



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

COMMUNICATOR

Quarterly Publication of the Communications Committee

INSIDE

Thanks for the Memories	1
President's Message	2
Board Highlights	3
GHI's Next General Manager	4
Who's Who: New Faces on the Board	4
Farmer's Market	4
Who's Who in GHI	5
Communications Survey Results	6
Member Musings: Walking Dogs	6
Fall Yard Care	7
Free Leaf Pick up	7
Maintenance Calendar	7
GHI Annual Member Picnic	8
Did you know?	8
Thank You, Brenda	8
What's Happening	8



Thanks for the Memories

Reflections on 17 Years of Serving GHI

By Gretchen Overdurff, Outgoing General Manager

It all started 18 years ago at a cooperative housing conference. I was facilitating a workshop and my colleague was co-training with GHI board member Margaret Hogensen. Some of you may remember Margaret, who served on every committee and board position during her many years in GHI. Margaret mentioned that Greenbelt Homes was looking for an experienced general manager. The rest is history!

I moved to Maryland from Michigan in December of 1993, and began my tenure on January 1, 1994. As the first female CEO, I had my share of challenges in a predominately male-dominated industry. What could a woman know about building maintenance and the physical plant? Interestingly, I first learned about replacement reserve studies when an officer of the co-op I managed traveled to Greenbelt to learn about setting up a replacement reserve and brought back GHI's member handbook. Little did I know that I would one day be referencing that book in an official capacity.

The decision to come to GHI changed my life forever. I have been faced with challenges that strengthened character

and enhanced personal growth. I have been privileged to make the acquaintances of some of the finest folks anywhere, and have enjoyed the respect and cooperation of each board of directors I have served and my staff.

Housing cooperatives are indeed made up of a special kind of people. Folks have the ability to impact the circumstances around their living conditions and environment. Nowhere have I seen this better demonstrated than at Greenbelt Homes. The early values of community activism have brought a lasting legacy of member involvement and concern for preserving the assets that abound in the Greenbelt community.

A housing community of this size requires a large staff to meet the needs of its members and the aging homes in which they live. One of the things I have been most proud of is the service-oriented, dedicated staff of professionals that serve our cooperative. After becoming acclimated to the job, I undertook a major reorganization of the staff. Regular coaching and training occurred with the goal of developing a service-oriented culture where members are served as employees would like to be served. GHI's first mission and vision statements were developed.

Continued on page 5

SAVE THE DATE!
GHI Members Annual Community Picnic
 Sunday, October 9
 See page 8 for details.

GHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS:

Tokey Boswell, President
(319) 331-2144
tokeyray@netscape.net

Laura Moore, Vice President
(240) 506-4841
laura@lauramoore.com

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

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

DIRECTORS:

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

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

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

Irv Wartell
301-345-1195
yorkies@peoplepc.com

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



President's Message

By Tokey Boswell

Keeping in touch with members

'Word of mouth' seems to be a time-honored tradition of exchanging information in GHI. Sometimes, though, word of mouth can be inaccurate. And it's not always fast enough. And it doesn't reach everyone equally. A cooperative the size of GHI has to depend on other means of communication to keep members informed about upcoming events and decisions about the future. The Board and GHI staff are committed to making information available to members.

Here's how we do it currently:

1. *The Communicator* newsletter. This newsletter is delivered to every member's door, on a quarterly basis. Thank you for reading it now!
2. The 'GHI News in Review' page in the *Greenbelt News Review* newspaper. This is a new feature that allows us to get information out to members more quickly. The newspaper is delivered to all homes in Greenbelt, and extra copies are always available at the Coop Supermarket.
3. The website, www.ghi.coop. The revamped GHI website is beautiful, and better organized to help members find what they're after.
4. A new Facebook page. Social media users can friend us at Greenbelt Homes.
5. A new Twitter feed. Follow us on #GHImgmt.

Other communication outlets have been proposed as well, and we'll be evaluating what is feasible to do with limited staff and a volunteer board. As you'll see in this issue, the results of the Communications Survey show that many members are interested in email communications, so we will be looking at the many types of options available.

If you have ideas for how to improve GHI communications, please contact your board members or staff. And when you do read official GHI publications, please use that 'word of mouth' technique to help us spread the word to other members who might not have seen it.

