

# The House Special



Volume 31 Issue 3

*Skyline House*

March 2011



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker

The Board of Directors met on Wednesday, February 23, 2011. What follows is my report

### **2011 Annual Meeting**

The Board will next convene Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> for the 2011 Annual Meeting/Election. No business will be conducted at that meeting. In addition to my and the Treasurer's reports, Committee Chairs will present a brief report on some of the highlights of their committee's activities during the previous year, a summary of where things stand now and a mention of any potential upcoming events, activities, actions, or goals over the next 12 months. Immediately following adjournment of the meeting that evening, the Board, with its two newly elected members, will meet in closed session to organize and elect officers.

### **2011 Board of Directors Election**

The Association is fortunate three owners have volunteered to be candidates for the two (3-year) seats to be filled by the 2011 election.

By now everyone should have received their election materials via the U.S. mail in which one can find, among other things, brief bios of each of the candidates. If you have not received these important election/voting materials, please notify Management.

I, the Board, and the Association thank the three volunteers for their willingness to serve our Skyline House Community. Those are current Board Treasurer Charles Roberts, current Board Vice-President Maria Elena Schacknies, and resident owner Ahmad Shairzay.

The 2011 Meet the Candidates Program is scheduled for 7 PM, Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. It will be chaired by Covenants Committee Chairman Joe Livingston. Please, show your support for the candidates and our Association by attending the Program. I ask each of you to remind and encourage your friends and neighbors to attend and show their support as well. Also remind them they can easily cast their vote right there in the same room, immediately following the Program.

I also remind everyone, and again, ask you to remind your friends and neighbors that every owner's vote is critical to a successful election. Unless 25% of all owners vote, the election is not official. No doubt owners hear that statistic and think, "That should not be a problem!" Well, in

the 2009 and 2010 elections, just over 30% (170) of owners chose to be conscientious Skyline House citizens and vote. Put another way, roughly 70% (over 380) of owners chose not to bother to even cast their vote.

You can direct friends and neighbors to this issue of the newsletter which contains an easy to read explanation of three simple ways to cast their vote. Be aware that because proxies must be notarized, four office personnel are Notary Publics and will notarize proxies free of charge..

### **Actions Approved at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting**

During its meeting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Board approved seven action items:

1. As recommended by the Covenants Committee, the Board approved the appointment of Mr. Jack Prather to serve as the Inspector General of the 2011 Board of Directors Election to be conducted on March 22, 2011.

2. As recommended by the Association's Attorney, the Board approved a change to Rule 1 of the Association's Rules and Regulations to add the following language at Rule 1. A. 2. :

"The failure by any owner or any owner's family member, tenant, guest, invitee or licensee to comply with any rule and regulation shall entitle the Association to all remedies available to it at law, including, but not limited to, assessment of charges against the owner pursuant to the Virginia Condominium Act."

3. As recommended by the Association's Management, the Board approved change to Rule 13 added the following language at Rule 13. C.:

"In order to reduce noise and disturbances, owners/residents requiring work or services to be performed in their units shall require all contractors to perform such work or services between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The activities described above are not permitted on Sundays.

4. 2011 Swimming Pool Management Contract

As recommended by the Association's Management, the PPOC and the FMC, the Board approved award of the 2011 Swimming Pool Management Contract to Sunset Pools in the amount of \$27,894.00

5. Replacement of Fire Alarm System Headend

As recommended by the Association's Management, the PPOC and the FMC, the Board approved award of a contract to ARK Systems to replace the Headend portion of our Fire Alarm System in the amount of \$46,900.00. (See the PPOC report in this issue for additional detail.)

6. Energy Audit Request for Proposal (RFP)

As recommended by the PPOC and as developed by Management and the PPOC, the Board approved a Request for Proposal to be used for the solicitation of bids to conduct an Energy Audit. As reported previously, utility costs (electric and water) constitute about twenty percent of the Operational budget. An energy audit will provide short, intermediate and long range improvements which can be implemented through conservation efforts and the retrofitting or replacement of legacy energy and water systems all with the goal to minimize Association overhead costs and hence, the condo fee.

7. Questions for the Association's Attorney

As requested by the PPOC, the Board approved a short list of questions to be submitted to the Association's Attorney. The answers to these questions will provide clarification on By-Law requirements with regard to certain efforts which the PPOC would like to consider in the future such as possible installation of individual unit water meters, conversion of a common area from one purpose to another and the relocation of a common area function from its historical location.

