

The House Special



Volume 27 Issue 12

Skyline House

December 2007



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker

The Board of Directors met on Wednesday, November 28th. There were no action items.

I remind everyone the Ad Hoc Committee (AHC) conducting the Front Circle Landscape Design Project will next meet at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 5th to review the results of the resident survey and begin to develop a plan based on those results. Even if you are not a member I know the AHC will welcome your attendance and participation.

You will see below the annual announcement of the March 2008 election for two (three year) seats on the Board of Directors. The terms of current Vice President, Maria Elena Schacknies, and Director Toska Prather are ending. I hope both will consider running again. I encourage other owners to consider running. **YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!**

Again this year, the brightly lit Christmas tree in the lobby is already assembled and gorgeously decorated. If you have not seen it, you should make a point to do so. It stands 12 feet tall, weighs approximately 250 pounds and displays roughly 350 ornaments. Also, keep in mind the tree is a lovely backdrop for a group photo if you have friends or family visiting during the holidays. Thanks to Betty McLaurin and all the staff who take such pride in decorating our lobby area so wonderfully every year for this holiday season.

Don't forget! The annual Holiday Party is only days away. Saturday, December 8th. Don't miss out. If you have not signed up at the front desk, hurry to do so.

I want to thank Board members for their service to their community this year. Thanks also to all who so loyally serve on our Committees, Good Neighbors and Neighborhood Watch groups and in our library, and to Joyce Routt, for her website support (all so important to maintaining the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed here at Skyline House). Last, but not least, thank you to General Manager Silva and the Skyline House staff who work so hard throughout the year to make **The House our Home.**

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WISHES EVERYONE
A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON
AND A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR.**



MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

Façade Repairs Project

The work on all Phase IV tiers was completed at the end of October. During the first week of November the contractor completed the tuck pointing and repairs needed to the perimeter walls of all patios in the north side of the East Building.

All repairs reported by unit owners as a result of the façade repairs project, including broken tiles, damage to window frames, mortar removal from glass panes, balcony floor & railings, etc, were performed under the direction of the Association's Consultant Engineer, after he had determined that the damage had been caused by the façade repairs.

The landscaping repairs/replacement needed as a result of the East Building façade repairs were completed during the second week of November.

Garage Ceiling Beams Painting

The painting of all garage ceiling beams located in the B and C levels of the garage and the ceiling of the center ramp was completed in October. The ceiling beams and walls of the A level of the Garage have not been painted, this area will remain in observation during the winter months in order to determine the need for painting of these areas.

Unit Doors Painting Project

The painting of all unit doors in the West Building began on Tuesday, October 23rd and was completed by Thursday, November 15th. The painting of all unit doors in the East Building began on Tuesday, November 27th with a completion date scheduled for Thursday, December 20th.

Bike Rooms

The East and West Bike Rooms will be renovated during the third week of January 2008. All bikes stored in these rooms must be removed by Sunday night, January 13, 2008. The bike rooms will reopen on Friday afternoon, January 18th. The renovation will modify the existing bike racks offering improved support for the bikes. New registration will be mandatory. This last measure is necessary due to the fact that during the third weekend of November two bikes and one tire were reported stolen from the West Bike Room. The combination locks for these rooms have been recoded and will be routinely recoded on a monthly basis. New codes will be given from the Front Desk only to residents who have a bike registered for the room.

A SPECIAL APPEAL TO ALL RESIDENTS

Guest Parking Please, for the sake of all of our guests, reduce or better yet, CEASE YOUR PERSONAL USE of our guest parking spaces. Ask yourself before parking in a guest space, "do I really need to take up this space even though it is for only a brief amount of time?" Promise yourself, if you forget to remove your car in the allowed amount of time, you will be understanding when you find your vehicle has been towed at your expense.

West Lobby Door Please, DO NOT hold or prop this door open as doing so will damage the mechanism and, more importantly, **creates a severe breach of our security**. If you see this door being held open please try to close it and report it immediately. No one should enter through this door without a key. Refer all guests to the front lobby.

