

Volume 32 Issue 6

Skyline House

June 2012



BOARD OF DIRECTORS President, Maria Elena Schacknies

The promised educational campaign on the proposed By-Law changes is underway. To conduct such a campaign we identified potential volunteers in each of the floors in the East and West Buildings. They have been contacted through a written invitation. We need as many Unit Owners involved as possible. The invitation announces a meeting on May 30 at 7 p.m. in the West Party Room. At this Training Session the proposals will be discussed in detail, and any questions that might arise will be answered. We will also address the importance of getting out the vote on the proposed changes, and strategies for achieving this objective. If you didn't receive an invitation, but want to help, please join us. It is expected that each Floor Volunteer will contact those living on his or her floor to ask if they have any questions or would like additional information on, or explanations of, the proposals. In order for a By-Law to be amended, the Virginia Condominium Act requires that at least two-thirds of the total voting interest of Unit Owners be cast in favor of the change. That high level of voter participation is a genuine challenge, so this educational campaign is critically important.

As has been explained before, the vote on the amendments to the By-Laws must take place at a meeting. That meeting will occur only after the responses of the more than two-thirds of the Owners have been received. As with the annual Board elections, Unit Owners can vote by proxy, so you do not have to attend this meeting.

Management will be sending a survey to all Unit Owners to gather information on mortgage holders/lien holders. This information will be used to inform the lenders of the proposed By-Law changes and solicit their input. Under State law, they, too, must collectively support a proposal in order for the By-Law to be amended. Lenders will not be contacted until the necessary level of Unit Owner voting interest has been secured for one or more of the proposed changes. Please respond to this survey as soon as you receive it so that Management will be ready and able to contact the lenders when the time comes.

I am happy to report that Sharon Milton will be the new Recreation Committee Chair. She announced her desire to take on this responsibility at the Open Forum. We will meet to discuss her new role, and I hope that many residents will join her in making the Recreation Committee a wonderful success. She can be reached at <u>segmilton@yahoo.com</u>.

Mike Hanson has given the Skyline House Unit Owners' Association website a major facelift. The content has not changed much, but the following significant improvements have been made: He has added a page for each of our committees under Governance, and all the forms that Management requires can be downloaded in editable PDF format. Also, The Looking Around web page is now under Facilities, as are Floor Plans.

Mike received a big round of applause and the thanks of the Board and the General Manager for his tremendous contribution to our Association. You can look forward to experiencing the new website in June.

The Board approved the Covenants Committee recommendation to a change to Rule 1 "General" section F on smoking. The first paragraph of Section F was changed to: "Smoking is prohibited in the common areas and within 10 feet of any entrance to the building with the exception of:" The exceptions would remain unchanged: (1) "Unit balconies" and (2) "Outside areas (such as rooftop and pool area sundecks)."

The Board approved the Garden Club's proposal to not be a sub-committee of the PPOC and report directly to the Board. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Garden Club, please contact Howard Haymes at <u>hankee1@gmail.com</u>. All residents are eligible to participate.

The Board also approved Management's request to direct the Pool contractor to implement a kid swim time during the pool season. Notices will be posted in the bulletin boards as to when only children can be in the pool.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Charles K. Roberts, Treasurer

For several years the Association has been able to depend on the Unappropriated Members' Equity Fund Account, also known as the Working Capital Fund, to defray small deficits experienced in the annual Operating Budget. This has enabled the Association to cover unexpected expenses or other variances from budgeted figures. As I reported at the Annual Meeting in March, the size of that fund has diminished over the years. As of January 1, 2012, the audited amount in that fund stood at \$4,400.99. As of April 30, current year net operating income reflected a deficit of \$3,851.45, higher than the deficit projected for this point in the year by \$1,444.07. It appears likely that planned 2012 Operating Budget expenditures for the rest of the year will need to be curtailed.

As of April 30, the total figure for all reserves was \$1,996, 227.81 following partial payments for façade and balcony repairs.