### **Board Policy Regarding State Police Information Website**

A 2008 Board policy stipulates owners/residents be periodically reminded that the Association shall not monitor nor report, disclose or disseminate to owners/residents information available at the Virginia State Police Offender Registry website. It is further stipulated it is the responsibility of owners/residents, if concerned about such matters, to access the website themselves.



# MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

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

Phase three of the balcony (and patio) concrete repairs and railing replacement project will begin on **ALL FLOORS OF TIERS 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 14, 15 and 16 of the EAST BUILDING**. **The contractor mobilization and installation of the equipment needed for this project has been scheduled for Monday, February 28, 2011, weather permitting.** During the first week the contractor will install a rig for each tier above the balconies and any necessary overhead protection. Residents on these tiers have been requested not to use their balconies during working hours while the equipment is being installed over their balconies. All balcony doors are scheduled to be locked on Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 8:00 am, in order to proceed with the removal of the existing railings. It is mandatory that everything on these balconies/patios (including satellite dishes) be removed before the balcony doors are locked.

Notices were delivered under the door of each unit in these tiers on Friday, February 18th, containing all pertinent information for this project. Notices are also posted on the bulletin boards. Non resident owners were also notified.

The concrete repairs will be performed to the 12" outside perimeter of your balcony. Tile, if any, in that area, will be removed by the contractor. Unit owners are responsible to provide replacement tile and appropriate colored grout for that area. The contractor is responsible to install the new tile in the area where the original tile was removed. If your balcony is tiled contact the Management Office for additional information.

## **Garage Power Washing Project**

The power washing of all levels in the garage is done once a year during late winter or early spring to remove all chemicals brought in on tires as a result of the snow removal and de-icing measures applied to roads and driveways around the property during the winter months. This power washing is done to protect the integrity of the concrete decks in the garage.

This year the power washing of all garage levels has been scheduled for the week of March 28<sup>th</sup> with an estimated completion date of Thursday, March 31st. One entire level, upper and lower, will be power washed per day. Notices will be posted at least two weeks in advance. A sign up sheet will be placed at the Front Desk for residents who are unable to leave the property during the power washing and need assistance finding an alternate parking location for their car on the day their garage level is to be power washed. A sign up sheet will also be available for residents who leave the property every day and will offer their parking space for others to use.

It is imperative your car be removed from your space the day your level is scheduled for power washing. Failure to remove your car from your space on the designated day will result in a Covenants Hearing where a violation fine will likely be assessed to your unit, as per the Virginia Condominium Act.

## **Unit Windows and Balcony Door Replacement Project**

A total of 64 unit owners placed orders for windows/balcony door replacement, 29 in the West and 35 in the East, totaling more than 200 openings which reduced the original prices quoted.

All windows have been ordered. The manufacturer has provided the contractor with an estimated delivery of mid-March. Replacement of the windows/balcony doors in 18 of the units located on the North Side of the East Building will be performed during the summer months, after the balcony repair and railing replacement project is completed on that side.

## **Electricity "Blinks"**

Recently there have been several "blinks" of electrical service. Our Chief Engineer contacted Dominion Power and learned that in one incident, a transformer had burned out, resulting in two quick power losses. Two others occurred when power was cut to replace the transformer and then bring it back online. Another incident was when power was temporarily cut to replace a downed line, also resulting in two quick outages. They had no other info available.

## **Attention Owners Who Rent/Lease Their Units To Others**

**Please contact the Management Office for possible references on prospective tenants before you approve a new lease. Doing so might help you avoid big problems and save you money.**

## **Welcome to our new Accountant, Ms. Dana Tran**

Ms. Dana Tran joined the Skyline House Staff on Feb 7, 2011 in the Accounting Office. She has over seven years of experience in Finance and Accounting with various companies. She received her Associates Degree in Business Administration from Northern Virginia Community College and is currently pursuing her Bachelor Degree in Business Management at George Mason University. Dana wants to learn more about Property Management to enhance her long term career goals. Please drop by the Accounting Office to welcome Dana to our "House".



