



THE HOUSE SPECIAL

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April 2005



Board of Directors President, David Tilson

There was no Board meeting in March; the big event was the Annual Meeting of the Skyline House Unit Owners Association at which the election of new Board members took place. The new members elected (or re-elected) were Maria Elena Schacknies, Toska Prather, and Johnnie Moore. Shortly after the election results were announced, the new Board met and elected the following officers: Johnnie Moore, President; Budd Coutts, Vice President; Wayne Krumwiede, Treasurer; and Jean Orben, Secretary.

I presided over the Annual Meeting in my last formal role as outgoing President of the Association. My oral report to the Association follows:

I am now starting my 26th year as a resident unit owner at Skyline House. For 13 of those years I have served on the Board of Directors, seven as President. During all those years of service, I have done my best, along with most of my fellow Board members, to try to keep the long-term health and wellbeing of this community as the central focus of the Board's decision-making.

I confess that when we first moved into Skyline House in February 1980, I did not really understand the difference between living in a rental apartment and being a unit owner in a condominium. I assumed that all that was involved were normal

operational management decisions to see that the buildings and grounds were kept clean and secure, that the front desk was staffed with competent and polite personnel, and that the Management office provided such other administrative services as were needed. I did not fully understand what was involved in governance of a condominium and the crucial importance of resident unit owner involvement until I was elected to the Board in 1989.

As many of you know, Skyline House Boards have had some real adventures during the last 16 years. These included dealing with lawsuits, imposing two substantial special assessments on residents to pay for major repairs that could not be postponed and for which insufficient funds were available in our reserves, turbulence in changing from contract to direct-hire Management, and involuntary changes in General Managers. Many residents have not been bashful about expressing their unhappiness to the Board and Management vigorously, both orally and in writing, about their disagreements with Management and Board judgments on many of these matters. I should note, in passing, that often the most vociferous protests came from residents who had not participated in the decision-making process by serving on the key committees – the Physical Plant and Operations Committee and the Financial Management Committee – that were responsible for studying and making recommendations to the Board of Directors on each of these matters. Of course, some of the judgments that the Board made turned out to be wrong. But in every case they were made after weighing what each Board thought was the best professional advice they could obtain from

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	nbaker@fjc.gov		
DIRECTOR	Toska Prather	1003W	379-7849
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DIRECTOR	Maria Elena Schacknies	1302W	820-2239
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS/CO-CHAIRS

COMMUNITY RELATIONS	Vacant		
COVENANTS,	Joseph Livingston	814 W	931-6923
	joeandsonya@aol.com		
FINANCIAL MGT,	Wynfred Joshua	1414W	820-4471
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	and Chuck Ruby	1006W	578-0896
PHYS PLANT/OPS,	George Beams	710 E	578-9507
	and Kurt Bedenbaugh	1004 E	671-8930
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EDITOR

Louise Albin	lalbin2@metronets.com
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE HOUSE SPECIAL welcomes brief comments from its readers. Limit your letters to 250 words or less and include your name and unit number. The Association Board reserves the right to refuse incorrect or improper statements. Committee reports must be submitted to the Editor by the 23rd of each month or NLT 3 days after mtg.

Information for *THE HOUSE SPECIAL* may be sent by e-mail to the Editor, dropped off at the Management office or the reception desk.

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professional consultants with reputations for professional expertise, and with this advice also being considered as the basis for recommendations by the appropriate committees and by Management, before the Board made a decision. Our elected Boards are not expert on many of the matters on which they must make decisions, nor are our standing committees, and there are no infallible processes for selecting expert consultants, so there is no way of avoiding occasional mistakes. On balance, in my opinion, we have had a pretty good batting average. I am happy to report to you that at this time our financial status is sound – our Treasurer, Wayne Krumwiede, will give you a more detailed report later – and that we have identified and are in the process of completing repairs to all of the problems with our physical plant and equipment. In an indirect way, the marketplace and the tax assessors have endorsed our work; the value of our property has increased substantially in the past few years.

Of course, we have had to live with the noise and inconvenience of major repairs to our balconies, garage and residential building façades for several years, and the façade repairs will not be completed for another two to three years. I can testify from first hand experience that it is not a pleasant experience to have concrete drilling going on near your unit during the day. West building residents will have their ordeal come to an end by this summer. East Building residents need not feel deprived; they will have their turn to enjoy the music of the pneumatic drills starting either later this year or in 2006.

