



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

COMMUNICATOR

Quarterly Publication of the Communications Committee

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Celebrating 75 Years of Walkability

By Anna Socrates

"Nothing beats walking around this community."
 – Stephen Oetken, Greenbelt Museum

Walkability – it's the current buzzword in town planning, a requirement for healthy living, and a feature that attracts many to Greenbelt Homes, Inc. Living here, one quickly discovers that our walkability is not a new brainstorm, but was built into the original town plan with its interconnected walkways and the generous allotment of inviting green space.



One of the special perks of volunteering at the Greenbelt Museum is taking a free walking tour of Old Greenbelt with **Stephen Oetken**, docent *extraordinaire* with a master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Maryland and a GHI resident.

Stephen loves to show tour-takers Roosevelt Center, since "it's so central to Greenbelt's identity and a key component of the community's design." But the best thing for me was learning about GHI's little-known history and the many hidden gems that Stephen likes to point out, especially to long-time residents. For example, the Parkbelt houses, 10 prefabricated units on Forestway, were an early attempt at private enterprise in GHI, as a contractor constructed new types of housing. Stephen explains that there are also five frame prefabricated units – still a part of GHI – on Woodland Way that were built by the government. And he doesn't forget what he calls "hidden-in-plain-sight" gems. Did you know that the Domino's Pizza was the old fire station? A row of houses on Laurel Hill Road used to be a second grocery store, when the government extended the community by adding the first frame houses. GHI residents may also not know about the old health clinic on Ridge Road and that a pathway went from the lake to the high school on Edmonston Road, says Oetken.

Continued on page 3



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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.

**President's Message:****Celebrating Another Anniversary:
The Founding of Our Cooperative**

I am sure that most of you are aware that the City of Greenbelt is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The city, with the aid of a volunteer corps, has planned and staged a number of enjoyable and educational events throughout the year, with many more to come.

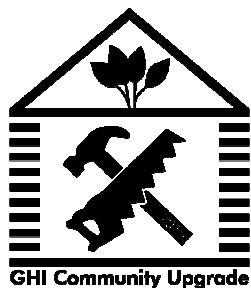
Did you know that we are fast approaching the 60th anniversary of the day that effective control of most of our GHI homes passed from the federal government to our housing co-operative?

Within a few years of the founding of Greenbelt, the federal government began to consider transferring ownership of the homes and some of the common grounds of "Old Greenbelt" to a non-profit, local housing entity. In preparation, approximately 400 Greenbelt residents formed a mutual housing cooperative in 1946 for the purpose of negotiating with the government regarding purchase. When Congress passed legislation in 1949, which gave preference to veterans' groups organized on a non-profit basis, the Greenbelt Mutual Homeownership Corporation reorganized itself as the Greenbelt Veteran's Housing Corporation (GVHC). The federal government designated GVHC as the preferred negotiator. Unfortunately, the Korean conflict intervened, which brought a halt to negotiations for two years. Title to more than 80 percent of the dwellings and a part of the undeveloped land in the city was finally transferred from the federal government on December 30, 1952 with GVHC assuming effective control on January 1, 1953. In 1957 GVHC changed its name to Greenbelt Homes, Inc. (GHI).

The Evening Star (October 7, 1937) reported that though government officials estimated the original Greenbelt homes would last at least 60 years, some skeptical engineers predicted that these homes would not last 25 years. Seventy-five years later, our homes remain in remarkably good condition. I think this can be attributed at least in part to the care our homes have received over the years by GHI members, board, and staff and to the GHI-wide rehabilitation of our homes undertaken from the late 1970s through early 1980s. The next GHI-wide upgrade is coming in just a few years. It will be time to replace some of the components, such as windows and baseboard heaters that were installed circa 1981. The replacements should be more energy-efficient in heating and cooling our homes.

As most of you know, we are currently in the planning stages of the upgrade and are engaged in a pilot project, which will provide important information to guide our decisions. The Board and the Buildings Committee will keep you informed as this project progresses. We appreciate the interest the membership has shown in this project. Members have already proven themselves to be valuable resources. Please stay engaged.

