

# *The House Special*



*Volume 31 Issue 10*

*Skyline House*

*October 2011*



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President, Maria Elena Schacknies**

It's with regret that I accept Joe Livingston's resignation as Chair of the Covenants Committee as of September 30, 2011. Joe has been an institution and a Skyline House treasure. He has earned our profound gratitude for his many years of unselfish and dedicated service. We are looking for a volunteer with extensive legal background to fill this void. This Committee formulates and maintains the regulations established by the Board of Directors for the day-to-day operations of Skyline House and monitors compliance by unit owners and renters. It establishes procedures for the enforcement of rules and regulations, and conducts hearings to levy assessments and/or institute sanctions when deemed necessary. Finally, it handles all matters pertaining to the nominations, balloting, tabulations of votes, and certification of voting outcomes for Board of Directors elections.

I am happy to announce that Janice Hill will be the new Chair of the Community Relations Committee (CRC). The charter of this Committee is to establish and maintain relationships with the community-at-large and to advise the Board on issues of potential interest to the Association. The CRC will assist the Board in keeping current with external affairs that might have an impact on the Association and its members. Janice is looking forward to meeting those who would like to join this committee. The Committee's first meeting will be on October 20th. Plans are underway to hold a Candidates' Night with those people running for office in Mason District, School Board, and State Senate and House of Delegates, on October 27<sup>th</sup> in the West Party Room. The announcement is in this newsletter. November 8, 2011, is Election Day, and we will benefit from hearing what the candidates have to say. Al Lambert chaired his last PPOC meeting in September, and this issue of the House Special includes his final report. He deserves a big round of applause and everyone's gratitude for his contributions as Chair of this Committee. Gary Akin will begin his chairmanship in the month of October, and we wish him much success.

Recent acts of nature have underscored the need for an Emergency Plan that would inform residents regarding the safest and most effective actions to take under various circumstances. If either the Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch (SS&NW) or the Physical Plant and Operations (PPO) Committees would volunteer to take on this task, it would be most helpful.

On September 7<sup>th</sup> at the Town Hall Meeting, Charley Roberts presented an overview of the AT&T antennas proposal. Dr. Eric Haseltine, President of Haseltine Partners LLP, and Christine Hoch, Executive Director of the Center for Safer Wireless, provided scientific information about antennas relative to public health and safety. Attendees stated their positions or asked questions to understand the issue in order to form their own opinion about the benefits and possible risks.

This deliberative process has been beneficial to the Board in reaching a decision on the proposed antennas on the roof. The Board ratified its unanimous “no” vote on this proposal. We are hopeful that those who got involved will step forward and become active in the affairs of the Association. The activism that the proposed antennas created proves that many owners are willing and able to contribute constructively to our community. My hope is that this involvement will continue into the future.

First-time condo owners sometimes don’t realize the differences between living in a condominium and living in rental apartments or a private home. The differences are very important. Residents of a condominium are not just individual owners or tenants. They are also members of a unique community with its own specific rules and regulations. Skyline House owners elect a Board of Directors consisting of peers who donate their time and expertise to ensure that the enterprise is well managed and fiscally sound. They, in turn, are supported by resident volunteers who serve on committees that help to shape Skyline policies and conduct condominium business. Skyline House is most likely to provide the optimal living experience when residents not only fulfill their *individual* responsibilities, but also become actively involved in the *communal* life of the condominium. Therefore, I strongly encourage owners to join committees or at least attend Committee and Board meetings. Newcomers are especially encouraged to discuss condominium life and business with long-term owners, to learn how Skyline House works and what makes it unique. The more you know about your community, the more ideas you will have about how the Skyline Experience can become even better.

Warmest congratulations to Greg Grimm for 20 years of dedicated and extraordinary service to all of us.

The Board of Directors approved awarding the contract to Hi-Rise Windows to replace the window panels on the balconies, and to Chesapeake Iron Works, Inc. to fabricate and install six additional storage bins in the East Building.

The newsletter has a new editor, Philip Cohen. The October issue appears in the traditional format. However, the November issue will have a new format that is being developed by Manuela Guill. She is also developing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for preparing the reports for the newsletter.



