



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.
COMMUNICATOR
 Bi-Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee

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**Leaf Bags
 Available NOW via
 the Administration**

We're looking for community
 and Greenbelt related

PICTURES

**We know we've got
 talented members out there
 and we would like some
 help to show off our
 beautiful community!!!**

We are looking for pictures
 (showing Greenbelt, GHI, and
 the surrounding areas) to be used
 throughout Greenbelt and in GHI
 publications. Credit will be
 given. For details, call
301-474-4161, ext. 152.

**THE GREENER GREENBELT CHARRETTE IS AN
 OVERWHELMING SUCCESS** **BY MARAT MOORE**

Nearly four hundred GHI members and Greenbelt residents attended the weekend charrette that took place at Greenbelt Elementary School from Friday, September 28 to Sunday, September 30. Architects and designers; city, county, and state officials; and students and faculty from the University of Maryland also participated throughout the weekend. Children participated in a special mini-charrette and shared ideas of what they loved and wanted to preserve and improve in Greenbelt.



Greener Greenbelt Initiative principals such as Carl Elefante and Melanie Hennigan, of the American Institute of Architects' Potomac Valley chapter (AIA-PV), Jim Cohen, Chair of the GHI's Green Ribbon Task Force, and Board President Sylvia Lewis were very pleased with the level of participation and ideas generated by all the participants.

The focus topics were affordability, livability, sustainability, and historic preservation. These topics were all addressed in discussions grouped by size and scale, from smallest to largest: 1) GHI dwellings, buildings, and grounds; 2) Roosevelt Center; 3) Old Greenbelt, including the lake; and 4) Greater Greenbelt, including all areas of the city, its transportation system, planned developments and other aspects.

In the discussion on GHI dwellings, buildings, and grounds, more than 60 residents discussed a host of topics, including greener energy strategies to reduce costs and environmental impact, and the need for GHI additions that are compatible structurally but functional for growing families and older people wanting to age in place. The design team came up with half a dozen ideas for each GHI floor plan, including two-story serviceside additions.

Architect Mike Poness presented to the entire audience the "three big ideas" that emerged from the discussions on dwellings: 1) improve energy performance of GHI units; 2) develop a "pattern book" of design prototypes for GHI additions; and 3) develop recommendations to maintain and improve open space. "One size does not fit all," Elefante said in the charrette's concluding session, referring to GHI units. "The brick, block, and frame units are all viable, fine structures. But they're all different in their orientation in the landscape, tree canopy coverage, and in many other ways."

AIA-PV is committed to work on this project throughout 2008. All the ideas and drawings generated at the charrette will be posted by mid-November at www.greenergreenbelt.org. Early next year, there will be opportunities for residents to participate in review, further discussion and ideas, designs and strategies produced at the charrette. Notice of these events will be publicized in the *News Review*. These discussions will generate a final report that will be published by AIA-PV and presented to the GHI Board.

Our thanks to Principal Kimberly Seidel, GHI member Beatrice "Bessy" Sanders, Building Supervisor Alexander Johnson and all the staff at Greenbelt Elementary School for their great cooperation throughout the three-day charrette. This article was adapted from an October 4, 2007 article that appeared in the Greenbelt News Review.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

As we move toward the season of thanksgiving and goodwill I have been thinking of the benefits we share as cooperative members of Greenbelt Homes Inc.

- GHI is a market rate co-op, which means that we receive the full value of our home if we choose to sell our membership rights;
- We co-own the entire cooperative, including the woods, common areas, playgrounds;
- We employ over 40 skilled individuals to manage our property: be on call to fix emergency plumbing problems; respond to work orders for necessary structural repairs; take care of member concerns;
- We get to choose which of our fellow members should serve on the Board to oversee the management of our property.
- We can attend any board or committee meeting and voice our opinions.