Timeliness in payment of the Regular Assessment appears to be improving. The total number of Unit Owners seriously in arrears (more than 10 days), which stood at 28 in February, declined to 27 in March and 23 in April. At the end of April, nine of these Unit Owners were less than 30 days in arrears, and it is expected that payment of the approximately \$4,000 due from these Unit Owners will be received, with late fees. Fannie Mae has paid \$11,819 to cover a long term arrearage for one unit and pre-paid the Regular Assessment balance due through December 31. Presently, two units are in the Judicial Foreclosure process with trial dates set for July and August. These favorable results are complemented by an apparent improvement in the number of short term delinquencies of 10 to 30 days, down from a recent high of 24 to just 16 in May.

The percentage of renter-occupied units has remained steady at 24 percent throughout February, March and April, or 131 of 556 units.

Five Unit Owners have referred to me various complaints concerning invoices received from the Association, and Management Office staff and I are investigating each of them.

This month I began paying the Regular Assessment for the unit my wife and I own by automatic debit from our credit union checking account. If you are not among the 280 Unit Owners who also have done so, I encourage you to consider signing up for payment of the condo fee by automatic debit. The application form is available from the Management Office and requires only the attachment of a voided personal check.



MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Michelle Brown Slaughter

Management Reminders:

Entrance Keys: Remember to provide the correct unit entrance door key(s) to the Management Office for emergency use. If we do not have a current entrance door key(s) on file, we cannot help you when you get locked out, or if emergency access is needed. If there is an actual emergency, the lock will be damaged to gain access unless we have the correct entrance door key(s) on file.

Emergency Contacts: When you plan to travel, remember to provide an updated emergency contact(s) to the Management Office in case we need to access your unit during your absence.

Physically challenged persons list: Please provide to the Management Office a list of any physically challenged persons living in your unit, if you have not already done so. The Fire Department relies on this list to assist them in the event of an emergency evacuation. The list is kept at the fire alarm panel box in the lobby area.

How to care for your balcony after repairs: The Balcony Care & Maintenance Guidelines (dated November 23, 2009) are available in the Management Office and on the Skyline House Website. The guidelines contain the information you need to maintain and preserve the new water-proofing system on the balcony floors and the powder-coated aluminum railings.

<u>Skyline House Website</u>: The new and improved website will be launched in June. It will be more interactive, with access to frequently requested forms, committee sites, updated property photos, and a user-friendly format. Stay tuned for more details!!!

Party Room Rental Requirements:

Help us to help you make your party a success! Please follow these party room rental guidelines:

- 1. A deposit and party room orientation are required at the time the party room is booked. All fees must be paid in advance of the event, preferably on the Monday prior to the event, but not less than 72 hours before the event date. A cancellation fee of \$25.00 will be charged if the event is not cancelled in writing, at least 72 hours prior to the event date. All fees must be paid by the Resident or Unit Owner. Third-party checks are not accepted. An inspection is also required before the day of the party.
- 2. Party rooms are only rented to Owners and residents of Skyline House. At the time the deposit is made, the owner or resident must receive a brief orientation on the Party Room Rental procedures from the Management Office.
- 3. Fees are as follows: Damage Deposit \$ 200.00 (refundable) Rental fee (1-49 Guests \$250.00; 50-100 Guests \$300.00). Security Guards are required for any party with over 25 guests at the prevailing rate per hour (currently \$18.00 per hour). Please note: There is a four-hour minimum for Security guards. Guards are required to be in attendance one-half hour before the party and one-half hour after the party.
- 4. A maximum of 100 guests is allowed, and when there are between 60 and 100 guests, two Security Guards must be on duty.
- 5. Unless all Security Guards have been scheduled 72 hours in advance, the Security company charges time and a half. Please plan accordingly!
- 6. A guest list is required identifying <u>each</u> expected guest, including minor children (one person per line). Only guests who are listed will be allowed access to the party room.
- 7. Additional parking for weekend parties is available. A deposit is required in advance, and restrictions apply. See *Rule #23- Party Rooms (Requirements for Private Use) in the Skyline House Unit Owners' Rules and Regulations*, or contact the Management Office for more details.



PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, Gary Akin

The committee met on May 10, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. The following items were discussed and/or recommended for further action.

The Chairman announced that future PPOC meetings will be co-chaired by Mr. Al Lambert. I hereby take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank Mr. Lambert for his outstanding service to Skyline House over the past several years and also welcome him back into service as PPOC's co-chairman.

The Chairman asked about the discrepancy between three sump pumps being installed in the elevator pits and the Committee recommendation and Board approval for installation of only one sump pump. The General Manager, Mrs. Brown-Slaughter, explained that when she spoke with the contractor she was told that the cost of all three sump pumps was included in the price. The signed contract is currently under review. Upon completing this review, findings/recommendations will be reported out to the Board.

Garden Cub Chairman Haymes stated that the Association's landscaping contractor has planted three big Crimson King Maple trees at the edge of the back of the East building. The contractor has also planted along the fence to Build America. He added that a lot of the landscaping spots that were bare have now been remedied. Mr. Haymes said the Garden Club has finished the flower planting for the season. The flowers were planted around many trees. He reported that the slate wall at the front of the West Building has been completed. For the remainder of the season, the Garden Club will maintain the flower beds, fertilize the soil, and spot-plant shrubs. Mr. Haymes also introduced the members of the Garden Club to the Committee.

At the PPOC's April meeting the General Manager was asked by the Committee to procure two additional bids for a total of three bids (compliant with current procurement policy and procedures) for evaluation by the PPOC for the façade leak repairs. After receipt of all three bids, anticipated to be in hand within the next few days, the PPOC will proceed electronically (e-mail) to evaluation and provide its recommendation to Board of Directors (BOD). The PPOC's bid evaluation and recommendation process will be managed by Mr. Al Lambert with an anticipated recommendation provided to the BOD for their decision and/or approval in early June 2012.

The Chairman reported that seven items in the maintenance log were closed and that a few more were in the process of being completed. He encouraged residents to continue reporting maintenance items.

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



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT Chair, Wynfred Joshua

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met on Monday, May 21, 2012. For the month of April total income was \$336,155 with expenditures of \$194,739. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$141,416. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$116,214, leaving a net income before taxes of \$25,202.

As of 30 April, 21 apartment owners were roughly \$39,000 behind paying their condo fee. This includes nine owners who were delinquent for up to 30 days; two owners who were in arrears for up to 60 days; and 10 owners who were \$34,291 behind for more than 60 days. The over-60-days delinquents include 2 owners who are facing judicial foreclosure for their units and who owe \$18,157. Our attorney is handling this last group, including the foreclosures. A third foreclosure unit is owned by Fannie Mae, which pre-paid the condo fee through December 2012. In addition to those who failed to pay their condo fee, we continue to have owners who owe \$1630 in penalties for Covenant violations.

A total of 131 units, or 24%, are rented. The remaining 425 units, or 76%, are occupied by owners, although a few are actually vacant because the owner is not selling at this time.

In spite of this month's surplus, a number of budgetary issues warrant our concern. As to income, we had budgeted \$10,000 a month for in-unit maintenance, expecting many more units to replace their aging heat pumps or hot water heaters than has been the case. Our year-to-date income for in-unit maintenance is almost \$22,000 under budget.

Turning to expenses, legal fees to collect Unit Owners' arrears greatly increased in April to over \$6,400; more than \$4,600 were attorney fees for handling two judicial foreclosures. It is doubtful that we'll see much of this back. So far this year we are more than \$12,000 over budget for legal fees.

Our perennial culprit, the water and sewage bill, is beginning to make its impact. Whereas we had budgeted roughly \$22,000 per month, indications are that expenditures will average about \$24,000 per month. Although the rise in our water bill is mostly due to rate increases, we need to find ways to lower our water consumption.

