

# The House Special



Volume 29 Issue 11

Skyline House

November 2009



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker

The Board of Directors met on Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. As in Octobers past, the most important agenda item before the Board that evening was the Association's \$3.8 million 2010 Budget which the Financial Management Committee presented to the Board at its September 2009 meeting. **The 2010 Budget, as approved by the Board on October 28<sup>th</sup> includes a modest 2.9% increase in the Association's condominium fees commencing January 1, 2010.** Details of the fee increase will be sent to each unit owner over the course of the next two months. The 2010 Budget also includes a responsible increase in contributions to our Reserves to enable the Association to continue to plan for and adequately fund long-term maintenance and improvement projects for our aging buildings while also helping to avoid any future large "special" assessments to accomplish those requirements. As always, copies of the approved 2010 Budget will be available for owner review in the Management Office.

Our Financial Management Committee, its Subcommittees, our Treasurer and our Management and staff worked long hours to put before us a responsible, reasonable and well structured 2010 Budget. I offer thanks to all involved from the Board and the entire Association.

The Board also engaged in much lively discussion on many other matters that same evening including the advent of electric cars and what demands they might place on our buildings infrastructure (i.e. battery charging capabilities), property foreclosures and what the Association might be able to do to prevent them from lowering unit market values, and finally the newly renovated balconies and new balcony railings resulting from the ongoing Balcony Concrete Repairs and Railing Replacement Project and the related need to renew our enforcement of the rules and regulations as they pertain to the proper use of balconies and railings.

I mentioned above the need to plan for and fund the long-term care of our "aging" buildings. By "aging," I mean our buildings are, as of this year, 30 years old. According to Fairfax County records, the very first Skyline House condominium unit was sold 30 years ago this month, on November 23, 1979. What is wonderful about our community is the fact that many, many, many of the buyers in those early years of the 'House' remain owner/residents of their units to this very day. That says so much about the quality of life and the quality of our homes here at the 'House.'

I, and the Board, wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving holiday.



# MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

## **Balcony Concrete Repairs and Railing Replacement Project**

The contractor completed the re-coating of all balcony walls and ceiling by the end of September, followed with the application of the seal coating to all tiled balcony edges and the entire surface of all other balconies, as approved by the Board during its September 2009 meeting. The delivery and installation of the new rails began the week of October 19<sup>th</sup> and is estimated to be completed by Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting.

Tile repairs on tiled balconies will be performed immediately after the railing installation is completed.

The completion of all punch list items and demobilization is estimated for the middle of November.

## **First Floor Redecoration Project**

The contractor began the First Floor Decoration with the replacement of the wood window boxes in the East and West Galleries which has been completed, followed with the removing and replacing of all wallpaper on the walls and columns in the both buildings passenger elevator lobbies. The new wallpaper installation and replacement of bulletin boards will be completed by Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. The renovation of the mail box areas which includes the replacement of the walls paneling, ceiling fixtures and mail sorting cabinet will start on Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> and should be completed by Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>. During this time the mail boxes will not be reachable during working hours.

The last task of this project is the replacement of the carpet in the East and West Buildings first floor residential corridors, which is scheduled to begin on Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. The replacement of the carpet in the passenger elevator lobbies and galleries will be completed during the week of November 16<sup>th</sup>. This project is estimated for completion by Friday, November 20, 2009.

The installation of the additional security cameras needed to cover the entire West and East Gallery areas was completed at the end of October 2009.

## **Fire Lane Parking in Front of the West Building and Front Circle**

Residents and their guests continue parking along the fire lane located in the driveway between the property entrance and the Main Lobby. Parking along this fire lane not only is a violation of Skyline House Rules and Regulations but also blocks traffic making it very difficult to pass right through when approaching or exiting the front circle, especially during rush hours. Doing this also interferes with cars backing out of the guest parking spaces located across from the fire lane in front of the West Building.

