

# The House Special



Volume 32 Issue 5

Skyline House

May 2012



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Maria Elena Schacknies

The April meeting is the Board's first since the Annual Election that took place on March 27, 2012. As you know the Board is composed of seven elected officials, i.e., the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and three Directors. The roles and responsibilities of the four officers are stated in the Association By-Laws. The By-Laws also establish responsibilities for Unit Owners, for example, in maintaining their units (Section 3: Unit Owners' Duty to Maintain).

It is important to emphasize responsibilities of *both* the Association's Officers *and* Unit Owners because Skyline House is a *community*, and these responsibilities are therefore closely connected. The Board must act in a way that maintains or enhances the value of our property and the quality of life in our condominium. In following the By-Laws governing property maintenance, Unit Owners are contributing to exactly the same goals. The decisions that the Board makes, on behalf of Unit Owners and with their input, affect us all. Although they may not realize it, Unit Owners' and residents' actions, like the actions of the Officers, also affect everyone directly or indirectly. The person who carefully maintains his or her unit and responsibly uses the common areas and facilities not only enjoys personal satisfaction from doing so, but also makes living here more pleasant for everyone else. And individual violations, for example, gluing carpet to balcony floors or painting balconies, may not seem extremely serious, but they add up to have a significant negative impact on everyone's property values. Because we are a *community*, when each of us acts, whether as an Association Officer or as an individual Unit Owner or resident, all of us are affected.

As new people come to live in Skyline House, we must emphasize their membership in our community, encourage them to understand their responsibilities as community members under the By-Laws and Rules and Regulations, and invite them to participate in the governance of Skyline House. Of course the By-Laws don't require that Unit Owners volunteer to join Committees or to run for positions on the Board, but without civic-minded people who are willing to volunteer, the Association simply could not function.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the recommendation from Management and Physical Plant and Operations Committee for of the interior design and color of the panels and floors of the garage elevators.



# MANAGEMENT

**General Manager, Michelle Brown Slaughter**

**2011 Audit Report:** The final Audited Financial Statements for 2011 and 2010 were received and distributed to Finance Committee members, the Board President, and the Treasurer.

**Balcony Railing Repairs--East Building:** The contractor, Concrete Protection and Restoration, Inc., has completed demolition work. Of the 44 units that have tile floors, four units have loose tiles that must be removed. Four units have glue from carpeting, seven have painted balconies, and 14 have ceiling hooks that must be removed. Gluing down balcony carpets, installing ceiling hooks, and painting balconies are all violations of Skyline House By-Laws. The contractor will remove the glue, paint, and hooks, and individual Unit Owners will be charged for the cost of this work. The screens in 26 units were not removed in preparation for the balcony work.

The form and preparation work to pour concrete began on March 30<sup>th</sup>, followed by power washing of the balconies. Once the concrete repairs on the floors are completed, walls and ceilings will be repaired, followed by seal coating. These tasks should be completed by the first week of May, when installation of railings and floor tiles is scheduled to begin. Weather permitting, the entire project is expected to be completed by the end of June or first week of July.

**Balcony Panel Project--West Building:** As of April 19<sup>th</sup>, our contractor, Hi-Rise Windows, installed balcony window panels and electrical outlet covers in 121 units in Tiers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, and 16. Some units also have new vent covers over their balcony doors. Tiers 9 and 10 were scheduled for installation by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Management will continue to post notices on the bulletin boards and deliver updates to residents in each tier as they are scheduled by the contractor. We are pleased to announce that Management has received several compliments from satisfied owners and residents on the work that has already been completed.

**Garage Repairs Proposal:** Two engineers from Whitlock, Dalrymple, Poston and Associates conducted the remaining 75% of garage testing on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. The deteriorated and rusted steel angles previously removed on three garage levels must be reinstalled no later than May, 2012. Management will notify car owners when the work is scheduled to begin.

**Elevator Repair Project:** Avery Elevator installed the computer monitoring system and new software in the Maintenance Office. The permit to proceed with work on the two hydraulic garage elevators was received from Fairfax County, and work resumed on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Only one elevator car will be inoperable at a time, and the lights on the buttons will not show for the duration of the repairs. Notices will continue to be posted by Management as work proceeds. The cherry wood laminate interior wall and rubber floor tiles recommended by the Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) were approved by the Board.

