

The House Special

Volume 18, Number 12

December 1998

THE HOUSE SPECIAL IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR UNIT OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Changes in the Association

Bob Busby

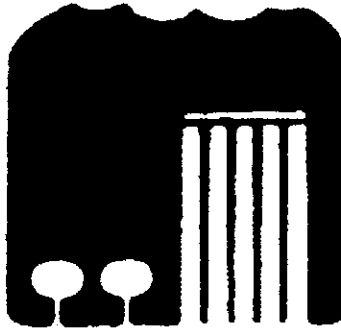


It seems like the Skyline House Unit Owners' Association is still in the middle of change this late in the year. Our previous manager, Al Smith is a very fine person and a great manager. The Association appreciates all the efforts made by Al Smith, while

serving as our Deputy and General Manager and we wish him the best in his future endeavors. Our new Interim General Manager, is our former Deputy Manager Mr. Randy Lyon. Mr. Lyon, who is relatively new to our Association, has the training and experience needed for the job. The Board will be considering it's options on retaining Mr. Lyon as the General Manager and on what to do about the hiring of a Deputy Manager.



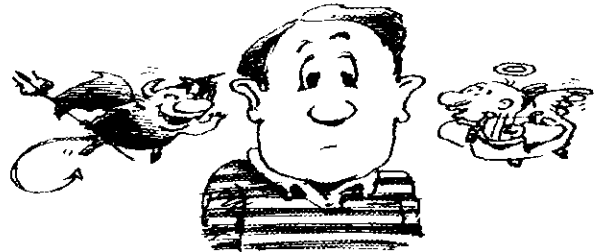
Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to all.



**Skyline
House**

From the President:

Charles K. Roberts



Neighbors, I want to acknowledge Al Smith's contributions to our Association as Deputy General Manager under Don Perper and as General Manager in his own right. Many of you noted and have taken the time to let me know that Al's enthusiasm and strong customer service attitude brought a "breath of fresh air" from the moment he arrived last spring. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Garage Repairs have indicated to me the strong support Al provided during the demanding technical study period in which the Committee, our consulting engineer Doug White of Thomas Downey, Ltd. and the newly combined firm of SPS & VSL sought the best solution to our garage construction requirements. Thanks in considerable measure to Al's efforts, the Association was able to execute a change order to our existing contract with SPS & VSL for concrete deck repairs to begin essential work on the horizontal post-tensioned beams. Construction is expected to be underway prior to the Christmas holiday.

Al also played a major role in seeing to it that the Association was able to pay off an eight-percent mortgage on the commercial space occupied by the Management Office, the Association's last obligation of this nature. On behalf of the Association I wish Al all the best in his future endeavors.

The Board of Directors has appointed Mr. Randy Lyon to serve as General Manager in an interim capacity, and Randy has agreed to do so. The Board has chosen that course of action because Randy joined us just about two months ago, and both Randy and the Board feel that an interim appointment will afford an opportunity to fine tune the working relationship between the general manager and the Board. Randy brings a wealth of experience to the job, and my fellow Board members and I have enjoyed very much working with him in the brief period in which he has been serving the residents of Skyline House. Several of you have noted that Randy is working without the support of a deputy general manager at this time and have expressed concern lest he burn himself out in this post. The Board is very sensitive to this issue, and efforts are under way to assure that Randy has capable managerial support at his disposal.

One of Randy's initiatives has been to arrange the opportunity to rent 50 in-door parking spaces in Skyline Mall from the Charles E. Smith Co. for the duration of our garage repairs. These will be in an area reserved for our use and patrolled regularly by security guards. You must display a special permit provided by our Management Office to take advantage of this opportunity. Together with our guest parking area we soon will have nearly 100 spaces into which we can rotate vehicles displaced from the garage by the repairs. Moving that many cars out of the garage at one time will enable our contractors to move through the repair process more efficiently. In the long run, this will save the Association money, speed completion of essential repairs and hasten the day when we can once again use our guest parking for guests. Randy will run this program, and I urge every resident to give him your fullest cooperation. I plan to work with Randy, and I hope others among you will be able to do the same.