Other expenditures are likely to remain within budget for the year, although for some months they may run higher than budgeted. The FMC will work closely with Management to do everything possible to avoid having a deficit this year.

The FMC discussed the proposed revisions of its charter. Suggested changes were basically designed to clarify existing practices.

As usual, our next meeting will be on the third Tuesday of the month, on June 18. Members of the Skyline House community are welcome to attend and give us their comments on the financial issues that face us.

Dollars and Sense: Why Replace Your Aging Heat Pump and Hot Water Heater?

- To save a lot of money on your electric bill
- To prevent water leaks in your apartment and units below you, since you could be responsible for the damage to them.
- You could even save money by purchasing these appliances in the Management Office and having them installed by the In-House Maintenance Unit.

Don't you think that makes sense?

Inge Chilman



COVENANTS COMMITTEE

Elayne Haymes, Chair

The Covenants Committee met on May 16, 2012.

A half-hour pre-discussion on issues related to Rules 1 & 2 took place from 6:30 to 7 p.m. In Rule 1, the Committee is recommending to the Board of Directors a change to "General" Section F, on smoking. The Committee recommends that the first paragraph of Section F be changed to: "Smoking is prohibited in the common areas and within 10 feet of any entrance to the building with the exception of:" The exceptions would remain unchanged: (1) "Unit balconies" and (2) "Outside areas (such as rooftop and pool area sundecks)."

A discussion began on Rule 2 "Occupancy," but further action on this issue was postponed until the next meeting in order to first obtain additional information on applicable Federal and county requirements.

The Committee also approved, for recommendation to the Board, the addition of two new sections to Rule 20 "Fire Safety": Section D "Unit owners/residents shall not use electrical outlets in the common areas and hallways for their personal electrical equipment, and Section E "Unit owners/residents shall not leave their apartment doors ajar at any time."



SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Chair, Robert J. "Bob" De Mayo

The Security, Safety, and Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) met on May 9, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Skyline House West Card Room. Members present were Mr. De Mayo, Ms. Manrique, Ms. Chilman, and Ms. Zierhoffer. Ms. Jones' absence was excused. Ms. Tycia Haight represented the Management Office (MO). Residents in attendance included Al Lambert, Ben Campbell and Karen Johnson. Rochelle also attended from the MO.

No safety issues were reported for the month of April. Two Neighborhood Watch patrols reported maintenance issues; information about vehicles with no visible stickers was given to Security. The new Security Supervisor, Mr. Latiff Mandel, met with the MO to discuss expectations and what is required.

With regard to the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), the Chief Engineer and the Management Staff were trained on using the microphone to be employed in case of a building emergency. On May 19, a meeting was scheduled in the MO for Annunciator training. All Front Desk staff will ultimately be trained. The MO office also consulted with the insurance company. There are no liability issues if the storage rooms are used for shelter-in-place, and this option will be considered when the plan is written.

The Board President intends to recruit "floor captains" to ensure that Unit Owners understand the proposed amendments to the By-Laws, and that they are encouraged to vote. The Committee discussed the possibility that these same "Floor Captains" could be asked--as part of the EAP--to assist residents in the case of emergency, especially those residents who need assistance in moving from their condos to lower floors for shelter or evacuation. Discussion moved to a form provided by Fairfax County that can be filled out by county residents to sign up for assistance in case of any disaster or declared emergency. This form will be considered as a model to be used for enabling Skyline House residents to request assistance. When residents enroll using whatever form is ultimately selected or developed, the EAP can include procedures for assisting these residents. Finally, Mr. Marciellio, an EAP planner for Fairfax County, will be invited to participate in a Town Hall meeting at Skyline House to discuss the value of an EAP, Fairfax County procedures, and the application of the County's plan to Skyline House. He will be asked to respond to any questions raised by SS&NWC and other residents. The Town Hall meeting is tentatively planned to take place sometime in June.

