

The House Special



Volume 29 Issue 9

Skyline House

September 2009



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker

The Board of Directors did not meet in August. The Board will next meet September 23rd.

The Latest Update of the Skyline House Unit Owner's Association's Rules and Regulations is Now Available

The new Rules and Regulations booklet, including the most recently approved rules, is now available. Owners and residents are encouraged to pick up a new booklet in the Management Office and take time to review what you think you already know.

The new Rules and Regulations are also available on our website at www.shuoa.org.



MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

Balcony Concrete Repairs and Railing Replacement Project

The demolition of deteriorated concrete started on Monday, July 13th and was completed on Tuesday, August 25th. The contractor will start the placement of new concrete during the first week of September. Immediately after the concrete is replaced the contractor will proceed with the re-coating all balcony walls and ceilings. Installation of new railings is estimated for the first week of October. The contractor estimates completion of the project by mid-October 2009.

The West Penthouse sundeck is off limits during the entirety of this project due to the equipment and wiring installed on the deck.

[Replacement tile for balconies where tile was damaged due to concrete demolition.](#) The tile repairs needed on all tiled balconies will be performed immediately after the new railings installation. **All residents with tiled balconies are required to provide the tile needed for these repairs, by no later than September 30th.** Management will send a letter to each of these

units during the first week of September, indicating if concrete repairs were performed beyond the 12" perimeter with information about the additional tile that may be needed in these cases.

Pool Hours Extended Into September Due To Balcony Concrete Demolition

The pool resumed regularly scheduled hours on Thursday, August 27th. Some of the contracted pool hours not provided during the balcony concrete demolition will be provided during September, after Labor Day. **This year the swimming pool will remain open until 7:00 p. m. daily through Sunday, September 20, 2009, weather permitting.** The remaining contracted pool hours not provided during the demolition will be used to open the pool earlier than normal (the week prior to Memorial Day) in May 2010.

First Floor Redecoration Project

The redecoration project was approved by the Board of Directors during its July 2009 meeting. During the first two weeks of August unit owners cast their vote for one of three design concepts and as a result, Design Concept 1 was selected by the majority of the unit owners who participated. The materials needed have been ordered and work will begin in late September. The contractor will begin with redecoration of the East and West mail lobby and passenger elevator areas immediately followed by the replacement of the wood window boxes in the East and West Galleries. The last task of this project will be the replacement of the carpet in the East and West Building first floor residential corridors, passenger elevator lobbies and galleries.

Cox Cable – Digital Channels

As a result of the conversion to digital broadcasting which took effect in Fairfax County on June 12, 2009 several TV stations decided to transmit in digital only. You may view any of these channels previously included in the Extended Service, and listed in our bulk agreement with Cox, if you have a Digital TV.

Please note the following information provided by Cox:

Per the FCC, only channels that were in limited basic that moved to digital are required to be viewable with the clear QAM tuner TVs; other channels that were on expanded and moved to Digital by Cox, will require a digital box to view.

Due to concerns received regarding the information provided by Cox (above), Management is seeking, from Cox Headquarters, a formal response seeking the actual FCC regulation they cite.

You may rent a digital converter box from Cox for \$5.50 per month or an HD box for \$7.99. Any resident experiencing a technical issue with Cable TV provided by Cox, needs to contact Cox directly to report the problem. You may contact Cox Customer Service at 703-480-6390.



INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Water Conservation In Your Condo Unit

Editors Note – Over \$175,000 per year of our condo fees is spent on our water usage in Skyline House and usage and costs keep increasing. It is to everyone's monetary benefit to try to reduce our water usage. If you want to help keep your condo fee increases as low as possible, read and follow our Engineer's advice below.

Check faucets and pipes for leaks. A small drip from a worn faucet washer can waste 20 gallons of water per day. Larger leaks can waste hundreds of gallons.

Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket or an ashtray. Each time you flush a facial tissue, cigarette butt or other small bit of trash, five to seven gallons of water is wasted.

Check your toilets for leaks. Put just a little food coloring in your toilet tank. If, without flushing, the color begins to appear in the bowl within 30 minutes, you have a leak that should be repaired immediately. Most replacement parts are inexpensive and easy to install.