Cooperative living is not for everyone. As is the case with most things in life, every benefit includes a cost. The proximity of our homes encourages social interaction with our neighbors and a feeling of community – but it also limits privacy; rules regarding the upkeep of our yards and houses help to encourage attractive surroundings and ensure the maintenance of our property- but they also limit individual choices; we have the benefit of experts who maintain our homes, respond to member complaints, invest our reserve funds wisely, pay our taxes, supervise contractors, assist in marketing our homes, landscape our common areas, care for our woodlands, take care of legal problems, hire, train and supervise employees and continually look for ways to improve the cooperative's service to its members – and we pay for this in our monthly co-op fee.

This year the largest single part of the budget, 36.81%, is spent on maintaining our houses, parking lots, common area and woodlands. Real estate taxes account for over 25% of the budget this year – next year this percentage will increase. Administrative services, including personnel, audit and legal fees, utilities, office supplies etc. costs 15% of the budget. To ensure that we are prepared for future large item expenses 13% of the budget is earmarked for funding reserves. Trash collection, insurance and service to GDC make up the remaining approximately 10% of the budget.

I went into this detail to emphasize that our monthly co-op fee is not some arbitrary figure the board decides to charge members, it is our share of the cost of the benefits we receive as cooperators in GHI. The 2008 budget is in the process of being prepared. The Finance Committee and Board are striving to ensure that the cost of our cooperative does not outweigh the benefits that we all enjoy from it. We will all receive a letter in December letting us know our monthly fees for 2008 – our portion of the cost of the benefits of living in and owning a share of, Greenbelt Homes Inc.

Happy Thanksgiving!



**Wear WHITE at
NIGHT**
So Drivers Can SEE You.

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BOARD MEETING 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, except during the summer when meetings are held once a month. Please check the calendar on the GHI website for details. With the exception of executive sessions, all meetings are open to the membership.

During August and September 2007, the Board of Directors took the following actions:

- Approved 16 new memberships and authorized changes to 10 mutual ownership contracts.
- Approved an exception to the rules and regulations to allow the installation of a garden window at 54D Ridge Road.
- Made the following contributions:
 - Greenbelt Labor Day Festival Committee (\$250)
 - Friends of the Greenbelt Museum (\$250)
 - Cooperative Development Foundation (\$500)
 - NASCO Institute (\$160)
- Authorized funds for the following purposes:
 - \$ 4,280 to remove and treat invasive plant species in Parcel B.
 - \$13,230 for replacement of 28 rental garage doors.
 - \$ 2,500 to retain for preliminary work on real estate tax assessment appeal.
- Approved a 4% increase in the overall salary line item for the 2008 budget year.
- Authorized the Manager to utilize the 2007 salary scales when applying merit increases to 2008 staff salaries.
- Approved a premium cost split of 90%/10% between GHI and employees for the payment of health care premiums for the budget year 2008.
- Directed that the employee health savings accounts be funded at 85% of the deductibles in one lump contribution at the start of 2008.
- Submitted a letter to the National Cooperative Bank in support of the New Deal Café.

GHI RECEIVES GRANT FOR RAINGARDEN

BY: GRETCHEN OVERDURFF

GHI has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$4,933 from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to construct a demonstration rain garden at the end of 6 Court of Plateau. The concept of rain gardens was begun at GHI by Landscape Specialist Matt Berres. He has designed and coordinated installation of several other rain gardens within the Cooperative with the assistance of the employees of the Grounds Department. Matt applied to the CBT Mini-Grant Program for funds to construct a large rain garden at 6 Court Plateau that will directly reduce storm water runoff from the parking lot that serves 4/6/8 Court of Plateau.



Rain garden at 33 Ridge Court, June 2007.

This rain garden will prevent further erosion and pollution to a headwater stream of the Chesapeake Bay, and will also improve the curb appeal of this area. Its design serves as a model of innovative storm water management. When complete, an educational sign will be installed at the site. Congratulations to Matt and the grounds team for their outstanding work and for helping take care of our environment.



Don't forget to set your clocks back an hour on November 4!

WHO'S WHO AT GHI

BY: BRENDA C. LEWIS



REAN SEECHARRAN

Handling the administrative functions in GHI's Technical Services Department requires excellent people skills as well as technical expertise. Rean Seecharran has both. There are many regulations to understand and Rean is able to relay them to members or

point out where they can go to get additional information.

