



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

COMMUNICATOR

Quarterly Publication of the Communications Committee

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36 Court Ridge Road *Where Everybody Knows Your Name*

By Amy Headley

Last summer, as court liaison, I helped organize a potluck for our GHI court, 36 Ridge Road. With lots of busy schedules it took nearly two months to agree on a date. But finally, on a Saturday, rain holding off, we were in full swing, with tables pulled from yards and, on the donated grill, veggie burgers and hamburgers sizzling side by side.



From left: Beatrice, Betty, Lynn, Eunice, Samantha, Art, Josh, Angela, Chris, Dorian, Amy, Amethyst, Beth, and (visitor) Rob.

And in this image, the meat-and-potatoes and tofu-granola neighbors came together to eat, laugh and embrace this community in a court. Where else but Greenbelt can you find single moms, dancers, computer programmers, teachers, and retirees, from the left to the right politically, sharing watermelon and garden-grown tomatoes in perfect tolerance?

The court sits along Hamilton, backing up to the GHI Administrative Building. It's shaped like a "T." Six frame homes on either side lead from the parking lot to form the base, and four houses at the top of the "T" complete our court.

My son and I moved into our home 11 years ago. And from the beginning, both he and I were embraced by our neighbors. On the corner house, diagonal from ours, lives Josh's best friend, Buddy the dog. They grew up together, from their wild puppy years to their gradual maturing and daily head scratching. Buddy is our guard dog. He alerts us whenever someone approaches the house. But his aren't the only watchful eyes.

One day when I was at work, my next door neighbors called my cell, explaining that another neighbor had noticed that my front door was wide open. Having indoor kitties, my first thought was, were they safe? These dear friends stayed in my home until I arrived. They'd already tracked down every cat, safely accounted for inside.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS**OFFICERS:**

Sue Ready, President
301-345-1612
suready@verizon.net

Frank DeBernardo,
Vice President
240-432-2489
FDeBernardo@aol.com

Chuck Hess, Treasurer
301-474-3670
Chuckhess1040@
netzero.net

Ed James, Secretary
301-345-8479
edjames@greenbelt.com,
edward.james@gmail.com

DIRECTORS:

Tokey Boswell
319-331-2144
tokeyray@netscape.net

Bill Jones
301-474-8872
bylljones@gmail.com

Diana McFadden
301-474-6787
Bowregard2003@yahoo.com

David Morse
301-938-2909
Voxfatui@aol.com

Patricia Novinski
301-982-4488
novinskip@aol.com

Communicator Volunteers

Issue Editors: Ed Fallon and
Amy Headley

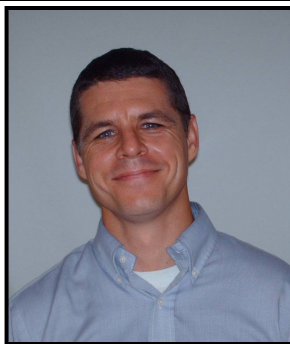
Contributors: Kristin Fletcher,
Chair, Lauren Cummings, JoAnne
Fournier, Sylvia Lewis, Marat
Moore, David Morse, Anna Socrates,
Rusty Wilbur

Layout: Beverly Palau

Staff Liaison: Sheri Swaim

Board Liaison: David Morse

GHI's new E-Newsletter includes the latest updates and any emergency alerts. To subscribe, go to www.ghi.coop and click on "I Want To...Subscribe to GHI E-News" in the center of the page.



Outgoing President's Message: Be Part of the Solution

By Tokey Boswell

Did you miss the *State of the Cooperative* town hall meeting on February 4? The GHI Board of Directors and staff talked candidly about the issues that the cooperative is facing and strategies for meeting the challenges. GHI member Eric Zhang, photo blogger for Greenbelt's 75th Anniversary, attended and posted his photos and very thorough highlights on his blog, at <http://greenbelt2012.wordpress.com/2012/02/06/ghi-town-hall-meeting>. Check it out!