— Sue Ready



Pilot Program Update: On to Insulation, Windows and Doors

By Lauren Cummings

GHI's Buildings Committee has been managing a Pilot Program, which began in the fall of 2010 in 28 units. The pilot program was designed to assess alternative ways of reducing home heating costs and to determine the cost of selected energy efficiency upgrades, the energy savings the upgrades will bring, payback periods for the upgrades, and the impact on members while the work is being done.

The Pilot Program will help members make informed decisions about the planned replacement under the Community-wide Upgrade of certain home components that are nearing the end of their lifespan (e.g., windows and doors) when paired with energy efficiency improvements. The upgrade is slated to begin within the next five years. A portion of members' monthly co-op fees have always been placed in a Replacement Reserve fund to cover the replacement cost of **some** of these components. To see a full list, visit the newly updated UPGRADE section on GHI's website: ghi.coop/content/upgrade."

At the conclusion of the Pilot Program, GHI members will vote on which—if any—building components examined in the program that are not covered by replacement reserves should be included in the Community-wide Upgrade.

Phase One, completed in March 2011, consisted of energy audits to provide baseline data to determine the impact of energy efficiency improvements made to the pilot homes during Phases Two and Three.

Phase Two consists of two steps. Step One, completed in November 2011, increased crawl-space insulation in the Pilot Program homes. Step Two will include replacing windows and doors, insulating attics, installing bathroom exhaust fans, adding insulated siding on the block and frame units, and insulating porch slabs of the block and brick units. Work on this phase was to begin this fall, but GHI received only one bid on the contract and did not approve it. Consequently, Step Two may have to wait until spring 2013.

Phase Three will test alternative heating systems to potentially replace the current baseboard heaters. The Buildings Committee is preparing a timeline for this phase.

Buildings Committee meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the GHI Administration Building. GHI members are welcome to attend.

Walkability

(continued from page 1)

Stephen loves showing Old Greenbelt to those who have not had the privilege of living here, but what he especially appreciates "is peeling back the layers of the history for those who know Greenbelt well, showing them places and telling them stories that they have not experienced before." As he puts it, "If I can help someone come away with a deeper appreciation for this community, then I feel that all the hard work has been worthwhile."

You don't have to be a volunteer to be able to take a walking tour with Stephen or **Matt Johnson** (also a Greenbelt Museum docent, with a planning degree from U-Md). The tours are periodically available from the Greenbelt Museum for a minimal charge of \$5.00. Email greenbeltmuseumedu@gmail.com or visit the website at greenbeltmuseum.org to find out when the next tour is scheduled, or plan one for your group of five or more. For the athletically inclined, Matt also offers a bike tour.



For a special 75th Anniversary Information Day, the Greenbelt Museum is adding free walking tours on Saturday, September 1 at 10 a.m., noon, and 2 p.m. Gather at the 75th Anniversary Table under the banner at Roosevelt Center.



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 in the Board room at the GHI administration building, except during the summer when meetings are held once a month. Except for executive sessions, all Board meetings are open to the public. For details, see the calendar on page 8 or visit www.ghi.coop.

From March through June 2012, the GHI Board of Directors took the following significant actions:

- Approved 11 new memberships and authorized changes to five mutual ownership contracts.
- Elected officers: Susan Ready – President; Frank DeBernardo – Vice President; Ed James – Secretary; Chuck Hess – Treasurer.
- Held a work session to update GHI's strategic plan. Approved yard plats at these locations: 56A&M Crescent Road, 58A&M Crescent Road, 62B Crescent Road, 60A-K Crescent Road
- Adopted the Rental Task Force's recommendations on changes to GHI's subleasing policy.
- Terminated a member's mutual ownership contract for cause.
- Established a task force to recommend procedures regarding issues with unauthorized rentals and vacant units.
- Approved the transfer of \$675 collected by GHI for a Dorothy Lauber Memorial to the City of Greenbelt for acquisition of rain garden plantings and a bench near the rain garden at Buddy Attick Park.