Please ask the driver coming to pick you up, to wait in the circle drive area until you come out of the building. Also, when you are being quickly picked up or dropped off; please ask your ride to pull ahead of the West Mail Lobby entrance, by the handicap ramp on the right, in order to allow your neighbors to come in and out of the building without blocking their way with the car.

### **Do You See Something In Need Of Correction In the Common Areas?**

**Report it in the Maintenance Log at the Front Desk**

**or Send an Email to the Resident Services Coordinator**

The House Maintenance Log kept at the Front Desk is always available for residents to report items in need of correction in any of the common areas. The Log is a good tool for residents and Management. Every morning this log is checked and a work order is scheduled for each reported item. If you observe something in need of attention in our common areas but for some reason you are unable to get to the front desk to enter it in the Maintenance Log, you can always send an email describing your observation to the Resident Services Coordinator, Noemi Najera. Her email address is [NOEMI@SHUOA.ORG](mailto:NOEMI@SHUOA.ORG). Your emailed report will receive the same prompt attention as those entered in the Maintenance Log. Your input is always very much appreciated since it helps to maintain our common areas in the best condition possible at all times.



# COVENANTS

Chair, Joseph Livingston

The Covenants Committee did not meet in October. The next Covenants Committee meeting will be held on November 18, 2009, at 7:00p.m. All owners/residents are cordially invited to attend.

## A SPECIAL APPEAL TO ALL RESIDENTS

**The Holiday season is almost upon us. We will be coming and going with arms full of goodies and gifts. Family and friends will be coming to visit. I appeal to all residents:**

### **Guest Parking**

Please, for the sake of our guests, reduce, or better yet cease, your personal use of guest parking spaces. Ask yourself before parking in a guest space, "Do I really need to use this space even if only for a brief amount of time?" Promise yourself, if you forget to remove your car in the required amount of time, you will understand when your vehicle is towed at your expense.

### **West Lobby Door**

**No one should enter the West Lobby Door without a key fob (even a resident).**

**If you live in Skyline House but do not have a key fob to the outside door, please enter through the front lobby.**

**Refer ANYONE trying to enter without a key fob to the front lobby desk.**

**If you need to load or unload items to or from your car, this is NOT the place to do so. Load and unload your car at the loading dock.**

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



## PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, Al Lambert

Greetings! The Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) meeting on Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, was unusual in that we had no agenda items for review. Taking advantage of this lull in activity, the Committee had an in-depth discussion of two topics that have a significant impact on our condominium investment and our quality of life.

The first topic involved the schedule for repainting the residential corridors. A few months ago the PPOC conducted a walk-around of the buildings to observe corridor conditions and entrance door hardware. A concern surfaced that corridors had a lackluster appearance due to too many paint touch-ups on sections of the corridors that had had minor damage from scratches and surface marks. The question was posed, should we accelerate the corridor repainting schedule?

The current schedule has the corridors being repainted every three years and unit doors every five years. Normally painting occurs in late fall or early spring when children have returned to school, and the building-supplied heat can accelerate the drying process. Thereafter, touch-ups are accomplished as needed. Since touch-ups can never completely match the original paint application, a point exists when aesthetics require that the entire corridor be repainted and thus some floors are repainted more often than every three years.

The discussion included the impact on costs (manpower and materials) of changing the painting frequency of the corridor walls from three to two years. Also discussed was asking Management to investigate manufacturers and the types of paint (flat latex, etc.) we might use to give us improved durability. In the course of discussion, it was determined that repainting of the corridors is influenced by such things as water leaks, damage during move-ins/outs, deliveries of new appliances or furniture and, unfortunately, now and then, vandalism.

The outcome of the discussion was that we maintain the existing paint schedule and that the Committee schedules a walk-through at least annually of all corridors in each building. This will

provide the opportunity to validate the paint schedule by observing the aesthetic condition of the hallways, while knowing the last time it was painted and the time of the next scheduled painting. The time between repainting could be adjusted, on a recommendation to the Board, should the corridors be found to be sub-par.