At that meeting, I raised some concerns about rising costs and the need to keep costs down. Because of increasing taxes and maintenance costs, I said, "Some of us might not be able to afford to live here in the future." That is, unless we make changes to the status quo!

GHI's Board and committees are actively looking at ways to keep our costs down and our revenues up:

- The Board has filed real estate tax appeals for hundreds of units.
- The Buildings Committee is developing proposals for the Pilot Project and the Community-Wide Upgrade that will lower our future energy and maintenance costs.
- The Finance Committee has proposed that GHI buy more apartment buildings and use the profits to benefit GHI members.
- Everyone on staff is brainstorming better ways to do business.

But we need your help too!

If you want to be part of the solution to help keep GHI affordable, there are many ways to get involved.

- We need you to serve on the Board and as committee members. These strong leaders and dedicated volunteers – members just like you – are the heart and soul of our cooperative.
- We need you to attend the budget sessions in September and tell us what is most important to you.
- We need you to submit your unique ideas and innovative ways of doing things to the Board and staff. Members like you came up with the ideas for the "News in Review" page and the weekly GHI eNews!

Mostly, we need members to be ENGAGED. Join the conversation with GHI on Facebook. Read – and offer to write for – "GHI News in Review" and the *Communicator*. Sign up for eNews. Visit the website every once in a while to see what's new at www.ghi.coop. And volunteer when and where you can. The more involved you become, the more influence you will have over our cooperative's future.

Don't be afraid about rising costs. Be engaged and help us find solutions!

**Editor's note: Tokey Boswell is temporarily on leave from the GHI Board of Directors and is anticipated to return in August 2012. Bill Jones, as Vice President during last year's term, assumed the role of President during Tokey's absence, until the board re-organized and elected new officers after the recent election*

August 2: Greenbelt Co-op to Celebrate 75 Years as UN Honors Co-ops Worldwide



“Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic vitality and social responsibility.”

—UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, launching IYC, October 31, 2011

You can explore the extraordinary worldwide breadth of cooperatives, amazingly diverse celebrations and the UN International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) at <http://social.un.org/coopsyear>. Closer to home, the Greenbelt Cooperatives Alliance (GCA) will mark 75 years of cooperative activity in our city with *Celebrating Co-ops in Greenbelt* festivities from 2 to 4 p.m. on **Sunday, August 12**. The alliance would love to see every past and present member of each of its seven member co-ops join the fun. The event will feature entertainment, co-op bingo, co-opsicles, exhibits from each of GCA’s co-ops, a 75th Anniversary table, and much more. You can learn more about the August 12 event, the Greenbelt co-ops, and GCA in the Community section of the Co-op Supermarket website at www.greenbelt.coop.

Inserted in This Issue

Revised Rules For Storage Sheds

Included in this issue of the *Communicator* is a complete revision of GHI shed regulations for insertion in your Members Handbook (the Green Book). The new document provides members more choice in choosing shed models, while maintaining GHI standards concerning size. The initial draft regulation was submitted to the membership for comment prior to final adoption on March 22, 2012.

Please remove pages 52-07, 53-07 and 54i-07 from your Handbook and insert the newly revised Section IX. Storage Shelters – Sheds pages as 52–9, 53–12 and 54–12.

36 Court Ridge Road

Continued from page 1

During the blizzard two winters ago, a group of us dug out all the vehicles for our seniors and those neighbors that were ill. No one questioned it; it is what we do. We step in to take care of each other.

This past year I lost my job. I couldn’t have imagined the outpouring of help from my neighbors and friends. One family brought us dinner twice a week. One morning we were shocked to find a HUGE bag of cat food left anonymously on the porch for our felines. They have stepped in to mow my lawn, feed the cats during our vacations, plant grass seed, and build a Martha Stewart worthy brick patio between our homes so we could have a place to enjoy a glider and the numerous court black kitties who have adopted most of us as their people.

