family Picnic**. The Committee provided hotdogs and hamburgers while residents brought other foods to complete the meal. Over 160 people attended this event. Throughout the year the TGIF socials were held usually the first Friday of each month. We also hosted a Super Bowl Party, Kentucky Derby Party, Children's Halloween Party, Thanksgiving Dinner, and a Holiday Party. A **"Welcome Wagon"** package including community as well as Skyline House information was put together by Evelyn Haught and Betty Turner. This package of information is given to each new owner by the Management Office as part of the newcomer orientation. A wider variety of events is being planned for 2008 including specific events for teens, ladies, and children. In-house TV Channel 12, The House Special and the mailbox lobby bulletin boards provide current information about upcoming events.

Committee members who helped make 2007 a great year include: Christine Dozier, Donna Heflin, Cindy Judy, Gladys Manrique, Nadyne McKelvey, Janet Shipko, and Carroll Thompson. In addition, other residents have helped in many ways during the year. We wish to thank June Coutinhos, Dave Dozier, Evelyn Haught, Hanna Jones, Bill Lewis, Luis Manrique, Dale Turner, and Judith York.

Already this year we have had two committee members resign because they have moved away. We are in need of your involvement with our committee on a one time basis or as a regular member. We encourage you to get involved by bringing your ideas and enthusiasm to our meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month.

**The RC will meet in the W. Card Room at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 8, 2008.**



## LADIES

**YOU ARE INVITED FOR DESSERT and COFFEE**

**Thursday, April 17  
EAST PARTY ROOM  
6:30-7:30 PM**

**The Recreation Committee invites**

**LADIES ONLY**

**to enjoy a coffee and dessert social with your Skyline House neighbors.**

**No need to bring anything, we will provide the refreshments.**

# “HOUSE” HINTS

## Hot Water Heaters

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

## Air Conditioner/Heater System Filters

Change the filter on the unit in your utility closet and your system will run more efficiently and better filter the air. Purchase new filters at the front desk (note filter size).

## Unit Water Shut Off Valve

Every unit in Skyline House has a shut off valve that cuts off all water (hot and cold) to the unit. This valve is located in the utility closet, above the water heater tank, usually close to the back wall. This valve is the bigger valve in the closet. If any resident has a problem locating this valve, please contact the office and they will arrange for someone to come by and show you the exact location. This valve turns off all water located inside your unit, except the Fire Sprinkler System, which can only be turned off by the building engineers or the fire department at a valve not located in any unit.

## Water Leakage Alarm

Just a reminder that you can purchase (in the Management Office) an alarm to place on the utility closet floor. The alarm will sound whenever it detects water leaks. This will save you and your neighbors from suffering a lot of damage, expense and frustration.

## Garage Remote Control

If your remote is more than a couple of years old and you have never changed the battery, do so soon to prevent being unable to open the garage door. The remote uses a standard 9-volt battery and can be easily replaced via the small compartment on the remote's back.

## Dryer Vent Cleaned At No Charge

The Association schedules cleanings for dryer vents of all units in tiers 5, 6, and 14, and for all units on the 17th floors. Dryer vents for all other units will also be cleaned at no charge; however, you must schedule the service with the Management Office. Your vent is located right above the balcony door on the outside. You can tell if it needs cleaning by looking to see how much lint is caught in the vent. A clean vent will reduce drying time and thus your utility costs. More importantly a clean vent will reduce the possibility of a dryer fire. Save your money and be safe. Schedule a dryer vent cleaning.

## Pest Control

The Association contracts for weekly (Thursdays) pest control service for all common areas and also, on a first come first serve basis, for up to eight individual units. If you are having a problem in your unit with roaches, ants, spiders, etc. do yourself and your neighbors a favor and sign up for the service at the front desk. **There is no cost to you.**

## Balcony Etiquette

Is your balcony a cluttered, unsightly storage area? Rule 15G states, “Balconies shall not be used for storage.” Please make sure your balcony is not an eyesore. Clean it up.

When watering your plants, remember, water running out of your pots rains down on all the balconies below. Not only does it stain and damage balconies and furniture, on occasion, it might even drench a neighbor. Please use saucers under all your plants.

Feeding birds on your balcony might seem a nice thing to do but is prohibited by House rules as it creates major problems for your neighbors and the Association. Do not feed birds and if you have a bird feeder please remove it.

No matter how small, never throw anything from your balcony (especially cigarettes).





# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## APRIL 2008



(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4 <b>TGIF</b> 6:30 p.m. W. Party Room	5
6	7 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	8 <b>Recreation Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	9 <b>Security, Fire &amp; Safety Comm.</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	10 <b>Physical Plant &amp; Operations Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	11	12
13	14 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	15	16	17 <b>LADIES ONLY COFFEE AND DESSERT</b> 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. E. Party Room	18	19
20	21 Financial Mgt. Committee 7:00 pm W. Card Room  Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	22 <b>Ad Hoc Decorating Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	23 <b>BOARD MEETING</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	24	25	26
27	28 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	29	30			
<b>GOOD NEIGHBORS: JULIA BATES (703-845-0746) AND TOSKA PRATHER (703-379-7849)</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.

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