## **INFO FROM THE ENGINEER**

**Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm**

### **Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) Bulbs**

We have recently been asked about CFL bulbs and their safety. Some residents had seen reports from different sources that stated the bulbs might actually catch on fire, melt, etc. However, in searching the web, I found few verifiable references to these bulbs catching fire. The recommendation is, do not use any of these CFL bulbs that are cheap, cut rate, or off brand. Use a nationally known brand you have used before that you know and trust. For more information about CFL bulbs, I refer you to the Underwriter's Lab website and snopes.com, which have the best information I found about these bulbs. The snopes site gives more info about the bulb catching fire, which they say is false. Go to the following web addresses for more info:

<http://www.ul.com/global/eng/pages/corporate/newsroom/storyideas/compactfluorescentlamps/>

<http://www.snopes.com/inboxer/household/cflbulb.asp>

### **Water Leaks**

We recently had two leaks which residents did not report when they were discovered. Both leaks developed into problems which caused property damage that could have been avoided, had we been informed immediately. If you find a leak in your unit, call the office and report it immediately. If it is after office hours, call the front desk, as there is someone on call at all times.



# COVENANTS

**Chair, Joseph Livingston**

The Covenants Committee met on January 19, 2011. The report of that meeting was published in the February issue of the House Special and is available for your review at [www.shuoa.org](http://www.shuoa.org). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to recommended for approval by the Board, two proposed changes to the Association's Rules and Regulations both of which the Board approved at its February 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The actions are discussed in more detail in this issue's President's report.

The Covenants Committee next meets on March 16, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., in the West Card Room.



# PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

**Chair, Al Lambert**

Greetings! The Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) met February 10<sup>th</sup>. One agenda item was a component replacement of the Fire Alarm System. Another, an indication Spring is just around the corner, was the 2011 Swimming Pool Management contract..

In our Reserve Budget there is a line item for the replacement of the Fire Control System (FCS) in 2015 at a projected cost of \$337,628.00. The major component of the FCS is a fire alarm control panel which is an electric panel controlling the fire alarm system. The panel receives data from sensors (detectors) in individual units and throughout the building and monitors their operational integrity along with fire alarms to alert the facility in case of a fire. Industry had previously discontinued production of the fire alarm control panel and repair parts were becoming unavailable. A fire control panel is required under the building code for large buildings. The good news is only the fire control panel had to be replaced because the wiring, detectors, and amplifiers did not require replacement. The three bids by contractors to replace the fire control panel were ARK Systems (\$46,900.00), Life Safety Systems (\$66,650.00), and Edwards Service (\$80, 572.00). After a discussion on each proposal the committee recommended the ARK Systems as the vendor because they are an authorized GE Distributor, good references, had the best price, and possessed excellent knowledge of the product.

The second agenda item was the Swimming Pool Management Services. The requirement is to provide pool coverage 65 hours per week and two lifeguards at all times who must be 20 years of age or older. The lifeguards have to be on-site 30 minutes prior to opening for pool cleaning. The four contractor bids were Sunset Pool (\$27,894.00), Winkler Pool Management (\$29,765.00), Continental Pools (\$29,950.00) and Premier Aquatics (\$31,850.00). The committee recommended the contract be awarded to Sunset Pools because they have been our vendor since 2001, had the best price and there was no increase in cost from 2010.

The PPOC will not meet in March because of that month's annual election of new Board members. The PPOC's next meeting will be Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. On the agenda will be Quick Energy Savings Returns (QESR) such as turning off some common area lights and closing Penthouse floors in late evening. Trying to quantify electrical monetary savings in a large facility like ours is next to impossible but statistics cannot prove what makes common sense.

Although there will no formal meeting in March the PPOC will conduct a walk-around Thursday on March 3 @ 7:00 p.m. to inspect the boiler rooms which always leave participants in a state of awe when they see the size and complexity of the equipment.

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!



# FINANCIAL MANAGMENT

**Chair, Wynfred Joshua**

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) did not meet in January because there were no new proposals or actions to be considered. Our first meeting of the New Year was instead on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. For the month of January total income was \$334,940 with expenditures of

\$227,557. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$107,383. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$111,744, leaving a deficit of \$20,120 before taxes.

Although the 2011 budget had significantly increased outlays for utilities – electricity with +6.06% and water with +14.38% -- due to the very cold weather in January the Electricity Account was more than \$20,000 over budget. The Water and Sewer Account ran more than \$11,000 over budget. While we expect these overruns to decline in the coming months, the Water Account, particularly, bears watching closely. The FMC recommended that we should publicize the overruns of the water bills prominently, in the hope that residents will realize how much this costs them and such realization might encourage them to attempt to individually reduce their water usage. The Legal Fees Account had a modest deficit of \$217 for the month of January even though we had increased the 2011 budget for this cost from \$4,000 to \$10,000.

We do not yet have the final audit report, but it appears that variations with our own end-of-year report are minor. According to our figures we have a deficit for the past year of about \$21,000 (audit is slightly higher). The main contributors to the deficit are the Water and Sewer Account with \$44,000, the Electricity Account with \$9,600, and the Legal Fees Account with \$12,000.