Every morning while my son is waiting for his bus and giving Buddy his morning attention, Buddy’s owner Ray comes out and shares guy talk with Josh. They both look forward to this, and being a single mom, I’m thrilled at Ray’s counsel and friendship with my boy. And not only Ray, but all the men in



Buddy and Josh

our court have really stepped up, meeting that male bonding need I know Josh has wanted. From the beginning, it was a done deal. The guys talk wrestling, animals, video games--and this touches my heart perhaps more than anything else.

I tell people if I ever won the lottery I would never move. Ok, maybe I’d construct an addition or a screen porch, but this perfect composition of unique and generous people who make up our village at 36 Ridge cannot be replicated anywhere else. To imagine a place without Buddy, without Dorian and Amethyst’s Haunted Halloween, without our faithful retired friends checking on us, or a daily greeting from one of the slinky black kitties, is to imagine a cold and lonely place.

I’m sure there are countless similar stories across GHI. But this is ours. And millions of dollars are dust, when everyone here knows your name, and together their unique, lovely personalities form our little piece of heaven.

Sorry, no homes for sale here. Good luck finding your own special court!



Board Actions in Brief

Full minutes may be viewed in PDF format at www.ghi.coop/about-ghi/board-of-directors/minutes. Members may also stop by the GHI office to read the minutes.

The Board meets twice a month on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. at GHI. During the summer months, meetings are held monthly. Except for executive sessions, all Board meetings are open to the public. For details, see the calendar on page 8.

During its February and March meetings, the GHI Board of Directors took the following significant actions:

- Approved 12 new GHI memberships and authorized changes to four mutual ownership contracts.
 - Approved yard plats for 1 and 8 Courts Southway, 17 Court Ridge Road, 2 Court Woodland Way, and 7 Court Crescent Road.
 - Established a Rental Task Force to review rental policies and associated fees.
 - Reinstated the Communications Committee as a standing GHI Committee.
 - Approved the submission of an authorizing resolution form in support of GHI's application for grant funds through the Maryland Historic Trust.
 - Updated Corporate Resolutions for North State Bank, Greenbelt Federal Credit Union and Lafayette Investments to specify GHI's new general manager.
 - Approved a four-month leave of absence from the Board from April 1 to July 31, 2012, for Tokey Boswell.
 - Requested management to advertise for members to join a taskforce concerning GHI participation in the 2012 Greenbelt Labor Day festivities.
 - Greenbelt Builders, Inc. to perform spring gutter cleaning for frame and brick homes and detached garages at a cost of \$18,632.
 - Greenbelt Builders, Inc. to perform fall gutter cleaning for frame and brick homes and detached garages for an amount of \$21,687.
 - Petria Inc. to perform spring gutter cleaning for block GHI homes and detached garages at its bid of \$4,540.
 - Petria Inc. to perform fall gutter cleaning for block GHI homes and detached garages at its bid of \$4,860.
 - Global Roofing to replace flat roofs on the GHI Administration Building, team leader's office and paint shop at a cost not to exceed \$147,558.
 - Northeast Contracting to replace the flat roof at 135B Northway for a total not to exceed \$15,763.
 - Kipcon, Inc., for the survey and reserve study concerning GHI additions for a total not to exceed \$33,350.
 - Windstream/Paetec Telecommunications Company for phone service at the Administration Building complex at a monthly cost of \$494.55 (\$17,803.80 total contract for three years) plus an initial installation fee of \$202.50.
 - Authorized the general manager to purchase either two used sedans at a cost not to exceed \$13,800 each and one used pickup truck at a cost not to exceed \$18,600 or, if unable to obtain the two used vehicles by March 31, 2012, to purchase one new Chevrolet Cruze sedan and one new Toyota Tahoma pickup at a cost not to exceed \$18,457 and \$24,796 respectively.
- Rules and Regulations:**
Adopted revised shed rules [see insert].
- Policies:**
Adopted policy to allow publishing in GHI communications media the agenda for Board meetings, including the general manager's suggested motions for action on each item.
- Expenditures:**
- B&P Utilities, Inc. for emergency underground sanitary sewage repairs at 20 Court Hillside for a cost not to exceed \$25,277.

