



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

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from President 2
 Board Highlights 3
 Animal Care 4
 Who's Who at GHI 4
 Why Insure With HO-6? 5
 Board Schedule 6
 Anti-Harassment Insert 6
 Contact Information 7
 It's a Date 8
 Handbook Updates 8
 Submission Information 8



Leaf Bags
Available NOW via
the Administration
Bldg. while supplies last

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, contact the
 GHI main office.

GHI COMMITTEES REVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN

More than 30 GHI committee volunteers gathered on Saturday, December 8 for an all-day workshop to brainstorm ideas about how the cooperative's committees can be more effective and more aligned with GHI's new strategic plan. Some participants are newcomers to GHI; others have lived here for more than 50 years. But they had one thing in common—a strong commitment to our cooperative and its members.

Why take another look at the GHI committee structure? Over the years, the number of committees has continued to grow, with the result that the workload is getting heavy on Board members and staff, who each send a representative to every committee meeting. In addition, with four key areas targeted in the strategic plan—1) Member Services, 2) Buildings and Grounds, 3) Finance and 4) Governance—the GHI Board felt that it was important to align the committee structure with those four areas, and to identify any gaps or overlap in the work of GHI committees. The Board also believes that the increasing complexity of GHI's committee structure does not necessarily translate into better service to members.

Bill Duncan, a GHI member who has expertise in strategic planning for housing associations, facilitated the workshop. He told the group about GHI's strategic planning process, which included a Board retreat in March 2007 and a strategic planning retreat last summer. After much discussion, a final strategic plan was approved in November (to view the plan, visit the GHI website at www.ghi.coop and go to the Governing Documents page).

He identified three areas of concern: 1) the increasing time commitment of Board members, committee members and staff in committee work; 2) the conflict and disorganization that can result from the growing complexity of the committee structure; and 3) the impact of both those problems on morale and member services.

The role committees play at GHI was discussed in depth. Participants noted that committees are extensions of the Board that conduct research on issues and reach out to the larger membership. It was also recognized that committees are responsible to the Board—and the Board is responsible to members. Clear direction from the Board and responsive committee reports to the Board are essential if the process is to work effectively. Workshop participants also identified the lack of routine communication among committees and with the Board.

Continued on page 7

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

Happy New Year! Now is a time when many of us reflect on our lives, look back at the last year, and make resolutions for the coming year. The GHI Board does the same thing, but as a group, it takes longer for us to review the past and evaluate the present, and especially plan for the future, since GHI is looking ahead not just to 2008, but to the next 30 years!



Reviewing 2007: The Green Ribbon Task Force (GRTF) was set up to identify a vision of what we would want GHI to be in 2037, when our community is 100 years old. GRTF and other cooperative members partnered with the American Institute of Architects, Potomac Valley Chapter, in the Greener Greenbelt Initiative. A charrette held in September drew more than 400 people who shared their ideas, insights, knowledge, and dreams for our community's future. But while we are planning for the long term, the Board recognizes that there are some immediate concerns that must be addressed. Several months were spent reviewing these concerns and that discussion led to a new strategic plan, which the Board approved in November (see more about the plan in the article on page 1). This plan will be modified as needed as the Charrette reports come in and GRTF develops a long-range vision.

Looking Forward: GHI's committee structure is under review (for full coverage, see article on page 1). Committee charters are being reviewed and revised in January, and there will be open enrollment for the revamped committees when current members may choose to remain within the same area of interest, or switch to another area, and when non-active GHI members will be encouraged to become involved. On Valentine's Day, the Board will confirm committee appointments and GHI committees will begin to work under new charters.

It is likely that GHI will have fewer committees as overlaps are eliminated and non-strategic activities are removed from committee charters. But an activity that is not "strategic" can be very valuable. Many current committee activities add greatly to the quality of life in our cooperative, but don't require Board oversight and direction. One option to continue these activities without being part of a Standing Committee's activity would be to form GHI groups that might be called Special Interest Groups (SIGs). would give members a way to pursue activities and programs that are near to their hearts. They could elect their own officers, and no longer have a limit on membership. As a recognized SIG (similar to the status of recognized groups that the city approves), members would still have the opportunity to approach the GHI Board for GHI official action when appropriate.