Install water-saving shower heads and low-flow faucet aerators. An inexpensive water-saving low-flow (less than 2.5 gallons per minute) shower head is easy for unit owners to install.

Long, hot showers can use five to ten gallons every unneeded minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rinse off.

Take shorter showers. To cut down on water use, turn off the water after soaping up, and then turn it back on to rinse. A four-minute shower uses approximately 20 to 40 gallons of water.

Turn off the water after you wet your toothbrush. There is no need to keep the water running while brushing your teeth. Just wet your brush and fill a glass for mouth rinsing.

Rinse your razor in the sink Fill the sink with a few inches of warm water. This will rinse your razor just as well as running water, with far less waste of water.

Use your dishwasher and clothes washer for only full loads. Dishwashers and clothes washers should be fully loaded for optimum water conservation. Most makers of dishwashing soap recommend not pre-rinsing dishes which is a big water savings. With clothes washers, avoid the permanent press cycle, which uses an added 5 gallons (20 liters) for the extra rinse. For partial loads, adjust water levels to match the size of the load. Replace old clothes washers. New Energy Star rated washers use 35 - 50% less water and 50% less energy per load. If you're in the market for a new clothes washer, consider buying a water-saving front loading washer.

Minimize use of kitchen sink garbage disposal units. In-sink 'disposals' require lots of water to operate properly.

When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing. If you have a double-basin sink fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you have a single-basin, gather washed dishes in a dish rack and rinse them with a spray device or a pan full of hot water. If using a dishwasher, there is usually no need to pre-rinse the dishes.

Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables. Rinse in a sink or a pan of clean water.



PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, Al Lambert

Greetings! As is our custom, there was no August meeting of the Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC). However, on the last Thursday of July the monthly Property Walk-Around was conducted. Chief Engineer Gregg Grimm gave us an interesting and informative tour of the East Building elevator room and the rooftop cooling towers. The elevator room is a combination of pulleys, electric motors, safety fuse boxes, and PC computer monitors. We learned about past renovations, pre-positioning of elevators to expedite response time, emergency operations during an electrical loss, use of surveillance cameras to view inside the elevator cabs and the abilities required of our technicians to perform maintenance and repairs. The cooling towers, which remove heat energy from the water to provide cooling within our buildings, are behemoth structures which sit atop the roof and operate on daily. It was an impressive tour and interesting to learn how they functioned in performing the removal of heat from the water. Our next walk-around will be September 24th at 7:00 p.m. It takes about an hour with some walking and absorbing information related to our home. I hope you can find time to participate in the future.

I want to return to my comments last month about rising costs and how we can, within the mission of the PPOC, minimize the impact on our condo fee. In the Association there are basically five divisions of component maintenance and replacement responsibilities:

- The unit owner's responsibility for adequate maintenance of the interior one's unit. Such as: carpeting, appliances, painting, furniture, etc. Inattention has little impact on the condo fee.
- A "shared" maintenance responsibility between the unit owner and the Association where areas overlap. Owner inattention to shared responsibilities often results in unnecessary expenditure of Association funds. For example, not properly caulking around a bathtub to preclude water or moisture penetrating the infra-structure, can cause damage to a common area or possibly another unit. Also, inadequate maintenance and replacement of hot water tanks, washer hoses, and other plumbing items can cause damage and expenses beyond one's unit.
- The Association's responsibility for daily maintenance in the common areas such as landscaping, parking areas, outdoor lighting, drainage gutters, trash disposal facilities, swimming

pool, exercise room, and all hallway walls and flooring. Maintenance is a significant expense in the operating budget and costs can be controlled by adhering to the Rules and Regulations pertaining to these areas. Unfortunately, some owners fail to realize that careless damage to these areas, causing destruction or untidiness, adds to expenses and thus, condo fees.

- Another division is The Association's responsibility for the replacement or repair of major components (elevators, façade, roofs, boilers, etc.) which are usually planned and budgeted for in advance via the Reserve Fund. Ongoing maintenance and physical inspections monitor these components for wear or indications of premature failure. Owner participation in governance can have a significant impact on the replacement or repair of these major components and costs by bringing owner expertise and life experiences to the PPOC meetings during project review. It is not unusual for projects in this category to range in cost from several thousand to more than a million dollars. Obviously, these projects have a considerable impact on our condo fees.