Two residents participated in the Open Forum on the EAP. A question was asked about the role of the Security staff in the event of an emergency. MO was asked to determine if there is any mention of emergency roles in the contract. It was also suggested that we ask Vornado for permission to utilize their underground garages at 5509-5513 Leesburg Pike should the need arise to leave either or both Skyline House towers. It was also suggested that SS&NWC consider identifying specific residents to assist those with special needs in the event of an emergency, as discussed earlier. Procedures will be considered for inclusion in the EAP based upon these Open Forum suggestions.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Chair, Janice L. Hill

Virginia General Assembly member, Delegate Alfonso H. Lopez is the special guest at our next Community Relations Committee (CRC) meeting, Thursday, June 21, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. Delegate Lopez will discuss highlights of the 2012 Virginia General Assembly, the 2012 Virginia State budget and address your concerns. Please join us for the opportunity to personally discuss our concerns with our Delegate.

Update on the Columbia Pike Transit Initiative

The Columbia Pike Transit Initiative, proposed initiative to implement high capacity service from the Skyline area to Pentagon City via Columbia Pike, is holding another round or public meeting with an update on the Initiative.

Both meetings will be identical in format, so please attend the one most convenient for you. The meetings are from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 6, 2012, Patrick Henry Elementary School, Cafeteria/Gymnasium, 701 South Highland Street, Arlington, VA 22204

Thursday, June 7, 2012, Goodwin House Baileys Crossroads, Auditorium, 3440 S. Jefferson Street, Falls Church, VA 22041.

Additional information will be posted on bulletin board in both towers.

May Meeting Recap

The CRC met on Thursday, May 17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room with 10 residents attending the meeting. A special guest, Mr. Christopher Gaspar, a legislative assistant for Defense, Intelligence & Homeland Security Issues for Congressman Jim Moran joined the meeting. Mr. Gaspar provided an update on the Seminary Road DOD facility (BRAC) including a transportation update for I-395 and the surrounding streets. Various improvements are in development to continue smooth access in the area. More information will be provided as schedules are finalized. Thus far, the transportation nightmare originally envisioned has not materialized and the proposed changes will further improve the area's transportation. Mr. Gaspar also provided thoughts about Columbia Pike and initiatives to improve access to the Pentagon and Pentagon City. Northern Virginia transportation, sequestration and general issues of concern were topics of an excellent conversation between the Committee members and Mr. Gaspar.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Good Neighbors assist residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency. Services provided are typically short-term and in the local area. For example, picking up mail or prescriptions or making small grocery purchases.

Anyone experiencing a medical emergency should call 911 immediately.

JUNE

SONYA LIVINGSTON 703-931-6923

GERALDINE NAVEAU 703-931-46-43

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.

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.



INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

Water Leaks and Leak Detectors

We continue to have water leaks from water heaters, HVAC units, and utility closets, where your water heater and heat pump are located. The leaks are usually spotted by residents who live below where the leak originated. These leaks can cause extensive 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 Management Office has water alarms for \$15.27 each, and they are available at most home improvement stores. Place it in your closet to get an early warning alert 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

If you haven't already done so, contact the Management Office to schedule your heat pump to be serviced for the summer. This service can save you money on the electric bill. To assure your unit is running at peak performance, we check the Freon level, which could be low and may cause the unit to run longer which in return does not produce cool air, and costs more to operate the unit. We also add algaecide to the drain pan of the air conditioning unit to prevent condensate leaks by keeping the drain pan and drain lines free of algae that clogs the unit.

Your Water Heater

The normal life expectancy of a water heater is 10-14 years. Warranties vary from six to 12 years; some manufacturers offer more. While the unit may continue to operate normally for years to come, it may be very close to a normal life expectancy and may fail tomorrow, causing leak damage to your unit and the units below. When your water heater has exceeded the warranty period, we recommend that it be replaced. Call the Management Office for approximate pricing, or contact the vendor of your choice.

