

# The House Special



NEWSLETTER OF THE SKYLINE HOUSE UNIT OWNERS' ASSOCIATION | DEC-JAN | VOL 36; ISSUE# 10 | SHUOA.ORG

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Richard Porter



I am reporting this month that Al Lambert has decided for a second time to step down as PPOC chairman. We appreciate his service, and he continues on the garden committee. I'm happy to report that co-chairman Diane Yeager has agreed to continue as co-chairman, this time with former director Brian Stukes as co-chairman. I look forward to great things from them, as I do from the redoubtable June Baker, our new FMC chairman. I have asked both committees to work to recruit and involve more of our younger owners.

I wish you all a happy Thanksgiving.

At this juncture of our national history, it seems to me the following synopsis from the autobiography of Frederick Douglass is particularly apt:

Douglas spent a year (1833) with Covey, during which he was frequently and brutally whipped. Having spent considerable time in the city, Douglass was not familiar with farm instruments and techniques. Because of this unfamiliarity, he made mistakes and was continually punished. Covey pushed his slaves to the limit, making them work long hours, and he constantly spied on them to make sure they did the work. Despite his professed religious piety, Covey saw profit in breeding slaves, so he bought a female slave and hired a married man to have sex with her for a year. Douglass confesses that witnessing this inhuman tyranny may have been the lowest point in his life for he contemplated killing Covey and ending his own life. Because Covey's farm was located on Chesapeake Bay, Douglass often saw ships from all around the world. The sight of their billowing white sails continually renewed his hope for an eventual escape.

One hot day in August, Douglass collapsed from fatigue, an event which led to matters that changed his life. Covey came by, kicked him, and gave him a beating. Although Douglass was bleeding profusely, he managed to escape and walked seven miles to St. Michael's, to ask Master Thomas for help. Although Thomas didn't believe Douglass' story and sent him back to Covey in the morn-

ing, he did allow him to stay for the night. On reaching Covey's farm, Douglass found himself the object of another beating. This time, however, Douglass ran into the cornfields and Covey couldn't find him.

Eventually, Douglass encountered Sandy Jenkins, a fellow slave who believed in the supernatural powers of certain plants. Sandy advised him to carry a certain root on his right side, an act which would make it impossible for any white man to harm him. Sandy believed that his own root had always saved him. To humor Sandy rather than argue with him, Douglass followed his instructions. To Douglass' surprise, when he returned to Covey's farm, Covey spoke kindly to him. A few days later, however, Covey pounced on him. This time, Douglass decided to physically resist. In the ensuing fight, Douglass gained the upper hand, and, after nearly two hours of wrestling and struggling, Covey finally gave up. Douglass recalls:

"Covey at length let me go, puffing and blowing at a great rate, saying that if I had not resisted, he would not have whipped me half so much. The truth was, that he had not whipped me at all."

Douglass thinks that because Covey enjoyed a widespread reputation for being the region's best slave breaker, it provided him with plenty of free labor, and he didn't want to punish Douglass any further because doing so would be an admission of his having lost a physical fight. For the rest of Douglass' stay, Covey didn't touch him again. Douglass recalls: "This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free."

## TREASURER'S COMMENTARY

Karen H. Johnson



In the month of October, total income was slightly below the amount expected in the budget. This small shortfall is accounted for by somewhat less than expected

income from the In-Unit Maintenance program. Our expenses were noticeably greater than expected in the budget. This outcome was importantly the result of a very large water bill that substantially exceeded the expected amount. This high water bill was the result of a need to refill the pool earlier this year because of a problem with a pump. Consequently, it does not suggest future high bills. The year-to-date total spending on utilities now slightly exceeds the amount expected in the budget.

In other elements of the budget for October, we continued to record spending on payroll that is less than budgeted. Our Administrative expenses also remained below budget. For October the positive outcomes were recorded for legal fees related to unit owners and for licenses and permits and insurance. The cost of goods sold within the In-Unit Maintenance program was also less than expected in October.

