

# *The House Special*



*Volume 30 Issues 11*

*Skyline House*

*November 2010*



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President, Norman Baker**

The Board of Directors met on Wednesday, October 27, 2010.

During its meeting, the Board approved the Association's \$3.6 million 2011 Budget which the Financial Management Committee presented to the Board at its September 2010 meeting. **The 2011 Budget, as approved by the Board on October 27<sup>th</sup>, includes a 3.1% increase in the Association's condominium fees commencing January 1, 2011.** Details of the fee increase will be sent to each unit owner over the course of the next two months. The 2011 Budget also includes a responsible increase in contributions to our Reserves to enable the Association to continue to plan for and adequately fund long-term maintenance and improvement projects for our aging buildings while also helping to avoid large "special" assessments to accomplish those requirements. As always, the approved 2011 Budget will be available for owner review in the Management Office.

Our Financial Management Committee, its Subcommittees, our Treasurer and our Management and staff worked long hours to put before us a responsible, reasonable and well structured 2011 Budget. I offer thanks to all involved from the Board and the entire Association.

Also noted at the meeting was the Covenants Committee's report that, after more than six years of service as Chair of the Election Committee overseeing our annual election of the Board of Directors, Sonya Livingston is stepping down. The Committee has selected former Board Treasurer Julie Campbell to serve in that role beginning with the upcoming 2011 Election, the processes for which, start this coming month. I, the Board and the Association sincerely thank Sonya Livingston for her dedicated service, these past six years, insuring the annual elections were conducted in an organized and accurate manner. The Board was pleased to learn from the Covenants Committee that Julie Campbell has agreed to serve as the new Chair of the Election Committee. As noted in the Covenants Committee Chair's report, Julie, a former Skyline House Board member as well as a former Treasurer of the Association, will bring both that experience and her professional accounting and auditing background to the Committee.

The Board of Directors will convene for its last 2010 meeting on Thursday, December 2, 2010.



# MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

## **Replacement Of Unit Windows and Balcony Door Project**

The mock up material for the owner occupied model unit 1005W was delivered on Monday, October 25<sup>th</sup> and the installation of the new windows and the balcony door was completed soon thereafter.

The flyer provided by HiRise Windows providing the open house dates and times and a copy of their proposal has been posted on all bulletin boards.

## **Replacement Of Unit Window Glass Panes, Screens And Rollers Project**

Notices have been posted and a sign up sheet placed at the Front Desk for residents who want to have their glass panes, screens or window rollers replaced by American Screen and Glass. The company will schedule the measurement day as soon as 20 residents sign up for these services.

### **WINDOWS WINDOWS WINDOWS**

### **(AND NEW BALCONY DOORS TOO!)**

### **Interested? See Below and Read the Lobby Bulletin Boards**

**Attention all owners. Now is the time to replace old glass panes, rollers and screens in your windows OR replace an entire window (including the frame and track itself -- along with the glass and screen)**

#### **Option 1**

Replacement of unit window Glass Panes (all frames remain the same), and/or window Rollers, and/or window Screens.

The Association has selected "American Screen & Glass" to provide these services as described in the currently posted announcement entitled "Window Glass Panel Replacement" and for which sign-up is now available at the front desk.

#### **Option 2**

Replacement of entire unit windows including the old window Frames/Tracks, the Glass Panels and the Screens as well as the opportunity to replace your unit Balcony Door with a matching, framed, glass panel door.

The Association has selected "Hi-Rise Windows" to provide these services. Hi-Rise is holding three open houses in a Skyline House Unit where owners can see the Option 2 HiRise Window products fully installed and determine cost estimates for their units.

**The three open houses will be held in West Unit 1005 on the following dates**

**Wednesday November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Saturday November 6<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

**Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

Don't miss out on these incredible opportunities to upgrade your units, to seal off drafts from old windows before this year's winter season and, to simply improve your views. Please check the mail-lobby bulletin boards for additional information (for-example, sign-up deadlines) and updated announcements concerning these opportunities.

**Prices with both companies have been negotiated by the Association for their specific services. Any and all costs are the unit owner's responsibility.**

## **Cleaning of A/C and Dryer Vents Project**

The dryer vents in tiers 5, 6 and 14 of both buildings, which are located on the outside façade above the window panels, were cleaned by the Association's contractor in early October. The dryer vents located above balcony doors are cleaned in-house when requested by the residents.

