



# Skyline House Newsletter

## FALLS CHURCH NEWS

### Annual Pajama Drive Alert!

Cold weather is right around the corner, and the Mason District Station is preparing for the season with our annual Pajama, Sock, and Slipper drive. Help keep kids warm this winter!

We're collecting NEW, unwrapped pajamas, socks, and slippers for children and teens (ages 0-17). Larger sizes are especially needed!

Drive Ends: **Wednesday, January 1, 2025**

Drop-Off Location: **Residents can drop off their donations at the front desk or the management office. The Activities Committee will make drop-offs at Mason District Station.**

Let's come together as a community to make a difference.

For more info, reach out to us at: [FCPDMasonCPO@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FCPDMasonCPO@fairfaxcounty.gov)  
Thank you for your kindness and support!

**Mason District Station**  
**PAJAMA DRIVE**

We Are Accepting Donations for  
NEW, Unwrapped Pajamas, Socks, Slippers (Ages 0-17)  
*(Specific Need for Larger Sizes)*

**DRIVE ENDS:** Wednesday January 1, 2025  
**DROP OFF LOCATION:** 6507 COLUMBIA PIKE  
(Box in Lobby Area)

**For More Information:**  
[FCPDMasonCPO@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FCPDMasonCPO@fairfaxcounty.gov)

### CONTENTS

FALLS CHURCH EVENTS.....	1
GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT.....	2
PRESIDENT’S NOTES.....	3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.....	5
TREASURER’S REPORT.....	6
CREATIVE CORNER.....	7
CHIEF ENGINEERS ADVICE.....	8
HOUSE CALENDAR.....	10

### Management Office - (703) 578-4855

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**Deputy General Manager – Courtney Pinnock**  
**Chief Engineer - Greg Grimm**  
**Housekeeping Supervisor Marvin Bustillo**

**East Building Resident Coordinator Belinda Jones**

**West Building Resident Coordinator Gloria Dwuma**

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

**EDITOR/DESIGN:** Donte Wilkins  
**CO-EDITOR/DESIGN:** Bryant Stukes

Visit [www.shuoa.org](http://www.shuoa.org) or Building Link to find past issues!

## GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT

BY TYCIA HAIGHT, GENERAL MANAGER

*I hope that everyone had a Wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!*

### Condo Fee Increase for 2025:

By now, owners should have their condo fee increase letters mailed on Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Also included in the mailout was a form to update your information. Please take a moment to fill it out and return it to the Management office if you have any updates! 😊

If you are on automatic debit (where we withdraw your fees from your bank), your new amount will automatically be updated. If you use a bill payer service through your bank, please be sure you update your new amount directly with your bank. If you have not received this letter, please contact our accounting office to obtain a copy.

### Guest Parking and loading dock enforcement:

I have included in the last three newsletters that we are enforcing guest parking so that our residents' guests have a place to park when they are visiting. Be aware that we have developed a list of repeat offenders (3 or more violations), and the front desk is authorized to request towing without further approval from Management. Please help us to keep our limited guest parking open for guests as it is designated during the holiday season and going forward. *Thank you!*



*Wishing all our residents a wonderful holiday season!*

*Submitted by Tycia Haight, General Manager*

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

BY RICHARD PORTER, PRESIDENT



Dues are rising faster than inflation for many of the roughly 76 million residents of communities that keep shared pots to pay for expenses. The money pays for things such as swimming pools, recreational facilities, and landscaping, as well as upkeep and insurance for the association.

In some parts of Washington state, including the Seattle area, homeowners' association dues have more than doubled over the last year on average, according to Realtor.com, a listings marketplace.

Condo association dues are up 6% nationwide this year versus last, and as much as 15% in parts of Florida, according to real-estate brokerage Redfin.

Maintenance fees for recently sold co-ops in Manhattan rose 27% in the third quarter of 2024 from four years earlier, and condo fees rose 41% in the same period, according to appraisal firm Miller Samuel.

Buying a newly constructed home means paying the fees more often than not. Eighty-one percent of new single-family homes sold in 2023 are in an HOA, compared with 73% a decade earlier, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Nearly a third of the U.S. housing stock is part of community associations, which include HOAs, condominiums, and cooperatives, according to the Foundation for Community Association Research. The fees can range from a few hundred dollars a year to thousands every month.

"Buyers are spending much of their monthly payment on things other than the property itself," said Joel Berner, senior economist at Realtor.com. (News Corp, parent of The Wall Street Journal, operates Realtor.com.)

The association fees are further stretching the budgets of current and prospective homeowners. Higher home prices and mortgage rates already make home buying prohibitive for many. Other costs like utilities and property taxes also are climbing in many areas of the country.