I know all of you who have lived here for some time know that as a self-governing community of 556 units with over 1000 residents, we unit owners are very dependent on those among us who volunteer their time and energy to do the many tasks involved in ensuring that our condominium is well-managed, financially sound, well-maintained, and attractive. These things do not happen by chance. For the benefit of those of you who may have arrived recently, let me summarize briefly why your active participation in condominium governance is so important.

The condominium governance structure is set forth in our bylaws which, in turn, are legally-based on the Virginia Condominium Act. We are, in effect, a sub-unit of local government. Thus, the decisions made by your elected Board of Directors are critical in affecting the quality of life in this community. The Board is responsible for hiring and overseeing the performance of the General Manager, who, in turn, hires and oversees the staff and the numerous contractors we

retain to perform many types of essential services. The Board approves the budget (which includes setting the condo fees), sets the rules and regulations to which all residents must adhere, and establishes and adjusts a policy framework for Management to ensure that the quality of service to the residents is as high as possible, that the maintenance of our buildings and grounds is excellent, that our finances are handled properly and our financial records are accurate and current.

The Board cannot do all of these things without the assistance of four key committees: the Physical Plant and Operations Committee, co-chaired by Kurt Bedenbaugh and George Beams; the Financial Management Committee, co-chaired by Winnie Joshua and Chuck Ruby; the Covenants Committee, chaired by Joe Livingston; and the Fire, Safety, and Security Committee, which was, until recently, chaired by Terry Sekellos, but is now without a Chairman. Safety and security are matters of central interest to all unit owners, and I hope a mature, experienced unit owner with some leadership skills will volunteer to take on this important job. In addition, the Elections Committee, chaired this year by Sonia Livingston, performs the essential annual function of organizing and conducting the election of new members of the Board of Directors.

There are three other Committees and at least two individuals that contribute significantly to the quality of life in Skyline House: the Recreation Committee, chaired by Tony DiSalvo; the Neighborhood Watch, Chaired by Judith York; the Good Neighbors Committee, co-chaired by Toska Prather and Ernest Loyola. Louise Albin has been our conscientious and able editor of The House Special, our monthly newsletter, for many years. And Joyce Routt is doing an excellent job as our chief web site developer.

I would encourage all unit owners – particularly those who have been residents here for a relatively short time – to attend committee and Board meetings and learn about the decision-making process first hand. Most committees meet once a month in the West Card Room and the agenda for the meeting is posted on the bulletin Boards. Many unit owners are experienced professionals or business people whose skills and insights enable them to make important contributions to the decision-making process at Skyline House if they participate in the deliberations of one or more of the key committees. Joining a committee is easy; just attend the meetings regularly. After attending three meetings, you can become a voting member if you wish to do so. I assure you that you will be welcomed by your fellow unit owners. Except for the Covenants Committee, the chair of which is appointed by the Board, all Committee chairs are elected by the Committee members.

The actual work of keeping Skyline House an attractive and desirable place to live is done by 27 staff

members who are ably led by Gusbey Silva, our General Manager, and her Deputy, Darryl Hall. The maintenance and engineering staff, led by Greg Grimm and his deputy, Tettie Moore, maintain all the mechanical and electrical systems in our buildings and, as necessary, supervise and assist Marcello Quisbert in providing excellent in-unit repair and maintenance services. Relatively few condominiums provide the prompt and reliable in-unit services available here in Skyline House at reasonable cost. Betty McLaurin, who leads our housekeeping staff, and who has worked here since the buildings opened, does a first-rate job of keeping our buildings and grounds neat and clean. The front desk, one of the toughest functions to handle well because of the high staff turnover that is an inherent characteristic of this type of job, functions well. I particularly want to mention the outstanding service we have had for many years from Adua Stranere and Mike Coleman. Both are part-time employees and both are exceptional people who have many friends at Skyline House. The office staff consists of three very able ladies: Tania Saib, the Resident Services Coordinator, Tycia Haight, the Bookkeeper, and Terezhina Renosto, the Administrative Assistant. I am confident that all of you share my strong feelings of appreciation for the excellent services all of our staff provide to this community.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation to my fellow Board members: Budd Coutts, Vice President; Wayne Krumwiede, Treasurer; Jean Orben, Secretary; Johnnie Moore, Norman Baker, and Toska Prather, who agreed to fill the vacancy created by Linda Councill's resignation last fall. I am honored to have had the opportunity to serve with all of you.

