

# *The House Special*



*Volume 28 Issue 12*

*Skyline House*

*December 2008*



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President, Norman Baker**

I want to thank the Board members for their service to their community in 2008. Thanks also to all who so loyally serve on our Committees, Good Neighbors and Neighborhood Watch groups and in our library, and to Joyce Routt, for her website support (all are so important to maintaining the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed here at Skyline House). Last, but not least, thank you to General Manager Silva and the Skyline House staff who work so hard throughout the year to make **The House Our Home**.

### **THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WISHES EVERYONE A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON AND A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR.**

The Board of Directors met December 3<sup>rd</sup> to conduct its final meeting of 2008. During the meeting the Board approved a new landscaping contract and an end-of-the-fiscal-year resolution recommended by our auditors to facilitate tax-filing that best serves the Association. The Board tabled a resolution recommended by the Association's Attorney modifying one of the Association's Rules pending clarification on two points and it discussed, among other things, the pending balcony railing remediation project. The Board will next meet, January 28, 2009.

You will find in this issue the annual announcement of the March 2009 election for three seats (each a 3-year term) on the Board of Directors. The terms of current Board Treasurer Julie Campbell and Directors John Warner and Toska Prather (who is serving the final months of former Board member Evelyn Haught's term) all end in March 2009. I ask each to please consider running again. I encourage other owners to also run. **YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU.**

You will note in the Neighborhood Watch Report in this issue, our hard-working, long-serving Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Judith York, will step down in January 2009. I have had a brief communication with Security, Fire and Safety Committee (SF&SC) Chairman Bob De Mayo and I am pleased to know that he is in overall agreement with me that, in the new year, it will be best for the of the Neighborhood Watch function and for the Skyline House community as a whole to incorporate the Neighborhood Watch function and its volunteers into the SF&SC. Bob and I will, with Judith's input, try to work quickly to formalize this new structure so that it

can, hopefully, be in effect for the January 2009 SF&SC meeting where assimilation and organizational details will begin to be addressed and implemented.

I am pleased to announce that, at my request, Carol Cataldo has agreed to serve officially as the primary point of contact for the Board and Management with our in-house volunteer library staff. Carol has been vigilantly, but unofficially, serving in that capacity since our former, late, owner/resident library founder Barbara Michelman took ill some time ago. Carol informs me the library will be open every Monday evening in December.

I would also like to acknowledge Virginia Fissmer who is serving with Toska Prather as a Good Neighbor Coordinator filling the vacancy left by the death this past month of our dear "good neighbor" Ernest Loyola.

Again this year, the brightly lit Christmas tree in the lobby is already assembled and gorgeously decorated. If you have not seen it, you should make a point to do so. It stands 12 feet tall, weighs approximately 250 pounds and displays roughly 350 ornaments. Also, keep in mind the tree is a lovely backdrop for a group photo if you have friends or family visiting during the holidays. Thanks to Betty McLaurin and all the staff who take such pride in decorating our lobby area so wonderfully every year for this holiday season.

Don't forget! The annual Holiday Party is only days away. Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.

## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **SKYLINE HOUSE ANNUAL ELECTION FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MARCH 31, 2009**

**THREE VACANCIES WILL BE FILLED, EACH FOR A 3 YEAR TERM.**

#### **HOW TO BECOME A CANDIDATE**

**Nominations open Friday, January 2, 2009 and close Friday, February 6, 2009.**

**Applications can be picked up at the front desk.**

**Completed applications must be returned to the Management Office  
on or before close of business Friday, February 6, 2009.**

#### **MEET THE CANDIDATES**

**Meet the Candidates Program, March 10, 2009.**

#### **HOW TO VOTE**

**All owners will receive their election package in late February via the U.S. mail. The election package will include a ballot and proxy, voting instructions, an announcement of the Annual Meeting at which your vote can be cast, and biographies of the candidates for the Board of Directors.**

**Owners wishing to vote before the Annual Meeting may cast proxy ballots as soon as they have made their election decisions and have their proxy notarized.**

**CONDOMINIUM GOVERNANCE AFFECTS ALL OF US.**

**PLEASE CONSIDER RUNNING FOR OFFICE TO HELP INSURE SKYLINE HOUSE  
REMAINS A FIRST-CLASS COMMUNITY.**

**EVERY OWNER'S VOTE IS NEEDED -- BE SURE TO CAST YOUR VOTE.**

## **Proper Attire in Common Areas**

Rule 7 of the Skyline House Rules and Regulations states:

**“All persons shall be properly attired (which includes shirts, footwear and bathing suit cover-ups) when appearing in the lobbies, corridors, elevators and all other common areas within the buildings.”**

Please, think about what you are wearing or not wearing, when you go to get your mail, take out your trash or simply take a stroll in the corridors, galleries and lobby areas of our buildings. If you would not dress in a similar way to go to the store, the bank or elsewhere in public, don't dress that way in the common areas. Skyline House is every resident's home and residents should not have to see nor have their guests see Skyline House appearing to be a beach-side hotel or a hospital/nursing facility. Skyline House is a luxury condominium. Please present yourself accordingly when in the common areas.



## **MANAGEMENT**

**General Manager, Gusbey Silva**

### **Main Lobby Roof - Perimeter Wall Repairs**

The repairs to the perimeter walls of the Main Lobby roof were completed by the end of November. The coating of the walls will be applied after the roofing is replaced.

The roof replacement started on November 25<sup>th</sup> with the removal of the old roofing system. It will take approximately three weeks, weather permitting, to complete this project which includes the replacement of the Main lobby, canopy and connector corridor roofs. During this time there will be two large containers installed in front of the lobby by the circle, one during the day time on the left side of lobby entrance by the magnolia tree and a second one on the right side of the lobby by the West Gallery. A third container will be installed between the west end of the East Building and the garage any time trash and debris needs to be removed from the connector roofs.

Notices are posted requesting residents to walk and drive carefully when passing this equipment.

### **Cox Cable**

Cox held an Open House on October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. During this time Cox representatives assisted residents with the transition to the new bulk programming taking registrations for the boxes needed to receive the transmission of digital channels and for other additional services. During the week of November 3<sup>rd</sup> a team of several technicians completed the tickets generated during the Open House for the problems reported by residents.

The House Channel has not yet been implemented due to the need to install specific equipment that requires wiring installation from the southeast corner of the garage, where Cox wires reach our buildings, to the accounting office where the computer for the house channels will be installed. Cox will absorb the cost of the equipment needed and the Association will absorb the cost for the wiring and the installation which will be performed in-house by Greg and Tettie. We are waiting for an estimated time of delivery of the cable wiring to be installed in-house.

### **Signage for S, G and Penthouse level doors**

The PPOC recommended signage on S, G, and Penthouse level doors which are not currently marked. The matter was raised by a Neighborhood Watch member who, when performing rounds, found one of these doors unlocked and was not able to exactly identify which door in the report. Signage alternatives for this and also future signage needs will be presented by Management at the January 2009 PPOC meeting.

### **Front Circle Year-Round Lighting**

The year-round front circle lighting fixtures arrived on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The lamps for the fixtures were promptly ordered and in-house installation will be coordinated once the lamps are received.

## **WEST LOBBY DOOR**

**The West Lobby Door is NOT for loading and unloading.**

**Please, use the loading dock for such purposes.**

Please, DO NOT hold or prop this door open as doing so will damage the mechanism and, more importantly, **creates a severe breach of our security**. If you see this door being held open please try to close it and report it immediately.

**No one should enter the West Lobby Door without a key fob (even a resident).  
Refer ANYONE without a key fob to the front lobby desk.**

### **Guest Parking**

Please, for the sake of all of our guests, reduce or better yet, **CEASE YOUR PERSONAL USE** of our 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.



## **INFO FROM THE ENGINEER**

**Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm**

### **Christmas Tree Disposal Bags**

Again this year, Christmas Tree disposal bags are available free at the front desk. These bags will be available beginning Monday December 8th. After the holiday, you may take your bagged trees to the loading dock for the staff to dispose of them.

### **Kitchen Sink Drains**

Recently we have had residents with back to back kitchen sinks (your neighbor's and your kitchen face each other) who have had stopped up sinks and one or the other runs the disposal to eliminate water from the sink. If the water in your sink comes back into the sink when you run your disposal, call the office (or Front Desk after hours) and ask to have your drain cleaned out. Running the disposal simply fills up in the sink in the unit next door and when it gets full, it runs the water onto the floor. Please don't use the disposal if this happens, it can cause water damage to the unit next to you.

### **Leak Detectors**

We are still having resident's Water Leak Detectors in their utility closets alarm when there is no water. Remember to change the battery once a year to prevent false alarms. Also, please note the alarm device should be located on the floor of the utility closet, not in the water heater drain pan.