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Higher association fees are part of the reason owners such as Judy Goldstein are selling. She said her \$12,500-a-year HOA dues are another expense to worry about for the upkeep of her roughly 1,800-square-foot, three-bedroom house in Boynton Beach, Fla.

Real-estate agents have told her that her dues are high for the area and have deterred some buyers. Goldstein, 82 years old, is hoping to be able to sell before she also has to pay a coming special assessment: about \$780 to fund a pickleball court that she has no intention of using.

“It’s all too much,” she said.

### **Moving target**

Unlike a fixed mortgage payment, HOA dues tend to increase over time. The size of the dues in part depends on the home’s square footage, its location and the number and age of the buildings in the community. In 2024, 9% of homeowners will pay more than \$500 a month in HOA fees, compared with 6% in 2020, according to the Foundation for Community Association Research.

They are generally mandatory and not negotiable. HOAs may foreclose on owners for unpaid dues, which can result in the loss of an owner’s home, said Pierre Debbas, a real estate lawyer in New York City.

Services such as trash collection and snow removal are increasingly shifting away from cash-strapped local governments to community associations, said Dawn Bauman, executive director of the Foundation for Community Association Research.

Owners who frequently use the amenities may feel they are getting their money’s worth. They may enjoy the community parties and using features such as a clubhouse or golf simulator that otherwise they may not be able to afford.

Associations are meant to help homeowners financially by ensuring property values in their neighborhood don’t go down, said Rick Sharga, CEO of CJ Patrick, a real estate consulting firm.



The evidence is mixed on whether HOAs actually support property values. Residents and property managers alike say that a community that never raises dues could fall into disrepair.

### **Rising costs**

Karen Kostiw, a real-estate agent in New Jersey and New York, said HOA fees have become more unpredictable compared with about four years ago.

She recently has seen the fees jump by 15% to 20% in a year, stemming in part from more frequent and pricier repairs to big-ticket items such as roofs and boilers. An increased number of natural disasters, including flooding, have made the major fixes more frequent and costly. She added that the expense of salaries and benefits for HOA employees such as property managers and maintenance staff is also rising.

“There is a delicate balance of being empathetic to owners with fixed incomes while recognizing that the association does not have fixed expenses,” said Karl Kuegler, director of community association management at property management company Imagineers LLC. He said regular fee increases often are less burdensome than delaying increases until large special assessments become unavoidable.

Many condo associations [in Florida](#) are issuing special assessments and beefing up their reserve funds to tackle overdue repairs. The partial collapse of a building in Surfside, Fla., that killed 98 people in 2021 has led to new laws around condo repairs.

Before you buy in a community, you can typically figure out whether there is a special assessment by reviewing financial disclosures and board-meeting minutes. In many states, buyers can make offers contingent on being able to review these types of documents, said Daryl Fairweather, Redfin’s chief economist.

Looking at the last five years of dues is likely to give you a sense of how much they will go up in the future. “Don’t assume that your dues will remain fixed,” she said.

**President’s Report**  
**November 20, 2024, From the Wall Street Journal**



**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

BY JUNE BAKER, COMMITTEE CHAIR



The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met in person and via Zoom for the last meeting of 2024 on Monday, November 18th.

**Financial figures for the month of October 2024 are:**

Total Income	\$ 461,995.00
Total Expense	\$ 424,231.00
Reserves Contributions*	\$ 156,673.00
Federal & State Income Tax	\$ -
Net Income	<p>\$ Leaving a Net Income of <b>\$37,764</b> for the month of October. Please note that the budgeted amount for Net Income was \$18,258, and year-to-date, our actual Net Income is \$137,341.</p>

Total Income was \$12,582 less than budgeted, with accounts such as Late Fees/NSF Funds, Move-In/Refinance Income, In-Unit Maintenance Income, and Miscellaneous Income producing less income, with other accounts showing positive income for the month.

Expense categories Administration and Contracts were slightly more than budgeted, and all other categories were under budget for the month.

Expenses from the Reserve Budget totaled \$8,888 for the month of October and included HVAC heating boilers, Life Safety items, security cameras, and trash compactor repairs.

General Manager Tycia Haight gave the Management Report, which mentioned that the letters about the condo fee increase would be mailed to owners on the Monday following the Thanksgiving holiday. An emergency contact form is being included to update any changes. In addition, the contract for garage repairs is under review by our attorney and our insurance broker.

Committee members asked several questions about the financial statements; Ms. Haight and Staff Accountant Andrea Galler responded to the questions.