Rean started with GHI in October 2000. She previously worked eight years with a local technology training company and was attracted to GHI because of the location and company size.

A native of Guyana, West Indies, Rean came to America to continue her education and raise a family. She and her husband, Deo, have two lovely daughters, Devena, 15 years old, and Maya, 8 years old. They are a close-knit family and enjoy traveling, fishing, and gardening together. They live just up the road from Greenbelt in Glenn Dale, Maryland. Rean takes a great deal of pride in assisting her daughters as they learn and take advantage of the many opportunities available in the United States.

When asked what she liked most about GHI, Rean mentioned the friendly people and the excellent community environment. She likes being able to exercise at Curves during her lunchtime or walk and enjoy the fresh Greenbelt air. She loves working for GHI because of her co-workers, GHI management, and the personal attention each employee receives.

When you contact the Technical Services Department, you will understand why Rean has received GHI's Attitude Award and/or Peer Award for the last four years.

**Happy Holidays
and Best Wishes from
Greenbelt Homes**

CAN YOU KEEP YOUR COOP FEES DOWN? YES!

BY: ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Did you know that your dollars are spent cleaning up yard debris and bulky trash put in the common areas and entrances to courts? Yes, GHI staff spends 80-100 hours a year cleaning what some of your neighbors dispose of improperly. That amounts to between \$1,754 and \$2,193. That may not sound like a lot of money when spread over 1600 units, but the time staff spend cleaning up is time taken away from their regular jobs.

301-474-8004

We have great pickup services from the City of Greenbelt. Call the Public Works department at 301-474-8004 for yard waste and bulky trash. They will take your yard waste on Fridays, miscellaneous junk and wood on your normal trash day and metal on Fridays. You need to tell the person answering the phone what items you require them to take and where the address is. They can also tell you any specific requirements for disposing of your junk. For example, you may need to take apart some items while others can be left whole, and wood should be no larger than four feet long.

Please remember that the areas outside of your yard belong to all of us – the members of GHI. We wouldn't want someone to dump their yard waste or junk in our yards, so let's not dump it anywhere it doesn't belong. Please dispose of it properly.

COMPANION ANIMAL COMMITTEE PROVIDES OXYGEN MASKS TO THE CITY OF GREENBELT

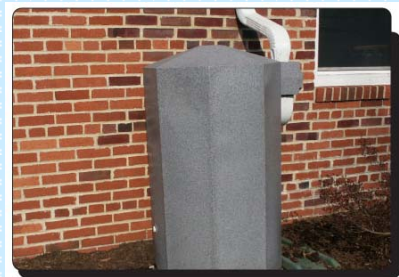
BY: ROBIN EVERLY

In the photo below, Cigo eagerly accepts four sets of animal oxygen masks from the GHI's Companion Animal Committee for use by the City's police canines and other animals in need of life support. Since April, this committee has provided a total of 45 animal oxygen masks to aid area first responders in animal rescues. This presentation of masks was held as part of regular City Council meeting on September 10, 2007.



Left to right: Cam MacQueen, Kris White (Chair), Debbie Cooley, Cpl. Robert Musterman, Cigo, Capt. Thomas Kemp, and Amethyst Dwyer.

**Don't be caught in a dry spell.
Order your Rain Barrel today!**



For more information on rain barrels, approximate costs, and other details, visit www.ghi.coop/rainbarrels/index.htm

or contact Matt Berres, Landscape Specialist at mberres@ghi.coop, (301) 474-4161 x132

RECIPES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Greatest Praline Muffins EVER!!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup chopped pecans
- ½ cup flour
- 2 beaten eggs
- ¾ cup butter (1.75 sticks)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- Small (golf ball size) muffin tin
- Bakers Joy spray (please no substitute! PAM will NOT work)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
 2. Mix all ingredients together
 3. Spray baking pan
 4. Scoop mix into pan
 5. Place in 350 deg. oven for 20 minutes.
- The muffins sort of caramelize on the tops and edges, and stick to your teeth so they are kind of gooey, chewy and yummy!