Unit Heat Pumps

Many units still have the original heat pumps, which are now more than 32 years old. These heat pumps have far exceeded their lifespan, and can fail at any time. We recommend replacement to avoid loss of air conditioning or heat in the future. The new units are much more efficient, using much less electricity than the original units (**about one third less**). More information is available in the Management Office. Units ordered from us take just a few days to arrive, usually within 3 business days, and they can be installed in less than three hours.

Spruce Up for Spring

Update Your Bath for Less Than \$8

Does an old rubber plug dangling from a chain give your bathtub a tired look? Update with a simple **"Flip It" tub stopper**. This nifty little device has a rust-proof chrome finish and comes with a variety of rubber gaskets that size it perfectly to fit most standard tub drain openings. A small knob on the top allows the bather to flip it open for showers and closed for baths. If the stopper seems too hard to insert into the drain, put a small amount of liquid soap around the two rubber "o" rings, and it will slip into the drain easily. It instantly lends an attractive new-fixture look to your bathtub—and it's simple to install yourself. Buy it in the Management Office for only \$7.31

Sheila Shine for Sparkling Balconies and Kitchens

Clean your balcony railings, exterior window frames, and furniture with *Sheila Shine*, an amazing, easy-touse product that wipes away grime and leaves a protective coating. Many Skyline House residents have relied on Sheila Shine for years to restore their balconies after winter's doldrums. Now, try it on your new kitchen stainless steel appliances to make fingerprints disappear and restore that just-purchased look. Sheila Shine also works wonders on many other items to protect against rust and corrosion. A long-lasting 10ounce spray can is available at the Front Desk for \$9.



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR JUNE 2012



(<u>WWW.SHUOA.ORG</u>)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	5	6	7	8	9
10	Library Open7:00 - 8:00 p.m.East Penthouse	12	13 Security, Safety & Neighborhood Watch Comm. 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	14 Physical Plant and Operations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	15	16
17	18FinancialManagementCommittee7:00 p.m.W. Card RoomLibrary Open7:00 – 8:00 p.m.East Penthouse	19	20	21 Community Relations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	22	23
24	25 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	26	27 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	28	29	30

GOOD NEIGHBORS: Sonya Livingston (703) 931-6923 and Geraldine Naveau (703) 931-4643

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pres., Maria Elena Schacknies 1302W 820-2239 mariaelena.shuoa@gmail.com Vice President, Robert De Mayo 1213E 575-4464 rdemayo@shuoa.org Treasurer, Charles Roberts 914E 998-6080 cxroberts@shuoa.org Secretary, Barbara Thode 404E 888-3569 bthode@shuoa.org Director, Norman Baker 1114W 671-6759 nbaker@shuoa.org Director, Michael Cusato 906E 257-6234 mcusato@shuoa.org Director, Karen Johnson 1511W 379-0322 kjohnson@shuoa.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Financial Management Wynfred Joshua 1414W 820-4471 diawin@metronets.comToska PrPhysical Plant/Operations Gary Akin 705E 989-8979 gary_l_akin@yahoo.comVirginiaCovenants Elayne Haymes 902W 347-7918 haymes.elayne1@gmail.comVirginiaCommunity Relations Janice L. Hill 511W 415-1537janicelh21@gmail.comSecurity, Safety, & Neighborhood Watch Robert De Mayo 1213E 575-4464 rdemayo@shuoa.org

MANAGEMENT OFFICE (Central # 703-578-4855)

G M, Michelle Brown Slaughter michelle@shuoa.org Deputy General Manager, Tycia Haight tycia@shuoa.org Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm greg@shuoa.org Accountant, Huajun "Lucy" Bei lucy@shuoa.org Admin. Assist., Rochelle Cunningham rochelle@shuoa.org Resident Services Coor., Noemi Najera noemi@shuoa.org Web Developer, Mike Hanson mike@hansonprogrammer.net

GOOD NEIGHBORS COORDINATORS

Toska Prather 1003W 379-7849 t_pra@verizon.net Virginia Fissmer 601W 379-2901

EDITOR Phil Cohen

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