At this time each year, I thank the members of the FMC for participating in meetings and discussing items of interest to Skyline House. Members are: Marie Aziz, June Baker, Tremayne Bunaugh, Inge Chilman, JoHannah Eklund, Grace Krumwiede, Wayne Krumwiede, Bryant Stukes, and Diane Yeager. Special thanks to Karen Johnson, Board Treasurer, for her contributions. Our Management Team of Tycia Haight, General Manager, Courtney Pinnock, Deputy General Manager, and Andrea Galler, Staff Accountant, are always available to answer our questions and support us.

**This year we:**

- Participated in hybrid and Zoom meetings.
- Continued fulfilling our fiduciary responsibilities by checking invoices twice monthly.
- Reviewed bank and VISA statements monthly.
- Reviewed financial statements at each meeting and asked questions about accounts.
- Recommended numerous proposals to keep Skyline House running smoothly.
- Reviewed the draft audit report.
- Encouraged Management to continue to pursue payment of unpaid bills (e.g., for In-Unit work, etc.), which has resulted in quicker payment of those bills.
- Reviewed garage specifications and attended pre-bid meeting.
- Discussed at length the need to increase condo fees significantly because of upcoming garage repairs and the need to address the internal aspects of the resident corridors.
- Met with the Covenants Committee Chair to review the Attorney’s comments about non-payment for motorcycle spaces and Association-owned storage units and make necessary changes to rental agreements.
- Met in August to review 2025 Operating and Reserve budgets and listened to the pros and cons of both budgets. Upon further analysis, in September, the Committee voted to recommend a greater increase in condo fees because of the greater anticipated repairs to the garage.

The FMC Chair met with the Covenants Committee Chair, Mr. Bert Barrois, to discuss revisions to rental agreements for Association-owned storage units and motorcycle spaces in the garage. Our attorney made several recommendations pertaining to residents whose rentals fall into collection status. We will meet with Ms. Haight to complete/revise the draft at which time it will be sent to the attorney.

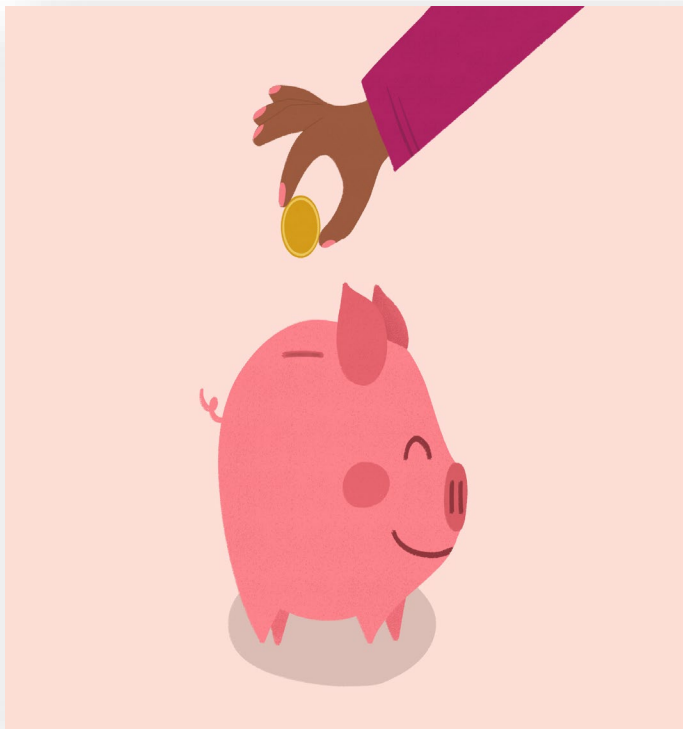
The FMC is recommending that the Board of Directors

- Accept the proposal from Service Mechanical for a West building rooftop AAON Compressor Replacement at a cost of \$12,495.00. The recommendation was adopted unanimously.
- Accept the proposal from US Lawns of Arlington for snow removal as needed, with rates to remain the same as in the previous contract. The recommendation was accepted unanimously.

**The next regular meeting of the FMC will be on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, following the Federal holiday on Monday.**

**As usual, we invite all residents to attend in person or via Zoom depending upon circumstances.**

**Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season!**



## TREASURER'S COMMENTARY

BY KAREN JOHNSON, TREASURER



I participated in the FMC meeting on November 18, 2024. As of this date, we have data for the month of October and for the year to date, hence for ten months of the year.

For the month of October and for year to date, net income was positive, that is income exceeded expenses. Net income in October was almost \$40k. This brought net income for the year to date to \$137k. The budget expected net income to be negative at this point. Accordingly, our financial outcome for the first ten months has been favorable. Management has done well in controlling our expenses.

Total income in October was slightly below budget, and for the year to date, it was also below budget. For both time frames, the item most responsible for the below-budget outcome was the in-unit maintenance program. We are not likely to reach the total income for the year for this program that was planned in the budget. An offsetting positive income item for 2024 so far has been interest income, which was above budget in October and year to date.