Member Requests

- Approved a permanent conversion of a 3-bedroom floor plan to a 2-bedroom floor plan at 2L Research Road.
- Approved a request to install a nonconforming gardenside door at 11E Hillside Road.
- Approved the installation of a fixed window in the location of an existing gardenside through-the-wall air conditioner at 4L Plateau Place.

Rules and Regulations

- Revised the GHI rules in Section X.N.1 and X.N.2 of the Members' Handbook.

(See Handbook inserts in this issue of the Communicator and box at right.)

Policy

- Approved production and publishing of rolling 10-year sales data for GHI units on an annual basis.

Expenditures

- Four items from 2011 year-end revenue surplus: \$48,260 to contingency reserves, \$10,000 for the establishment of a Micromain/Jenark link, \$10,000 for a study on job classifications and salary scale, and \$241,000 to replacement reserves.
- Gilbert General Contractor: \$8,250 for repairs at 14R Ridge Road.
- CPE, Inc.: \$67,482 for parking lot repairs.
- Lanham Construction: \$15,519 for repairs to sidewalks at 28 sites.
- Mane-Line Utilities: \$245,521 for underground sanitary sewage and storm drain repairs at 27 sites.
- Mane-Line Utilities: \$70,691 for drainage system improvements at seven locations.
- City of Greenbelt: \$250 donated for the Labor Day Festival Committee and \$100 to help sponsor Bike-to-Work day.
- GHI: \$300 for door prizes given at the Annual Meeting.

Attention Members: Handbook Revisions

Included with this newsletter are revised pages to the Members' Handbook. The changes occur in SECTIONS X.N.1 and X.N.2 pertaining to building openings, windows, doors and skylights. The changes were necessary to clarify these specific rules and remove conflicting information discovered in the document.

Please remove pages (63i-01, 63j-07, 63k-10, and 63l-10) from your Handbook and replace them with revised pages identified as (63i-01, 63j-1 and 63k-12, 63l-10).

Meet Frank DeBernardo, Vice President

By Robin Everly



Although Frank DeBernardo is one of our newly elected first-time Board members, he has been active in the Greenbelt community since moving to GHI in July 2004.

Frank treasures GHI for its park-like ambience and walkability along with the spirited civic-mindedness of its residents.

Frank has tons of administrative and community experience that he is bringing to the Board. He is currently on the City of Greenbelt 75th Anniversary Committee. For the past four years, he has represented Prince George’s County and our community on the Metro Riders’ Advisory Council, which he chaired in 2010 and 2011. This council advises the WMATA (aka Metro) Board on rider and public transportation issues. Frank is also one of the founding members of GreenBeLT Pride, a group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) individuals and their supporters.

Frank has been executive director of New Ways Ministry for 18 years, a job that he loves. New Ways

is a national Catholic ministry of advocacy, reconciliation, and education for lesbian and gay Catholics and the wider church and civil communities. The organization’s purpose is to build bridges between lesbian and gay people and the Catholic Church.

When asked why he ran for the Board and what he hopes to accomplish, Frank answered, “I ran because I think I might be able to help the GHI community in two areas – communications and volunteer recruitment. These are a big part of my job as executive director of a non-profit, and I hope that I can bring some of that experience to GHI.” He feels GHI is facing a big issue with the upcoming upgrades to our units. When asked what he felt is the most pressing issue facing GHI, he answered, “that we have to find better ways to help people become involved in the work of the cooperative. Two areas in which I think we can improve are educating people on what it means to live in a cooperative and providing people with opportunities to become involved in areas that affect their lives and families.”

So far, Frank is learning a LOT, enjoying his colleagues on the Board and he is impressed with the GHI staff. He respects the members who have come to meetings to voice their concerns and says: “The passion and interest I have seen has given me a new appreciation for living in GHI.”

Welcome aboard, Frank!