The flyer provided by Chute Masters containing their estimate for the cleaning of unit A/C and dryer vents was posted on the bulletin boards and a resident sign-up sheet was placed at the front desk. A total of 64 residents signed up for the services which are scheduled for the third week of November and the week after Thanksgiving. The contractor will service eight units per day.

If you did not have the chance to sign up during the first round you have another opportunity to do so now. The contractor has added two more days to the schedule: Monday and Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Additional sign-up sheets have been placed at the Front Desk for these two days.

## **Required Guests Registration**

Some residents have observed instances when a guest parks their car in the fire lane and residents throw their key-fob from their balcony to the guest for them to access the building. Skyline House Rules and Regulations require all visitors to sign the visitor's log at the reception desk.

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

*As I have done in the past, I will be organizing a food drive again this year, for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays to assist some less fortunate families in the Fairfax County area, referred to me by the Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA).*

*A food collection box will be placed outside the Accounting Office beginning Tuesday November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The donated food will be delivered to the families during the week of November 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

*The Christmas food drive will begin on Monday December 6<sup>th</sup> and those donations will be delivered to the families during the week of December 20<sup>th</sup>.*

*As in the past, the best way to collect donations is to divide food items into groups according to 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, Macaroni and Cheese, Sugar etc.)*

*Also paper/plastic and condiment items are always needed.*

***Please remember to always check the dates on any canned and boxed items. I cannot accept, and will have to dispose of, anything which has expired.***

*If you would like to make a donation to assist in purchasing perishable items, only gift cards to local grocery stores can be accepted. Please drop the gift card off in the Management office.*

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

Editor's Note: I was interested, and thought others might also be interested, to know something more about the ***Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA)*** Tycia mentions in her message. The ACCA was established in 1967 and is an alliance of churches in the Annandale community and adjacent areas including Bailey's Crossroads. It provides day care, food, rental assistance, furniture, and other services to low income families in the Annandale/Bailey's Crossroads area, regardless of religion, race, or ethnic background. ACCA states, "what counts most in ACCA is serving those in need."



# INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

## **Heating Season**

Fall is here. If you haven't tested your heat pump for winter operation in heat mode, now is the time. Doing so may save you a night time service call.

## **Water Leaks**

Remember, a water leak detector is available for purchase in the management office. These devices have alerted many residents of a water leak which has originated in their unit or is coming from a unit above. The small alarm gets placed on the floor of your unit's hvac [utility] closet, and emits a beeping tone loud enough to alert you if it senses water. (The device emits a softer tone when it needs a new battery.)

## **Copper Pipes in HVAC Closets**

We were recently made aware of a water leak in a unit's main water riser (see picture below), which was the result of a very small leak at a copper pipe joint. This pipe runs from floor to ceiling behind the water heater in your hvac [utility] closet. In this particular unit, the association had replaced the water heater just a few months before, and, at that time, there was no leak. Please check these pipes often. If you notice a leak, notify the management office immediately. If the leak is on the copper pipe that runs from floor to ceiling, and is before the unit shut off valve, the Association will assume responsibility and pay for the repair. If any other copper pipes or the main water shut off valve is leaking, that repair is the responsibility of the unit owner.



## **Do You See Something In Need Of Correction In the Common Areas?**

**Report it in the Maintenance Log at the Front Desk**

**or Send an Email to the Resident Services Coordinator**

The House Maintenance Log kept at the Front Desk is always available for residents to report items in need of correction in any of the common areas. The Log is a good tool for residents and Management. Every morning this log is checked and a work order is scheduled for each reported item. If you observe something in need of attention in our common areas but for some reason you are unable to get to the front desk to enter it in the Maintenance Log, you can always send an email describing your observation to the Resident Services Coordinator, Noemi Najera. Her email address is [NOEMI@SHUOA.ORG](mailto:NOEMI@SHUOA.ORG). Your emailed report will receive the same prompt attention as those entered in the Maintenance Log. Your input is always very much appreciated since it helps to maintain our common areas in the best condition possible at all times.



# PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, Al Lambert

## PPOC Committee Reserve Fund Overview

Greetings! With the autumn months upon us the PPOC met on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to continue the discussion on resident's requests to upgrade our Exercise Room and receive Management updates on near term projects.