The new year offers tremendous opportunities for GHI. We want to make sure that we make optimum use of our resources, including staff and volunteer time, and that communication flows freely in both directions as we work toward our common goals. The signs that greet us as we come in to our neighborhood proclaim, "GHI, A Cooperative Community."

May our cooperative spirit ensure that we all enjoy a Happy New Year!



**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 October and November 2007, the Board of Directors took the following actions:

- Adopted a strategic plan.
- Affirmed the 5 foot maximum height for hedges along inner walkways and at intersections of the inner walkways, with a 3-year phase-in plan.
- Approved the following changes in the rules and regulations:
 - Section X regarding identification of insulation specifically as an alteration (copy included with this issue of the Communicator).
 - Section VII regarding finished side of fences (copy included with this issue of the Communicator).
- Approved a member/staff anti-harassment policy and directed staff to promulgate it to members in the Communicator and include it in the new members' handbook.
- Approved a 2008 operating budget in the amount of \$7,958,277.
- Approved the following exceptions:
 - Modification of a gardenside window to an entry door at 5H Plateau Place.
 - Painting of entry doors at 34D Ridge Road a dark green color.
 - Installation of a gardenside natural wood picket fence 1G Westway.
- Authorized the purchase of one used Ford E-150 Van at a cost not to exceed \$15,776 or one new Ford E-150 van from Academy Ford at a cost not to exceed \$21,246.
- Approved yard plats for 9 Court Ridge Road and 1 Court Westway.
- Contributed \$340 to the Friends of the new Deal Café Arts and Music Sustaining Fund.
- Announced James Grant, 19C Ridge Road, winner of the quarterly EZ-Pay drawing.
- Approved 15 new memberships and authorized changes to 5 mutual ownership contracts.
- Entered into service contracts as follows:
 - Fall season concrete sidewalk repair - \$10,393
 - Lateral sewer pipe replacement at 37L Ridge Road- \$11,457
 - Tree maintenance - \$112,685 with a 2% increase in years 2009 and 2010
 - Landscape maintenance of common areas- \$43,640 (2008); \$43,640 (2009); and \$44,510 (2010)

TWELEVE ESSENTIALS FOR COMPANION ANIMAL CARE

BY: DEBORAH COOLEY

The Companion Animal Committee recommends the following 12 steps for responsible companion animal care:

1. Make sure your animals have visible identification to facilitate easy and quick return if lost. Microchipping may ensure identification in the case of lost ID tags.
2. Spay and neuter your animals.
3. Make sure to license and vaccinate your animals.
4. Keep proof of current vaccines with important papers in case of disaster/evacuation. You'll need them for the animals' admittance to shelters.
5. Make sure your companion animals are leashed when off your property.
6. Keep your cats indoors, remember, it's the law!
7. Make sure your companion animals are housed inside.
8. Make sure your companion animals are given a diet that is nutritionally balanced with lots of fresh, clean water.
9. Schedule regular check ups with your veterinarian.
10. Take a training class that will teach you how to safely manage your companion's behavior.
11. Make sure to exercise your companion animals daily through walks and play.
12. Be loyal and patient with your companion animals because they are with you!

We encourage all companion animal guardians and custodians to keep these recommendations in mind so that you and your companion animal can have a happy, healthy and long-lasting friendship.



WHO'S WHO AT GHI

HAPPY NEW YEAR

FROM GHI STAFF

We wish to thank all GHI members for allowing us to serve you during the past year, and for your support and cooperation in helping us care for your homes. We all join in wishing you a New Year filled with peace, happiness and prosperity. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for improving our service.