For the month as a whole, the outcome of income less total expenses was less favorable than expected in the budget. However, it was not enough to significantly change the year-to-date favorable balance that we had been experiencing previously.

The In-Unit Maintenance Program for the year through October had total income of about \$149,000. The payroll expenses attributed to the program reached about \$52,000, and the cost of goods sold was nearly \$100,000. As a result, the program through October was close to balance, but had a slightly negative net of income versus expenses.

As of October 31, the total number of units in delinquent status to the Association rose back to 15, with \$31,602 in amount due. The number of renter occupied units dropped one to 153, 28 % of the total.

## MANAGEMENT REPORT

Michelle Brown-Slaughter



### Bridge Project:

WDP has brought to our attention some administrative issues that need to be resolved. Therefore, we are currently in a temporary holding pattern on our bridge project until we obtain further clarification from the County regarding our permit status. However as of today, Building plan Review has been approved and Fire Marshall has approved as a repair and as such, most likely, will not require ADA additional costs, but we are still pending Criti-

### cal structures review and approval.

### Decorating Project:

The bulkhead over the front desk in the lobby was removed and the wall was repaired. Wall columns were fabricated and brought to the property for assembly and installation; this has been underway since Monday November 21<sup>st</sup>. Two columns have been identified to have active termites, our pest control company will be on site Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> to inspect and hopefully treat the areas. If treatment cannot be done or completed on Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will incur an additional cost for the contractor to rent a lift for an additional week (our lift does not reach high enough for the upper portions of the columns). The additional cost should be about \$600.00.

### Heartline Fitness:

The balance due for the new fitness equipment in the West exercise room was paid to Heart line Fitness company.

### FHA Approval:

The FHA recertification process was started in early October. Payment for renewal of the FHA application was paid to Project Support Services. SHUOA was successful in obtaining FHA recertification for another 2 years.

### Residential Corridors Carpet Cleaning:

Carpet was cleaned in both the East and West on November 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Balcony inspections:

Balcony inspections took place for those balconies that were of concern the week of November 17<sup>th</sup> with SKA (our structural engineer and CPR the contractor that performed all balcony work including the railing replacements). We are waiting on their findings and scope of work needed.

### Update Weather Emergency Policy – updates:

Management has purchased an additional Toro Gas two stage Snow blower, 12 additional snow shovels of different capacities and inventoried Ice melt to ensure we have enough on hand.

We have also secured a snow removal contract with State of the Art Landscape. They are located in Sterling, VA. They will return to the property more than one time during a 24 hour period and they have the capability to provide labor to remove snow from walk areas etc. in the event our staff is not able to arrive safely to do so. This would be in near or blizzard conditions, generally staff are able to arrive for snow removal. They own all their equipment outright and have more than one facility where it is stored. I have some pictures of equipment.

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, Greg and the DGM attended a disaster planning seminar hosted by Community Association institute and Toepfer Construction Company. The seminar

was helpful for us to use with our Emergency weather action plan. Monthly updated copies of residents needing assistance in an emergency list is kept at the front desk. The GM and DGM also have copies with them when off site.

Management is also developing a list of our contractors, utility companies, restoration providers, insurance contact, local pharmacy, hotel, Red Cross information that on-call staff can store in our cell phones (as well as hard copy), in case we're off-site during an emergency.

One of great importance and I have implemented already is - I have asked Noemi from now on each month when she prints the residents needing assistance in an emergency list that is kept at the front desk, to print separate copies for Michelle and I to have at home in case of emergency that we are not able to get to the property. This list has always just been kept at the front desk and an updated copy is run once per month on the 1<sup>st</sup> or the next business day.

**Attorney fees - Unit Owners Collections:**

\$900 was paid to the Association's attorney in October, 2016, for routine delinquency collections. \$552 was paid to the attorney for advice on general legal services for the month of October.