What has not been noted so far in this report is the unnecessary damage being inflicted on the walls in the corridors. Numerous activities contribute to this situation: not taking proper precautions (such as using dollies, protective covers, etc.) when transporting items in or out of a unit, unsupervised children/teens playing with toys/gadgets/balls in the hallways that can cause dents or scratches and, unfortunately, vandalism. The inappropriate behavior of a few or failure to take preventative measures when moving objects within the corridors results in a degradation of the corridor and a negative impression of our homes that is perceived by visitors and potential buyers of the property. In due course, it results in an increase of the condo fee and potentially has a negative impact on our resale value. When everyone shows respect for the property we call our Home, it becomes another area where condo fees can be minimized, aesthetics improved, and resale values increased. We need feedback from residents on how to minimize incidental damage to the corridors during transport of objects. For example, should the Association supply additional hand trucks, equipment moving dollies, and padded covers to assist during the moving of objects? Is each resident providing adequate oversight of the workers making deliveries to ensure careful movement through the hallway?

The second topic for discussion was raised when a Committee member mentioned planning had not started for the advent of electric cars. It is logical to assume that the intrinsic value of a unit will increase when the capability exists for an owner to plug-in his electric car. This could be an amenity unit owners will wish to have in the near future. After exchanging ideas on implementation methodologies, the Committee approved a recommendation to the Board that Management hire a consultant engineer. The objective is to examine the garage electrical infrastructure and to conduct a cost benefit analysis on alternatives to provide a capability for an electrical outlet in a parking space. [Editors Note – at its October meeting, the Board heard and discussed at some length this possibility and determined to not pursue it further at this time.]

Lastly, in conjunction with our monthly walk-arounds, each committee member was given a copy of the landscaping improvements accomplished in September and the tree removal and bush pruning scheduled for November. The option exists for each member to inspect the work and provide feedback at the PPOC's November meeting.

Remember the PPOC conducts a monthly walk-around of different parts of the property the last Thursday the month at 7:00 p.m. starting in the Front lobby. Feel free to join in. The areas toured/inspected on October 29<sup>th</sup> were the Building's Bike and Boiler Rooms. Due to the holidays in November and December the next PPOC walk-around will be on January 28, 2010.

The next PPOC meeting will be on November 12, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. As always, I welcome your feedback on this article or any matter pertaining to the PPOC. This is your home! We welcome you to join us. Thank You!



## **INFO FROM THE ENGINEER**

**Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm**

### **Elevator Use**

Several residents have complained about others pressing both the up and down buttons when calling the elevator. Please do not go to the hallway call stations and press both the up and the down buttons. Doing so uses more electricity and actually slows down elevator service making it take longer for you to reach your destination. For more information on elevator etiquette, refer to [www.elevatormrules.com](http://www.elevatormrules.com) where you will find elevator use tips and website reader comments..

### **Water Leak Detectors**

We still have water leak detectors for sale in the Management Office for \$15.90. These detectors work very well and should be placed in the floor (not the water heater drain pan) of your utility closet. If you already own one of these detectors, keep in mind that when the battery gets low it will emit sound, indicating it is time for a new battery.

# NOVEMBER 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.

**JUDITH YORK 703-671-2267**

**SONYA LIVINGSTON 703-931-6923**

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.



## FINANCIAL MANAGMENT

**Chair, Wynfred Joshua**

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met October 19, 2009. Total income for the month of September was \$310,885 with expenditures of \$199,798. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$111,086. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$104,317 leaving a modest surplus before taxes of \$6,769. With the exception of the cable TV contract and utilities, expenditures remain generally within projected budget figures. The cable bills are higher than projected because required taxes were not included in the initial price quotation. While the electricity bill has markedly declined compared to last month, utilities remain high, reflecting price and usage increases. Our legal costs are over budget as a result of having to respond to an owner lawsuit. We expect these costs to continue to increase as the owner is appealing the case.