### **TIE YOUR TRASH BAGS SHUT**

When you throw your trash down the chute, it is required to be in a trash bag, which is sealed or tied at the top. This keeps all trash in the bag on its way down to the dumpster. If the bag is not tied shut the updraft from the roof fans pulls trash in the bag to the roof fan where it stops up the fan screen, and causes bad odors to accumulate in the hallways. It also allows your personal information to be accessed very easily if there is any in the bag. It can also cause loose trash to blow in to someone's face on the floor above if they should happen to open the trash chute door to dispose of their trash.

**TIE YOUR TRASH BAGS SHUT**



**A Message To Skyline House Residents From**  
**Deputy General Manager Tycia Haight**

*I would like to thank all Skyline House residents who collaborated with the Thanksgiving food drive to assist the less fortunate families adopted by Skyline House as referred by ACCA (Annandale Christian Community for Action).*

*The December food drive will begin Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> with the food deliveries being made to the families December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.*

*If you would like to make a donation to assist in purchasing perishable items, only gift cards to local grocery stores will be accepted. If you would like to do so, please drop the gift card off in the accounting office lockbox.*

*The best way to collect is to divide items into groups by the first letter of your last name:*

*If you would like to make a donation, please check the list below:*

***If your last name begins with:***

*A-H Canned Foods (Vegetables, Cranberry Sauce, Fruit, Soup etc)*

*I-O Drinks (Juice, Tea Bags, Coffee, etc)*

*P-Z Boxed Items (Cake Mix, Mac and Cheese, Sugar etc)*

*Also paper/plastic and condiment items are always needed.*

***Thank you for helping those who, without this assistance, might not otherwise have a holiday dinner.***

Editor's Note: The ***Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA)*** was established in 1967 and is an alliance of churches in Annandale and adjacent areas including Bailey's Crossroads. It provides day care, food, rental assistance, furniture, and other services to low income families in those areas, regardless of religion, race, or ethnic background. ACCA states, "What counts most in ACCA is serving those in need."

**ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>**

**6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

**West Party Room**

This is a potluck party and is FREE to all adults.

Bring a dish to share with others.

Don't forget to bring your own favorite refreshment.

# **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.**

## **DECEMBER GOOD NEIGHBORS**

**GWEN PETITJEAN 703-820-4260**

**LOUISE ALBIN 703-379-1645**

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 Virginia Fissmer. Their contact information is listed in the newsletter directory under the calendar.



# **COVENANTS**

**Chair, Joe Livingston**

As we near this year's end, it is a good time to note some of our achievements as a community.

We can begin by recognizing and expressing thanks to those neighbors who work constructively throughout the year to maintain and improve the Skyline House community. Whether it is the members of the Neighborhood Watch or a member of the Board of Directors or all the many other volunteers, we are very fortunate to share in and enjoy the fruits of their work. Many of those noteworthy activities have been highlighted throughout the year in the House Special.

In keeping with the spirit of the season, I hope I express the feelings of many in thanking all those who volunteer to help make the Skyline House story a success.

Having looked back, we now must look forward to the new challenges that await us in the coming year. Among them is the 2009 election of three members to the Board of Directors.

One of our goals is to increase the percentage of owner participation in the election process.

The Election Committee is already at work. More information will be disseminated in the coming weeks. As always, the search is on for resident unit owners interested in becoming involved in the governance of our community. If you want to preserve what is right about our community or if you want change, get involved. You can make a difference and you are urged to consider becoming involved.

The Covenants Committee, as always, is looking for new members to help carry out its work. If you routinely read the House Special, you have some idea of the scope of the Committee's work.

This past year, we met regularly. We reviewed and recommended revisions to the Association's Rules and Regulations. The Hearing Subcommittee conducted a number of hearings in an effort to assist residents to maintain a welcoming, safe and clean environment, through adherence to and support of the Association's Rules and Regulations.

Come join us in the Covenants Committee. Check the House Special for the date of our next meeting and feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Best wishes for the holidays and a happy New Year!



# PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

## Chair, Al Lambert

Greetings! The Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) conducted its final meeting for the year 2008 on November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. with a review of the 2009 Landscape Maintenance Contract and the conduct of new and old business. In October the PPOC had reviewed and recommended a Statement of Work (SOW) for contractor cost proposals on the landscaping maintenance in 2009. This month the committee reviewed bids by contractors to perform the work. Six contractors submitted bids and of those five conducted a tour of the property and inspection of the grounds. The one firm not visiting the property submitted an online (email) bid at a bizarre low price of \$20K. This proposal was disregarded without further discussion. Of the five that toured the property two dropped out and did not submit a proposal. That narrowed the selection to three contractors and one of those submitted an outlandish bid of \$133K. Hence, the two viable contractors were Panoramic and Brickman with bids of \$41K and \$43K respectively. However, the Brickman bid did not include premium flowers for the circle in front of the lobby nor turning of the mulch. Additionally, Skyline Plaza has employed Brickman and recently decided not to renew the contract for reasons yet to be known. Panoramic has been our landscaper since the year 2000 and performed satisfactory work. With the narrowing of contractor selection to Panoramic the committee focused on the specifications in the SOW. The purpose was to reduce the overall cost closer to the \$35K budgeted for the task. It was determined the maintenance effort should be curtailed by reducing leaf repetition pick-ups from 3 to 2, a single turning of the mulch and applying a 2" inch application of mulch in April rather than the stated 3" thickness. This would reduce the estimated cost from \$41K to approximately \$37K slightly above the budgeted amount. Should the need arise to accomplish the aforementioned tasks back to the original occurrences the funds would be available in the budget. Hence, the committee voted to recommend to the Board selection of Panoramic Landscaping with reduced maintenance tasks to perform landscaping in 2009.

A second topic of new business was the introduction of a motion to label unmarked doors located in the G & S Level of the East Building and G Level West Building. The rationale was an individual could precisely report the location of possible incidents such as an unsecure door, the smelling of an odor such as smoke or someone calling for assistance through the identification of a door number. Additionally, having all doors labeled with a door number for professionalism and aesthetics was a secondary consideration. Management was requested to determine the number and location of unmarked doors along with an estimated cost for the January 2009 meeting. Predicated on a committee review and approval the doors would have a small silver type placard identical to those on marked doors in the association displaying a room number.

During the discussion of the aforementioned issues (landscaping & unmarked doors) it was mentioned the committee should reinstitute the property walk-around inspections. Historically, the committee and other interested individuals would examine completed projects or emerging new requirements such as modifications to the landscaping contract with an on-site visit. During the January 2009 meeting the walk-around inspections will be discussed with the idea that each month a new area will be identified for review by the committee. It is an opportunity for residents having a suggestion for improvement to the building or grounds to vocalize the issue or comment on the completion of a project (lessons learned). Note: In the past areas scheduled for inspection during the winter were indoors and projects like the outside swimming pool were inspected in the spring/summer. Dates and times of a walk-around inspection are flexible and predicated on individuals providing feedback on their availability.

The final topic was old business and Management provided an update on the balcony railing project in 2009. The first decision is for the Board to determine a course of action on the methodology to fix the railings. After extensive research Management has identified a company offering a new railing with a 20 year warranty on the coating. A suggested approach is to select two different contractors with one firm removing the railings and performing concrete repairs on the post holes and exterior edges of the balcony slab followed by the second firm installing a new railing. Additional information will be provided to the Board for the December 2008 meeting with a possible decision on the appropriate course of action. Once the course of action has been decided construction specifications will be written by our engineer consultant and reviewed by the committee with a recommendation to the Board. Following Board approval

management would obtain cost proposals from bidding contractors. Additional information will be available in the next few months.

The committee's efforts this year have been broad and expansive and will have a positive impact on our home in the foreseeable future. Renovation of the Front Circle, landscaping, roofing, repairs to the garage, energy management, review of the Reserve Study and completing the façade restoration are some of the more notable accomplishments. As important as these projects are to our quality of life all the Skyline House committees have suggested amenities that would not necessarily be available had former and current residents decided not to contribute their ideas. Amenities and services which are a result of resident participation include among many others: fax and copier service at the front desk, security guards, pest control services, gym equipment, a telephone at the front desk to call a taxi, keyless lock system for the exterior doors, recycle bins, a library, in-house maintenance service, window washing, installation of Cox wiring in the mid 1980's and newly installed Cox Cable wiring and options this year, luggage carts, keyless lock system for the exterior doors, neighborhood watch, good neighbors, speed limit signs in garage, and replacement windows and screens.