**Collections update- \$31,602 (October 2016) Delinquencies**

6 units owe \$25,446 for delinquencies that are 60 days past due. 9 units owe \$6,156 for delinquencies that are 10-60 days past due. Collection is being handled by the Association's Attorney.

**11/30/2016 Meeting Action Needed: Proposals to Approve for:**

- a. East Sundeck ceiling replacement proposals
- b. Board to vote on Segans recommendation for **Judicial Foreclosure for a unit owner that has not complied with monthly payment plan arrangements.**

**REMINDERS FROM MANAGEMENT**

**IT'S ALMOST THAT TIME AGAIN-** The 2017 annual meeting and election will be upon us soon. The following is the 2017 election calendar:

- Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> – Nominations open
- Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> – Nominations close
- Feb 28 – Meeting packages mailed to Owners
- Mar 7 – Meet the Candidates night
- Mar 28<sup>th</sup> – Annual Meeting and Election

**LOBBY REDECORATING PROJECT**

If you have not been through the lobby lately, you missed all of the commotion! We have a new look.

Below are photos of our lobby transformation. Stay tuned for the next newsletter when the project is completed.





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## CHIEF ENGINEER REPORT

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Gregory Grimm

### **Christmas Tree Bags**

Once again **FREE** Christmas Tree bags are available at the Front Desk, while they last. The bags prevent the scattering of pine needles around your unit, in the corridors, and in the elevators when you dispose of your tree.

### **Christmas Tree Safety**

Your beautifully decorated Christmas tree can also be a deadly fire hazard. Christmas tree fires are infrequent, but when they do occur, they are serious, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Fire departments responded to an average of 230 home fires caused by Christmas trees each year from 2007 -2011. The result was a yearly average of six deaths, 22 injuries and \$18.3 million in property damage, the NFPA reported.

### **Here is a check list of holiday fire safety tips from NFPA and FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration:**

- ⇒ When choosing a tree, look for one that is fresh and has green needles that don't fall out. Brownish needles mean the tree is dried out and more prone to catch fire.

- ⇒ Water your tree daily to prevent it from drying out.
- ⇒ Check the manufacturer's labels to ensure you use only lights and decorations that are flame-retardant. Look for a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Intertek or the Canadian Standards Association, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- ⇒ Check holiday lights for frayed wires or excessive wear.
- ⇒ Don't connect more than three (3) strands of mini-string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- ⇒ Keep your tree at least 3 feet away from any heat source, such as a fireplace, radiator, candles or lights.
- ⇒ Make sure your tree does not block an exit. In case there is a fire, you want a way to escape!

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## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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June Baker

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met on Monday, November 28, 2016.

The financial figures for the month of October were: total Income of \$380,143; total Expenses of \$236,155; Reserve Contributions of \$122,989; no Tax payments, leaving a positive income of \$20,999.

This month's Variance Report showed that most accounts were on or under budget during October.

Utilities were considerably over budget because of an extremely large quarterly water bill. Management believes that a problem with a pump at the pool caused the pool to drain completely before the swimming season, thus needing to be completely refilled, and this may have been a major cause of the overage.

There were no major concerns expressed regarding the financial statements. Questions raised by FMC members were explained by Ms. Brown Slaughter, the General Manager.

Committee members received informational items, some of which we discussed briefly and some of which will be discussed at length at the January 2017 meeting. For ex-

ample,

- Management provided us with the 5-year roof plan prepared by The Garland Company which delineates repairs and replacements to our roofs that will be required in the next several years.
- Greg Grimm provided a rationale in easy to understand language for replacing Air Handler Units.
- Since we have just obtained FHA recertification, a handout explains what that means for the Association and gives reasons for having such certification and dispels some false notions.

At the October meeting, the FMC asked Management to find sources that residents could use to make payments by credit and debit cards or other means as an additional option. This capability WOULD NOT replace current payment methods, such as automatic withdrawal of monthly fees from one's bank, checks, or cash. It will be just one more option that residents can use to pay their bills. We were provided with two options, both of which can link to our current in-house accounting system. We asked Ms. Brown Slaughter to contact the sources and ask if they would be willing to send a representative to our January meeting.