In regards to the Exercise Room, the PPOC had, a week earlier, conducted a walk-around inspection of the facility along with visiting several areas that could be candidates for relocation should that become a viable option. The Committee is working through a process which began with establishing a base-line of knowledge via the inspection of the Exercise Room and brainstorming options ranging from: 1) determining the facility is adequate 2) should be renovated and upgraded with new equipment or 3) relocated to another room with existing and new equipment. The next step the Committee undertook was to formulate a recommendation to the Board that Management be authorized to contact the Association Attorney for clarification on By-Law restrictions regarding relocating the Exercise Room. After the Attorney provides guidance, the PPOC will list advantages and disadvantages to each Exercise Room option. A cost/benefit analysis will be conducted on each option to arrive at a recommended course of action. Residents who utilize the Exercise Room view it as small in size leading to cramped conditions, uncomfortable crowding during peak hours, insufficient equipment at various times leading to a long wait period and the need for a larger selection of machines to address both gender needs and more body muscles. Also, there is the intrinsic value of having a robust Exercise Room in that it increases the resale value of a Unit and could encourage Residents who previous did not avail themselves to this amenity to begin using it. This initiative is in its infancy and now is the time to become involved and share your thoughts and ideas.

For the November walk-around the Committee decided to inspect the area behind the garage where surplus bricks from façade repairs are being stored with the goal to relocate them to an interior room in the basement of the East Building. The area will be inspected for accessibility, egress, lighting, and addressing any accumulation of debris. Please join us on Thursday, November 4 @ 5:00 p.m. in the Main Lobby. Note it is being conducted early to ensure daylight and will be the last outdoor inspection until next Spring.

Thereafter, Management provided an update on the Unit Window Replacement and the A/C & Dryer Vents Cleaning events. Attendees at the meeting had the opportunity to discuss and clarify questions on the status and methodology of each project.

This completes the newsletter report and .....wait! Is it not that time again? Yes, if you have been thinking about the Reserve Fund and trying to recall its purpose, why we have one, and when it is annually reviewed by the Association. The PPOC is charged with the oversight and maintenance of the buildings, equipment and grounds of Skyline House. The Reserve Fund is the principal document used to finance these undertakings and hence the Committee participates in the annual budget review. The Reserve Fund is a required document by the Virginia Condominium Law. Highlights of the Act are as follows:

- Every five years conduct a walk-around on-site inspection of all components listed in the Reserve Fund (normally having a value greater than \$10K). This will allow a determination of the necessary amount of reserves to repair, replace or restore all capital components. Accomplished in the Fall 2008.
- Update the study annually without an inspection to determine if the Reserves are sufficient and make adjustments as dictated by circumstances. Accomplished in August 2010.
- Ensure the budget lists all capital components (value greater than \$10K) with the estimated remaining life and estimated useful life. This is a "living document" in the sense adjustments should be made to service life components and adding new components previously not identified to the Reserve Fund. Accomplished in August 2010.

How does this tidbit of information on the Reserve Fund relate to the Condo fee? First is the realization we are not only Owners of our Units but in fact partial owners of every brick, rug, fixture, tree, garage, swimming pool, and physical piece of common equipment in the buildings.

Hence, the destruction, defacing, littering, soiling of common property is actually destroying your own property. Inconsiderate behavior or allowing visitors to deface common property is disrespecting your own and neighbor's property. This translates into a shorten service life for common area property (unnecessary expenditure of Reserve Funds), negative impact on the monetary value of your own unit and increases operational costs when cleaning teams have to remove the untidiness. We all win through lower condo fees when the projected service life of our common area property is maximized and we enjoy a well maintained and esthetic pleasing environment while our condominium unit increases in value.

On the upbeat side, the PPOC is investigating options to reduce Condo fees, enhance existing amenities and looking toward the future to attract residents who would contribute positively toward maintaining the quality of life of our home. The Committee is in the midst of generating a Statement of Work (SOW) for an Energy Management Analysis. As reported previously, the utility costs (electric and water) constitute about twenty percent of the Operational budget. The energy analysis will produce short, intermediate and long range improvement that can be implemented through conservation and the retrofitting or replacement of HAVAC legacy systems. Simultaneously, the Committee seeks during replacement and repair of physical components to leverage technology and install components that have a longer estimated life cycle with lower maintenance upkeep. Everything is accomplished with the goal to minimize Association overhead costs and hence, the condo fee.