Our lifestyle is changing and hence possibly our needs and services. Identifying new services or facilities and maintaining existing amenities is essential to promote growth and vitality in our home. For example, a facility I hear some residents wanting is a larger exercise room. Conceivably, converting a billiard room or one of the Party Rooms to an exercise area (minus showers and steam room) is doable predicated on resident involvement and feedback to the Board/Committees. There are other resident ideas that can only be openly discussed if there is individual involvement in governance. Everyone's input has value and residents who initiated the services I noted above continue to have the fulfillment of giving back to their community.

I welcome your feedback on this article or any issue pertaining to PPOC. This is your home! Thank You! .



## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**Chair, Wynfred Joshua**

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met November 17<sup>th</sup>. Total income for October was \$300,543 with expenditures of \$226,629. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$73,914. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$100,789, leaving a deficit before taxes of \$26,876 which largely reflected bills paid for work performed in September; fees for bank services inasmuch as interest no longer offsets fees; and increased water and sewer bills.

In response to inquiries from residents about the impact of the current national financial crisis on our reserves and operating funds, we would like to reassure you that our funds are invested in insured accounts. Our long time Reserve Funds are invested in GNMA bonds. As you might know, these are the only mortgage-backed securities guaranteed by the US Government. Funds needed for current operations and payments are in government insured money market accounts.

As to delinquencies, we had 26 units that were in arrears for a total of \$23,000. Please note that these figures fluctuate from month to month. About half of these owners routinely pay their condo fee late and include a late fee. At this point we also have 2 units in foreclosure.

We had a lengthy discussion about the upcoming balcony railings project. We refer you to the various options PPOC is reporting. From a financial perspective we note that we had budgeted \$1.7 million for this project however the costs have dramatically increased to some \$4 million. We understand that there is probably a viable option for less which PPOC is exploring.

We expect to get the figures for the first floor redecoration project next meeting.

We endorsed the proposal to award the 2009 landscaping maintenance contract to Panoramic Landscaping for the amount of \$35,816 with the restriction, however, that the selection and arrangements of the plants for the front circle be left to the Ad Hoc Landscaping Committee.

As is customary, the FMC will not meet in December. Please note that because the third Monday in January is a holiday, we have scheduled the next meeting for Monday, January 26, 2009. We welcome all interested residents to join us and give us your ideas on the financial management of our condo.





# SECURITY, FIRE, & SAFETY

Chair, Robert De Mayo

The Security, Fire & Safety Committee (SF&SC) met on November 12, 2008 with four members present. The minutes from the October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed and approved.

At the start of the meeting, with very few residents present, one of the committee members opined – tongue in cheek - that the paucity of resident attendance clearly means that the SF&SC is doing a superb job and residents are content. The Chairman, however, disagreed and urges all residents/owners to attend to voice their opinions, discuss issues, and make recommendations on Skyline House security and safety issues. The SF&SC is an open forum – please come use it!

Our ***Management Office Incident Report*** for the month of November included: (1) The Skyline House Bulletin Board posting of a picture and interest profile of one of our new Security Officers. As we have periodic officer turnover, the Management Office will post these profiles to familiarize residents with the security staff. (2) A resident called the Security Officer about a group of 5-7 young men arguing and fighting on a hallway floor in the East Building. After an immediate investigation, Fairfax County Police were called; eight police units responded and the incident settled without charges being filed. The Management Office has been in contact with the unit owners and expressed grave concern on the behavior of their tenants; this behavior is not in accordance with the family environment and residential setting of Skyline House. (3) A resident was reported speeding to make the green light while exiting the property. He has been notified and warned. (4) A report was filed again on the disgusting habit of some residents in Tiers 2 & 3 of tossing their cigarette butts off their balcony which land on their neighbors below. The Management Office is investigating to determine the culprits. (5) A notice was posted to remind residents and to underscore Skyline House Rule #5 – that all residents must use their issued key fob which authorizes legitimate entry into our buildings. Anyone without a working key fob MUST sign in at the Front Desk - no exceptions! The Front Desk has been alerted to be vigilant and forcefully enforce this standing security rule. The SF&SC recommends, in order to increase resident awareness of the need for security key fobs, that the Management Office periodically reinforce awareness of this House Rule with similar postings of notices on all of our entryways.

Our ***Management Office Security Report*** for this month revealed that all our security officers have been removed or replaced for a myriad of reasons (i.e. upward mobility in the company, changes of duty locales, retirement, performance, etc). One of our new CES Security Officers, who recently had his picture posted on our Bulletin Boards, brings 4 years of military experience to the job. Moreover, CES continues to be responsive and sensitive to our security needs.