Recently I was introduced at the front desk to a gentleman who has lived here for nine years but whom I had never met before. I asked him whether he had ever attended a Board meeting, and he replied that, no, he hadn't because he didn't think his opinion would receive any consideration.

I replied to him that I was sorry to hear that because if the Board does not get to hear his concerns we have little or no chance of addressing them. We proceeded to have a brief but thoughtful discussion of the budget for 1999. I share this story with you to encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to communicate with your Board. True, we are just part-time volunteers, but we value your inputs very much...even when they arrive with a bit of zing to them. The Board has instituted Owners' Open Forum during the half hour preceding each Board meeting. The tape recorder will be on, and I will take notes (though this informal session will not be made part of the official meeting minutes). This is an opportunity for information exchange between residents and the Board members who are able to arrive early. I hope to see you there.

I'm sorry to say that Bob Busby has had to choose between continued service on the Board of Directors and serving as editor of the House Special. Bob will be giving up the editor's blue pencil with the completion of this issue. I thank Bob for his enthusiasm and innovation in producing our newsletter since May, and I look forward to his continued service on the Board.

You know what comes next...a call for volunteers. Anyone with experience or interest in producing a newsletter is encouraged to come forward and help us get ready to publish the January edition. Please contact Bob Busby, Randy Lyon or myself if you are able to lead or just lend a hand.

Finally, it's time to start thinking about our Annual Meeting in March. Committee chairs will submit reports summarizing 1998 and looking forward to the remainder of 1999 and the year 2000, and we will elect three members of the Board of Directors.

I urge all unit owners to consider running for a seat on the Board. January and early February are the months in which to indicate your candidacy. Our self-governed community functions best when the talents of a broad spectrum of our Association are applied in service on the Board. If you don't believe this is the time for you to "take your turn in the barrel" please consider serving on one of our committees or subcommittees. The Board cannot function effectively without strong input from our committees. In fact, I would say that the real work of the Association is accomplished in its committees and subcommittees. Whether as a candidate for a seat on the Board or as a new committee volunteer, your Association needs you.



Wishing you a healthy, safe holiday season rich in every blessing.

Charley Roberts



Board Meeting

PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS (PPOC)

Bob Lowry - Co-Chair
Ken Grant - Co-Chair
Ross MacAskill - Co-Chair

The PPOC committee meets the first Wednesday of each month. Everyone is welcome to attend and be a member. To find out what is going on in Skyline House, every owner should attend the meetings or drop by the management office and review the meeting minutes. The last meeting was held on November 4, 1998 in the West Card room. The manager talked about maintenance and improvements to the facilities and the monthly property inspection or walk-through usually held on a Tuesday about 2:00 PM. The next walk-through will be held on Tuesday December 8, 1998 at 2:00 PM.

The walk through starts in the front lobby and will tour the mechanical rooms.

The committee again considered the floor covering for the East Bridge. The committee recommended that quarry tile be selected as the floor covering. It was decided that a detailed scope of work to cover the installation of the tile would be needed.

Residents are reminded to use the Maintenance Log located at the front desk to report common area problems to Management.

The Ad-Hoc Garage Repairs committee reported that work has started in the West end of the garage on the A-level. The committee is meeting weekly, with the contractor to review the contractors progress. Exploratory openings in the beams have been completed and the post-tension cables examined. Several cables were found to have failed in all beams. The beams are in the process of being closed and a design and fabrication of hardware for the external installation of a new post tension cable system is underway. The installation of the new cable system should start in early December 1998.

RECREATION COMMITTEE (RC)

Tony DiSalvo, Chair

If you are a new resident and have not attended the monthly TGIF, make this your first and meet your neighbors. YOU are more than welcome and to make it easier, you are requested NOT to bring a plate of hors d'oeuvres, just your own liquid refreshment.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, December 12, 7:00 p.m. for the Annual Holiday party that will be held in the West Party Room.