Good Deals for Your GHI Home

Most of the following items are available at the GHI warehouse behind the GHI Administration Building. For more information, contact **Melvin Williams** in the Maintenance Department warehouse at 301-474-4161, ext. 134.



For free:

- Lawn bags (in fall; 10 per member)
- Straw for lawns (especially new grass)
- House letters and numbers (2-inch, self-adhesive)
- Trim paint (quarts of white, medium gray, or brown)
- Cans of dry air (to control excess moisture)

For loan:

- Lawn aerators (“garden weasels”) for lawn care
- Extension brushes for cleaning siding
- Extension ladders (delivered to site; members must sign a ladder release form)

- Thermal leak detectors (described at www.greenbeltmd.gov/green_steps/thermal_leak.html)
- Kill-A-Watt Monitors (measure power use by appliances and electronics, described at www.greenbeltmd.gov/green_steps/Killawatt.pdf)

For sale:

- Grass seed mix (good for GHI soil) - \$2.00/pound

The Income-based Homeowners' Property Tax Credits

How to Get a 2012 Application



GHI members with a limited or fixed income may benefit from the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit program offered by the State of Maryland. This program reduces the tax on real property owned by homeowners of all ages whose combined gross household income does not exceed \$60,000.

The deadline for submitting the “HTC-60” application form for this credit to the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation is **September 1**, but you may want to complete the form now since most of the information it requires is probably at hand through your federal and state income tax returns.

Your completed HTC-60 application will also be considered for the supplemental homeowners' property tax credit offered by the City of Greenbelt.

Application forms are sent each year to homeowners who received the property tax credit in the previous year. If you don't have an application, you can request a copy at 1-800-944-7403, download it at www.dat.state.md.us, or pick up a copy at most county public libraries or in the lobby of the GHI Administration Building. The Maryland Tax Credits Telephone Service at 1-800-944-7403 answers questions about the credit and the application form.

Note: The Maryland Homestead Tax Credit should not be confused with the Homeowners' program described above. The Homestead Tax Credit program can limit increases in taxable assessment of owner-occupied property to a maximum amount; in the City of Greenbelt, the limit is 10 percent each year. The application form for this credit for the following three years is included in the assessment notice mailed to one-third of all homeowners at the end of each year.

City Corner: Peace Month 2012

What, When, Where, and Who



In 2001, the City of Greenbelt first celebrated Peace Month. This recognition promotes peace and non-violence in our community and increases awareness

about programs and groups that work toward that goal. This year, Peace Month is being coordinated by Prince George's Peace and Justice Coalition and will be held during June. The city kicked off Peace Month with a proclamation on May 29 and will provide other logistical support such as activity space in City facilities and publicity for other activities occurring in June.

—Mayor Judith F. "J." Davis, from her April 26 letter to Greenbelt churches, businesses, other groups, and individuals

Peace Month events are free and open to all.

Sunday, June 3: Artful Afternoon

Peace-lovers from toddlers to seniors create Peace Doves through easily-learned paper-folding.

1–3 pm at the Greenbelt Community Center,
15 Crescent Road, Room 116.

Hosted by Greenbelt Department of Recreation and Prince George's County Peace & Justice Coalition.
Contact Marj Donn, 240-462-7286, marjmdonn@verizon.net

Sunday, June 10: Bikes for the World

(<http://bikesfortheworld.org>): Through respected non-profit agencies, your used bike and bike parts will provide transportation for low-income rural people in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere for use getting to school and work and for health benefits.

10 am – 2 pm in the parking lot
behind the Municipal Building, 25
Crescent Road.
Hosted by the Baha'i Community
of Greenbelt
Contact Roya Bauman, 301-675-
0819, roya19@verizon.net



Monday, June 18: Why We Fight



A prize-winning film asks why the U.S. gets into so many wars in this special "Reel and Meal at the New Deal" event. Eugene Jarecki's widely praised 2006 film traces the "successes" of the U.S. military-industrial complex ("MIC") as it has led our nation into war in every decade since President Eisenhower's acclaimed farewell address.