# MANAGEMENT

**General Manager, Gusbey Silva**

## **Replacement of the Fire Alarm Headend System**

The replacement of the fire alarm headend system started the last week of June and was completed at the end of July. A flow switch on the sprinkler system was found defective, and the Association's contractor replaced it on Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. The Fire Marshall inspection of the new system was performed on Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. The entire East Building and the garage were inspected that day. The West Building will be inspected on Tuesday and Wednesday October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The two additional pull stations have been installed on the garage deck, as required by the Fire Marshall.

## **Dry-cleaning of Residential Hallways**

The residential hallways are dry-cleaned every other year in each building. The East Building was dry-cleaned on Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. At that time the Penthouse and first floor galleries and the G level connector corridor were also done in both buildings.

## **Garage Structural Inspection**

The Garage Structural Inspection performed every four years by Dr. Poston, has been scheduled to be done during Monday and Tuesday October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Residents have been notified. During the inspection the Engineer may request that some of the garage spaces be vacated for further testing of the concrete walls, columns and deck around those parking spaces.

## **Penthouse Walls Concrete Repairs and Window Sealant Replacement Project**

The Association signed a contract for this project, and the work started on Monday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Prior to the start date for this project a total of seven windows in the penthouse were replaced where the seal on the glass was broken and the windows had condensation between the glass panels.

## **Garage Elevators Modernization**

The bids for this project, according to the specifications designed by the Elevator Consultant, were received at the end of August. Management is in the process of checking the companies' references. The companies which submitted the best three proposals will be interviewed by the Elevator Consultant in conjunction with Management, the PPOC Chair and PPOC Board Liaison, prior to presenting a recommendation for contract approval during the October committees and Board of Directors meetings.

## **Admit Slips for Contractors Working in Units**

Management has encountered several incidents when residents left contractors working in their units or guests on their own, and for one reason or another, the contractor and/or guest left the unit, thus getting locked out. Unfortunately, if this occurs neither the contractor, nor the guest, can receive the lock-out service unless there is an admit slip at the front desk authorizing this contractor and/or guest to gain entry to the unit. Management recommends that residents leaving their units while their guests are in their unit and/or contractors are performing the work, issue an admit slip allowing Management to provide unit access to them in case of an emergency, such as being locked out. An admit slip can be issued for up to a 90-day period.

## **Greg Grimm's 20th Anniversary**

We congratulate Greg Grimm, the Association's Chief Engineer, for 20 years of dedicated, excellent service to our community. Please, when you see Greg, congratulate him on 20 Years of Service at Skyline House!



# INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

## **Heating Season is Coming**

Cold winter weather is right around the corner. Don't be surprised on the first bitter cold morning to learn that your heater is not working properly. Test your heating unit sometime soon and make sure it is dispensing warm air. If not, the in-unit maintenance staff can be scheduled to service your system, or replace it if necessary, at a very reasonable cost.

## **Laundry Soap Problems on Lower Floors**

Again some residents are using either too much laundry detergent or the wrong type of detergent, thus causing suds floods in some units on the lower floors. Typically, front-loading machines need much less detergent than top-loading machines. If you see suds on or close to the window of your front-loading washing machine, you are using too much detergent. You should see virtually no suds when you do laundry. Please check your current product and make sure it is clearly labeled low-sudsing. If it is not, please consider changing brands and/or reducing the amount of detergent you use for each load of laundry.



# PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, Al Lambert

Greetings! It was a day of continuous rain when the committee met on September 8, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. after the August recess. A list of projects awaited discussion on contract proposals, vendor selection, and analysis of the tasks, timeframe, and costs.

The first order of business was receipt of the Garden Subcommittee report. One would have to be lost in thought while exiting the garage not to notice the numerous trees surrounded by flower beds, and the added shrubbery and bushes that adorn the landscape. Other less conspicuous areas have been enhanced with the planting of small shrubs to fill in empty spots in the landscape. Heading into the fall/winter months, the circle in front of the main lobby will be undergoing a transformation with planting of grasses and flowers, along with cabbage plants on the adjacent grounds. A crimson red maple tree was planted earlier in the year (near the entrance to the property), and time permitting, a few more trees will be planted on the grounds this fall. The club is led by Howard Haymes, who welcomes ideas and feedback on all initiatives.