***Old/New Business Discussions*** included a review of “signage” on our grounds. Fire Regulatory signs (e.g., No Parking Fire Lane) appear to be in order as a result of other working group actions. Skyline House Guest Parking/Resident parking signs are in the process of being renewed by the Management Office. The issue of poor visibility of pedestrians – poor in daylight and exacerbated at night - to vehicle drivers at the exit of our property (i.e., roadway curve near West Building) continues to be troublesome to members of the SF&SC. To date, we have focused on solution sets such as changing the placement of the YIELD signs, to replacing it with a STOP sign, to painting/designating a pedestrian walkway, to placing a speed bump on the blind portion of the curved driveway/exit. To the members of the SF&SC, this issue remains open and unresolved; resident input or views are welcomed.

Further discussion took place on the current status of the reported late night drunk/lewd/disorderly conduct at the Build America strip mall adjacent to the West Building. Since the Skyline community/Fairfax County authorities meeting hosted at Skyline Square, and the subsequent law enforcement operations by the Fairfax Police and other county regulatory agencies (e.g., for liquor licenses, underage drinking, etc), things have been relatively more quiet. The SF&SC will keep this as a periodic update item.

The committee agreed that each monthly meeting should have a relevant “core theme”. This month’s is ***“Holiday Safety”***. All agreed that while one might assume “safety” is synonymous with the exercise of “common sense”...sometimes we really need reminders. Since December is a month of many religious and cultural holidays spent at home in Skyline House, your SF&SC would like to share these very useful holiday safety reminders – not in any order of precedence:

## **SF&SC Holiday Safety Tips**

- Do read the directions and **warnings** that come with all holiday decorative lighting.
- **Look for the “UL”** (Underwriters Laboratory), “**CSA**”, or “**RTL-SEMKO**” certification label on all electrical decorative products. Counterfeits/knockoffs are not made to the same high manufacturing standards and do not offer the protection from electrical shock, overheating and possible fire that certified products offer.
- Do not use “Indoor” lights, “Indoor” electrical decorations, or “Indoor” extension cords **outside on the balcony**; they may get wet and cause an electrical safety hazard.
- Turn decorative holiday lights and other decorations **off before leaving** your condo or going to bed; consider using automatic timers.
- Rule of thumb: **never** connect more than **3 light strands** together; it may overload the circuit causing overheating or a short.
- **Avoid overloading** wall outlets and extension cords with too many devices.
- **Unplug** a light string **before** replacing a bulb; review the original package for correct replacement bulb wattage and voltage.
- Also, to **avoid overheating extension cords**, do not run them under furniture or carpeting, behind baseboards or over walkways where they can be pinched, twisted or squashed.
- Be sure you have a **smoke detector installed** in your condo; use these holidays as the time to both test it (press the clear plastic button) and/or change the batteries.
- Make sure you have a Home **Fire Extinguisher** in your condo; check that it is both charged and ready to go.
- Three Big Holiday “Tree” Tips:
  - (1) Whether artificial or freshly cut – keep trees at least **3 feet** from all sources of heat to prevent fire;
  - (2) If selecting a cut tree, check for freshness to minimize the fire hazard of **dry needles** in contact with hot lights;
  - (3) Keep cut trees well-watered since a 6 ft tree will suck up and use the **1 gallon** of water in the base reservoir every two days!
- Never use **lighted candles** as decorations on trees, even on artificial trees.
- Place any lighted candles in sturdy containers; remember, **hot wax** can severely burn kids.
- After parties in your home and before retiring, check around and under sofa and chair cushions for **smoldering cigarettes** (Provide lots of ash trays).
- Consider installing at least one **carbon monoxide** detector in your condo’s sleeping area.
- Three Big Personal Safety while Shopping:
  - (1) ‘Tis the season for oh-my-gosh **pickpockets** in malls, be wary & alert, know where your pocketbook/purse is at all times by simply keeping it securely **closed** while with you **on your lap** – do not hang it on the back of the chair you are in while shopping or dining;
  - (2) In parking malls or garages: park you car under/near lights, in a **well-lighted** and clearly visible area, keep keys in hand with thumb on the alarm button on the car key fob until safely inside mall - same procedure in reverse while headed back to you car;
  - (3) Never park your car between 2 larger cars such as between vans with sliding doors, trucks, or large SUVs – do not be **hidden from visibility**; thieves may be watching.