7 – 9 pm at the New Deal Cafe,
Roosevelt Center, 113 Centerway
Hosted by Prince George's County Peace & Justice Coalition
Contact: Donna Hoffmeister, 301-441-9377, donna.hoffmeister@verizon.net
6:30 – 7 pm: Optional vegetarian buffet/Middle Eastern
cuisine: \$13

The GHI Guest House

A Home for Your Visitors

The GHI Guest House is a perfect retreat for your out-of-town visitors that you want to keep just close enough. Comfortable, convenient, and calming, there's no better place to collect thoughts, cherish quiet time, and enjoy some peace. It's also convenient to Roosevelt Center and the City of Greenbelt amenities such as the Library, Community Center, and the Aquatic and Fitness Center.

Fully furnished with all linens, dishes and appliances, the Guest House is located at 25A Parkway Apartments. With two twin beds in the bedroom and a queen-sized futon in the living room; the cost is \$70.00 per night (three-night minimum stay). Free local phone service is included.

Current Available Dates for Rent:

June 27-30
July 9-31
August 1-30
September 4-30
October 1-11, 21-31
November 1-30
December 1-31



To reserve a date or for more information, contact Christine Gyemfi at 301-474-4161, extension 147 or cgyemfi@ghi.coop.

*Note: Dates are subject to change without notice.
No pets.*

Cleaning Up Animal Waste: The Why and the How

By the Companion Animal Committee



There are many reasons why members should be cleaning up after their companion animals. It is against the law not to clean up animal waste, and the offense carries a fine. It is not pleasant when members, their children and/or their animals step in ani-

mal waste left by others, or when members are forced to smell animal waste that has been allowed to accumulate in members' yards. Members who do not clean up their animals' waste are not being fair to the majority of members who do clean up after their companion animals. Animal waste that is not cleaned up, or is disposed of improperly, can also negatively affect the environment and human health.

While it may be difficult to view animal waste as a major source of pollution, it can have a big impact on water quality – and even human health and the health of other animals. Animal waste contains nutrients and pathogens. When this waste ends up in water bodies, it releases nutrients that cause excessive growth of algae and weeds. This makes water murky and unusable for swimming, boating or fishing. Some diseases can be transmitted by animal waste through contact with the soil, particularly when it is allowed to accumulate in members' yards or common areas. Wildlife, children playing outside, and adults who garden are most at risk.

Members should not flush animal waste in their toilets as water treatment plants are designed to handle human waste, not animal waste. As most companion animals are meat eaters, their waste should not be placed in a regular compost pile as any parasites, bacteria and viruses are not readily destroyed and can be passed on to humans or other animals. Never place animal waste in a storm drain, and avoid allowing animals to do their business within 200 feet of a body of water.

If a member encounters someone who is not cleaning up animal waste, the member might want to offer a bag to that person. If that doesn't work, avoid confronting the member. Members may deliver a signed letter providing information about the incident to Member Services, or send an email with this information to Memaa@ghi.coop.

Tips for Cleaning up Animal Waste

- Always carry plastic bags when walking your companion animals. Newspaper bags, food storage bags and grocery bags are ideal for cleaning up animal waste.
- You can cover your hand with a plastic bag while picking up waste, then pull the bag back off your hand.
- Some people place a paper towel in each empty bag to help with clean up or to clean their hands after cleanup. Especially for smaller dogs or cats, using a paper towel may save time and trouble, but it is important to place the paper towel and waste into a plastic bag before disposing of it.
- Remember to tie the bag and then dispose of it in the nearest trashcan.

Disaster Preparedness Survey

Visit www.ghi.coop to complete an on-line survey concerning GHI members' preparedness in the event of a disaster. For those members with companion animals, additional questions are asked to determine if there are plans for them. Information gathered will be used to identify resources and to develop educational events and materials for GHI members.