This door is NOT for loading and unloading.

Please, use the loading dock for such purposes.

**SKYLINE HOUSE WELCOMES NEW
RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATOR
MS. LUZ STELLA GOMEZ**



Ms. Luz Stella Gomez brings to the position of Resident Service Coordinator over 20 years of experience as an Executive Confidential Secretary, Administrative Assistant and Office Administrator. She has international experience working with Siemens AG, in Germany and Africa. She served as an Administrative Assistant in the Office of the President of the Inter-American Development Bank as well as in the Women in Development Unit of the Bank. In that capacity, she earned the Administrative Ortiz Mena Award of the year for her participation in the Women of the Americas Forum in Guadalajara, Mexico and the logistical support she provided during the Women's Conference in Beijing, China. Her extensive experience working for and with international, high-ranking officers has proven her pleasant disposition, flexibility and ability to interact and communicate well with people of all different nationalities.

Luz Stella was born in Colombia, South America and raised in the United States from the age of 9. She comes from a family of two brothers, one sister and her wonderful parents (who, along with Luz Stella, are proud resident owners here at Skyline House). Luz Stella has three grown sons and three beautiful grandchildren.



**Ad Hoc Committee
Front Circle Landscape Design Project**

Chair, Maria Elena Schacknies

The Committee will next meet at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 5th in the West Card Room. The meeting will be primarily focused on reporting and analyzing the results of the resident opinion survey concerning the front circle design. All residents, not just Committee members, are welcome at this and all future meetings.



A Message To Skyline House Residents From
Deputy General Manager Tycia Haight

I would like to thank all Skyline House residents who collaborated with the Thanksgiving food drive to assist the less fortunate families adopted by Skyline House as referred by ACCA (Annandale Christian Community for Action).

The December food drive will begin Monday, December 3rd with the food deliveries being made to the families December 19th and 20th.

If you would like to make a donation to assist in purchasing perishable items, only gift cards to local grocery stores will be accepted. If you would like to do so, please drop the gift card off in the accounting office lockbox.

*The best way to collect is to divide items into groups by the first letter of your last name:
If you would like to make a donation, please check the list below:*

If your last name begins with:

A-H Canned Foods (Vegetables, Cranberry Sauce, Fruit, Soup etc)

I-O Drinks (Juice, Tea Bags, Coffee, etc)

P-Z Boxed Items (Cake Mix, Mac and Cheese, Sugar etc)

Also paper/plastic and condiment items are always needed.

Thank you for helping those who, without this assistance, might not otherwise have a holiday dinner.

Editor's Note: The *Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA)* was established in 1967 and is an alliance of churches in Annandale and adjacent areas including Bailey's Crossroads. It provides day care, food, rental assistance, furniture, and other services to low income families in those areas, regardless of religion, race, or ethnic background. ACCA states, "what counts most in ACCA is serving those in need."

'HOUSE' HINTS

GARAGE REMOTE CONTROL BATTERY

If your remote control is more than a couple of years old, and you have never changed your battery, you should do so soon in order to prevent being left stranded outside the garage entrance door. The remote control uses a standard nine-volt battery that can be easily replaced via the small compartment on the back of the remote.

THE HOUSE SPECIAL VIA E-MAIL

About 125 residents/owners have now signed up for e-mail delivery of The House Special newsletter. It is so easy to do! Just contact the Management Office and register your e-mail address. Receive your copy before hard copy even returns from the printer.

PEST CONTROL

The Association contracts for weekly pest control service for all common areas and also, on a first come first serve basis, for up to eight individual units. The service is performed every Thursday. If you have a problem in your unit with roaches, ants, spiders, etc. do yourself and your neighbors a big favor --- sign up at the front desk.

There is no cost to you.



PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Acting Chair, Al Lambert

The PPOC held its monthly meeting on Thursday, November 8th at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. Management provided an update on current activities and noted scheduled painting of the garage level B and C ceiling beams was completed except for a small area on a single ceiling beam. Painting of this portion will be accomplished in the near future based on coordination with the resident owner and weather conditions. The decision to paint the beams was predicated on a need to brighten the area for security and secondly to preserve the concrete. Ceiling beams on Level A are not scheduled for painting because it was thought to have sufficient lighting entering via the separation of the vertical concrete columns on the garage wall. An assessment on a need to paint the ceiling beams on Level A for brighter illumination will be done in the winter months. One resident attending the meeting mentioned the beams on Level A should be painted for aesthetics and to improve illumination. All resident input on the painting of Level A ceiling beams is welcome and can be provided at a PPOC meeting.

Chief Engineer Greg Grimm presented an overview of energy management initiatives to minimize utility costs and promote conservation of water and heat. Concerning Association electrical use; we obtain hot water for the heat pumps from electric boilers and it is not feasible to convert the task to oil or gas. An Energy Management system was installed in the mid-1990s with the capability to program common area temperatures based on days and time periods. Not included in the program were the party rooms, billiard rooms or the corridors on the penthouse levels. The Chief Engineer and Management are in the process of seeking proposals for the replacement of the Energy Management System which has been budgeted for in CY2008. This initiative will address the aforementioned areas and permit temperatures to be programmed in these areas and possible identification of new technologies to conserve energy. One potential initiative to conserve energy and reduce our electrical bill is to either dim or turn-off some corridor lights say between 11:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. Management will be checking to determine if there are building code issues prior to reviewing the feasibility of this initiative.

It was pointed out by Greg that owners can have a dramatic impact on their electrical bill by assessing the efficiency of their heat pump, refrigerator, hot water heater, storm windows and installing a programmable thermostat. The association provides heat pumps, hot water heaters, and digital thermostats that are state of the art for efficiency and can be installed at less expense than via a commercial vendor. This is a sensible investment to realize current savings and a capital investment since upon selling the unit one could provide utility receipts showing low cost electrical bills. For owners interested in water conservation the Association can assist in the purchase of a handicap toilet which is taller and has an adjustable water level.

Another topic of discussion was strategic planning and leveraging "Best Practices" in condominium associations. A complete copy of "Best Practices" for ongoing reference is available to Board and Committee members in the Management Office for ongoing reference. There was a general consensus some type of future planning would be beneficial to establish goals for future projects and identify cost reduction initiatives to conserve energy and minimize escalating condominium fees. Areas that could be addressed in a strategic plan or from Best Practices include financial management, energy, communications, and personnel administration. Individuals having thoughts or suggestions on future goals of the Association are encouraged to attend a PPOC meeting and share their ideas.

Lastly, the maintenance log was reviewed and it was revealed the luggage cart at the front desk had broken. (It has since been replaced with a brand new one.)

The opportunity remains for owners and residents to contribute ideas or express concerns on projects or initiatives that affect your home during the monthly meetings. Thank You!



INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

Saving Energy In Your Condominium

The items in your condominium that consume the most electricity are the **HVAC System (heat pump, or heating and air conditioning system)** and your **refrigerator**. If you haven't replaced either of these items, and they are the original ones installed in your condominium, you can greatly reduce your electric bill by replacing both. The savings with the refrigerator will vary, depending on the type, size, and model you buy, but any new one will save you considerable money. If you replace your HVAC system, and if you have an original Climatemaster unit, the new system will cost approximately one third as much to operate as the original unit. Replacing both these items will provide you considerable savings on your electric bill.

If you work, and no one is home during the day, installing a digital programmable thermostat, which can vary the temperatures when you are not home, will save you additional money.

Some residents have also installed storm windows in their units. This not only saves cooling and heating costs due to air leakage around the windows, it also dramatically reduces outside noise.

Also remember when you leave your unit, turn off all lights, disconnect cell phone chargers from the wall, switch off fans etc. as these small things add up.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Chair, Wynfred Joshua

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met on November 19th. Total income for the month of October was \$297,064 with expenditures of \$188,329. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$108,735. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$98,331, leaving net income before taxes of \$10,404. We still expect to finish the year with reserves of roughly \$1 million, including the working capital fund.