**Façade Window Leaks:** On March 9th, the Chief Engineer and a representative from Eastern Waterproofing conducted an inspection of the 11 units that were recently identified as having window leaks. Eastern Waterproofing provided a repair cost of \$28,923. Management will obtain two additional bids to present at the May 10<sup>th</sup> PPOC meeting.

**Collections update:** At the end of March, 11 Unit Owners were behind in paying condo fees for more than 60 days, for a total of \$34,845. One of these units is owned by Fannie Mae and is in foreclosure, and the Board has petitioned the court to compel foreclosure on two more of these units. Collections being handled by the attorney for the remaining eight units account for less than 2% of the total monthly assessments, and average less than \$1,700.

**Roof Antennas:** All of the inoperable antennas have been removed. The only remaining antenna and satellite dish belongs to Sirius XM Radio, which has a 200-watt transmitter. Management has also been advised by our insurance company that no one other than employees or contractors should be on the roof due to liability.

**Landscapers:** Additional ivy plants were installed and fertilized as promised, in areas where ivy is sparse but expected to fill in over time. Bare areas where ivy did not grow in the guest parking area due to overhanging parked cars and exhaust fumes have been mulched.

**West Loading Dock Parking:** Management painted five parking stripes in the West loading dock area to create additional parking spaces. The No Parking–Fire Zone sign was also removed from the hashed-out area in front of the West loading dock. This area is currently being used by Hi-Rise Windows, the balcony panels contractor, for the duration of the project.

**Fire Alarm Testing:** The fire alarm system was tested in two separate periods on March 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>, and April 11<sup>th</sup>. Certification was received indicating that the system has been tested and approved by the Fairfax County Fire Department.

**Fitness Center (exercise room):** Management took the following steps to improve the quality of the fitness center:

1. The 10 -12 year old equipment is maintained by an outside contractor and was just repaired in March, 2012. The elliptical machine's battery was also replaced.
2. The damaged motor on the rooftop air ventilator was replaced.
3. The fan to the air conditioning unit was turned on to run 24 hours a day since it uses 10-15% outside air intake, which will constantly add fresh air to the room.
4. The carpet was shampooed and placed on a routine housekeeping schedule.
5. The room is closed each Monday from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., instead of Tuesdays, so it can be thoroughly cleaned immediately following the heavier weekend use. This is in addition to the daily cleaning schedule.
6. Several damaged floor tiles were replaced in front of the steam room.
7. Two automatic air fresheners with lemon scent were installed in the corners of each room.
8. Deodorizer will be sprayed on the carpet prior to vacuuming it.

#### **Refurbishing Walkway over George Mason Drive:**

The refurbishing of this walkway will be accomplished in two phases. In Phase One, which will begin in early May, the Fairfax County's contractor will begin preparations to paint the railings that are on the ramps and outside the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) right-of-way.

The contractor will make every effort to minimize the need for complete closure of the walkway during refurbishment, but the user may be affected:

- As the contractor prepares to paint a portion of the railing, that section will be completely closed off on one side. The contractor will try to limit the span of the closed-off section to 10-20 feet at a time. This process will leave the walkway open to pedestrians.
- The section of the side of the railing being painted will be closed off during working hours, and if any of the paint has not dried by the end of the work shift, the section will be closed off until work resumes.
- The contractor will limit the trash and equipment at the work site each day. However, this will be a work zone. The area will not look exactly as it does now until the work has been completed.

Phase Two of the refurbishment will require a VDOT permit with a Traffic Control Plan. The permit process is underway, but it requires comment and review and therefore takes time. When VDOT issues the permit, the portion of the walkway that is elevated over George Mason Drive will be refurbished. The Traffic Control Plan is required because during this phase, for public safety, it will be necessary to partially close one travel lane of George Mason.

In addition to painting, some concrete work will be done.

Barring any unforeseen delays--for example, in receiving the VDOT permit--and weather permitting, the work should begin in early May, as indicated above. The job should be completed within 30 days of its start date.