Now the monthly report is complete for everyone to include those pondering the status of the Reserve Fund. The next meeting of the PPOC will be on Thursday, November 11, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. As always, I welcome your feedback on this article or any matter pertaining to the PPOC. This is your home! We welcome you to join us. Thank You!



## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**Chair, Wynfred Joshua**

The Financial Management Committee met on October 25, 2010. Total income for the month of September was \$314,057 with expenditures of \$228,921. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$85,136. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$107,446, leaving a deficit of \$22,310 before taxes. Deducting our estimated income taxes the deficit increases to \$26,710.

Looking at our utility bills, electricity usage was some \$4,457 less than what we had budgeted, but the water bill was \$2,786 over budget. Year-to-date, we are \$42,750 over budget in our total utilities account. Legal fees for condominium concerns and advice are also over our budget as are the legal costs we pay for unit owners' issues, such as collection of overdue condo fees. Note, however, the latter costs are generally recovered from owners when the late fees are collected.

We singled out the utilities and attorney accounts because they usually generate the largest overruns in the budget. Much of this will be compensated for by expense items which run under budget or by income items which end up to be more than expected. As a result and because we still need to get the financial results for October, November, and December, we do not know at this point whether we'll end the fiscal year with a surplus or deficit. To protect us against future overruns we did increase utilities and legal fees markedly in the 2011 budget.

The FMC discussed the increasing total of past due condo fees. Whereas, in June arrears had gone down to about \$35,000, in the last three months, as of the end of September, total delinquencies had steadily risen to \$49,669. While this is still limited for a condominium of our size and budget, it nevertheless represents almost 1.5% of the annual condo fee. Committee members felt strongly we should find ways to increase the penalty for late payments.

The ratio of owner/renter occupied apartments remained fairly stable: 434 apartments are owner occupied (including vacant units) or 78%, and 125 units are rented or 22%.

We did not have any old or new business to consider. Rather than meet on the usual third Monday of the month, our November session will be on Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> so as to give our General Manager adequate time to prepare the financial statements. We strongly urge our Skyline House owners to join us and give us your ideas on how your condo fee will be spent.



# COVENANTS

**Chair, Joseph Livingston**

The Covenants Committee last met on September 21, 2010. The matters addressed during that meeting were reported in the October 2010 House Special.

There are, however, two announcements to report to you.

First, I regret to announce the resignation of Sonya Livingston as Chair of the Election Committee.

For more than six years, Sonya and her Co-Chair, Helen Wiener have taken the lead in conducting the annual election for members of the Association's Board of Directors.

Under their leadership, a dedicated group of Skyline House residents come together year after year to perform the many and varied duties necessary to prepare and mail the single election package for both the resident and nonresident Unit Owners of the Skyline House Unit Owners' Association. This procedure was established by the Election Committee and approved by the Board.

Our thanks to each and every member of the team for their past service and we look forward to their continued support.

The Covenants Committee and the Election Committee have always had the full support of the Association's General Manager and her staff, to whom we owe a special thanks.

As Chair of the Covenants Committee with oversight responsibility for the Election Committee, I can say with confidence that during these past six election cycles, our elections have always been transparent, free of any complaint of any irregularities or impropriety and free from any interference.

The second announcement is the selection of Mrs. Julie Campbell as Chair of the Election Committee. Julie, a former member of the Association's Board of Directors as well as a former Treasurer of the Association, will bring both her experience as an Association official and her professional accounting and auditing background to the Committee.

Our thanks to Julie for assuming the very important assignment. We pledge full support to her.

The next meeting of the Covenants Committee has been rescheduled from November 17, 2010 to Tuesday, November 23, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. Please note your calendar of the change. As always, all unit owners/residents are invited to attend the Committee's meeting.



# SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

**Chair, Robert J. "Bob" De Mayo**

There was no meeting of the Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) this month, but grave concern was expressed by the Chairman about the lack of both Neighborhood Watch (NW) patrols and participation in scheduled meetings by NW members during the past six months. The purpose of the NW is to "enhance the security and safety of Skyline House" by "Neighbors Who Care". However, without active engagement by members, there is no point in continuing a NW.