Management Office:

Gretchen Overdurff, Brenda Lewis, Kathie Linkenhoker, CJ Evans, Patty Bergemann

Fiscal Department:

Stephen Ruckman, Stan Sidman, Fredda Dingler, Muhammad Arefin, Melvin Williams

Member Services:

Joan Krob, Christine Gyemfi, Loren Kryder

Physical Plant Operations & Technical Services:

Eldon Ralph, Bryan Crick, Ellen Folkee, Chemeka Grissett, Kenny Grimes, Matt Thomas, Matt Berres, Herbert Jackson, Tom Sporney, Peter Joseph, Rean Seecharan, Roger Bonifacio

Structures Team:

Robert Anderson, James Duckett, Bryan McCurdy, Lee McLean, Dwayne White, John McBride, John Joseph

Grounds Team:

Winston Taylor, Lawrence Brady, George Rose, Richard Yates

Mechanical Team: *Fatayi Ogansanya, David Jarmon, Desmond McAlmont, Lenner Garner, Derek Gordon, Reggie Lucas, Rob Baluch*

Don't be caught in a dry spell.



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

WHY INSURE WITH HO-6?

BY TOM SPORNEY, STAFF ENGINEER

A plastic wastebasket placed on a stovetop while cleaning. A burning candle placed on the top of a toilet tank. An unnoticed ember from a fireplace that smoldered below the floor. A bird's nest in a chimney cap soon after a cleaning.

What is the common thread in these? They are all conditions existing in the homes of careful, responsible coop members that resulted in a property loss incident. Regardless of how attentive people are, there will be that remote chance that a judgment error or oversight may occur.

Under Maryland Condominium Law, cooperatives are required to have property insurance that covers the common elements and all conveyed structure, walls, floors and ceilings even if they are not a part of the common elements. If there is an incident that would normally be covered by insurance (i.e. a fire, windstorm, etc.) the master policy will cover the claim (subject to the coop's deductible), but it would exclude coverage for personal property in the unit, upgrades to the unit, and things other than the common elements or walls, floors and ceiling. In addition, liability associated with the unit would not be covered by the master policy.

Some assume that the cooperative will cover these things even if the insurance company does not. This is not true. The cooperative is not a substitute for the insurance company. If a member doesn't have his or her own insurance policy, they will have to pay for these types of losses (personal property, upgrades, liability) out of their own pocket or try to prove that another owner was negligent. In addition, if a member is found negligent in an insurance incident, the cooperative may seek payment of its deductible from that member. That's where an HO-6 policy comes in.

An HO-6 policy will provide the following benefits not provided by GHI's master policy:

- contents insurance - personal belongings such as clothing, furniture, decorations, bedding & linen, electronics, jewelry, etc.

- liability insurance - occurrences for which the member is liable, such as a dog biting a visitor or a picture falling & injuring a visitor
- replacement of improvements - coverage for upgrades or improvements above the standard condition of the home
- loss assessment - would cover reimbursement of GHI deductible if the member is found liable. \$1000 is standard coverage on an HO-6 policy; the cost of the premium increase to \$5000 coverage to match GHI's present deductible is minimal.

GHI **strongly** recommends that each member have an HO-6 policy. Several insurance companies can write you one. Information on the broker GHI uses is available from the office. This policy is required for anyone having a wood burning or gas-fired stove or fireplace. Please be a responsible coop member and obtain an HO-6 policy if you don't already have one.

THE ARTIFACTS GARAGE IS CLOSING SOON

BY ROBIN EVERLY

The Artifacts Garage is located at #28 Parkway. It contains original components from GHI houses that have been donated by GHI members when they remodel. They have been available for purchase by members who want to refurbish their homes with original components. Currently, the garage is crowded with artifacts, run by a dwindling number of volunteers, has very limited hours and has had little recent activity. Therefore, the Board at the December 20 meeting approved giving the remaining items to the group Community Forklift to be sold through their facility in Edmonston, Maryland.

Community Forklift (www.communityforklift.com) is a non-profit group that sells salvaged surplus and green-building materials and works with at risk youth. Donation of materials to this group are tax deductible. Members will be able to purchase not only 1937 era artifacts, but older and more recent materials from this facility. Throughout January, there will be going out of business sales at the garage. The dates are to be determined and will be advertised in the *Greenbelt News Review*. You can also find information about the garage on our web site at <http://ghi.coop/Artifacts.htm>. After February 2, the items will be transferred to Community Forklift.