The Recreation Committee met on Wednesday, November 11 with eight members present. Thanks to all who came. Unfortunately, no new members were present. We still hope that we receive new members and one eventually would consider being co-chair.

The next Committee meeting will be Wednesday, December 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the West Card Room.

The Flea Market was a success. There were eight tables. A good number of residents showed up and all had a great time.



GOOD NEIGHBORS COMMITTEE (GNC)

Joan Collins
Toska Prather - Co-Chairs

Good Neighbors are available to assist all residents who are in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency. Call the Good Neighbors (GN) of the month if a need arises. Check the bulletin Boards for the current GN of the month. The Good Neighbors Group is always looking for additional members.

Call one of the Co-Chairs (Joan Collins at 998-0788 or Toska Prather at 379-7849) if you wish to join the Good Neighbors.

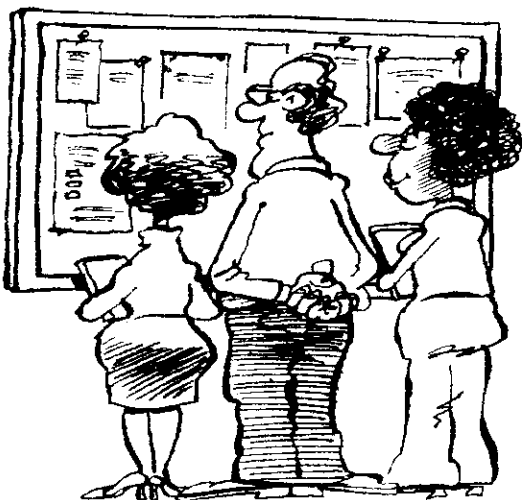
No one can help everyone, but everyone can help someone.

GN's are available to assist residents in a lot of different ways, so give them a call.

December 1998 Good Neighbors are:

Anne Preston - 931-7679

Glendis Taylor - 998-7871





COVENANTS COMMITTEE (CC)

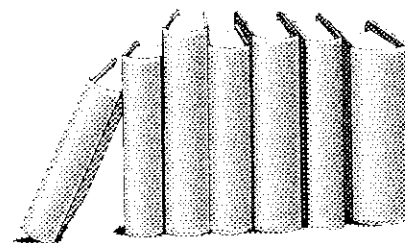
David Kafka. Chair

The covenants committee meets the third Wednesday of every month in the West Card room at 7:30 P.M. If you would like to know how the rules and regulations for Skyline House are developed, come on out and attend the covenants committee. Everyone is always welcome.

Thanks

Jack Herzig - 310-West

To all the friends and neighbors, owners, renters, management and staff who were kind enough to show their concern for my well-being during my recent visit to the Cardiac Section of Alexandria hospital. I am privileged to be able to express my sincere gratitude and that of my dear wife, Aiko. We thank you every one.



LIBRARY UPDATE

Librarian - Barbara Michelman

The library offers a wide assortment of books including mystery and suspense, romance, adventure, history, biography, classics and more.

Please come and see what your dedicated Skyline House Unit Owner supporters have accomplished. Borrow a book or just share a social evening with your friends in the library on the top floor of the East building every Monday night from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

During this hectic holiday season do come to the library on Monday night from 7 to 8:30 to browse, relax and join the pleasant conversation.

A thoughtful and caring unit owner has paid for an additional bookcase for our library to provide needed shelf space for "Books on Tape". Please help us repay the generosity by donating your "Books on Tape" now.