And to all of my fellow unit owners, I leave the Board with the feeling that this condominium is well-managed and well-governed and will continue to be served conscientiously and responsibly by the new Board that will take office this evening. I guess I am assuming the role of elder statesman, and if the new Board should ever want to seek my advice, I am available at a price that will not exceed the exorbitant salary I was paid as a Board member.

Thank you.



General Manager Gusbey Silva

Restoration on West Building North and South Façades:

The second phase of the Façade Repairs is on schedule. The demolition phase of the project which causes the most noise is scheduled to be completed by the end of April, weather permitting. Residents have been taking advantage of the party rooms for peace and quite while the drilling is going on.

Pool Overhaul Project:

This project started on March 1, 2005. The estimated completion date is May 9, 2005. Due to the days lost because of the inclement weather and the high volume of damaged concrete, Management has authorized the contractor to work on Saturdays if necessary. The pool is expected to open on time, during the Memorial Day weekend.

Passenger Elevator Security Cameras:

The passenger elevator security cameras have been installed and are now connected to the Front Desk monitors. The video recording is kept for up to 37 days. If you happen to notice any damage, due to vandalism, please notify the Front Desk and/or Management Office as soon as possible.

Contact Information for Owner's and Resident's:

Management is requesting all residents to please update their contact information, i.e. home, work, cell phone numbers, and emergency contacts. All non-resident owners are also requested to update their information.



Financial Management Committee Wynfred Joshua & Chuck Ruby Co-Chairmen

FMC REPORT TO THE ANNUAL MEETING 29 MARCH 2005

Those of us concerned with the financial aspects of Skyline House had a very busy year. The

members of the Financial Management Committee with our Treasurer, Mr. Wayne Krumwiede, have done a superb job of bringing to bear their experience and knowledge on the financial and budgetary problems our condo faces. As Chairman of the FMC, I would like to express my thanks for their dedicated support. I would also like to thank our General Manager who with her staff has kept us informed and has helped us through many a difficult project.

The FMC reviewed several proposals designed to maintain the viability of the structure of Skyline House or to enhance our living environment. We reported on these projects in our monthly newsletter, but let me recall a few. We endorsed the renovation of the cabs of the passenger elevators to ensure that our building would maintain its luxury ambiance and investment value. We supported replacement of the worn-out tile on the S level of the East Building. We recommended that our consulting engineer develop the project for overhauling the swimming pool and deck restoration. To reduce any fire hazards from the dryer exhaust vents, we recommended, in close collaboration with our General Manager, to hire a contractor for doing the cleaning from the outside walls for those tiers where the vents cannot be reached from the balconies. Cleaning the ducts from inside remained the responsibility of the owners. We were pleased to see the overwhelming response from the owners to go ahead with the project. I mention this in some detail to show you how our Committee takes into account a variety of considerations in deciding on a project.

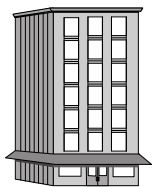
Several other projects we reviewed were designed to repair our aging structure and most residents would not be aware of these except for the inconvenience of temporary restrictions on using certain common areas, elevators, etc. Yet, these projects are essential to keep the House in efficient and safe operating condition. We continue to run into unexpected repair requirements because our building is getting old. For example, in working on the façade repairs, we discovered that the edges of the balconies were deteriorating because of water penetration. This is a project that will be facing us in the near future.

Our biggest effort, however, remains the north and south façade repairs. You may recall that we decided to spread this out over four years for

roughly \$2.5 million. This year we will be working on the west half of the West Building. The project causes a great deal of inconvenience for our residents in terms of noise, no access to the balconies, etc. But the work is essential to keep our building in a leak-free condition.

The reason we could afford to go ahead with these repairs without unduly raising the condo fee was the major change we made in our budget method. Our total budget consists essentially of the Operating Budget and the Reserve Budget. The Reserve Budget covers major repairs and replacements. Where the Reserve Budget was concerned, we switched the traditional method of component funding to the cash flow method. The latter allows us to meet the required expenses for repairs and replacements, but the increase in the Reserve Budget is more gradual and does not require major increases for a particular year in the budget. I won't go into any detail here, but we urge those of you who are interested in the intricacies of the budget to come to the FMC meetings.