There was no old or new business on the agenda. The FMC will be looking forward to considering some major projects early next year, such as the wiring project for the new cable service.

We note with regret that this was Helen Henderson's last time to attend an FMC meeting. In most private organizations there are always some people who are willing to serve and do the work. These are the volunteers. It is generally a small group, but they are critical to the functioning of the organization because they complement the salaried staff and ensure the application of our concepts of democracy. Skyline House is lucky that it has such a group of volunteers and Helen Henderson has been in the forefront of this group from the day she moved here. During the last years she has been particularly supportive of our Committee, always prepared to help when called upon. We wish her well in her new abode, but are sorry she is leaving Skyline House. We will miss her.

As has been our tradition, the FMC will not meet in December. Also, the dates for the next two meetings have been changed due to holidays on the relevant Mondays. Thus, the FMC will next meet on Tuesday, January 22, 2008. The February 2008 meeting will be held Monday, February 24th. We welcome all residents.



SECURITY, FIRE, & SAFETY

Chair, Robert De Mayo

The Security, Fire and Safety Committee (SF&SC) met on November 10, 2007 at 7 P.M. in the West Card Room. The Management Office was represented by Tycia Haight. As an opening remark, Mr. De Mayo complimented Ms. Haight on her excellent research on Smoke Detectors and the very informative internet sites for disaster preparedness (the addresses of which were included in the last edition of the House Special).

Monthly Incident Report: Ms. Haight presented the monthly incident report which is kept on file in the Management Office. Two incidents were reported, both regarding levels of disorderly conduct, each which required a police response. SF&SC members queried Ms. Haight on details of these incidents, particularly on the responsiveness and actions of our on-duty security guards at those times. Ms. Haight is monitoring their performance closely.

One vandalism incident was reported where a magic marker was used to scribble on the walls of a freshly painted hallway.

Emergency Preparedness Month – January 2008: As mentioned in previous meetings, your SF&SC has designated January each year as our Skyline House “*Emergency Preparedness Month*”. The Committee welcomes any and all Emergency Preparedness tips and suggestions from residents (e.g., informative web-sites or other sources) and views on how Skyline House must prepare for any emergency or disaster. Your suggestions may be included in our planned SF&SC handout in January 2008. Feel free to e-mail your suggestions to the Chairman of the SF&SC (address noted in directory in this newsletter) or drop them off at the front desk in an envelope.

Garage Safety: Your SF&SC urges everyone driving in the garage and on our grounds to always observe the “3 C’s” – always be as Courteous to other drivers as you expect them to be to you and your family; be Cautious since we have resident small children who can dart out fast in front of your moving vehicle from between parked cars or the garage elevator landing; and be Careful of our more senior residents who might be walking a bit slower than you would prefer in the roadways. Safety is everyone’s concern, so please, observe the speed limits.

Visibility Near Bus Stop: Mr. De Mayo passed on a compliment to the SF&SC and Management Office team received from a resident on the marked improvement of the lighting and visibility at the walkway to the Metro Bus Stop adjacent to our Front Lobby. He said this is why the SF&SC exists – it is an open forum to air resident concerns on security, fire and safety and it will always push hard to be responsive and resolve such issues.

Other Discussion:

An attending resident complimented the Management Office on action taken on the YIELD sign; it was stated that it is now much more clear and visible than in the past.

Committee members discussed how our security guards are now much more visible in their golf carts with the safety lights flashing as they periodically drive our grounds and through the garage at least once per shift. Management Office stated that the carts soon will be “winterized” with plastic sides as we move into the colder season.

An attending resident raised a concern about the need for a safety railing on the edge of the West building C-level garage portal and Committee-resident discussion ensued. It was mentioned that a review was done in the past on this subject and that Management probably still retains the results of the review. The SF&SC will look into the matter raised by the resident and may refer it to the PPOC to pursue further.