As requested, Management provided the Committee with additional proposals for updating our current Employee Manual and reworking the job descriptions. We now have 5 proposals: 2 from individual consultants, 2 from companies, and 1 from our Attorney. I asked FMC members to read the proposals, so that we can discuss them at the January meeting and make a recommendation to the Board at that time.

The FMC next turned to New Business, and the Committee is recommending that the Board of Directors:

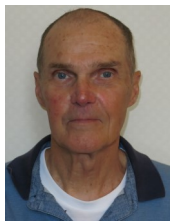
- Approve the proposal from Ben-Kel Construction to replace ceiling and light fixtures on the East Penthouse Sundeck for \$20,388. The vote in favor was unanimous. Dr. Joshua asked for details of the warranty, and the following day, the Deputy General Manager, Ms. Haight, spoke with the proposed contractor and forwarded details of the warranty to FMC members.

The next FMC meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2017. As always, we welcome residents to join us and participate in the important financial work of the Association.

## PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

### COMMITTEE (PPOC) REPORT

Al Lambert & Diane Yeager



On Thursday, November 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room the Physical Plant and Operation Committee (PPOC) met for the last time in this calendar year.

The first order of business was to approve Ben-Kel Construction Corporation to remove and install a new ceiling in the open space on the roof and install twelve new LED lights for the East Building at a cost of \$20,388.00.

The second topic was a brief discussion on the requirement to conduct a full Reserve Study as required by the Virginia Condominium Act and when the process should commence with the selection of a firm. Management had identified three potential firms who submitted a proposal with proposed costs and a sample of a completed Reserve Study. After a brief discussion, the committee elected to postpone the selection of a firm until late in 2017. Lastly, Management informed the committee it was reviewing alternative phone services for the association with the goal to reduce costs and stay abreast of the phone technology the association is using to support the telephone in-house line for communications and external calls. The next meeting of the PPOC is January 12th, 2017. As always, we 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!

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## GARDEN CLUB

Al Lambert

What's up?

Our pansies have been planted but rainfall is sparse in the local area. Newly planted flowers require supplemental irrigation prior to the onset of freezing and to allow the development of a root system. With the sprinkler system turned-off for the season it will be challenging for the club to water all the plants.

Time is running short for the planting of tulips and sometime before Thanksgiving Day the club will plant more than one-hundred tulips. As one makes a right turn to enter the garage the large planting area will be a tulip bed and smaller beds in the front of the condominium. Typically, tulip bulbs will return every spring but with our poorly drained clay soil they will be removed for spring planting.

It is possible to have some flowers in the landscape through the winter. One can see the fall and winter flowering in front of the association where there are flowering camellias. They will continue to flower in relatively warm weather and remain in bloom following the first freeze often through December.

This will be the last report for the season and the club wants to recognize Hanna Jones for her tireless work ethic and the many hours she has contributed to planting flowers throughout the year. Moreover, in the front of the association the club has created a display of rocks (boulders) in barren areas where there is no sunshine or rainfall. The three ladies who are responsible for the success of this project and I encourage everyone to extend their appreciation are to Maria Elena Schacknies, Hanna Jones, and Heide Fechtman. We appreciate your time and effort to improve our landscape!

Until next year, Thank you!

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## COVENANTS COMMITTEE

Bert Barrois

The Committee met in October to discuss the proposed children's playroom. PPOC has recently pushed to re-purpose the underused East Billiard Room as a children's playroom, and the Covenants Committee was tasked to draft rules and policies. PPOC sees an opportunity to put the space to better use, but the members of Covenants foresee problems with mess, damage, and noise. The Board seems inclined to proceed.

Besides these tangible concerns, the project raises two larger issues: Would it be serving the interests of owners or catering to renters? (We suspect that a disproportionate number of users would be renters.) Would Skyline House become more of a child magnet than it already is? Your input to the Board would be appreciated.