- Lastly is the division of "improvements" related expense, with the participation of committee members and owners resulting in monetary savings through cost reduction ideas. The resale value of our units also benefits from this division such as when new amenities have been identified and budgeted for implementation at a future date. Consequently, owners can take a passive approach (complying with Rules & Regulations) or an active approach via participation in the PPOC, to assist in the mitigation of costs.

I hope this overview will influence your future actions and participation so that we may continue to enjoy the benefits of residing in an upscale and well-maintained condominium.

As always, I welcome your feedback on this article or any other issue pertaining to the PPOC. This is your home! The PPOC committee will meet again on September 10th at 7:00 p.m. We welcome you to join us at our meetings. Thank You!



SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Chair, Robert J. "Bob" De Mayo

The Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) did not meet in August nor will there be a meeting in September. The next SS&NWC meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 14th.

I did host an open meeting in the front lobby on National Night Out, Tuesday August 4th. For those who could not join us, the following thank you note which I sent to participants and other supporters covers much of what occurred that evening.

"I want to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation for all the tremendous help and support I received during the preparation for, setup of, conduct during, and cleanup of our Skyline House National Night Out (NNO) on Tuesday, August 4th from a great group of folks at Skyline House! I believe it was a most successful event due to all of their efforts, as well as those of several "jump in" volunteers as the evening progressed.

I especially want to recognize our General Manager, Ms. Gusby Silva, her Deputy, Ms. Tycia Haight, and staffers Alice Rodrigues and Noemi Najera for their always cheerful and reliable support, advice and follow-thru with the event advertising, fliers and notices. As always, events like these could not happen without the behind-the-scenes, stalwart support of our Chief Engineer, Gregg Grimm and our Head of Housekeeping, Betty McLaurin. Thank you both for all the wherewithal of chairs, tables, punchbowl, and plates – and ever handy extension cords. Since this was my first solo planning and hosting, I must say: "What a great staff we are so very fortunate to have at Skyline House!! Hats off to you all!"

I am also deeply grateful for the hands-on, heavy-lifting work of my fellow Neighborhood Watchers (NWs) and volunteers: Hanna Jones, Al Lambert, and Betty and Dale Turner. In my old US Air Force parlance, you are real "aces" who enabled the setup and very classy hosting of this event to a very successful and entertaining conclusion. I give full credit to my wife Linda, for her creative ideas for the classy Lime Sherbet punch and the tasty Raspberry Sherbet punch, as well as the crock-pot of tasty treats, and the cookies, snacks, crackers and three kinds of

cheeses; it was a great spread and attending residents loved it all. Finally, we owe a special thanks to the two Fairfax (FFX) County Police Officers who dropped by to offer us their thanks and encouragement!

During our event, I and my daughter Kelly had the opportunity to be on-duty and wear our Reserve Deputy Sheriff uniforms to both represent and demonstrate solidarity with law enforcement nation-wide. Together we narrated the Sheriff's Department's historical roots and rich traditions in both Virginia and Fairfax County from colonial days to present. We also explained in detail the mission, roles and responsibilities of the Fairfax Sheriff's Department, as compared to the mission of the Fairfax County Police Department. We also related our personal experiences, some humorous, some serious, over the past 5 years as a Reserve Deputy Sheriff.

Volunteer opportunities for citizen participation in both the Sheriff Reserves, the FFX Police Auxiliary, and the VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service) were underscored to the audience which peaked at about 80 residents between 7 and 8 PM.; it was explained that due to county budget cuts, some of these aforementioned FFX County activities were now unfortunately curtailed.

I trust the interactive Q&A session on NNO, law enforcement in general, and even on our Neighborhood Watch went well. We especially wanted to tie together the fact that our FFX County Police Force in Mason District, our Neighborhood Watch, our contract Security Guard force, and our participation in the multi-community Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) forge key linkages between the community and local law enforcement that, in turn, foster a high level of confidence that our neighborhood environment is safe and secure.

Last but not least, thank you Mr. Norm Baker, our Board Chairman, for your continued encouragement to me and unflinching support of our Neighborhood Watch as we endeavor to continue to have a positive impact on our Skyline House community.”