Walking in Woodlands

By Kristin Fletcher

Early Sunday morning I awoke with the usual dog muzzle poking at my pillow, eyes intently urging me to get out of bed and into the woods so “somebody” could look for something to chase. Debating whether or not to take advantage of the first cool morning in a week, thanks

to the rain from the night before, eventually I pushed aside the nagging back aches and pains and decided to head out for a long walk in the woods, something I had not done in weeks because it has been so hot.

Stepping into the forest, the cool misty air and smell of the damp earth enlivened me as I listened to a chorus of birds singing high in the treetops. Crossing through a lush green carpet of ferns, I was immediately struck by a bright orange mushroom hugging the base of a tower-

ing oak tree. By now, I was feeling so much better. It’s amazing what the woods can do. Take a walk in the woods. You’ll be glad you did!

Celebrating Co-ops



Sheri Swaim, John Henry Jones and Gretchen Overdurff at the Celebrating Co-ops event in Roosevelt Center on August 12



Who's Who in GHI: Bill James, Accounting Manager

By Sheri Swaim

If you have visited GHI's Finance Department during the past few months, you may have met GHI's new Accounting Manager, Bill James.

Bill brings 30 years of accounting experience, the majority with nonprofit and humanitarian agencies, to Greenbelt Homes. One of his early jobs was Controller for the Cooperative Housing Foundation, an international nonprofit that was influential in the development of Greenbelt Homes as a housing cooperative. After spending subsequent years working for other nonprofits such as Goodwill, the Salvation Army, two mental health agencies, and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Maryland, Bill believes his job with Greenbelt Homes has brought him full circle.

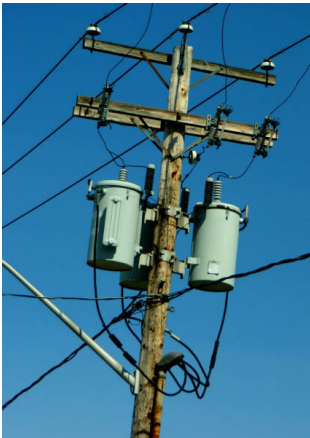
Being a true southern gentleman from North Carolina, Bill is very easy to talk to. His comfortable mannerisms combined with his expertise in his job enable him to converse comfortably with just about an-

yone he works with. And while he enjoys travelling and meeting all types of people, after heavy travel to 67 sites in 38 states in the past two-and-a-half years, Bill really wanted to slow down a bit and work in one office with a shorter commute to a job that still allows him to work with and help people. He sees working at GHI to be just right.

In his spare time, Bill and his wife of 48 years enjoy time at the beach and spending as much time as possible with their adult children and six grandchildren. On his own, Bill enjoys reading murder mysteries and scuba diving. Because of his extensive travel in previous jobs, Bill has dived in exotic places such as Egypt's Suez Canal and Costa Rica's Pacific coast. But his favorite place to scuba dive has long been the Outer Banks of North Carolina, where he has explored the Nazi U-Boat U85 and many other offshore shipwrecks.

When asked what he likes about working at GHI, Bill said he loves the quiet, calm office atmosphere. He also really likes GHI's mission to provide top-notch service to the members of the co-op, who are "both our bosses and our customers."

Next time you're at the GHI offices, stop in and meet Bill James. You will walk away with a smile on your face!



City Notes:

Pepco Upgrade

Pepco will be undertaking a significant infrastructure upgrade in Old Greenbelt in the coming months. The project involves replacing 500 utility poles, 250 transformers and 58,000 feet of electrical transmission lines that have reached the end of their useful service life. Pepco will be conducting significant tree pruning and removal in

conjunction with this project. GHI and city staff have been meeting with Pepco representatives for several months during the project's planning phase to minimize the impact of this project on GHI and city residents as well as the tree canopy throughout the city. If you have any questions or comments concerning this project, you may email them to pepcoproject@greenbeltmd.gov.

Ready to Remodel?

Are you thinking about making kitchen improvements or building an addition to your GHI home? Or maybe adding a shed or fence to your back yard?