The amount of overdue condo fees has risen again. While the total amount for December 2010 was about \$51,000, for January 2011 the figure had increased to more than \$60,000. About \$52,000 of that was the result of 8 units which were more than 60 days in arrears; our attorney is handling these. Almost \$5,000 was caused by 10 owners who were 10 to 30 days behind in payment. While we continue to compare favorably with other condominiums, the FMC is concerned about the steady rise in arrears.

Rental units have risen to 23% (130 units). This leaves 77% (427 units) owner occupied..

FMC members were very pleased with the Holiday Party in December. We had a good turnout of more than 60 residents. Some had not participated in a House event for several years and others were relative newcomers. Because several House members contributed food, flowers, and decorations, expenses were less than \$300. We hope we can repeat this event in December 2011.

The FMC recommended to the Board to award the 2011 swimming pool management contract to Sunset Pools for the amount of \$27,984. We have had Sunset Pools for several years and had excellent service. They are offering their service for the same price as last year. Their liability insurance is sufficient. The FMC also endorsed PPOC's recommendation to engage ARK Systems for replacing the Fire Alarm System. ARK will be using a GE retrofit system which requires replacement of only the Fire Alarm Head-end for \$46,900. Our head engineer supports going ahead with ARK. We had originally budgeted some \$337,000 for replacement of the system in 2015, so the ARK proposal represents quite a savings for us.

The FMC will not meet in March. Our next meeting will be Monday, April 25, 2011. We welcome all members of our Skyline House community to join us. We need your ideas and thoughts in meeting the fiscal challenges our Association faces.

## **MARCH 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.**

**HANNALORE JONES 703-379-1473**

**JUDITH YORK 703-671-2267**

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





# SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Chair, Robert J. "Bob" De Mayo

The Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) did not meet in February 2011. The report of its January 2011 meeting was published in the February House Special and is available for review at [www.shuoa.org](http://www.shuoa.org). **The SS&NWC will next meet March 9, 2011.**



by  
neighbors who care



by  
neighbors who care

All of us must frankly admit that miscreants and criminals do exist in our corner of Fairfax County. It's a fact-of-life that crimes are committed each day in our own Mason Police District; and, while our Police Department maintains a steadfast vigil by tagging and bagging these bums, and your Sheriff's Department locks them up tight in the City Jail, you can just never predict when - or where - criminal activity might occur, perhaps even very close to where we live.

So, if you own or live in Skyline House and you are worried about your personal security and physical safety or that of your loved ones ***Get involved now!***

Do you believe Skyline House needs to ***raise-the-bar*** on Security and Safety? ***Get involved now!***

Do you wonder if Management does all it can to provide a safe environment? ***Get involved now!***

If you wonder what security services our CES Security Officers perform on your behalf and want to know more details from the experts, ***Get involved now!***

If you believe you have a right-to-know (i.e., "Hey, I pay condo fees!!") about what's going on here with both personal security precautions and physical safety issues. ***Get involved now!***

If you feel, like that hackneyed TV commercial says, you are "mad as hell and can't take it anymore!" and you want to know how you can make a difference, ***Get involved now!***

**How do you get involved? What can you do to make a difference? Well, two things:**

**First** - attend monthly Security, Safety & Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) meetings and inform the chairman you want to join and have a say (a vote) in matters under the committee's purview as well as actively contribute to the creativity of the group. After attending 3 subsequent/sequential meetings you will be certified and welcomed by the chairman as a new member in good standing of this vital security/safety oversight group. Meetings are held monthly to address an agenda set by the group to discuss, vet, and recommend actions to the Board.

**Second** - join the **Neighborhood Watch (NW)** and quickly become an officially sanctioned **Watcher**. A simple application is required, then **one-hour** or so of required training by the Fairfax Police on NW responsibilities and code of conduct. Then you will be paired up with other certified watchers to conduct "NW Patrols" of our buildings, garage, and common areas to help deter crime and enforce our Rules and Regulations. Only one, 1-hour patrol per week is required to remain active and current. More patrols than that are encouraged and welcomed. Your hand-written report on a pre-printed form is submitted at the end of the patrol and is reviewed for follow-up action by me and Management!