Pumpkin Cheesecake

INGREDIENTS

- 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
- 1 ¼ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 eggs
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 prepared 8 inch pastry shells



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Beat together the cream cheese and the sugar, add the pumpkin and the spices. Beat in eggs one at a time. Add salt. Beat until creamy. Pour the batter evenly into the two pastry shells.
3. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 50 minutes or until the knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool then top with whipped topping, if desired.

Do you have a good recipe? Send it in to share it with your community. Send to mgmtooffice@greenbelthomes.net to the attention of the Communications Committee.

Harvest Loaf Cake

INGREDIENTS

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|---|
| 1.75 cups flour | .5 tsp salt | 1 cup sugar |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | .5 tsp nutmeg | 2 eggs |
| 1 tsp. cinnamon | .25 tsp ginger | .75 canned pumpkin (1/2 of a 16 oz can) |
| .5 cups butter | .25 tsp cloves | .75 cup chocolate chips (1/2 bag of 12 oz. chocolate chips) |
| | | .75 chopped walnuts |

DIRECTIONS

1. Sift together dry ingredients (flour, b. soda, salt and spices)
2. Cream butter in a large mixing bowl, gradually add sugar and cream at high speed until light and fluffy.
3. Blend in eggs; beat well.
4. At low speed, add one third of dry ingredients. Blend well.
 - Add one half of pumpkin. Blend well.
 - Add second third of dry ingredients. Blend well.
 - Add remaining pumpkin. Blend well.
 - Add remaining dry ingredients. Blend well.
5. Stir in chocolate chips and half of the walnuts.
6. Pour into greased and floured large loaf pan. Sprinkle with remaining walnuts.
7. Bake at 350 degrees for 65 - 75 minutes; until cake springs back at a gentle touch.
8. Cool, drizzle with glaze. Let stand 6 hours before slicing.

Doubling the recipe fills 1 bundt pan or 3 small loaf pans.

Glaze: Mix .5 cup confectioners sugar, 1/8 tsp nutmeg, and 1/8 tsp cinnamon. Add 1 or 2 tablespoons of cream or milk. Drizzle over cake after cake has cooled.

OUR ANIMAL NEIGHBORS: THE COMPANION ANIMAL COMMITTEE

The report in the *News Review* about a coyote sighting in Greenbelt reminds us that animals co-inhabit our community, which means that we need to develop a compassionate, eco-centric ethic that encompasses our animal brethren. Below are suggestions from GHI's Companion Animal Committee for co-existing peacefully with our wildlife neighbors.

How to Prevent Urban Wildlife Problems

- Do not leave cat or dog food outside overnight and close any companion animal access doors overnight. Bring in bird food at night.
- Do not leave unsecured garbage cans or garbage bags outside. (Rinse thoroughly all food-related recyclable items before putting them in the recycle bin.)

Conduct semi-annual home inspections & maintenance:

- Cover attic vents and crawlspace openings with a heavy gauge, weatherproof wire mesh.
- Inspect eaves, trim boards, and other areas where the roof and house join for openings. Repair rotting wood, loose shingles, and damaged siding.
- Trim branches that are overhanging or touching the roof to prevent access for wildlife.
- Put "animal-proof" caps on chimneys to prevent access to raccoons and squirrels.
- Install an "L-shaped" barrier around your deck to prevent wildlife access underneath:

Attach heavy gauge wire mesh to base of deck, bury it at least 8 inches into the ground, bend it 90 degrees away from the deck for about 12 inches, and then cover it with soil.

A slightly modified version of this technique can be used to protect gardens too.

Share this information with your neighbors.

Remember-- Before covering/repairing any openings in and around your home, make sure there are no animals trapped inside. If you are unsure, please call a wildlife removal professional!

For more information, please visit

<http://www.humanesolutions.com>

or contact HWS at 1-866-9HUMANE.