Greenbelt Homes, Inc. Board of Directors 2008 Meeting Schedule

Thursday	January 10	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Monday	January 14	7:00 p.m.	Work Session: Non-Walkway Hedges
Thursday	January 24	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	February 14	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	February 28	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	March 13	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	March 27	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	April 10	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	April 24	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	May 8	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday	May 15	7:30 p.m.	Annual Membership Meeting
Thursday	May 22	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting

BOARD SETS ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Today's diverse communities and workplaces require that we operate in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In recognition of the responsibility GHI members have as employers of the staff that conducts the day to day maintenance and administrative functions of the cooperative, the GHI Member/Staff Anti-harassment Policy is designed to address any issues of discrimination and/or hurtful conduct that may occur. Please include this policy (see insert) as part of your GHI Handbook.

2008 MONTHLY CO-OP FEE BREAKDOWN AND FORM 1098 FOR TAX RECORDS

In December 2007, a letter showing the monthly co-op fee breakdown for 2008 was mailed to members. In January members will receive a colored sheet of paper (substitute 1098) indicating the amount of the real estate taxes paid in 2007. Please be sure to keep the substitute 1098 with your tax records. The Board of Directors authorized a \$10 charge for replacements.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact the Finance Committee or the Finance Department at 301-474-4161.

Continued from page 1

During lunch, committee members looked at the flip-chart pages posted around the room that displayed the purpose or “charter” of each committee and activities in 2007. Participants were asked to find linkages among committees, identify overlaps and gaps related to the goals of the strategic plan, and write their questions and comments on the flip-chart pages.

In the afternoon, small-group sessions were held that focused on current committee assignments and three key areas listed in the strategic plan related to a committee’s work. Some were relatively easy--the Finance Committee and Investment Committee went under the Finance area. Others were more challenging. The Member and Community Relations, Marketing, Communications, and Companion Animal Committees were tentatively grouped under Member Services. The Green Ribbon Task Force , Architecture Review, Sustainable Design & Practices, Woodlands and Yard Line Committees were grouped under the Building and Grounds area.

Different scenarios were discussed and different alignments were suggested, such as the merging of some committees and the creation of a coordinating committee to improve communication between specific committees and to pinpoint gaps and overlap. Participants discussed the different functions of committees – some carry out research needs of the Board, others (like the Green Ribbon Task Force, which helped organize the Greener Greenbelt Charrette) focus on a particular project or task, and a few do social outreach activities and resemble a special interest group in their functions. Committees in this category might not have to follow strict Board direction and would be free to involve more members.

The GHI Board will review committee charters in January with the aim of having a structure that will allow us to do the best job in serving the current membership and helping our cooperative to thrive. We appreciate every committee member who devoted a Saturday close to the holidays to attend the workshop – their commitment of their Saturday demonstrates how special GHI is to us all and what an important part it plays in our lives.

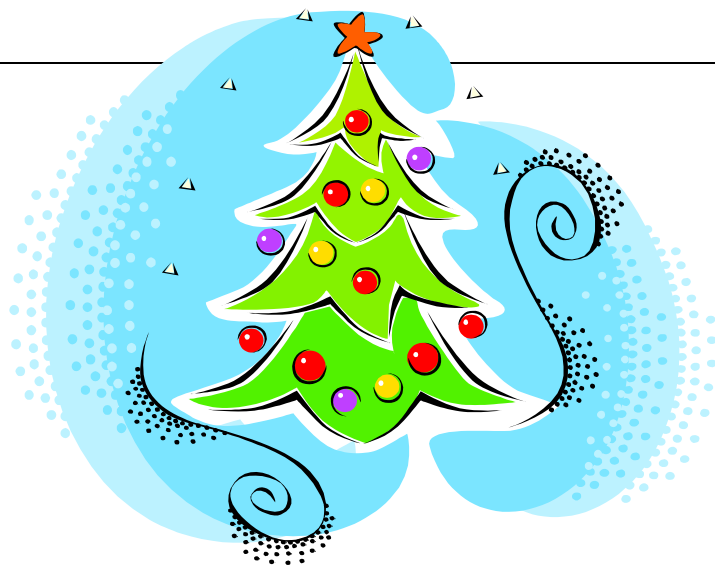
– Sylvia Lewis

CHRISTMAS TREE DISPOSAL



Your discarded Christmas tree can be recycled! The Public Works Department will pick up trees at the following locations beginning Friday, December 28, 2007 and on the following Fridays until February 1, 2008.