### Miscellaneous Reminders:

*Woof-woof, meow-meow, tweet-tweet ...* This is a no-pets building. (Rule 14.)

*Safety in the garage ...* Use your lights, don't speed, don't pass other cars, and don't tailgate though the entry door. If you don't have your remote, stop by the lobby and check one out at the desk. (Rule 18-f-3.)

*Bicycles on balconies ...* Naughty, naughty. (Rule 15-i.) Balconies are not for storage. We have a bike room for that, with plenty of space, and it's free nowadays. (We have to keep the external appearance of the building in mind. Prospective buyers notice.)

## GOOD NEIGHBORS

The purpose of the Good Neighbors Program is to help residents of Skyline House who need assistance for health reasons, including residents who are housebound. This service is NOT available for medical emergencies. In the event of a medical emergency, the resident MUST call 911 for help. Good Neighbors volunteer to help in the following ways: - Taking residents to medical appointments within the radius of approximately 10 miles. If the Good Neighbor wishes to wait for the resident at a hospital or doctor's office, this can be arranged in advance. If the Good Neighbor goes back home, pickup time can be determined between the two parties. - Picking up prescriptions at local pharmacies. - Picking up mail or packages at the Front Desk or the mailbox. - Picking up groceries at the local supermarkets. Any requests of an unusual nature not listed above should be directed to Alina Gonzalez (703-379-5391) or Virginia Fissmer (703-379-2901). If you want to help neighbors in need, and to make the Skyline House Community even better, please contact Alina or Virginia.

DECEMBER 2016 VOLUNTEERS are:

SONYA LIVINGSTON	814W	703-931-6923
MARILYN SILVER	601E	703-256-0775

## A GIFT OF POETRY

*inspires the heart and touches the soul*

Skyline House Association plans to publish a poem each month in the newsletter from resident submissions (owners and renters). If you would like to have a poem printed from your native country, please have it translated into English. Poems must be submitted to the Management Office no later than the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Wednesday of each month.

“A Psalm of Life”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

*What the heart of the young man said to the psalmist*

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
 Life is but an empty dream!  
 For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
 And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
 And the grave is not its goal;  
 Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
 Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
 Is our destined end or way;  
 But to act, that each to-morrow  
 Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
 And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
 Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
 Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
 In the bivouac of Life,  
 Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
 Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
 Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
 Act,— act in the living Present!  
 Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us  
 We can make our lives sublime,  
 And, departing, leave behind us  
 Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
 A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
 Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
 With a heart for any fate;  
 Still achieving, still pursuing,  
 Learn to labor and to wait.

Submitted by: Al Lambert, Unit 709W



## PARTICIPATE!

A national flag is a flag that symbolizes a country! Skyline House would like to identify and recognize all residents and their country of origin. Stop by the Management Office and provide your name and native country so that a small flag can be purchased and put on display in the main Lobby.

## SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR December 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5 <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	20	21	22	23 <b>Office closes at 2:00</b>	24
25	26 <b>Library closed</b> <b>Office closed</b>	27	28	29	30 <b>Office closes at 2:00 PM</b>	31



# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## January 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 <b>LIBRARY CLOSED</b> Office closed	3 <b>Recreation Committee</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	4	5	6	7
8	9 <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	10	11 <b>Security/Safety &amp;NW</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	12 <b>PPOC</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	13	14
15	16 <b>LIBRARY CLOSED</b> Office closed	17	18 <b>Covenants</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	19 <b>CRC</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	20 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	21
22	23 <b>FIN MGT</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	24	25 <b>BOARD</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	26	27	28
29	30 <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	31				

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Richard Porter 1005E 414-870-0499 rporter@shuoa.org  
 Vice President, Sarah Kreger 301W 593-3806 skreger@shuoa.org  
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 Director, Norman Phillion 1605W 434-9596\_nphillion@shuoa.org  
**Web Developer**, Win Singleton

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

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### GARDEN CLUB

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 Virginia Fissmer 601W 703-379-2901

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