Not sure of the relevant GHI rules? Rean (pronounced "Ree - ann") Secharran of the Technical Services staff can help you to find the guiding rules and what types of improvements need a permit. It's always better to know ahead of time! Contact Rean at 301-474-4161, ext. 143 or email her at rsecharran@ghi.coop.

Fall Yard Care Is in the Bag

By Matt Berres

The weather will be getting cooler and the days shorter as fall arrives. Check out these fall garden tips:

1. **Planting.** Cooler weather is perfect for planting grass, bulbs, shrubs, and trees. Look for flowering bulbs on sale at garden shops. Don't forget those fall blooming flowers such as chrysanthemums and New England asters.
2. **Pruning.** Fall is the right time to trim those lower tree limbs and prune shrubs for better form. Privets, viburnums, forsythias, and many other branching shrubs can benefit from rejuvenating pruning. Remember any tree limbs over eight feet are GHI's responsibility. Call the GHI maintenance office to schedule elevated pruning work.
3. **Mulching.** A good layer of mulch will help prepare flowerbed areas for the winter and improve soil quality. Free shredded mulch is available at the Northway fields. Or you can simply rake fallen leaves into bed areas. Remember don't apply mulch more than two to three inches deep.



4. **Leaf Removal.** Using a lawn mower to shred leaves in your lawn area is a great way to remove them while adding valuable organic material that improves the soil. Yard waste can also be composted in your yard. Composting information is available at <http://ghi.coop/content/woodlands-links>

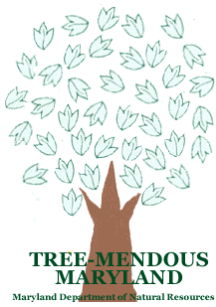
Need help with those leaves?

The City of Greenbelt offers **free leaf pick up service** for all GHI members. Leaves should be raked into **paper** bags or put in plastic bins labeled "Yard Waste" and put on your **serviceside** entrance for pickup. This fall GHI will again supply 10 free paper bags

to each unit which can be picked up from GHI during Maintenance Office Hours.

Leaves or yard waste in **plastic bags will not be collected.**

Please do **not** rake leaves into GHI common areas or woodlands, as large leaf piles make extra work for GHI staff to collect and can also present a fire hazard in woodland areas.



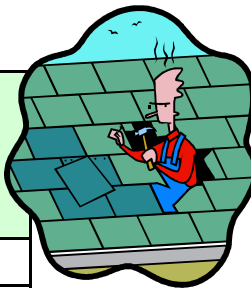
Tree-Mendous Program

GHI will be partnering again in 2012 with the Maryland Forest Service to offer a program for discounted purchase of native trees and shrubs. Please see the insert in this newsletter for more details.

Maintenance Schedule: Fall 2012

Please be alert to these current and future tasks overseen by the GHI maintenance department. For questions, contact Matt Berres at 301-474-6011.

| | |
|---------|---|
| Aug-Dec | Electric Meter Panel Inspections/Repairs |
| Aug-Nov | Masonry Porch Roof Repairs |
| Oct-Nov | Replacement Tree Planting in GHI Common Areas |
| Oct-Nov | Fall Concrete Repairs |
| Oct-Nov | Replacement Tree Planting in GHI Common Areas |
| Nov-Dec | Common Area Leaf Collection |
| Nov-Dec | Fall Gutter Cleaning |



Communicator Submissions

Have an idea for a story?
 Like to submit an article? Photo to share?
 Send your ideas to Sheri Swaim at mgmtooffice@ghi.coop.
 Articles are due by October 25 for the Winter 2012 issue.



Annual Picnic to Be More Family Friendly!

Volunteers Needed

Save the date for GHI's Annual Member Picnic on **Sunday, October 7 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the GHI administration building on Hamilton Place.**

This year's picnic will feature a moon bounce and other fun games for kids as well as a hula-hoop contest and musical chairs. Join your neighbors for an afternoon of delicious food, musical entertainment, and games for kids and adults. This event is entirely member-led so we need your help to pull it off. Please email Lauren Cummings at lbcummin@hotmail.com by September 15 if you can volunteer 30 minutes of your time to help on the day of the picnic.