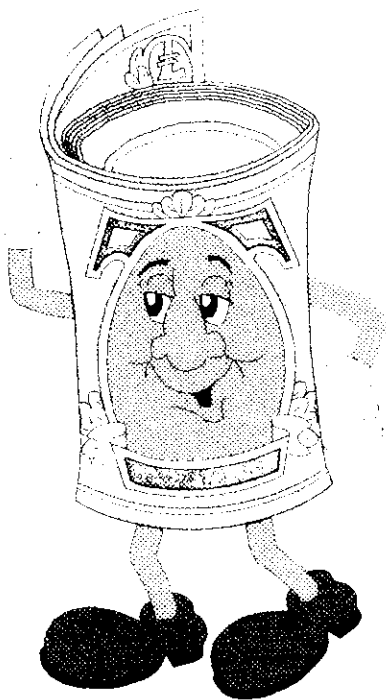


FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (FMC)

Rick Riether, Chair

The FMC meets on the third Tuesday of every month. In November, the Committee is meeting on the 17th at 7:00 p.m. All residents are welcome to visit, attend and become members of the FMC. Your Association needs your expertise on the FMC as well as on other committees. Come check out the FMC and see how your money is being spent.

Check out more information received



SECURITY, FIRE & SAFETY COMMITTEE (SFSC)

Ann Mehrten - Chair



The SFSC Committee meets every other month in the West Card room at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend and find out what is going on at Skyline House.

Eight members/visitors of the committee were present for the meeting.

Everyone should remember that management is towing vehicles that are parked in reserved spaces. Owners and visitors must have permission from management to park in reserved spaces.

Between November 9th and 10th, 1998, four vehicles were vandalized in the area of the West loading dock. The side windows of the vehicles were broken and anything of value in the vehicles was taken. Remember to not leave anything in your vehicle that you do not want taken. Security can not be every where. Our security provider Guardsmark has been advised of the problems and will be making appropriate changes to the guards routine in an attempt to be more viable and hopefully that will keep our unwanted vandals out of our parking areas.

The incident reports for September and October were presented. Fortunately, all were minor. Due to our present limited outside parking space, there is an increase in the number of cars being towed - remember, you must have permission to park there!

At present, Skyline's Neighborhood Watch is a small but stalwart number who would welcome additional people to walk around, get some exercise, and observe and report anything out of the ordinary. If you are interested in learning more, contact Ann Mehrten at 703-820-8156 or e-mail: AMehrten@aol.com. I am also looking into having an police officer from Mason District hold a crime prevention seminar here one evening.

There was a motion passed at the meeting to recommend that an additional guard be hired to patrol the outside areas until the garage work is finished and parking lot is open to guests again.

Note: In the event that Skyline must be evacuated in an emergency, there is a list at the front desk of residents who may need help leaving the building. If you would like to put yourself on the list or suggest that someone should be, leave the name and unit number at the front desk.

The next committee meeting will be January 14. All are welcome to attend.



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Editor: Robert Busby

Send information for the newsletter to the Skyline House Management Office

Voice (703) 578-4855

Fax (703) 998-5827

Published Monthly

The House Special welcomes information from its readers. Please limit your information to 250 words and include your name and unit number. The Association reserves the right to refuse incorrect or improper statements.

If you submit your information to the editor on a computer disk with a camera-ready paper copy attached, it makes it so much easier to get the information in the newsletter the way you want it.

An advertising rate card, showing the cost and sizes, is available from the Management Office. The Unit Owners Association does the best it can to get your information in the newsletter the way you want it. At times your information may be edited, enhanced or resized due to the amount of space and time available.

The appearance of advertisements in the House Special does not constitute endorsement by the Association.

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Board of Directors:

President	Charley Roberts
Vice President	David Tilson
Treasurer	Wayne Krumwiede
Secretary	Virginia Poindexter
Director	Barbara Michelman
Director	Robert Busby
Director	David Mayrose

Copies of the newsletter are available at the front desk for those who request a copy. The Association is now able to mail newsletters. If you receive the newsletter in the mail and do not want one, please let the management office know you do not want one so the Association can save money.

A volunteer is needed to become the new editor of the House Special. This is the last issue edited by me. I have enjoyed helping the association in this capacity but am unable to continue as the editor. Anyone who would like to take over this task should contact the President of the Board or the management office.