Total expenses in October and year-to-date were below budget. The savings in expenses year-to-date were recorded for payroll, payroll taxes and benefits, computer expenses, electricity, water and sewer, snow removal, and trash removal. Offsetting the savings from low expenses in these categories were various partial offsets including an excess over budget of spending for our security contract.

Our balance sheet as of October 31 showed total assets of \$2.6 m and total liabilities of \$355k.

The delinquency report as of October 31, shows total outstanding arrears somewhat less than on September 30.

Again, in October, there were 127 renter-occupied units, 23 percent of the total.

**Karen H. Johnson, Treasurer**

CREATIVE CORNER



Parade

I heard the bells on Christmas  
Day

Their old, familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet

The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to  
men!

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Happy  
Holidays

**CHIEF ENGINEER'S ADVICE**

BY GREG GRIMM, CHIEF ENGINEER



**Bathroom Sprayers**

We continue to have problems with bathroom sprayers leaking. When we encounter a leaking sprayer, we immediately disconnect it. We

recommend not using these, as they will always eventually leak. We recommend purchasing a bidet-type toilet seat, which is more suitable for the task and has fewer hoses that constantly move when used.

**Water Heaters**

Many units still have old water heaters. If your water heater is more than 12-14 years old, it is time to replace the unit. Protect yourself and all your neighbors below you from a flood.

**Free Dryer Vent Cleaning**

Several residents have had their dryer vents cleaned, and we are finding some vents so clogged with lint, that we have no idea how their dryer even worked. Again, this we do free of charge. Call the office for an appointment today. If you live in tiers 5, 6, and 14 or on floor 17 of either building, your vent is on an exterior wall that is not easily accessible, we have limited success with these tiers.

**Water Leak Detectors**

We have water leak detectors in the Management Office for sale at \$25.69 each. These detectors sound a loud alarm when they sense water on the floor of the utility closet. Having one of these could save you many dollars in damage to the units below you if you develop a leak in your utility closet.



**HOUSE RECIPE CORNER**



**Hearty Beef Stew**

**Ingredients**

- 1 (2 pound) boneless beef round steak, cut into 1-inch cubes
- kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 3 cups chopped onion
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 cups dry red wine
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary
- 1 tablespoon herbes de Provence
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 cups beef broth, or more as needed
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 3 cups chopped carrots
- 3 cups cubed Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1 cup fresh peas
- 1 ½ teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, or to taste



**Directions**

1. Gather all ingredients and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Season beef with salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add flour and paprika and toss until evenly coated.
3. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Working in batches, sear beef in hot oil, stirring occasionally, until well-browned, 10 to 11 minutes per batch. Transfer beef to a plate and leave drippings in the pot.
4. Add onion to drippings; season with salt and pepper. Cook and stir until onion begins to caramelize, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
5. Stir in tomato paste; cook until it turns brown and begins to caramelize and stick to the bottom of the pan.
6. Pour in red wine and bring to a boil while scraping the browned bits of food off the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Cook until wine is almost evaporated, about 3 minutes.





7. Add thyme, rosemary, herbes de Provence, and bay leaves. Stir in broth and Worcestershire sauce; bring to a boil.
8. Return beef to the pot, then remove from heat and cover with the lid.
9. Braise stew in the preheated oven until beef is almost tender, about 1 hour 30 minutes. Remove from the oven.
10. Add carrots, potatoes, and more beef broth if needed. Cover the pot and return to the oven to braise until beef and vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes more.
11. Discard bay leaves. Stir in peas, rosemary, and thyme. Serve hot.

## SHUOA COMMITTEES



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 SEEKING A CHAIR



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## December 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Activities Committee Meeting 7 PM  3:00- 5:00 Bridge	4	5	6	7 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM  1:00 PM- 5:00 PM Library is Open
8	9 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM  Dementia Screening 4-7 PM  6:00 PM- 7:00 PM Library is Open	10	11 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM	12	13	14 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM  <i>SHUOA Christmas Party</i>
15	16 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM	17 3:00- 5:00 Bridge	18 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM	19	20	21 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM  1:00 PM -5:00 PM Library is Open
22	23 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM  6:00P – 7:00P Library is Open	24 <i>Management Office</i> closes at 2 PM 	25 <i>Christmas Day</i>  SHUOA Office Closed	26	27	28 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM
29	30 <i>Walking Group</i> 10:30 AM  6:00 PM – 7:00 PM Library is Open	31 <i>Management Office</i> closes at 2 PM 	<i>January 1</i> <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR</b> SHUOA Office Closed			