City of Greenbelt
75th ANNIVERSARY
DINNER DANCE GALA
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2012
7:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.
Martin's Crosswinds
7400 Greenway Center Drive,
Greenbelt, MD 20770

TICKETS: \$65.00 EACH

Includes: Dining and Dancing to the music of Peaches O'Dell and Her Orchestra
 Cash Bar Available.



Tickets are available for purchase Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30pm at the Greenbelt Community Center 15 Crescent Road or by calling Carolyn West at 240-542-2058 www.greenbeltmd.gov/75



Please purchase your tickets by September 7th!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

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

September

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|--------------------------------|
| Mon | 3 | -- | OFFICES CLOSED-Labor Day |
| Thu | 6 | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting |
| Sat | 8 | 11:00 am | Pre-Purchase Orientation |
| Tue | 11 | 8:30 am | Yard Line Committee |
| Wed | 12 | 7:30 pm | Architectural Review Committee |
| Thu | 13 | 6:45 pm | Investment Committee |
| Thu | 13 | 7:30 pm | Finance Committee |
| Fri | 14 | -- | OFFICES CLOSED |
| Tue | 18 | 7:30 pm | Companion Animal Committee |
| Wed | 19 | 7:00 pm | Woodlands Committee |
| Thu | 20 | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting |
| Mon | 24 | 7:00 pm | Pre-Purchase Orientation |
| Mon | 24 | 7:00 pm | Communications Committee |
| Wed | 26 | 7:00 pm | Buildings Committee |
| Fri | 28 | -- | OFFICES CLOSED |

October

| | | | |
|-----|----|---------|--------------------------------|
| Thu | 4 | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting |
| Sat | 6 | 7:00 pm | Pre-Purchase Orientation |
| Sun | 7 | 1-3 pm | Annual Member Picnic |
| Tue | 9 | 8:30 am | Yard Line Committee |
| Wed | 10 | 7:00 pm | Joint Board/Finance Committee |
| Wed | 10 | 7:30 pm | Architectural Review Committee |
| Fri | 12 | -- | OFFICES CLOSED |
| Tue | 16 | 7:30 pm | Companion Animal Committee |
| Wed | 17 | 7:00 pm | Woodlands Committee |
| Thu | 18 | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting |
| Mon | 22 | 7:00 pm | Pre-Purchase Orientation |
| Mon | 22 | 7:00 pm | Communications Committee |
| Tue | 23 | 8:30 am | Yard Line Committee |
| Wed | 24 | 7:00 pm | Buildings Committee |
| Wed | 24 | 7:30 pm | Architectural Review Committee |
| Fri | 26 | -- | OFFICES CLOSED |

November

| | | | |
|------------|---------|----------|--------------------------------|
| Thu | 1 | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting |
| Sat | 3 | 11:00 am | Pre-Purchase Orientation |
| Thu | 8 | 6:45 pm | Investment Committee |
| Thu | 8 | 7:30 pm | Finance Committee |
| Fri-Mon | 9 & 12 | -- | OFFICES CLOSED |
| Tue | 13 | 8:30 am | Yard Line Committee |
| Wed | 14 | 7:30 pm | Architectural Review Committee |
| Thu | 15 | 7:30 pm | Board Meeting |
| Mon | 19 | 7:00 pm | Pre-Purchase Orientation |
| Tue | 20 | 7:30 pm | Companion Animal Committee |
| Wed | 21 | 7:00 pm | Woodlands Committee |
| Thur & Fri | 22 & 23 | -- | OFFICES CLOSED |
| Mon | 26 | 7:00 pm | Communications Committee |
| Wed | 28 | 7:00 pm | Buildings Committee |

(Dates are subject to change)

Maintenance service is available - for emergencies only - outside of normal maintenance hours or when offices are closed. Call 301-474-6011.