If any of the contractor's practices cause concern, residents may contact William Schell at 703-877-2846.

This information was provided by the Office of the Mason District Supervisor, Fairfax County.



# TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer, Charles K. Roberts

I attended the April meeting of the Financial Management Committee (FMC), which took on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. In the scheduled absence of the chairperson, committee member June Baker chaired the meeting and presented a report of the proceedings and key financial metrics to the Board.

General Manager Michelle Brown-Slaughter has streamlined FMC and Treasurer review of the monthly financials by producing a very helpful variance report that highlights differences between expected, or budgeted, and actual monthly results. March data showed a deficit of \$1,434 due to the facts that (1) the apartment unit the Association owns was not rented during that month, (2) income from the In-Unit Maintenance program was reduced while the Chief Engineer was convalescing, and (3) taxes were higher than expected because securities were sold to fund capital repairs.

The audit of 2011 financial performance was completed prior to the Annual Meeting in March, at which time I summarized key findings. The final approved version of the Audit Report has been received.

Two units are in the judicial foreclosure process. The Association has petitioned the court to compel foreclosure of these two units, for which payment of Association dues, or the condo fee, is several thousand dollars in arrears. It is unlikely that these actions will result in the Association receiving amounts in arrears, but the alternative of allowing the non-performing Unit Owners to add to the amount in arrears is unacceptable.

The number of renter-occupied units has increased by four to 131, or 24 percent of Association units.

I would like to repeat my statement from the February regular meeting and last month's Annual Meeting. I have directed the General Manager and her staff to refer all questions and complaints concerning notices of indebtedness or late payments to me personally. The reason I have done this is to remove from the Management Office causes of friction between Unit Owners and our staff. And, in any case, any relief from indebtedness would be the prerogative of the Board. My contact information is posted on the Association web site, in *The House Special*, and on first floor bulletin boards. If you have any questions about an invoice received from the Association, please contact me personally. If a fellow Unit Owner shares a concern with you about an invoice from the Association, please encourage him or her to contact me.

The Association's finances remain in good condition. The Association persists in its efforts to collect all monies due.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charles K. Roberts



## INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

### Water Leaks

We continue to have water leaks from water heaters, HVAC units, and utility closets. The leaks are usually spotted by residents who live below where the leak originated. These leaks can cause damage to your unit and the units below. If you do not have a leak detector, we recommend that you purchase and place one in your utility closet today. The office has water alarms for \$15.27 each. Place it in your closet to alert you of a leak in your closet or from the unit above. **The device should go on the concrete floor between your water heater and the heat pump. Do not place the device in the water heater pan** because an air conditioning leak would go undetected.

### Air Conditioning Season

It is time to have your heat pump serviced for the summer. If you haven't already done so, contact the Management Office to schedule your heat pump for service. This service can save you money on the electric

bill since we check the Freon level, and it could prevent an air conditioning leak. To help prevent drain back-ups in the units and drain lines, we add a packet to the drain pan to treat the condensate water.



## **PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS**

**Chair, Gary Akin**

The Committee met on April 12, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. The following items were discussed and/or recommended for further action:

Management provided clarifications to questions the Committee raised at its March meeting, regarding the garage elevator wall panel specifications. Afterwards, Management recommended to the Committee Biltmore Cherry for the garage wall panels and Spicy Cherry for the floor. The Committee adopted a resolution recommending that the Board of Directors approve the selections proposed by Management.

The Garden Cub Chairman reported that the commercial landscapers have not yet started planting flowers due to the recent weather and observed that the nurseries will start stocking their supplies when the weather is warm. He indicated that the Garden Club will then start planting flowers. The Garden Club informed the Committee that the roots of three trees in the back of the East Building, on the turn into the garage, are coming up. It was therefore decided to join the three trees, fill them in with soil and tie them together with a very low wall.

The General Manager asked the Committee for direction regarding whether Management should procure two additional bids for the façade leak repairs, or provide Eastern Waterproofing's proposal to Smislova, Kehnemui and Associates and/or Whitlock, Dalrymple, Poston and Associates to bid the work out as our consulting engineers. The Committee decided that Management should procure two additional bids.