Thereafter the committee transitioned to new business and the project to replace all exterior panels on the balconies and façades in the East and West Buildings. Due to funding constraints, the project will be a multi-year undertaking beginning this year in the fall and ending in 2013. Starting in the fall, new balcony window panels will be installed in the West Building; the East Building balcony panels will be done during the fall of 2012. The façade panels (between the balconies) will be installed in both buildings in 2013. The committee recommended that the contract be awarded to Hi-rise Windows, which submitted the lowest of the four bids received at a total cost of \$1,085,625. This bidder also had the best warranty: ten years for material and five for labor. Finally, Hi-rise has a record of proven

performance at Skyline House, as attested to by residents who had windows replaced in the past few years. The panels are Alpolic Aluminum Faced Composite. Given uncertainty in the future price of aluminum, the contract award that the committee recommended is restricted to the balcony panels at a cost of \$441,600. Next year the contractor will submit a bid for the replacement of the façade panels. The good news--I think--with what seems like an unending renovation of our buildings is that the balcony panels will be installed from the inside, thus only requiring contractor access to the balconies for a short time. Exterior scaffolding will be used for the façade panels in 2013. In both instances, the new panels will be attached over the existing panels, thus substantially reducing noise hazards and inconvenience during installation.

The next topic was old business and the project to fabricate six additional storage bins in the East G Level, Storage Room #5. The dimensions of the storage bins are as follows: two each measuring 6.5' wide and four each measuring 10.5' wide; all are 8' tall and 8' deep. The rental of these bins will produce additional income for the Association and serve as an amenity for residents. Three bids were submitted, and Chesapeake Iron Works was the lowest at \$6,942. The committee recommended approval based on the best price and the company having been an Association contractor since CY 2000 and done excellent work.

Next month Gary Akin will begin as the new chairperson of the committee. He is exceptionally qualified for the position, having served on the PPOC and as a Board member. The threefold purpose of this report has been to inform, comfort, and challenge owners. I encourage everyone to make time to participate in committee decisions affecting your home.

The next PPOC walk-around will occur on Thursday, October 6 at 7:00 p.m. to visit the swimming pool area for an informal discussion on the closing of the pool, scheduled replacement of surface tile, and water proofing the planters. The latter are leaking water, thus causing staining on the exterior of the garage façade. Time permitting, the group will view the storage area and condition of reserve façade bricks set aside for future repairs.

As always, I welcome your feedback on this article or any matter pertaining to the PPOC. This is your home! We invite you to join us. Thank You!



## **FINANCIAL MANAGMENT**

**Chair, Wynfred Joshua**

The Financial Management Committee met on Monday, September 19, 2011. For the month of August total income was \$403,211 with expenditures of \$228,508. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$174,702. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$111,744, leaving a net income before taxes of \$62,958. Our income this past month was high because it includes the roughly \$71,000 gain from CDs that had matured and required us to cash them in. This money has already been reinvested. To date, our Reserve budget is roughly \$2.1 million.

Owner arrears in condo fees continue to edge up. For the month of August total delinquencies amounted to \$61,670 or about \$2,400 more than last month. Our attorney is handling the collection from six owners who owe more than \$54,692 for more than 60 days. Note, however, that four of those are delinquent for more than \$50,000. We have eight owners who have been delinquent for up to one

month for a total of roughly \$4,600. And we have two owners who have been delinquent for up to two months for almost \$750.

Attorney fees for recovering delinquent condo fees are about \$400 over budget this month, resulting in an overrun of \$2,650 over the budgeted figure year-to-date. Part of these costs, however, is eventually paid by the delinquent owner when the condo fees are paid. In the meantime our Association undergoes a double impact of late condo fees and attorney costs for trying to recover the fees. These expenditures plus delinquent condo fees help to explain why our condo fees go up.

Our electricity bill for August was about \$17,000 over the monthly allotment. The year-to-date expenditure is approximately \$12,000 over the budgeted amount. The water bill continues to cause concern with a year-to-date overrun of some \$43,500.

FMC members unanimously accepted PPOC's recommendation to the Board to award a contract in the amount of \$441,600 for replacing the window panels on the balconies to Hi-rise Windows. This is the same company that recently installed new windows and glass balcony doors for individual owners. Our experience with this company has been good, and it offered us the best warranty for labor (5 years) and material (10 years). Hi-rise was also the lowest bidder.

The FMC also recommended that the Board approve building six new storage bins in Storage Room #5 in the East Building by Chesapeake Iron Works for \$6,942. This company built the previous bins and did an excellent job. We have been very successful in the past with renting the bins and expect to be so with the new ones; there is a waiting list of residents who want to rent a storage bin. Income from the new bins has already been included in the proposed 2012 budget.