***What can be the effect of your time spent on the SS&NWC or the NW? Some I can recall are:***

- You will be directly supporting law enforcement in a citizen volunteer capacity;
- Monitoring the performance of our Security Officers; critique or applause;
- Monthly review & discussion of all security/safety incidents;
- Reviewing, vetting and or recommending security policies or changes to previous ones;
- SS&NWC walk arounds to evaluate security "hot spots" and assess security camera placement;
- Monthly security learning opportunities such as a tour of the Fairfax 911 Emergency Facility;
- Reach-out to Skyline Plaza & Square Security members for "best practices" and data on issues;
- Networking with Police & other Associations' NW reps at Citizen Advisory Council meetings;
- Quarterly meetings and an annual picnic to share patrol experiences and sharpen the NW corps.

***DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS FOR COMING NW RECRUITMENT RALLYS AND  
SS&NWC MEETINGS WILL BE POSTED ON OUR BULLETIN BOARDS!***

***PLEASE ATTEND AND SIGN UP TO GET INVOLVED!!***

***YOU'RE NEEDED TO HELP "RAISE THE BAR" ON SECURITY AND SAFETY!***

## **ATTENTION ALL OWNERS**

### **Please Read The Following Important Information** **You owe it to yourself and your community to vote**

Your Association recently sent to you, via U.S. Mail, important materials for you to use to vote in the 2011 Board of Directors election. Do not discard these as they are your **ONLY** ballot and proxy (weighted to your unit) for this election. There is also a small envelope to insure the secrecy of your ballot and a pre-addressed envelope to submit your ballot and **notarized proxy**.

#### **ARE THERE ANY NOTARY PUBLICS AT SKYLINE HOUSE?**

**Four Management Office staff members (Gusbey Silva, Tycia Haight, Alice Rodrigues and Noemi Najera) are Notary Publics and will notarize your proxy at no charge.**

There are two (3-year) Board of Director positions to be filled. Three owners have volunteered to run for those two positions. Please acknowledge their willingness to give of their time to serve you and your Association by taking a few minutes of your time to cast your ballot for two of them. **YOUR VOTE IS NEEDED.**

### **HOW DOES ONE VOTE?**

**You DO NOT Need To Wait Until The March 22<sup>nd</sup> Election to Vote.**

**It Is Preferable If You DO NOT Wait Until March 22<sup>nd</sup> To Vote.**

**Vote As Soon You Are Ready.**

### **THREE EASY WAYS TO VOTE**

(1) **ANYTIME** -- If you are ready to vote after reading the three candidates' applications, simply **bring your ballot, proxy and a photo ID** to the Management Office **at any time, but as soon as possible**. Management staff will notarize your proxy (FREE) and you can submit your completed and sealed ballot/proxy. **YOU ARE DONE.**

(2) **At the Meet The Candidates Program (see box below for more info)**. If you want to learn more about the candidates before you vote, attend this program. **Bring your ballot, proxy and a photo ID**. Immediately after the program, Staff will notarize your proxy (FREE) and you can submit your completed and sealed ballot/proxy. **YOU ARE DONE.**

(3) **Election Night March 22<sup>nd</sup> (6:30 PM to 7:30 PM) in the West Penthouse.** Although it is very helpful to your Association if you vote early, as a last resort, you can **bring your ballot, proxy and a photo ID** and vote the evening of the Annual Meeting/Election on March 22<sup>nd</sup> between 6:30 PM and 7:30 PM in the West Penthouse. **YOU ARE DONE.**

**IF YOU ARE A NONRESIDENT OWNER** and unable to come to Skyline House then take your ballot/proxy to a Notary Public as soon as possible. Cast your vote on the ballot, have the proxy notarized and mail both to Skyline House. **YOU ARE DONE.**

### **MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Charles Roberts, Maria Elena Schacknies, Ahmad Shairzay**  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2010, 7:00 P.M. WEST PENTHOUSE**

Show your support for the candidates and join your neighbors to hear their presentations and ask them questions. Free notary service will be available that evening. Bring your proxy, ballot and a photo ID. Immediately following the program, have your proxy notarized and cast your ballot.





# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## MARCH 2011

([WWW.SHUOA.ORG](http://WWW.SHUOA.ORG))



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 Physical Plant & Ops. Comm. Walk Around 7:00 p.m. Meet In Front Lobby	4	5
6	7 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	8 MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 7:00 p.m. West Penthouse	9 Security, Safety, and Neighborhood Watch Comm. 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	10	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 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	22 ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS 7:00 p.m. West Penthouse	23	24	25	26
27	28 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	29	30	31		
<b>GOOD NEIGHBORS: WAYNE KRUMWIEDE 703-671-2267 and HANNALORE JONES 703-379-1473</b>						

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

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