A Committee member brought up an on-going concern about excessive oil/grease spillage on certain garage parking spots. Not only are they unsightly, they are a safety concern as well since excessive oil/grease can be tracked into pedestrian walkways perhaps causing a resident to slip and fall. Ms. Haight was aware of the specific parking spot mentioned and informed the SF&SC that such spillage is a reportable item that has

been stressed to our security guards and housekeeping staff during their daily rounds. The Management Office assured the SF&SC that they will follow-up and notify the parking spot owner whenever such spillage is reported by anyone, guards, staff or residents.

Ms. Haight noted she has met several times with our security management company to underscore the need for improved guard retraining and their awareness of our rules and regulations. She will continue to provide consistent oversight of our security force to ensure their expected and proper performance. Good discussion of guard training issues and monthly performance ensued. Mr. De Mayo requested that it be incorporated as a continued agenda item report from the Management Office at future SF&SC meetings.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Coordinator, Judith York

As we now enter the busy holiday season, please keep your wallet and bags close to you and be alert to your surroundings, especially when you park in a crowded area. Keep purchases locked inside the trunk of your car, out of view. Observe the tags and types of vehicles parked near yours when you run errands, as we seem to have more and more people willing to drive off without leaving a note when they hit and damage other vehicles. Also, of course, it's easy to become distracted when the area is so congested so please be alert to your surroundings at all times (and don't be afraid to scream "fire" if you need people's attention. "Fire" is often more effective than "help").

On Tuesday, December 4th we will have our last meetings of 2007 at the Mason District Police Station (6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003; phone 703-256-8035). If you have the opportunity, please try to attend one or all of the following activities that evening. It is an excellent way to meet our local police officers and staff, as well as other neighborhood watch residents in Fairfax County. (If you attend the holiday party portion of the meetings, please bring juice or snacks with you to share with others.)

December 4 th 6:30pm	Neighborhood Watch Coordinators
7:00pm	Neighborhood Watch Training
7:30pm	Citizen Advisory Council (Holiday Party)

The painting of the outside of the apartment doors is going very well and I thank all the volunteers who have guarded the various floors during lunchtime—also, of course, thanks to our painters who do such good work to keep Skyline House attractive and well maintained. The painting of the West Building was completed before Thanksgiving and we have now started on the East Building. I was pleased that residents volunteered to help in both the East and West buildings, regardless of the building in which they reside.

I would like to thank the volunteers of our Skyline House Neighborhood Watch Program for their help this year. We need your participation in walking the buildings to supplement the work of the security guards. I appreciate your reliability and I am grateful for your efforts in reporting incidents and repairs - and always locking unsecured doors while on your rounds. You help Skyline House remain secure and well maintained.

My home phone is 703-671-2267. If you would like to join the Neighborhood Watch Program, simply call me. It's an easy way to give back to the community and you only need to walk one hour a week, at your convenience. I will be happy to accompany you on a trial "walk-around." Thank you. Judith York.



COVENANTS

Chair, Joe Livingston

The Covenants Committee met on November 26th. The Committee considered the agenda items. One of them was the Election Committee's preliminary plans for the 2008 election for two members for the Association's Board of Directors. The Committee was apprised of a notice to all Unit Owners containing specific information about the election. The Committee also noted the need to nominate an Inspector General of the election.

The Committee discussed a proposal to review the Association's Rules and Regulations to determine whether to recommend to the Board to revise and/or update these rules. To that end, the Committee will commence a review of the current rules at the next Covenants Committee meeting.

The Committee also discussed a proposal to train members of the Committee in order that they might be able to take assignments as members of the Hearing Sub-Committee. The intent of the training is to insure the availability of trained panels to hear allegations of infractions of the Association's established rules and regulations, only after efforts to resolve these matters administratively are unsuccessful.

Lastly, the presence of a mere quorum was noted and members were again urged to ask a neighbor to join the Covenants Committee. The members were also asked to urge their neighbors to consider running for a seat on the Board.