Finally, we submitted the proposed 2012 budget to the Board. Personnel costs were increased by a modest 1.3%. We raised the legal fees for collection account by \$1,500 or 17.65%. We increased the allotment for the Bad Debt account by \$9,000 or 50% at the advice of our Auditors, bringing the total account to \$39,000 at the end of 2012. We raised allocations for utilities roughly 15% in view of rate increases and past experience. There were a few other increases and decreases, resulting in a total raise in the Operating budget of 4.1 %. The increase in the Reserve Budget (maintenance repairs plus replacements) remained the annual 4%.

The next meeting of the FMC is scheduled for October 17, the third Monday of the month. We welcome residents to join us and give us your questions and ideas.



## **SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

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

The SS&NWC met on 14 September 2011 at 7 p.m. in the Skyline House West Card Room. Committee members were present or had excused absences due to travel. The Management Office was represented by Ms. Tycia Haight.

After the minutes of the previous meeting were approved, the Chairman recapped the Neighborhood Watch participation in the National Night Out. Many Watchers and other neighbors joined in to both

construct and place over 80 lighted "luminarias" in front of Skyline House facing South George Mason Drive. Six police officers from the Mason District Station visited, enjoyed refreshments, and interacted with the group of residents present. A notable event was put on by your Neighborhood Watch, and this chairman expresses his sincere thanks for their volunteer help.

Ms. Haight presented the Management Office Report on minor transgressions in the garage, minor security incidents (i.e., some damage to the carpet in the east Penthouse), and the status of our Security Officers. Neighborhood Watchers were urged to keep conducting their security patrols when they can. The purpose of these patrols is twofold: one, to report any security issues promptly; and two, to report any maintenance discrepancies quickly to save our Association repair funds. The garage directional driving options/recommendations are still in final draft and will be sent electronically to the Board for our next meeting.

A Neighborhood Watch indoctrination is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on October 4th at the Mason Police Station. Prospective and new Watchers are urged to attend.



## **COVENANTS**

**Chair, Joseph Livingston**

The Covenants Committee met on September 21. At the meeting, we considered and recommended to the Board that Rule 18 of the Association's Rules and Regulations be amended to require the temporary removal of vehicles parked in the garage to facilitate the annual power washing of the garage floors, and the inspection and repairs of the garage.

There was no other business that required committee action.

At the meeting, I informed the members that I had notified the Board President that I would resign my position as Chair of the Committee, effective September 30, 2011.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee members and volunteers for their help in carrying out our assignments over the years.

My thanks also to the present and past Board and Committee members, without whose help our work on the Covenants Committee, the Covenants/ Hearing Committee, and the Election Committees could not have been done.

## **MAGAZINES FOR ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL**

Thank you very much to the Skyline residents who have been faithfully donating their magazines via the collection box located at the Front Desk. Your contributions are routinely distributed to Alexandria Hospital and other medical facilities such as Chemotherapy and Dialysis Units and Cardiology and Specialized Medicine waiting rooms. Your donated magazines provide much needed distraction for patients awaiting or going through difficult medical procedures and help to break up some very long hours for family members and friends accompanying and visiting those patients.

Please remember to donate your current (please no old/outdated) magazines to the Front Desk. If you have any questions regarding this much appreciated program, please call Marilyn Baker at 703-671-6759.

## **A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS RE-INSTITUTED A COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE (CRC). JANICE HILL WILL CHAIR THE COMMITTEE, WHICH ENSURES THAT SKYLINE HOUSE HAS A VOICE IN COMMUNITY MATTERS AFFECTING US ALL.

PEOPLE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THIS COMMITTEE SHOULD PLEASE EXPRESS THEIR INTEREST TO:

JANICE HILL AT

[Janicelh21@gmail.com](mailto:Janicelh21@gmail.com) or 703-415-1537

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Skyline House Unit Owners Association

### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

#### **Charter**

The purpose of the Community Relations Committee (CRC) is to establish and maintain relationships with the community at large and to advise the Board on issues of potential interest to the Association. The CRC will assist the Board in keeping current with external affairs that might have an impact on the Association and its members.