Thanks for being an informed member!

Communicator Volunteers

Contributors: Kristin Fletcher, Interim Chair;
Lauren Cummings, Ed Fallon,
JoAnne Fournier, Sylvia Lewis,
Marat Moore, David Morse,
Anna Socrates, Rusty Wilbur
Layout: Beverly Palau
GHI Staff Liaison: Sheri Swaim

Sign Interpretation Services Available

GHI will arrange to have an interpreter assist the hearing impaired at regular board, committee and annual meetings upon request.

Please contact the Member Services Department at 301-474-4161 x140 or via e-mail at: memaa@ghi.coop at least one week in advance of the meeting to request this service.

Board Meetings and Highlights

The GHI Board meetings are held in the Board Room of the GHI Administration Building. Meetings are usually held twice a month on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m., except during the summer when meetings are held once a month. Please check the calendar on page 8 or the GHI website for details. With the exception of executive sessions, all meetings are open to the membership.

Board Actions During May and June 2011:

- Approved nine new memberships and authorized changes to three mutual ownership contracts.
- Approved yard plats for 20G-T Hillside Road.

Contracts:

- Repairs of underground sanitary sewage and storm drains at twenty-three sites (B&P Utilities, \$242,099).
- Improvements of drainage systems at two locations (B&P Utilities, \$44,583).
- Repairs to 8R Laurel Hill, (Greenbelt Builders, Inc., \$12,925).
- Repairs of parking lots (CPE, Inc., \$63,377).

Elections:

Received certification of the 2011 annual elections from the Nominations and Elections Committee as follows:

- Elected to N&E Committee - Paula Clinedinst, Henry Haslinger, Rick Ransom and Karen L. Yoho.
- Elected to the Board of Directors - Tokey Boswell, Laura Moore, Bill Jones, Patricia Novinski and Chuck Hess.
- Elected to Audit Committee - Debbie Cooley, Bill Edwards, Dianne Wilkerson.
- Elected the following Board of Directors officers: Tokey Boswell, President; Laura Moore, Vice President; Ed James, Secretary; and Chuck Hess, Treasurer.

GAIL Program Medicare Workshop Series: Tuesdays at 6:00 pm

Approaching 65? If you have questions about some of the changes you may be facing in health insurance, join the Greenbelt Assistance in Living (GAIL) program for one of our informational workshops. Registration is free, but advance reservations are required. Call Greenbelt CARES at 301-345-6660 to RSVP.

- Understanding Medicare Basics – October 4, 2011
- Preventative Services Under Medicare – October 11, 2011
- Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage – October 18, 2011
- Medicare Subsidy Programs for Low-Income Medicare Recipients – October 25, 2011

You do not have to sign up for all the workshops.



Eldon Ralph To Be Next GHI General Manager

Tenure begins on December 12

In case you haven't heard, Eldon Ralph, GHI Assistant General Manager since May 2008, accepted the offer of GHI's Board of Directors to serve as the new General Manager on July 14, 2011. Outgoing general manager Gretchen Overdurff is retiring on December 31. The transition process is being led by a Transition Task Force comprised of board, staff, audit committee and GHI members.

Eldon was hired as Director of Physical Plant Facilities in April 1997 and brings a wealth of direct experience with GHI as well as expertise in administration, facilities management, and finance. Born in Guyana, South America, he received his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering at the University of the West Indies and completed an advanced degree in Plant Engineering/Maintenance Management at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology in England.

Mr. Ralph also has a Certified Diploma in Accounting and Finance and the following certifications: CPE (Certified Plant Engineer), CEng (Chartered Engineer), and CMCA and PCAM, certifications in community association management, with PCAM being the Community Association Institute's highest professional designation.

Who's Who: New Faces on the Board



Laura Moore, Vice President

Laura currently serves on the Greenbelt Pride Board of Directors and on the Board of the Roosevelt Democratic Club. She previously worked for the County Council, where she learned about the zoning and development process and worked on legislation to make environmental improvements in the county. Laura served as an officer in the U.S. Navy for three years in the Philippines and in Panama. She received her

undergraduate degree from MIT and recently received her master's in entomology from the University of Maryland, where she was president of the Graduate Student Government.