The Chairman explained that a lot of e-mails had been exchanged regarding reports of mildew or mold in the fitness room. He said he went to the fitness room to investigate this issue and did not see any problem with the items that were being reported as moldy. A few Committee members who use the fitness room on a regular basis added that they also did not see any problems. The Chairman commended Management for taking all the necessary steps to keep the fitness room in a good, clean, working condition.

The Chairman reported that there were 15 items in the maintenance log. He added that five entries had been closed and 10 entries were still pending in various stages. He encouraged residents to continue reporting maintenance items.

Come join us at future PPOC meetings. Upcoming items/projects we will be involved with are: West Building entrance door, exercise room relocation/ improvements, energy audit study, identifying ways/means to decrease cost of common area electricity, information technology and computer system upgrades, and inspection/evaluation of the Skyline House water supply pipes.

Respectfully,  
Gary Akin



## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**Chair, Wynfred Joshua**

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met on 23 April 2012. Total income for the month of March was \$335,643 with total expenses of \$219,179. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$116,464. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$116,214, leaving a very modest net income of \$250 before taxes. After payment of quarterly taxes of \$26,500, we were left with a net loss of \$26,250.

Twenty-seven apartment owners are behind a total of \$43,043 in payment of their condo fees or penalties for covenant violations. Outstanding payments for condo fees of \$41,403 include 12 owners who are delinquent

for up to 30 days; two owners who owe for up to 60 days; and 11 owners who are \$34,845 behind in payments for more than 60 days. Our attorney is handling the last group. In addition to owners who failed to pay their condo fee, two owe \$1,640 in penalties for covenant violations.

We have 131 units (24% of total units) that are being rented, with the remaining 425 (or 76%) being owner-occupied, although a few of those units are vacant with the owners neither living in them nor renting them at this time.

The General Manager prepared a comprehensive variance report for the month of March enabling the FMC to quickly review the financial report and understand the reasons for the differences between budgeted amounts and actual amounts. The Committee thanked her for providing this useful information and asked her to continue providing this report in future months.

In general, Administrative costs were slightly over budget, mostly because of high legal fees relating to Unit Owner fee collections. At this point, Utilities were under budget for the month and slightly under budget year-to-date. We can be thankful for the mild weather thus far this year. Income Taxes were higher, because of the gain on sale of investments in 2011. Most other accounts were either on target as budgeted or slightly under budget.

Ms. Brown Slaughter's Management Report detailed the large number of Association maintenance projects that are in progress or have been completed this year and reflect major planned reserve fund spending.

The major topic of discussion was revision of the FMC Charter requested by the Board of Directors. A draft revision is being prepared and should be ready early in May.

The FMC wants to remind Skyline House residents that we have party rooms (with newly updated appliances in the kitchen) available to rent for their festive functions. Information is available on the Association's web site, <http://www.shuoa.org/partyrm.htm>, or residents can contact the Management Office for details. Because of the ongoing balcony railing repair project, only the West Building's party room is currently available. We now have additional guest parking available evenings and weekends, and information on accessing the parking and rules for using the spaces are available in the Management Office. In addition, this information was included in the February 2012 edition of *The House Special*.

The FMC will meet on May 21, the third Monday in May, at 7 p.m. in the West Card Room. As usual, members of the Skyline House community are welcome to attend.

### **Dollars and Sense: A Reserve Fund – Why?**

Here are some of the projects in progress or planned to keep our condominium safe and sound:

- Balcony Railing Project
- Balcony Panel Project
- Heat Exchanger Project
- Elevator Repair Project
- Garage Repairs Project

*And* no special assessments are necessary! Don't you think a Reserve Fund makes sense?

Inge Chilman



# SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

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

The Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) met on April 11th at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. All members were present (Mr. De Mayo, Ms. Jones, Ms. Manrique, and Ms. Chilman & Ms. Zierhoffer). Ms. Michelle Brown-Slaughter attended for the Management Office. The main topics were review of progress on the Emergency Action Plan, an open forum for discussion on granting permission for the Fairfax County Parking Officer in our garage, and invitations for future speakers at Town Halls.

**Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) Recap:** A verbal summary of the CAC meeting of April 3<sup>rd</sup>, held at the Fairfax Government Mason District Center/Police Office, and attended by other Committee members, was provided. Essentially, the Fairfax Animal Control Officer gave us a rundown of animal and related issues within the county. We found it interesting that we have a problem—not with cats, dogs, or foxes—but with the exploding bat population due to the good weather over the past few years.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting were presented, and a motion was made and accepted to approve them as prepared.

**Management Office Updates:** Routine activity reported; Neighborhood Watch patrols continue to discover and report items that need repair and maintenance.

**Emergency Action Plan:** Drafts of sections of the plan were presented and discussed by Committee members.

**SS&NWC Charter:** The Committee charter was put in final draft and sent to the Board of Directors President for consideration.

**New Business:** The Open Forum prior to our meeting netted one resident who disagreed with permitting police in the garage and emphasized the need to have them patrol our South Mason Drive street better for cars parked illegally, junk cars, etc. Mr. De Mayo thanked him for his viewpoints and assured him that the Committee and Neighborhood Watch are concerned about our frontage streets. He then clarified the issue of the garage and parking spaces being "limited common areas" under the purview of the Board of Directors and the desire of our President for Skyline House to be a model hi-rise condo in our neighborhood.



# COMMUNITY RELATIONS

**Chair, Janice L. Hill**

The Community Relations Committee (CRC) met on Thursday, April 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. The meeting focused on 2012 initiatives/activities. Ms. Krysta Jones, Director of Outreach for Congressman Jim Moran, will be the guest speaker at the May 17 CRC meeting. CRC interests include an update on the Seminary Road Department of Defense facility (BRAC) and its impact on Northern Virginia, anticipated Congressional issues (possible government shutdown, continuing resolution, etc.), and other matters of concern to our community (Social Security, senior outreach, Pike Transit Initiative update, etc.).

For the June meeting, the Committee voted to invite our State Government representatives (Senate and House of Delegates) to provide an overview of the Virginia legislative session. The Committee also voted to invite Supervisor Penny Gross for an autumn meeting to provide an update on Fairfax County affairs.

A discussion concerning support and collaboration with the Security, Safety & Neighborhood Watch (SSNW) Committee followed with the CRC agreeing to collaborate and support SSNW as needed.

**Next meeting is Thursday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. Please join us!!!**

**REMINDER:** The Fairfax County Solid Waste Management Program is hosting a document shredding event at the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale, on Saturday, May 19, 2012, from 8 a.m. until 12 noon.

## **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.**

**MAY**

**JUNE BAKER 703-824-3619**

**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.

## **A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS RECREATION COMMITTEE**

If you wish to serve as Chair or Co-Chair, please contact Maria Elena Schacknies at [mariaelena.shuoa@gmail.com](mailto:mariaelena.shuoa@gmail.com) or call 703-820-1904. Once the Chair position has been filled, residents interested in being committee members will be invited to contact the Chair or a Co-Chair.

### **RECREATION COMMITTEE**

#### **Charter**

The Committee's responsibilities would be:

1. Conduct periodic informal parties for the purpose of bringing residents together.
2. Take responsibility for gatherings for a specific purpose, such as holiday feasts, honoring volunteers, recognizing a special event, theme dinners, etc.
3. Sponsor a variety of outside activities for the entertainment and amusement of residents (e.g., theater parties, sightseeing trips, excursions, etc.)
4. Assist committees of the Association, when requested, in conducting get-togethers to stimulate participation on those committees and in the activities of Skyline House.
5. Plan for, or assist in, any activity which will enhance the volunteer involvement of residents.

## **MAGAZINES KINDLY REQUESTED**

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.





# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## MAY 2012

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



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	8	9 <b>Security, Safety &amp; Neighborhood Watch Comm.</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	10 <b>Physical Plant and Operations Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	11	12
13	14 <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	15	16 <b>Covenants Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	17 <b>Community Relations Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	18	19
20	21 <b>Financial Management Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. <b>W. Card Room</b> <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	22	23 <b>Board Meeting</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	25	25	26
27	28 <b>Library Closed</b>	29	30	31		
<b>GOOD NEIGHBORS: June Baker (703) 824-3619 and Alina Gonzalez (703) 379-5391</b>						

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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