Specific CRC responsibilities include:

Serve as an information channel to the Board and residents on issues that may affect the community at large and Skyline House residents as members of this community, including issues such as zoning, public transportation, revitalization and construction.

Establish cooperative relationships with other community associations, public service organizations and interest groups to identify opportunities for joint action benefitting Skyline House Unit Owners and residents as well as the larger community and, with the approval of the Board of Directors, send Skyline House representatives to public hearings and meetings and review and report findings which may affect the Association.

## ***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.**

### ***OCTOBER***

**BELEN ELIOT      703-671-7045**

**ALINA GONZALEZ 703-379-5391**

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.

### **Medicine Cabinet Cleanup**

The 30<sup>th</sup> annual Substance Abuse Awareness Week features Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanup. From October 10-14, residents may properly dispose of unused and expired medications by taking them to their local police station. Stations serving Mason District include: Mason District Station, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale; Franconia District Station, 6121 Franconia Road in Alexandria; and West Springfield District Station, 6140 Rolling Road in Springfield. Proper disposal of unwanted medications prevents accidental poisoning or abuse by others, and protects the environment. Only prescriptions in liquid or pill form may be dropped off. No needles or pressurized canisters will be accepted. Disposal is free, convenient, and confidential. Information about proper disposal of medications is available on-line at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/dontflush](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/dontflush).

**!!HELP WANTED!!**  
Skyline House  
Seeks  
**LEADER**  
To Chair  
The  
**COVENANTS COMMITTEE**

**Qualifications:** This important volunteer position needs a Skyline unit owner with a legal background who can cooperatively develop, interpret and implement rules, regulations, and other technical documents.

**Responsibilities:** This volunteer leads a committee which

- Formulates and maintains the regulations established by the Board of Directors for the day-to-day operations of Skyline House.
- Monitors compliance by unit owners and renters.
- Establishes procedures for the enforcement of the rules and regulations.
- Conducts hearings to levy assessments and/or institute sanctions when deemed necessary.
- Handles all matters pertaining to the nominations, balloting, tabulation of votes, and certification of voting outcomes for the Board of Directors elections.

**Rewards:**

- The gratitude of the Skyline House Community.
- The satisfaction of performing a challenging public service and *making a crucial difference in the day-to-day lives of your neighbors.*

**For More Information, please contact:** Maria Elena Schacknies at [Mariaelena.shuoa@gmail.com](mailto:Mariaelena.shuoa@gmail.com) or 703-820-2239.



# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## OCTOBER 2011

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



| SUNDAY  | MONDAY  | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---------|--|---|--------|----------|
|   |   |         |  |   |        | 1        |
| 2   | 3<br><br><b>Library Open</b><br>7:00 – 8:00 p.m.<br>East Penthouse  | 4       | 5  | 6<br><b>Physical Plant &amp; Ops. Comm.</b><br><b>Walk Around</b><br>7:00 p.m. Meet<br>In Front Lobby | 7      | 8        |
| 9   | 10<br><br><b>LIBRARY CLOSED</b>   | 11      | 12<br><br><b>Security, Safety, and Neighborhood Watch Comm.</b><br>7:00 p.m.<br>W. Card Room | 13<br><br><b>Physical Plant &amp; Operations Comm.</b><br>7:00 p.m.<br>W. Card Room                   | 14     | 15       |
| 16  | 17<br><b>Financial Mgmt. Comm.</b><br>7:00 p.m.<br><b>W. Card Room</b><br><b>Library Open</b><br>7:00 – 8:00 p.m.<br>East Penthouse | 18      | 19   | 20<br><br><b>Community Relations Comm.</b><br>7:00 p.m.<br>W. Card Room                               | 21     | 22       |
| 23  | 24<br><br><b>Library Open</b><br>7:00 – 8:00 p.m.<br>East Penthouse   | 25      | 26<br><br><b>BOARD MEETING</b><br>7:00 p.m.<br>W. Card Room                                  | 27<br><br><b>Meet the Candidates</b><br>T.B.C.<br>W. Party Room                                       | 28     | 29       |
| 30  | 31<br><br><b>Library Open</b><br>7:00 – 8:00 p.m.<br>East Penthouse   |         |  |   |        |          |
| <b>GOOD NEIGHBORS: Belen Eliot 703-671-7045 and Alina Gonzalez 703-379-5391</b> |   |         |  |   |        |          |

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### EDITOR Phil Cohen

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