Keep smiling and having fun for these are the good old days.

Notes from the Interim General Manager ...

The holiday season is upon us. At this time I would like to review some of the issues that would allow for a smooth and expeditious way of addressing problems that have occurred in the past.

Christmas Trees.... When bringing a Christmas tree to your home, use the freight elevator only, not a passenger elevator. After the holidays, contact the front desk to schedule an appointment for a member of our housekeeping staff to remove and dispose of your tree accordingly. Management will be providing large plastic bags that will aid you in the disposal process. These bags will be available at the front desk. Please do not attempt to remove your tree yourself. Dry pine needles create a lot of problems with the elevator door tracks and carpeting. Also do not attempt to put trees in the trash chutes or leave them in the disposal rooms. Let us do the work!

Packages ... As usual we are expecting a tremendous amount of packages to be delivered during the upcoming holiday season. Your cooperation in assisting our front desk would be greatly appreciated. You can do this by:

- Checking for packages with more frequency. Especially if you anticipate receiving perishables or items that need refrigeration.
- Arrange with a friend to pick up your packages if you are going to be away.
- Ask family and friends to include your unit number in your address.
- The front desk will attempt to notify you via the telephone in the event you have perishable items such as flowers and fruits.

Parking ... Please advise your guests not to park in our fire lanes, driveways, or loading docks. They will be towed. Make sure they are aware of the registration process for all vehicles parked in guest parking areas. Additional parking is available in the garage at Skyline Mall across the street after 6 p.m. on weekends and holidays. You may park along South George Mason Drive also.

Safety.... Always be aware of your surroundings. Use extra care when utilizing the ATM machine, always know where your purse is, and do not leave packages in plain view in your vehicle.

Holiday hours.... The Management office will close for the Christmas holiday at 1 p.m., on Thursday, December 24, and will reopen Monday, December 28. The office will close for the New Years holiday at 1 p.m., Thursday and reopen on Monday, January 4, 1999.

Saturday maintenance service hours ... Effective January 2, 1999 there will be a maintenance man on duty from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., every Saturday. So for those of you who would like to schedule maintenance repairs for Saturday please feel free to do so.

Additional building services ... Need to borrow a luggage cart, or jumper cables? These items are available for your use. Just leave your driver's license as your deposit to ensure their prompt return for use by others.

Happy holidays!

Randy Lyon, Interim General Manager



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1999 Budget

This article describes the results of our recently completed budget process for calendar year 1999. Rather than keep you in suspense, the results are: Condo fees will increase 4.13%. This results from an increase in expenses of 3.1% and a drop in other income of 11.13%. The decrease in other income is primarily due to an expected drop in interest rates, thereby reducing our interest income, and a reduction in 'In Unit Maintenance' income resulting from a labor hour price reduction charged to tenants. The increases in expenses are explained below.

Since there is always uncertainty concerning the future, the budget process employed conservative principles. That is, where several equally-likely outcomes were possible, the higher costing one was selected. I am optimistic that the present budget will be sufficient for the year, and perhaps might leave us with a modest unspent surplus come next December.

The budget process is primarily the work of two subcommittees: the budget subcommittee forecasts operating expenses, and the reserve subcommittee determines annual reserve contributions. Both groups are entirely composed of your neighbors generously donating their time for our collective benefit, with substantial support from our building management.

The budget subcommittee reviews four years of trend data, compares past budget figures with actuals, and works closely with building management in forecasting the requirements for approximately 100 separate budget line items. Actual expenses for 1998 are projected to come in within 2.9% of the forecasted budget, although individual line items have varied somewhat more.

The reserve subcommittee tracks replacement costs of major common-owned capital assets, expected remaining life, and annual contributions to our reserves to that ensure major periodic expenditures are funded when needed.