ABOUT THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

BY: ROBIN EVERLY, CHAIR

Hopefully, you have been noticing the changes we have been implementing to your newsletter, the *Communicator*, throughout 2007. Some are obvious and striking such as the new masthead, printing in color, revised layout, and more graphics and photographs. Other changes are subtler, but just as important, such as committee members writing original articles and being proactive in what goes in each issue. Two excellent examples of this effort are Marat Moore's informative piece on our new Board members in the September/October issue and articles on the Greener Greenbelt Initiative in several issues this year.

When the newly formed Communications Committee met in January 2007, under Sylvia Lewis' leadership, our small, but energetic group decided to make several changes to the newsletter. We hope GHI members agree that these changes are positive and worthwhile. Current committee members Ann-Marie Saucier, Eva Fallon, Marat Moore, Kristi Fletcher, David Morse, Brenda Lewis, and myself are a highly skilled, dedicated, and creative crew. Our Committee's charge is also to recommend and implement changes to the GHI website and to produce press releases to promote GHI throughout the Washington Metropolitan area. In order to meet these challenges we will need more GHI members to join our committee or provide us with a digital photograph or article once in awhile. We would love to hear about Courts that regularly socialize together.

If something is going in GHI you want to promote, please let us know. Our committee meets on the third Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. In the coming year, we plan to concentrate on the website and will try to write a press release or two. If you want to know more about this committee, please email me at robin.everly@verizon.net. I'm excited about our committee's accomplishments this year and look forward to what we will do in 2008. Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year!

It's a Date November/ December 2007

Nov. 6	Member & Community Relations	7-8 PM
Nov. 8	Sustainable Design Practices Committee	7-8 PM
Nov. 12	Veteran's Day	Offices closed.
Nov. 13	AD Hoc Yard Line Committee	8:30-10:00 AM
Nov. 14	Architecture Review Committee	7:30-9:30 PM
Nov. 15	Board of Directors	7:30-9:30 PM
Nov. 19	Communications Committee Woodlands Committee	6:30-7:30 PM 7-8 PM
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving Holiday	Offices closed.
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Holiday	Offices closed.
Nov. 27	Marketing Committee	7-8 PM
Nov. 28	Companion Animal Committee	7:30-8:25 PM
Dec. 4	Member & Community Relations Com.	7-8 PM
Dec. 6	Board of Directors	7:30-9:30 PM
Dec. 11	AD Hoc Yard Line Committee	8:30-10:00 AM
Dec. 12	Architecture Review Committee	7:30-9:30 PM
Dec. 13	Sustainable Design Practices Committee	7-8 PM
Dec. 17	Communications Committee Woodlands Committee	6:30-7:30 PM 7-8 PM
Dec. 20	Board of Directors	7:30-9:30 PM
Dec. 25	Christmas Holiday	Holiday
Dec. 26	Companion Animal Committee	7:30-8:30 PM

New Legislative Committee

Board President Sylvia Lewis has started a Legislative Initiative to advocate for local, state, and federal policies and programs to benefit our cooperative community. Drawing on GHI's history as a hotbed of activism, the group is working to identify current policies that are discriminatory towards cooperatives, programs that could benefit GHI members, and other issues that affect our quality of life. The Legislative Initiative Group met and chose several issues to research: reverse mortgages, MD Accessible Homes for Seniors Program, The Intercounty Connector (ICC), the Metro Purple Line, and sustainability incentives.

The group encourages all members to think about and submit other public policy issues of importance to our community. We also seek additional policy wonks, organizers, and lobbyists to join us. No experience is required, and you choose your level of involvement. Please contact Sylvia Lewis at revs.lew@verizon.net or (301) 474-3635 to suggest an issue or to volunteer.

"Legislative Alert! Reverse Mortgages. Read

<http://ghi.coop/legislative/revmtgsampleletter.htm>

for important information on how you can help make Reverse Mortgages available to GHI members." Sylvia Lewis

The Greener Greenbelt Initiative is planning to make some preliminary materials available from the September 28-30 charrette. The scope of the materials and timing of their release has not been decided yet. Check the website (www.greenergreenbelt.org) after the next meeting of the Steering Committee (November 7) for further developments.

GGI will be posting a preliminary summary of the charrette soon.