To review the Management's proposed budget and report our findings to the Board is one of the key responsibilities of the FMC. We spent a lot of time on this. At this point, we can say that our financial situation is sound. We accepted a \$3.3 million budget which required only a 2.5% condo fee raise for 2004. We ended the year with a surplus of some \$83,000 because of some postponed projects, savings in projected contracts and the very efficient operation of the building by our General Manager and her staff. Because of the major expenses for the façade repairs, we decided to transfer the surplus to our Reserve Budget. At the end of the day, however, the successful operation of our condominium depends on the effective cooperation of the Board, the Committees, and Management. As long as we have this we can look toward the future with confidence.



**Physical Plant
And Operations Committee
George Beams
And Kurt Bedenbaugh**

The Committee met on Thursday, March 10th. The following subjects were discussed:

Pool Lights and Change Order for the Outdoor Swimming Pool:

The Management office alerted the PPOC members that Gardner Engineering, Consulting Engineer for Skyline House, recommended replacing the underwater light fixtures during the renovation and the upgrade contract is in place. Gardner Engineering has noted and verified that the lights are in disrepair; eliminating them will greatly reduce the constant leaks which can be seen from the outer wall at the upper garage level. The embedded light fixture is formed in-place, and the sprayed concrete called "Gunite" has deteriorated around the light fixture. Gardner Engineering has estimated the anticipated cost to be approximately \$20,000.00.

A Motion was passed to recommend to the Board to allow the contractor to proceed as planned to omit the underwater light fixtures and explore the possibility of installing a type of lights that could be placed around the perimeter of the pool for esthetics and safety. The PPOC and standing Board Member, Norman Baker, noted that the elimination of the lights was also based on the verification that Management learned that the Fairfax County Government does not require lighted pools unless the use of the pool occurs in the night when lighting is mandatory.

Property Inspection:

The Management office will post a notice after the landscape contractor has completed the proposed planting service for the next inspection.

**Security, Fire and
Safety Committee**



Due to the lack of a quorum, the Security Fire and Safety Committee could not conduct its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, March 9th. The Committee is still without a Chairperson. If you are interested in chairing this Committee, please contact the Board President, Mr. Johnnie Moore, at the listed information. Your volunteerism is greatly appreciated.

We would again like to remind all Skyline House residents that security is everyone's business. Please make an effort to help keep where you live safe by always being aware of your

surroundings while traveling around, and please report any suspicious activity you witness.

Please continue to use your headlights, use extreme caution, and obey the speed limits when driving in the garage and around the property. We would like to extend an invitation to all residents to join the Committee. We meet the 2nd Wednesday every other month at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 11, 2005.



Covenants Committee **Joseph Livingston, Chairman**

The Committee met on March 16, 2005. As was noted at the January 2005 meeting of the Committee, it was intended that Rules 13 and 18 of the Association, pertaining to noise and parking, respectively, be reviewed. Rule 13 was reviewed, and it was decided to take no action regarding it. The Committee deferred discussion of Rule 18 until the next scheduled meeting on May 18, 2005.

The Committee noted the work of the Election Committee preparing for the 2005 election of the Board of Directors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents who worked with the Election Committee and urge you to attend our next meeting to share with the Committee your experience and to offer suggestions to improve the process even more. Again, thanks.

Just a reminder, the Committee will meet on May 18, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. All residents are welcome to attend.



Neighborhood Watch **Judith York, Coordinator**

The Fairfax County Police Department in partnership with Allstate Foundation and the Virginia Crime Prevention Association sponsored a safety and security fair on Sunday, March 20th. Law enforcement officers from across Virginia attended and several activities took place, including the fingerprinting of children so their parents can keep a copy on file (photo ID's can be obtained for children and adults who do not drive, through the Department of Motor Vehicle offices). On Tuesday,

April 5 at the Mason District Police Station, there will be a Neighborhood Watch Training session at 7:00pm, followed by a Citizens' Advisory Committee at 7:30 p.m.