The increases in expenses are distributed as follows:

	<--Budget in Thousands-->			
	1998	1999	%-change	\$-change
Salaries & Benes.	\$ 707.2	\$ 703.2	-0.6%	\$ (4.0)
Administrative	\$ 150.0	\$ 148.4	-1.1%	\$ (1.6)
Interest, Special Pjts	\$ -	\$ 55.0	100.0%	\$ 55.0
Utilities	\$ 435.0	\$ 435.0	0.0%	\$ -
Maint. & Repair	\$ 118.5	\$ 85.3	-28.0%	\$ (33.2)
Supplies	\$ 64.6	\$ 64.0	-0.9%	\$ (0.6)
Contracts	\$ 274.8	\$ 293.7	6.9%	\$ 18.9
Reserves	\$ 462.5	\$ 498.5	7.8%	\$ 36.0
Taxes	\$ 4.3	\$ 2.3	-46.5%	\$ (2.0)
Total Expenses	\$2,216.9	\$2,285.4	3.1%	\$ 68.5

The **Salaries & Benefits (31% of total)** decrease resulted from a number of factors. Salary increases averaged about 1.5% overall plus bonuses for outstanding performance, hospitalization costs increased 3.4% (not bad for these days), and a combination of a number of unfilled staff positions and staff re-organizations during the coming year resulted in a net drop in labor expenses of 0.6%.

Administrative expenses (6%) also declined by 1.1%. Three major changes combined to produce this result: general economizing in administration support activities, a shifting of funds from legal debt collections to auditing, and a 4.4% increase in insurance costs. We are budgeting for a substantial upgrade in the audit practices for 1999 in order to ensure we, the residents, are protected against waste, fraud, and abuse. It should be noted that this is a routine precautionary examination, and not in response to any suspicion or evidence of any problems.

The **Special Project (2%)** line is a new category, representing an interest expense of \$55,000 to cover the 1999 cost of our garage repair. This is expected to be a multi-year activity funded by a bank line of credit. Upon completion, the amount due will probably be rolled over into a fixed debt of 5-20 years duration (details to be negotiated), at which point we shall start paying it down.

Utilities (19%) - electricity and water/sewage costs are not budgeted to change. Historically, these expenses have been relatively stable, and there is reason to be optimistic. Our building management has initiated several energy-saving measures which have already led to some savings in our electricity bill, and we are reviewing modifications to the building which could reduce our water consumption. In the meanwhile, we are projecting no increase.

Maintenance & Repair (4%) costs are forecasted to drop 28% in 1999 compared with 1998. This is due to a 50% decrease in non-contract landscaping, caused by the completion of a non-recurring upgrade during 1998, and an 84% decrease in lighting fixture replacements. This latter drop will result (hopefully) as we replace our common light bulbs with long-life bulbs, and employ other similar economies.

Supplies (3%) will decrease 0.9%. The big item in this part of the budget is procurements for our In Unit Maintenance program, and we are expecting efficiencies from changes in our buying policies.

Contracts (13%) increased 6.9%. This is primarily due to an increase in our security contract of 18.8% when we changed contractors last year. Other notable changes include an estimate (worst case) of 27.3% increase in our building TV cable costs and a 22.6% decrease in our landscaping contract; both

results of changing contractors. (Please note, the new landscaping contractor is excellently recommended and has successful history with our building – we are not sacrificing quality of life to the budget gods).

Reserve Contributions (22%) require a 7.8% increase. No single cause has been identified as yet. Although it is inevitable that replacement and repair costs rise as the building ages, a sound reserve policy should be more stable year to year. We are reviewing the situation and shall comment further in the future.

So, as can be seen our expenses will increase from \$2.217 million to \$2.285 million, or by \$68,000. If it were not for the unexpected garage problems (\$55,000 for 1999), the increase would have been only \$13,000, or 0.6% which is not bad for an inflation rate of around 1.5%. This, together with the drop in other income resulting primarily from lower interest rates (which seem to go hand in hand with low inflation rates) gives us a 4.13% increase in our condo fees.

And so another year.