- 73 Court Ridge Road – playground opposite
- Plateau Place & Ridge Road- corner of the playground side.
- Research Road & Hillside Road – corner
- 44 Court Ridge Road- area near playground
- Eastway & Crescent Road – corner
- 21 Court Ridge Road – across from Green Ridge House
- Crescent Road & Ridge Road- playground at junction
- Parkway Road – corner across from Community Church
- Parkway Road – corner across from 58 Court Crescent Road
- 7 Court Southway Road- Playground at Little League Field
- 11 & 13 Court Ridge Road – Park area between courts



It's a Date January/February 2008

Jan. 8	AD Hoc Yard Line Committee	8:30 AM
Jan. 8	Member & Community Relations Com.	7:00 PM
Jan. 10	Board of Directors	7:30 PM
Jan. 14	Work Session on Hedges	7:00 PM
Jan. 16	Finance and Investment Committee and Woodland Committee	7:00 PM
Jan. 22	Coffee Social	7:00 PM
Jan. 24	Board of Directors	7:30 PM
Jan. 29	Marketing Committee	7:00 PM
Jan. 30	Companion Animal Committee	7:30 PM
Feb. 5	GHI Steering	7:00 PM
Feb. 5	Member & Community Relations	7:00 PM
Feb. 14	Board of Directors	7:30 PM
Feb. 20	Woodlands Committee	7:00 PM
Feb 21	Board of Directors	7:00 PM
Feb. 26	Marketing Committee	7:00 PM
Feb. 27	Companion Animal Committee	7:00 PM
Feb. 28	Board of Directors	7:30 PM

HANDBOOK UPDATES

Included with this newsletter are insert pages for inclusion in your Members' Handbook. Changes and/or modification to the rules occur as follows:

- SECTION VII. A new paragraph 4 has been added to specify that the finished side of the fence must always face the neighbor or common area.
- SECTION X. IMPROVEMENTS, ALTERATIONS AND ADDITONS. Under definition, paragraph a. is modified to incorporate: "including the addition of insulation."

Please remove page 49a-06/49b.04 and replace with insert page 49ai-07/49b.04.

Please remove page 55-06/56-07 and replace with insert page 55-07/56-07.

2008 ANNUAL MEETING ON MAY 15

The Nominations and Elections Committee (N&E) reminds members that the annual meeting time and elections for the GHI Board of Directors, Audit Committee, and N&E Committee are approaching. For over 50 years, our Board has managed and enhanced our community. And now it's time for members to run for any elected position in the upcoming election. Any resident member at least 21 years of age may serve. It is easy to get on the ballot. Simply fill out a consent to serve form and file it with Board Secretary, Dorothy Lauber or any N&E committee member or submit a nomination by petition with 10 members signatures to the Secretary of the Corporation or the Corporation Office at Hamilton Place. Descriptions of the duties for each position are available at the GHI office. See the web site at <http://ghi.coop/n&einfo/package.htm>. This year's committee is Deborah Cooley, Robin Everly, Marjorie Gray, Andrew Nitz, and Elizabeth Wellborn. Please feel free to contact them for additional information.

IMPORTANT: ABOUT 2008 COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS

Here is the 2008 schedule for when articles, photographs, and announcements are due for the Communicator newsletter. Please submit this information, before or on the due date, to Brenda Lewis at blewis@greenbelthomes.net and not individual committee members. The committee will give some leeway for articles written about an event, announcement, or meeting that has taken place a few days before or after the newsletter deadline, but is important to cover in the next upcoming issue. Under these circumstances, please contact Brenda and let her know how soon you can get the materials to us. We need to start enforcing our deadlines because the last few issues we have been scrambling at the last minute to get the newsletter to the printer. As you know, we are all volunteers and have many other things going on in our lives. Please help us to avoid this situation with future issues. Thank you! - Robin Everly, Chair.

Communicator 2008 Issues	Articles Due By
March/April	Monday, January 21
May/June	Monday, March 17
July/August	Monday, May 19
September/October	Monday, July 21
November/December	Monday, September 22
January/February 2009	Monday, November 17