Chuck Hess, Treasurer

Chuck has lived in GHI for over 25 years and is a CPA with a master's in taxation from The American University in D.C., specializing in income tax preparation. Chuck has served on the Buildings, Finance, Investment, A&E and Audit Committees and has chaired the Finance and Investment Committees. He served on the Board of Directors for 18 years, six of them as the Treasurer, before he went to serve as the business manager of Maluti Adventist Hospital in Lesotho in Southern Africa.



Bill Jones

Bill is a retired college math professor who has lived in GHI since 2004 and has been a member of GHI's Finance and Investment Committees since 2006. He has also served on the GHI Bylaws Task Force and the GHI Pilot Project Task Force. Bill is active in the Greenbelt community at large and is currently treasurer of Streetlights of Bethany and on the board of O2B2, a Greenbelt-based theatre group. Bill has also performed many volunteer functions for the Greenbelt Arts Center, including directing, video recording and acting.

GREENBELT



FARMERS MARKET

Good Stuff: Greenbelt Farmer's Market

The Greenbelt Farmer's Market (www.greenbeltfarmersmarket.org) is now in its fourth year with many favorite vendors returning plus a couple of new ones. Featuring organic and local fare, the market is open every Sunday (except Labor Day weekend) from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. through November 20 in the main Roosevelt Center parking lots. Check the website for upcoming special activities.

Thanks for the Memories *Continued from page 1*

Over time, employees developed a cadence of accountability as they learned that outstanding performance and commitment to the job bring rewards and recognition. GHI's first employee appreciation program was established. Seeking and retaining qualified employees has become a key task of the HR department and many employees have a lengthy tenure.

My experience as a former teacher and community mediation facilitator has been especially useful. Where there are people, there will be a variety of challenges. Our senior staff has become adept at handling conflict and finding solutions to vexing problems.

We have survived record-breaking snow, hurricanes (Isabel comes to mind), fires and environmental scourges such as mold, lead and asbestos. We made the transition to Y2K without incident, and survived the temporary relocation to a portable office while the administration building was upgraded. We have worked through the recent real estate tax change, embraced advances in technology, and are now communicating through online social networks.

Serving as general manager of Greenbelt Homes is a commitment in which you pledge to serve the people of this cooperative community in a way that means doing whatever it takes to get the job done. I couldn't have asked for a more positive or rewarding experience. I leave GHI with many warm memories and treasured friendships, and with gratitude for all that I have learned. I hope that I have made a difference in the way we do our work, with the people who care for your homes and by helping to shape the future direction of the cooperative. I hope to see many of you during the coming weeks. Thank you for trusting and supporting me these seventeen years.

WHO'S WHO AT GHI

By Brenda C. Lewis



Sheri Swaim

Sheri joined GHI at the end of January 2008 as the Executive Assistant to the General Manager. Her role has since expanded, and as Special Assistant to the Management Office, her new duties include responsibility for enhancing GHI's communications--

especially social media; serving as the staff liaison to the Communications Committee, and working on marketing projects.

Sheri recently took and passed the certification exam for a community manager, offered by the Community Associations Institute (CAI). She also has a background as a small business owner and is a trained Therapeutic Family Mentor.

Sheri loves walking around the lake on her lunch hour, and reading various local list serves and social media, which keep her up-to-date. When asked what she likes most about working for GHI, Sheri did not hesitate; she likes "the atmosphere of respect and camaraderie, especially in the management office."



Monica Johnson

The new face behind the reception desk belongs to Monica Johnson, newly hired in July to the upgraded position of Administrative Assistant in Member Services. Monica comes to us after 15 years working for a non-profit on Capitol Hill.

She brings considerable experience and talent, including working with boards, planning meetings, researching grants, collecting member data, designing and updating websites, and developing promotional material. We are pleased to have her join the GHI family.

Breaking News: August Earthquake

A few instances of superficial drywall cracks have been reported, but no significant damage has been observed in GHI units as a result of the August 23 earthquake. If members observe any cracks or shifting within their unit, please notify the GHI maintenance department to initiate an inspection.

Communications Survey Results

195 Members Respond

In May and June, 195 members responded to the Communications Survey, roughly 12% of the total number of GHI households and a significant survey response rate. The feedback was thoughtful, and illustrated the varied needs of our community. Surveys were distributed at the annual meeting, in the summer *Communicator*, and on the website, with responses received from all three areas.