Check these Websites: **Consumer Product Safety Commission:** [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

**Electrical Safety Foundation International:** [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org)

**Dominion Virginia Power:** [www.dom.com](http://www.dom.com)



# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

**Coordinator, Judith York**

As of January 2009, I will be stepping aside as coordinator of the Neighborhood Watch Group. The Board President has informed me that he would like to see the Group and its functions formally incorporated into the charter and under the umbrella of the Security, Fire and Safety Committee as he believes this would be in the best interest and viability of the Group and also be in the best interest of our community as a whole. He has asked me to work with him and SF&SC Chair Bob De Mayo to insure this happens in as efficient and non-disruptive manner as possible.

I do want to point out that, in the last 7 years, the number of neighborhood watch volunteers has declined from 60 to 20 volunteers. In winter, especially, there are fewer residents walking the corridors for the neighborhood watch group. We have evolved into more of an informational team, with fewer walkers but more information shared amongst the neighborhood watch group and, where appropriate, the Board, the Security, Fire and Safety Committee, the Management Office and the front desk. In light of all of that, I support the idea of incorporating the Neighborhood Watch function into the SF&SC and look forward to working with them to effectively accomplish that reorganization.

Finally, I would like to thank the Skyline House residents who have volunteered and worked on various committees and groups during 2008 and our management and staff for their hard work, as well as our security guards for their vigilance.

\* \* \* \* \*

What follows below is directly quoted from the Fairfax County Police Department's "Holiday Safety" information because, coming up, you will have the crush of crowds, oodles of traffic, the buying of gifts and, hopefully, a quiet and safe place to relax, enjoy and recover from it all.

**HOLIDAY SAFETY – DON'T BE A VICTIM** – Everyone is looking for extra money or gifts during the final weeks of holiday shopping and that includes criminals. They are out in force trying to separate you from your money and property. In recent months there has been an increase in the number of GPS, iPods and other electronic devices being stolen from vehicles. Be extra vigilant during the holiday season and keep the following tips in mind:

**PERSONAL SAFETY WHEN SHOPPING** – (1) shop during daylight hours whenever possible; (2) always be aware of your surroundings; (3) know exactly where you park your car; (4) if shopping at night, park in well-lit areas; (5) avoid shopping alone; (6) carry keys, cash and credit cards separate from each other; (6) if you have to carry a purse, carry it close to your body and always have it zipped or snapped; (7) be aware of strangers "accidentally" bumping into you, pickpockets use this as a diversion; (8) avoid carrying large packages that block your vision and make you a target for thieves; and (9) avoid shopping until you are exhausted; you are more alert when you are less tired.

**MORE TIPS ON PERSONAL SAFETY** – (a) when harried or in a crowded shop, make sure you get all forms of identification and credit cards returned to you before you leave; (b) leave the mall/store well before closing time--this way, there is a greater assurance you will walk out with other people--there is safety in numbers; (c) use an escort or use mall security if you have too many packages or if you are leaving the store after closing; (d) be alert while walking to your car and check under and around your car as you approach it--after checking your car, lock it immediately upon entering it; (e) if you see a van parked next to your car, you can choose to enter your car through the passenger side; (f) avoid using automatic teller machines at night and remember to keep others from seeing when you type in your PIN; (g) remove GPS units, iPods and any other electronic devices from your windshield and store them out of sight; and (h) see (g) above and remove evidence of such item (that is, suction cup marks) from your windshield.

**TIPS ON HOME SAFETY** –if you go out of town for the holidays, make sure you ask a trusted neighbor, friend or family member to check your unit at least once or twice a week and pick up mail and newspapers; and provide your contact number in case of emergency.



# RECREATION

## Chair, Betty Turner

The Recreation Committee met on Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>.

The November 7<sup>th</sup> TGIF was cancelled because there was no host/hostess, due to illness and committee members' schedules. We regret any inconvenience this may have caused to residents, but circumstances were beyond our control. To prevent this happening in the future, please let the committee know if you are willing to serve as host/hostess for these events.