The daily construction at Skyline House brings me to another issue – that of noise. Neighborhood Watch volunteers have indicated that, on weeknights and weekends, there have been cases where loud television, radio, or stereo music can be heard as they are walking through the building. If you like your television or stereo loud, please consider wearing a headset so the neighbors next door to you and above and below you are not disturbed. Our community is all-encompassing – we have young and old, mothers with young children, residents recuperating from illness, and residents wishing some “quiet time” so your consideration in keeping the volume down will be appreciated. Given the constant construction noise during the weekday, it is natural that in the evenings and on the weekends, we treasure some peace and quiet.

I have never thanked, by name, the volunteers who have participated in the three years since the Neighborhood Watch program was revived and now I would like to make amends. Thank you so much: Sandy Alami, Gloria Ambers, Alice and Majid Fakhry, Dorothy Ferrell, Virginia Fissmer, Law Henderson, Ralph and Diana Huppert, Mohammed Ibrahim, Lynn Klubek, Ernest Loyola, Gabrielle Mallon, Gladys and Luis Manrique, Chris McCaskie, Mary McRae, Bahieh Musa, Jane Nassif, Gwen Petitjean, Jack Prather, Charley Roberts, Liza Ruiz, Kyong Hui Sides, Felipe Turina, and Sagrario Van Chau, and our Deputy General Manager Darryl Hall. Your hard work and volunteerism in the Skyline House community is much appreciated.

If you are interested in volunteering an hour a week for the Neighborhood Watch Program, please call me on 703-671-2267. We always need volunteers, and it is a good way to know how the building operates and to meet residents and Management – the exercise, of course, is simply a bonus!



Recreation Committee
Tony DiSalvo
Chairman

Where are you Skyline House residents? Not as many folks attending March TGIF, but all had a good time. I must add there was a lot of good food.

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

The next Committee meeting will be Wednesday, April 13th, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room.

The April TGIF is scheduled for Friday, April 1, 6:30 p.m., in the West Party Room.

MAGAZINES FOR ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL:

Thanks again to the Skyline House residents who drop their magazines at the front desk to be delivered to Alexandria Hospital. As I have said before, they look for me every Sunday afternoon when I make my delivery. If you have magazines you would like to donate and you are unable to drop them off at the front desk, you may call me at: 703-824-1958.

LOST AND FOUND:

Did you know there is a box with items that have been lost here at Skyline House? If you have lost something, check at the front desk and see if your lost item has been turned in. Your lost item may be there.



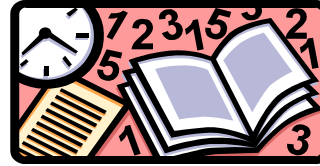
Good Neighbors Committee
Co-Chairs

Toska Prather 703-379-7849
Ernest Loyola 703-671-0384

Good Neighbors for April 2005:

Sonya Livingston 703-931-6923
Gwen Petijean 703-820-4260

The Good Neighbors are available to assist all residents who are in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency. We always welcome new members to assist those in need. If you are interested in serving your neighbors, call one of the co-chairs listed above and join us.



Editor
Louise Albin

Public Health Emergency Wallet Cards – Do you know your blood type? Do you remember all your allergies, medications, and medical conditions? Do you know the numbers of those you need to contact in an emergency situation? In the event of an emergency, this information could easily slip your mind. The Virginia Department of Health has created an information card that people can easily store in their wallet or purse. The card is the size of a credit card and expands to the size of a standard piece of paper. It was created to help people prepare for public health emergencies and contains space to record important information such as your blood type, medical conditions, allergies, current medications, nearby hospitals and local/out-of-town contacts. It also contains information on creating a family emergency health plan, mass immunizations/medications, a chart of a few diseases and exposures associated with terrorism, including general symptoms and treatment information. Additionally, the card provides contact information for local and national public health agencies. The Emergency Wallet Card is a valuable item to keep with you at all times. For more information, call the Fairfax County Health Department at (703) 246-2435 or visit the web at <http://fairfaxcounty.gov/service/hdwebhtm>. You can also visit the Virginia Department of Health on the web at www.vdh.virginia.gov

SPECIAL EVENTS AT SKYLINE HOUSE April 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 TGIF 6:30-8:00 WPR	2
3	4 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 ECR	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 ECR	12	13 RECREATION 7:00-8:00 WCR	14 PPOC 7:00-8:00 WCR	15	16
17	18 FINANCIAL 7:00-8:00 WCR LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 ECR	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 LIBRARY OPEN 7:00-8:00 ECR	26	27 BOARD 7:00-8:00 WCR	28	29	30

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