Three quarters of the responders, or 75%, agreed that both the *Communicator* and the GHI 'News in Review' (GNIR) page should continue to be produced. Nearly all responders (98%) said that they read the *Communicator* newsletter, and 89% agreed or strongly agreed (evenly split) that it was valuable. The majority of members, 58%, prefer the newsletter to be hand-delivered, but a significant 30% would like to receive it electronically.

Most responders (84%) had seen the new GNIR page and over three quarters, 77%, agreed that it was valuable (again, evenly split between agreed and strongly agreed).

There were 81 comments, or 41%, with many suggestions. Concerns were expressed about the cost and time spent to do both communications vehicles. Many members would like more use of e-mail and the web, particularly for announcements and updates, but many others do not have access to this medium and enjoy having a hard copy to read. The Communications Taskforce will be working with the board to review the different options for more use of electronic communications in the coming months.

Based on the results of the survey, the Board agreed that the *Communicator* should continue to be published, but on a quarterly basis instead of bi-monthly, and the 'News in Review' page can be produced up to twice a month as resources permit.

A big THANK YOU to all who responded!



Lauren, Elgin and Dharma head out for a stroll.

Member Musings: Walking Dogs and Making Friends

By Lauren Cummings

My partner and I moved into GHI a few months ago and several friendly neighbors warmly welcomed us into our court. I wanted to move past the parking lot niceties to make friends and gain community. Thankfully we

have two reasons to get out and meet people...dogs. You would be surprised how many people are out at 6:00 a.m., the wonderful GHI paths are heavily used during our daily walks.

Through the simple act of walking our dogs, we have found friends and a sense of community. Jeanelle and Anthony invited us over for the court wine hour they host, Kelly and Scott loaned us a dog harness, Tim and Jackie invited us to their Fourth of July BBQ, and Anya and Clark issue serious game night challenges. I wouldn't have guessed that in a short three months we would have met so many new friends and neighbors.

Tonight, as I was walking home from a GHI Communicator Task Force meeting, I briefly met Sweetie and her owner, whose name of course I didn't get. That's how it usually is with dog owners; you learn the dog's name and never the owner's. In my first month in GHI I had a similar experience; another dog walker and I introduced dogs and then turned to walk away. The other woman turned back and said 'let's not do this. I'm Libby,' and she pointed out where she lived. It was refreshing and it's a constant reminder of what can happen when we open ourselves to moments of spontaneous community. There are so many things we have in common. It's why many of us chose to live in GHI, but there are also so many unique differences between us.

I challenge you to open your eyes to the community around you and to dedicate a little more time to "walking the dogs" so we can all get to know each other a little better.

Fall Yard Care Is In the Bag

By Matt Berres

The weather will soon be getting cooler, the days shorter and fall will soon be here. Check out these fall garden tips.

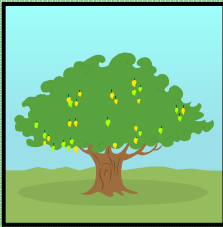
1. **Planting.** Cooler weather is perfect for planting grass, bulbs, shrubs, and trees. Look for flowering bulbs on sale at garden shops. Don't forget those fall blooming flowers such as mums and New England asters.
2. **Pruning.** Fall is the right time to trim those lower tree limbs and prune shrubs for better form. Privets, viburnums, forsythias, and many other branching shrubs can benefit from rejuvenating pruning. Remember any limbs over 8 feet are GHI responsibility. Call the GHI maintenance office to schedule elevated pruning work.
3. **Mulching.** A good layer of mulch will help overwinter flowerbed areas and improve soil quality. Free shredded mulch is available at the Northway fields. Or you can simply rake fallen leaves in bed areas. Remember don't apply mulch more than 2-3" deep.
4. **Leaf Removal.** A great way of removing leaves is to use a lawn mower to shred the leaves into your lawn area. This adds 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>.



Free Leaf Pick-Up Service

The City of Greenbelt offers **free leaf pick up service** for all GHI members. Leaves should be raked into PAPER bags or plastic bins labeled "Yard Waste" and put on the SERVICESIDE entrance for pickup. GHI will supply 10 free paper bags to each unit this fall. Bags can be picked up from the GHI warehouse, starting September 26th.