All Neighborhood Watchers are hereby formally requested by the Chairman to attend the SS&NWC meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p. m. in order to: (1) continue their NW membership; and, (2) determine a way ahead through group goal-setting. All ideas and suggestions on revitalizing our NW are welcome.



## **SKYLINE HOUSE HOLIDAY PARTY**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>**

### **Mark Your Calendars**

Reserve Saturday night, December 11<sup>th</sup>, for the Skyline House Holiday Party. More information will be available soon. Watch for announcements on the mail lobby bulletin boards.

## **Recycle Your Used Eyeglasses & Hearing Aids**

The Bailey's Crossroads Lions Club asks Skyline House residents to donate their used prescription eyeglasses, prescription and non-prescription sunglasses and used hearing aids to the Lions Club **Recycle for Sight and Hearing** program. Donated items will be sent to a recycling center where they will be cleaned and refurbished for distribution during health care missions in developing countries where such items are often unaffordable and/or unavailable.

**A Lions Club *Recycle for Sight and Hearing* collection box is now located at the Skyline House front lobby reception desk. Thanks for your donations!**

## **NOVEMBER GOOD NEIGHBORS**

**Good Neighbors assist residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency. Services provided are typically short term and in the local area. For example, picking up mail or prescriptions or making small grocery purchases.**

**Anyone experiencing a medical emergency should call 911 immediately.**

**ELAYNE HAYMES 703-347-7918**

**JUDITH YORK 703-671-2267**

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

## **MAGAZINES FOR ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL**

Don't forget to bring your magazines to the front desk so Tony DiSalvo can deliver them to Alexandria Hospital. Please do not hold the magazines for long periods of time before doing so as they become outdated. The magazines are much appreciated by the Hospital's patients, visitors, and volunteers. Any questions call Tony at 703-824-1958.





# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2010

([WWW.SHUOA.ORG](http://WWW.SHUOA.ORG))



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b>  <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Physical Plant &amp; Ops. Comm.</b> <b>Walk Around</b> (see bulletin board for time)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>  <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Security, Safety Neighborhood Watch Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	<b>11</b>  <b>Physical Plant and Operations Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>  <b>Financial Management Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. <u>W. Card Room</u> <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>23</b>  <b>Covenants Committee</b> 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	<b>30</b>	<b>COMBINED NOVEMBER/DECEMBER BOARD MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2010 at 7:00 PM in W. Card Room</b>			
<b>GOOD NEIGHBORS: JUDITH YORK 703-671-2267 and ELAYNE HAYMES 703-347-7918</b>						

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker 1114W 671-6759 nbaker@fjc.gov  
Vice President, Maria Elena Schacknies 1302W 820-2239 cultura@att.net  
Treasurer, Charles Roberts 914E 998-6080 charley.roberts@prodigy.net  
Secretary, Barbara Thode 404E 888-3569 bthode@culpeppergarden.org  
Director, Jean Orben 205E 845-0119 rorben@msn.com  
Director, Al Lambert 709W 931-7314 myongal@verizon.net  
Director, Robert De Mayo 1213E 575-4464 jusbob2u@verizon.net

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

General Manager, Gusbey Silva gusbey@shuoa.org  
Deputy General Manager, Tycia Haight tycia@shuoa.org  
Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm greg@shuoa.org  
Accountant, Lincoln O'Gilvey lincoln@shuoa.org  
Administrative Assist., Alice Rodrigues alice@shuoa.org  
Resident Services Coord., Noemi Najera noemi@shuoa.org  
Chief Web Developer, Al Lambert myongal@verizon.net

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Financial Management Wynfred Joshua 1414W 820-4471 diawin@metronets.com  
Physical Plant/Operations Al Lambert 709W 931-7314 myongal@verizon.net  
Covenants Joseph Livingston 814W 931-6923 joeandsonya@aol.com  
Security, Safety, & Neighborhood Watch Robert De Mayo 1213E 575-4464 jusbob2u@verizon.net

### GOOD NEIGHBORS COORDINATORS

Toska Prather 1003W 379-7849 t\_pra@verizon.net  
Virginia Fissmer 601W 379-2901

**EDITOR** --- Norman Baker 1114W nbaker@fjc.gov 671-6759

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**Falls Church VA 22041-3711**