The Children's Halloween Party turned out to be a real success with more than 40 children attending. Most of them were accompanied by at least one parent. The "Tattoo Parlor" operated by **George and Sophia Mazur** (East Building Residents) was a big hit. Wonder Woman, aka **Sittia Waters** (West Building Resident) arrived promptly and kept the party moving. **Suzan Orman** (West Building Resident) did an excellent job of keeping the games moving and the children's attention. A friend visiting with volunteer **Shirley Williams** (West Building Resident) assisted the children with the activities and helped maintain order. Other volunteers, **Hanna Jones** (East Building) and **June Coutinho** (West Building) provided a helping hand to Gladys with distributing the "Trick or Treat" candy and toys. A really big "Thanks" goes to ALL the residents who filled the basket with candy and toys to be distributed at the party. A special thanks to **Rudolph Coutinho** (West Building Resident) for the donation of three huge lighted decorations. Each child was photographed by **Dale Turner** (East Building Resident) as they arrived in costume. Each child received their picture as a souvenir of the party. Betty McLaurin and the housekeeping staff were very helpful in arranging the tables to accommodate the activities and help setup the room. This turned out to be a really nice event for the children of Skyline House.

A total of 19 attended the Thanksgiving Dinner on Thursday, November 27<sup>th</sup>. The food was excellent and the sunset was beautiful. It was nice to share a meal with those who may have otherwise been home alone or eating out in a restaurant.

The Annual Holiday Party will be on Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> in the West Party Room. This will be a potluck event with residents bringing food to share. The Recreation Committee will provide coffee and the paper products. There is no charge to attend and no need to pre-register. Just bring food to share and spend some time socializing with your friends and neighbors. We have suggested "Festive holiday attire" but you may certainly dress however you feel most comfortable.

Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month and are open to all residents. At the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting we will be finalizing the plans for the Holiday Potluck.

## **ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>**

**6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

**West Party Room**

This is a potluck party and is FREE to all adults.

Bring a dish to share with others.

Don't forget to bring your own favorite refreshment.



# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR DECEMBER 2008



(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>THERE ARE NO STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN DECEMBER. THE NOVEMBER 2008 BOARD MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 3, 2008</b>						
	<b>1</b> Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> BOARD MEETING 7:00 PM West Card Room	<b>4</b> Ad Hoc Decoration Committee 7:00 PM West Card Room	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>9</b> Recreation Committee 7:00 PM West Card Room	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <b>HOLIDAY PARTY</b> 6:30 p.m. W. Party Room
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			
<b>GOOD NEIGHBORS: GWEN PETITJEAN (703-820-4260) AND LOUISE ALBIN (703-379-1645)</b>						

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker 915W 671-6759 nbaker@fjc.gov  
 Vice President, Maria Elena Schacknies 1302W 820-2239 cultura@att.net  
 Treasurer, Julie Campbell 1005W 933-6010 juliecampbell48@hotmail.com  
 Secretary, Charles Roberts, 914E 998-6080 charley.roberts@prodigy.net  
 Director, Budd Coutts, 1607E 931-3165 bcoutts@metronets.com  
 Director, John Warner 806W 933-1678 johnkemanai@yahoo.com  
 Director, Toska Prather, 1003W 379-7849 t\_jpra@verizon.net

## MANAGEMENT OFFICE (Central # 703-578-4855)

General Manager, Gusbey Silva gusbey@shuoa.org  
 Deputy General Manager, Tycia Haight tycia@shuoa.org  
 Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm greg@shuoa.org  
 Accountant, Hasan Mehmud hasan@shuoa.org  
 Administrative Assist., Alice Rodrigues alice@shuoa.org  
 Resident Services Coor., Noemi Najera noemi@shuoa.org  
 Chief Web Developer, Joyce Routt jlrou@metronets.com

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Financial Management Wynfred Joshua 1414W 820-4471 diawin@metronets.com  
 Security, Fire, & Safety Robert De Mayo 1213E 575-4464 jusbob2u@verizon.net  
 Physical Plant/Operations Al Lambert 709W 931-7314 myongal@verizon.net  
 Covenants Joseph Livingston 814 W 931-6923 joeandsonya@aol.com  
 Recreation Betty Turner 416E 820-1411 bturneronline@yahoo.com

## GOOD NEIGHBORS COORDINATORS

Toska Prather 1003W 379-7849 t\_pra@verizon.net  
 Virginia Fissmer 601W 379-2901

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COORDINATOR

Judith York 514W 671-2267 eboracum@verizon.net

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

THE HOUSE SPECIAL is published by: Skyline House Unit Owners' Association, Inc.,

3711 South George Mason Drive, Falls Church, Va. 22041-3711 The House Special is printed by Dan Daniels Pioneer Press

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