AD HOC DECORATION COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs, Maria Elena Schacknies & Alina Gonzalez

Final Report

The Ad Hoc Decoration Committee (Cheryl Robertson, Virginia Fissmer, Evelyn Haight, Heide Fechtman and the Association's Head of Housekeeping Betty McLaurin for advice on maintenance issues) has completed its assignment to identify and recommend a designer/decorator contractor (C-Designs) and with the contractor's assistance, to develop and recommend three designs for the re-decoration of the first floor galleries and residential corridors of the East and West buildings. Design Number One of the three Committee recommended designs approved by the PPOC, the FMC and the Board, was selected by a vote of unit owners in August 2009. The contract with C-Designs includes the replacement and upgrade of the gallery window boxes, the re-surfacing of the mailboxes, the replacement of the lights in the mailbox area, the replacement of all bulletin boards, the replacement of the wallpaper in the East and West lobby areas, the replacement of the carpet in the first floor galleries and residential corridors and the replacement of the flooring in the six passenger elevators.

The Committee first convened in February of 2008. The effort took many months of hard work and we are grateful it is completed. It has not been a simple task and we hope that when the redecoration is completed, residents will be pleased with the final results. We were cognizant from the beginning that as a Committee we would not be able to please everyone. Taste is most subjective, what some people like, others don't, but that is nothing new. What matters is that as a Committee we did our utmost to ensure that the design was in accordance with the characteristics of our buildings, that the quality and durability of the materials to be replaced was the best in the marketplace and, that those materials would be easy to keep well maintained.

We want to thank Management, the PPOC, the FMC, and the Board and for their support during the Committee's year and a half of work. It was a long, arduous process but one that offered all of us the opportunity to learn a lot and gain from the experience but most importantly to maintain and, hopefully, improve the quality and value of our home and investment.

SEPTEMBER 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.

JUNE BAKER 703-824-3619

FRAN STAMM 703-998-8221

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

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

MAGAZINES FOR ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL

Don't forget to bring your magazines to the front desk so Tony DiSalvo can deliver them to Alexandria Hospital. Please do not hold the magazines for long periods of time before doing so as they become outdated. The magazines are much appreciated by the Hospital volunteers.

Any questions call Tony at 703-824-1958.

Editors Note: Not only does 25-year Skyline House resident Tony DiSalvo appreciate the magazines residents leave at the front desk for him to donate to Alexandria Hospital but, the hospital staff and patients appreciate the magazines as well. Recently, Tony received a thank you card from hospital staff which included, among others, personal notes from:

The Emergency Room Patient Advocate – “Dear Tony...the patients really are thrilled when I offer a new magazine while they are waiting for test results or procedures. It's been... a joy to know that every [week] we'll have a fresh batch of magazines...The patients appreciate it and I am grateful for something to offer to keep them satisfied and relaxed. Thanks!”

The Volunteer Manager – “Tony, please know we appreciate your...faithful delivery of current magazines for our patients. Thank You.”

So, residents, continue to keep those magazines coming and do so frequently so they are not outdated before they can be delivered by Tony to the hospital and its patients and staff.

SPANISH LANGUAGE COURSES AT LINCOLNIA SENIOR CENTER

Spanish I, II, and III are offered at the Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria, (703 914-0223). Classes begin September 28th for 8 weeks. Cost is \$5.00. To register call the Center and give them your name and phone number. Payment may be made the first day of class. You will learn to read, write and have conversations in Spanish.

Spanish I is each Monday at 11 a.m. for 8 weeks

Spanish II and III is each Monday at 12:45 for 8 weeks



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2009



(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Library Closed	8	9 Security, Fire and Neighborhood Watch Comm. CANCELLED Next meeting Oct. 14, 2009	10 Physical Plant & Operations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	11	12
13	14 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	15	16 Covenants Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	17	18	19
20	21 Financial Management Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	22	23 BOARD MEETING 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	24 Physical Plant & Operations Committee Walk-Around 7:00 p.m. Main Lobby	25	26
27	28 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	29	30			
GOOD NEIGHBORS: FRAN STAMM (703-998-8221) & JUNE BAKER (703-824-3619)						

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