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Skyline House Residents
From: Greg Grimm, Chief Engineer *greg*
Date : November 25, 1998
Re: Heating Season

If you haven't already made the switch from air conditioning to heat, chances are that you will be doing so soon.

To make this transition as simple as possible, please make sure there is a **clean filter** in your heat pump at all times. Filters may be purchased at the Front Desk 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you switch your heat on and it doesn't work, please before you call for service ensure that your filter is clean. If your filter is very dirty, in almost every case, it will cause your heat pump not to operate because there will not be enough air flow for your heat pump to operate properly

As a reminder, you should change your heat pump filter about every thirty days.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY



BRING YOUR OWN BEVERAGES, SETUPS, AND HORS D'OEUVERS



**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 12
7:00 P.M.**

West Party Room

**NO RESERVATIONS
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FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT ATTENDED A TGIF,
MAKE THIS YOUR FIRST AND MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS.
BRING ONLY YOUR OWN LIQUID REFRESHMENTS

The following is excerpted from the Mason District Newsletter (Vol. 18, No. 11, Nov. 1998) published by Fairfax County Police Crime Prevention Unit, Mason District Station.

HOLIDAY HINTS

SHOPPING

- Don't flash large sums of cash - don't carry more credit cards than you plan to use. If you lose a credit card, notify the credit card company immediately.
- Consider whether you could safely use a coin purse with identification and credit cards rather than carrying a purse. Putting your coin purse & keys in a pocket (maybe with a safety pin across the opening) can make shopping easier as well as safer. Keep your wallet safe from pickpockets by carrying it in an inside jacket pocket or front trouser pocket. Be aware of anyone bumping into you and look out for "staged" events. Often pickpockets attempt to distract their victims so they won't notice their wallets being taken.
- Lock your valuables in the trunk of your car. Always lock your car door, even if you're only gone for a few minutes. Never leave the car running!
- Try to coordinate your shopping trip with a friend if you plan to be out late. There is truth to the adage "there's safety in numbers".

TRAVELING

- If you are driving, have a mechanic thoroughly check your vehicle to make sure it is roadworthy. Inspect the brakes, brake fluid, tires, hoses, and belts. Make sure the battery, lights, and windshield wipers are in good working order.
- If you are flying, keep your tickets and money secure. Stay alert and try not to let children or commotion distract you. It only takes a second's distraction to provide an opportunity for a thief to steal your purse or carry-on items. If you look alert, the thief is likely to leave you alone because a more likely victim will surely present him/herself.
- Before you leave home, let a trusted neighbor know you will be away and how you can be reached in case of emergency. (Skyline residents may leave this information with the Management Office). Make sure you have made the necessary arrangements for mail and newspapers.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS 1998 - 1999

BOARD LIAISON

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>UNIT #</u>	<u>PHONE #</u>
PRESIDENT	Charley Roberts	914 E	998-6080
VICE PRESIDENT	David Tilson	805 W	998-7254
	Management & Personnel		
TREASURER	Wayne Krumwiede	606 W	998-0251
	Financial Management		
SECRETARY	Virginia Poindexter	306 E	379-7268
	Covenants		
DIRECTOR	Robert Busby	102 W	931-7322
	Recreation		
DIRECTOR	Barbara Michelman	1311 W	931-6093
	P.P.O.C. and Library		
DIRECTOR	David Mayrose	1406 E	845-0234
	Security/Fire & Safety		

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

COMMUNITY RELATIONS			
COVENANTS	David Kafka	210 W	820-0195
FINANCIAL MGT	Richard Riether	1606 E	998-7005
PHYSICAL PLANT & OPNS	Bob Lowry	705 E	671-3575
	Kenneth Grant	1408 W	931-2556
RECREATION	Tony DiSalvo	502 E	824-1958
SECURITY/FIRE & SAFETY	Ann Mehrten	1315 E	820-8156

EDITOR, HOUSE SPECIAL	Robert Busby	102 W	931-7322
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