Leaves or yard waste in plastic bags will not be collected. Please do NOT rake leaves into GHI common areas or woodlands. Large leaf piles make extra work for GHI staff to collect and may present a fire hazard in woodland areas.



Tree-Mendous Program

GHI will again be partnering with the Maryland Forest Service to offer a discounted native tree and shrub purchase program in 2011. Please see the insert in this newsletter for more details.

2011 GHI Maintenance Schedule	
Aug-Dec	Electric Meter Panel Inspections/Repairs
Sept-Nov	Masonry Porch Roof Repairs
Oct-Nov	Fall Concrete Repairs
Oct-Nov	GDC Garage Door Replacement
Oct-Nov	Common Area Tree Plantings
Nov-Dec	Common Area Leaf Collection
Nov-Dec	Fall Gutter Cleaning

Your Coop Fees at Work

GHI Maintenance Department completed **677** work orders in the month of July. As of July 31, the maintenance department has completed **4,964** in 2011!

FROM THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

The maintenance reception desk is closed for lunch between noon and 1 p.m. daily. You can reach the main front desk reception for emergency service during that time.

ADDRESS UPDATE REQUEST

All GHI members are asked to update their telephone number and email addresses. Call Shawnta in the maintenance Office at 301-474-4161, ext. 127 or email maintaa@ghi.coop. Thank you!

GHI Members Annual Community Picnic

Sunday, October 9 from 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Hamilton Place

For food planning purposes, please RSVP to Monica Johnson by September 29 at 301-474-4161 ext.140 and let her know how many from your household will attend. Cozy Restaurant of Thurmont, Maryland will again cater the event. Everyone just loves COZY!




Did you know?

GHI has the following items free for members:

- Exterior trim paint
- Damp rid (please bring refillable containers back for refill to save resources)
- Straw (seasonal availability)
- Self-stick house letters/numbers

Available for loan to members:

- Exterior extension ladders
- Siding cleaning brushes
- Garden weasels (aka hand-rototillers)
- Grass seed available for \$2 per bag



Thank You, Brenda!
The Communications Task-force wishes to express our utmost appreciation to Brenda Lewis, GHI Human Resources Director, who not only faithfully served as our staff liaison for many years without complaint, but graciously listened to our endless debates about content, style, editing, stories....and the list goes on. Brenda went above and beyond more times that we can count to continually help us make deadline and produce a quality newsletter. Thank you, Brenda!

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at the GHI Administration Offices on Hamilton Place, and are open to all GHI members.



SEPTEMBER			
Thu	1	8:00 p.m.	Member Input Session (Budget)
Fri	2	--	OFFICES CLOSED
Mon	5	--	OFFICES CLOSED -Labor Day
Tue	6	7:15 p.m.	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Thu	8	7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
Wed	14	7:30 p.m.	Architectural Review Committee
Thu	15	7:00 p.m.	Real Estate Tax Meeting
Fri	16	--	OFFICE S CLOSED
Sat	17	11:00 a.m.	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Tue	20	7:30 p.m.	Companion Animal Committee
Wed	21	7:00 p.m.	Woodlands Committee
	21	7:00 p.m.	Joint Board and Finance Committee (Budget)
Thu	22	7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
Mon	26	7:00 p.m.	Communicator Task Force
Wed	28	7:00 p.m.	Buildings Committee
Fri	30	--	OFFICES CLOSED
OCTOBER			
Mon	3	7:15 p.m.	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Thu	6	7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
Sun	9	1-3:30 p.m.	Member Picnic
Mon	10	--	OFFICES CLOSED-Columbus Day
Wed	12	7:30 p.m.	Architectural Review Committee
Fri	14	---	OFFICES CLOSED
<p><i>(Dates are subject to change)</i> Maintenance service is available-for real emergencies only- outside of maintenance hours or when offices are closed.</p>			



**"Like" us on
Facebook: "Greenbelt Homes"**



**Follow us on
Twitter: "GHImgmt"**

COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS: Interested in contributing an article? Send your ideas to Sheri Swaim at mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net. Articles are due October 24 for the winter issue.