The time and place of the next Covenants meeting will be posted on the bulletin boards.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

SKYLINE HOUSE ANNUAL ELECTION FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MARCH 25, 2008

**The Skyline House Annual Election for the Board of Directors will be held on
Tuesday, March 25, 2008.**

Two vacancies will be filled, each for three (3) years.

HOW TO BECOME A CANDIDATE

Nominations open Wednesday, January 2, 2008 and close Friday, February 8, 2008.

Applications can be picked up at the front desk.

**Completed applications must be returned to the Management Office on or before
close of business Friday, February 8, 2008.**

HOW TO VOTE

All owners will receive their election package in late February via the U.S. mail.

**The election package will include a ballot and proxy, voting instructions, an
announcement of the Annual Meeting at which your vote can be cast, and
biographies of the candidates for the Board of Directors.**

**Owners wishing to vote before the Annual Meeting may cast proxy ballots as soon as
they have made their election decisions and have their proxy notarized.**

CONDOMINIUM GOVERNANCE AFFECTS ALL OF US.

**PLEASE CONSIDER RUNNING FOR OFFICE TO HELP ENSURE SKYLINE
HOUSE REMAINS A FIRST-CLASS COMMUNITY.**

BE SURE TO CAST YOUR VOTE.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Good Neighbors will assist residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency.

DECEMBER GOOD NEIGHBORS

GWEN PETITJEAN 703-820-4260

ALINA GONZALES 703-379-5391

Good Neighbors always welcomes new members to assist those in need. If you are interested in serving your neighbors, please call Coordinator Toska Prather or Ernest Loyola. Their contact information is listed in the newsletter directory.



RECREATION

Chair, Betty Turner

The Recreation Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 13th was attended by only two members. However, we had email as well as phone input from other members since they were attending classes, out of town for work, and out of the country on vacation.

The Children's Halloween Party was attended by 12 children and their parents. Although this may seem like a small turnout, we were pleased with the compliments we received from the parents about the well organized party. The games and activities were designed to have the parent and child enjoy the fun together. We have names/phone numbers/units numbers for those parents and plan to be in touch with them for future events.

The November 2nd TGIF was a very pleasant evening hosted by Janet Shipko. About 30 residents attended, including at least one first time attendee. The 50/50 raffle resulted in \$16.00 for the Committee and \$16 to West Building resident winner.

We accepted reservations for 30 adults and 1 child for the Thanksgiving Dinner held in the East Party Room. However, only 26 adults attended. It was a busy time as Bill Lewis, Donna Heflin, Janet Shipko, and Dale and Betty Turner peeled over 20 pounds of potatoes and made green bean casserole in the Party Room kitchen. Dinner was served on corelle rather than chinet paper plates. Many suggested we make this an annual event.

The Committee has decided to continue with TGIF socials on the **first** Friday of each month in 2008....even on Friday, July 4th. The First TGIF for 2008 will be on Friday, January 4th in the East Party Room. Our Committee meetings have been moved to the 2nd Tuesday of EACH month in the West Card Room. All residents are welcome to attend the meetings and of course the activities.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

6:30 PM SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

West Party Room

This is a potluck party and is FREE to all adults. A signup sheet is at the Front Desk so please sign up to let us know that you are planning to attend as well as what food you will buy or make to bring and share with others. Bring your own favorite refreshment.

The Committee will provide paper products, punch and coffee.

Committee member Gladys Manrique will host this event.



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2007

(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
THERE ARE NO BOARD OR STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN DECEMBER						1
2	3 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	4	5 Ad Hoc Committee Front Circle Landscape Design Project 7:00 PM West Card Room	6	7	8 HOLIDAY PARTY 6:30 p.m. W. Party Room
9	10 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 Library Closed	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Library Closed					
GOOD NEIGHBORS: GWEN PETITJEAN (703-820-4260) AND ALINA GONZALES (703-379-5391)						

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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 inappropriate statements. Information for THE HOUSE SPECIAL may be sent by e-mail to the Editor, dropped off at the Management office or the front desk attention EDITOR.

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