The survey will be available through June 30th.

Maintenance Schedule: Replace, Repair, Upgrade	
Please be alert to these current and future tasks overseen by the GHI maintenance department. For questions, contact Matt Berres at 301-474-6011.	
May-June	Gutter Cleaning for your homes
May-June	Replacement of porch roofs in masonry homes
May-June	Spring concrete repairs for sidewalks
May-Aug.	Trim Painting for houses
May-Sept.	Community Beautification inspections
May-Nov.	Upgrades of home electrical grounding



Who's Who in GHI: Meet Alvin Shaw, Project Manager

By Brenda Lewis

You may soon get to know Technical Services' newest staff person, especially members who are in the Pilot Program or participating on the Buildings Committee. Trained in architecture at Virginia Tech, Alvin's talents in construction administration and design led his former employers—including Marriott International, McKissack & McKissack Architects and WMCRP Architects—to assign him to some challenging and interesting projects. While his love of design and architecture was put to good use, he also has a knack for working with people, interpreting sophisticated plans, and an ability to consolidate a large amount of detail into more manageable sizes.

Alvin is very professional and approachable. When he is not being an architect, he loves to study genealogy; he has traced his mother's line back six generations. Alvin also enjoys trying his hand at graphic design and reading motivational, business, and finance materials. Someday he wants to learn Spanish. His ideal vacation would involve a beach and his travel interests are global, having visited Italy, France, England, and Switzerland. GHI members who have talked with Alvin will not be surprised that he considers meeting new people important.

It hasn't taken Alvin long to learn to love GHI. He is especially pleased with its sense of community, its spirit of volunteerism and its greenery. He really likes the GHI people that he works with—and we hope to keep it that way.

From Your Volunteer Communicators

Do you enjoy stories and photos that focus on the GHI community? The fourth Monday of every month, GHI members discuss, write, and produce the quarterly *Communicator* newsletter and the monthly *Greenbelt News in Review* page. The Communications Committee is looking for talented newsletter editors and writers—and especially managing editors—for upcoming issues of the *Communicator*. Managing editors produce one issue per year with the help of other committee members.

Consider donating your time and expertise by completing the volunteer form online. Go to www.ghi.coop and search for "Volunteer form." And feel free to stop by our meeting—we laugh and often have snacks!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Unless otherwise noted, all activities are at the GHI Administration Building and are open to all GHI members.

JUNE

Fri	1	1:00 pm	Pre-Purchase Orientation
	8	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed
Tue	12	7:30 pm	Nominations & Elections Committee
Wed	13	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
Mon	18	7:15 pm	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Tue	19	8:30 am	Yard Line Committee
Tue	19	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
Wed	20	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
Fri	22	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed
Mon	25	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
Wed	27	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee

JULY

Wed	4	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed
Fri	6	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed
Tue	10	7:30 pm	Nominations & Elections Committee
Wed	11	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
Tue	17	8:30 am	Yard Line Committee
Tue	17	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
Wed	18	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
Thu	19	7:00 pm	Finance Committee
Fri	20	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed
Mon	23	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
Wed	25	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee

AUGUST

Fri	3	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed
Tue	7	8:30 am	Yard Line Committee
Tue	7	7:30 pm	Nominations & Elections Committee
Wed	8	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
Sun	12	2:00 pm	Co-op Reunion @ Roosevelt Center
Wed	15	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
Thu	16	7:00 pm	Finance Committee
Fri	17	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed
Tue	21	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
Wed	22	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee
Mon	27	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
Tue	28	8:30 am	Yard Line Committee
Fri	31	--	Office & Maintenance Dept. Closed

For **emergency** maintenance service outside regular office and maintenance hours, call 301-474-6011.

Communicator Submissions

Have an idea for a story? Like to submit an article?
Photo to share?

Send your ideas to Sheri Swaim at
mgmtoffice@ghi.coop.

Articles are due by July 27 for the Fall 2012 issue.