Last month there were 14 owners who were \$6,269 overdue in payments for 10 to 30 days; 4 owners owed a total of \$10,081 for more than 60 days. Collection for this group is being handled by our attorney. 2 owners owed \$1,100 due to covenant violations. As a result we had a total of \$17,449 in arrears for September. Our rental percentage continues to be 22% or 121 units.

Our Committee discussed at some length the foreclosure of one of our units which had been handled by the Bank of America for HUD. Several members were concerned that HUD might sell the apartment at a bargain price or to a subprime buyer, thereby impacting the overall investment value of the condominium. The question was asked if the Association could buy the unit to rent it out. The Committee decided to ask the Board to explore whether we could do this legally, and if so, to consider the possibility of acquiring the unit. [Editors Note – at its October meeting, the Board heard and considered this possibility and determined to not pursue it further.]

The FMC reviewed revisions in the 2010 Budget including a change in employee benefits and the Board's decision to recoat entire balcony surfaces instead of just the 12" perimeter damaged and repaired during the current construction project. Recoating the entire surface at this time saves the costs of mobilizing equipment and obtaining labor at a later date that is already in place and included in the current contract. With these changes in the budget projections, we concluded that by the end of 2010 we can still expect to have almost \$2 million in our Reserves. Our Committee commends Management for working to limit the 2010 condo fee increase to 2.9%.

The FMC decided to hold its next meeting on Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> instead of the usual 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday to provide more time for staff to complete the financial reports and to enable some of our traveling members to attend. As always, we strongly urge residents to join us. We welcome your views and advice in spending your condo fee.



## SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

**Chair, Robert J. "Bob" De Mayo**

The next Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>.



# SEASONAL FLU vs NOVEL INFLUENZA A (H1N1)

(Provided by your Skyline House Safety, Security & Neighborhood Watch Committee)

## RESOURCES USED FOR THIS FACT SHEET OF THE NOVEL INFLUENZA A (H1N1)

CDC H1N1 Website <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services flu website <http://www.flu.gov/>

## INFLUENZA FACTS

In a typical year, approximately 5 to 20% of the population gets the seasonal flu.

Two flu strains, seasonal influenza and the **H1N1** influenza, are currently circulating in the U.S.

H1N1 influenza virus is a **new strain** of influenza virus, first recognized in April 2009.

People may be contagious from 1 day before showing symptoms up to 7 days after getting sick.

Most people who have been infected have recovered without needing medical treatment.

## H1N1 PREVENTION

Immunization with the H1N1 vaccine is the most effective way to prevent and limit the illness.

H1N1 vaccination is required for everyone in the U.S. military.

Key H1N1 vaccine target populations include: pregnant women; those who have household contact with infants less than 6 months old; people between the ages of 6 months and 24 years; people between 25 to 64 years who are “high risk” because of chronic health disorders (example: diabetes or asthma) or who have compromised immune systems due to medical issues.

## STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

“Social Distancing” means don’t sneeze on other people and keep your germs to yourself.

Cover nose/mouth when coughing/sneezing; sneezing into your elbow/sleeve is most effective.

Wash your hands often with soap and water; alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; germs spread that way. Stay home if you get sick.

## **Why the need for Social Distancing?**



**The U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention says:** “If you get sick with flu-like symptoms this flu season, practice social distancing and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care. Most people with 2009 H1N1 have had mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs and the same is true of seasonal flu. However, some people are more likely to get flu complications and they should talk to a health care provider about whether they need to be examined if they get flu symptoms this season.”



# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2009



(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	10 Security, Fire and Neighborhood Watch Comm. 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	11	12 Physical Plant & Operations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	13	14
15	16 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	17	18 Covenants Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	19	20	21
22	23 Financial Management Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	24	25 Note: Nov/Dec Board Mtg. will be held Thursday Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	26	27	28
29	30 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse					

**GOOD NEIGHBORS: SONYA LIVINGSTON (703-931-6923) & JUDITH YORK (703-671-2267)**

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