



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

# COMMUNICATOR

Bi-Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee

Administration: (301) 474-4161 • Maintenance: (301) 474-6011

E-mail: [mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net) • [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop)

© 2008 - Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

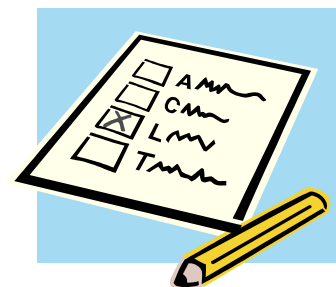
Message from President	2
Board Highlights	3
Contact Information	3
Bright Ideas	4
Handbook Updates	4
Who's Who at GHI	5
Online Fence Survey Info	6
Beautification Program	6
House and Garden Tour	6
Relocating Wildlife	7
Pesticides and Wildlife	7
Drain Stoppages	7
It's A Date/ Calendars	8

## ANNUAL MEETING TIME — LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!!

BY: ROBIN EVERLY, CHAIR, NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Once a year, our member-owned housing cooperative holds a meeting to conduct business and elect the members who will lead and manage for the coming year. This year's Annual Meeting is on Thursday, May 15 beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Doors open at 7:00 p.m., so please come early. Let's start on time.

Voting for Board of Directors and Audit Committee will take place after the meeting concludes and the following day between the hours of 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the GHI Office. Five Directors will be elected, as well as the three members on the Audit Committee.



If you can't participate in person (but we hope you do), there are two ways to "let your Voice be heard". One choice is to give a "proxy" to someone you trust who is a GHI member, essentially appointing them to participate in the meeting and subsequent voting on your behalf. Proxy forms are available at the GHI office and must be returned to the office by close of business Friday, May 9 or to Board Secretary Lauber, 9M Ridge Road, by midnight, May 10.

Another way is to vote absentee by completing an absentee ballot. Ballots will be made available through the GHI office beginning on Monday, May 12 through noon on May 14. Ballots must be returned to Joan Krob, GHI's Director of Member Services by 3:30 p.m. on May 14. Keep in mind, absentee voting only allows for you to vote for Board and Audit committee members. Your concerns and "Voice" will not be represented for business decisions made at the actual meeting.

### GHI COMMUNITY YARD SALE

Date: June 14, 2008

Time: 8:30 am- 12:30 pm

Where: Front Lawn -- GHI Office Grounds

**COST TO RESERVE A TABLE  
IS \$10.00**

**CONTACT: GHI - 301-474-4161**

### • SUBMIT • YOUR GHI PICTURES

Including but not limited to:

- Community Related
- Surrounding Areas
- GHI Events and Neighborhoods

Questions about submitting and picture formats? Contact the GHI Main office at 301-474-4161.

### 2008 ANNUAL MEETING ON MAY 15

It is easy to get on the ballot. See the website at <http://ghi.coop/n&einfopackage.htm>.

This year's committee is Deborah Cooley, Robin Everly, Marjorie Gray and Andrew Nitz. Please contact them for additional information.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

I sometimes think that a movie, or even a TV series could be made from the day to day happenings in GHI. The production would include drama, humor, pathos, excitement, and adventure. The roles involved would stretch the capacity of any casting agency, ranging from heroic to villainous with plenty of opportunities for comic relief. The TV series could include episodes that focus on the environment, humane treatment of animals, work place issues, house maintenance, mental health, conflict resolution, birth, romance, and death. There's plenty of material to run for several seasons.



Pilot program: Neighbors are at loggerheads. (Possible causes of conflict: parking issues, noise, lifestyle differences, animals, children, all of the above). Joan Krob, Director of Member Services tries to resolve their differences. Suggests City's Mediation Services, but neighbors refuse to go. They are brought before a Complaints Panel to state their case. Opportunity to show how actions can be perceived very differently by different people, a la the recent movie *Vantage Point* or the 1950's classic *Rashomon*. Should appeal to classic movie buffs.



Subjects for other episodes:

- Creative juices flow freely as a group of members brainstorm a theme for Labor Day float and booth. Reminiscent of the old Mickey Rooney/ Judy Garland " Lets put on a show!" movies. Should appeal to seniors who pine for the olden days.
- Members face choices of what they want for their community in the future. Dramatizes stark consequences of action and inaction as shown in *It's a Wonderful Life's* Aging houses need serious attention and rehabilitation. Reminiscent of several "This Old House" programs.

Actually the GHI Show has been running for 53 years, and throughout all that time the GHI Board of Directors has been in the middle of the action. Your Board meets twice a month for most of the year, and holds training workshops and work sessions as needed. The Board is responsible for reviewing the General Manager's performance, approving the budget, member fees, contracts, the replacement reserve, member applications, and for terminating memberships for cause. It also makes decisions on policy matters that are essential for the well being of our cooperative.

Can't you picture yourself having a role in this production ? You could be " Absolutely Mahvelous!"

There's still time to put your name in as a candidate for the Board, Audit Committee or Nomination and Elections Committee. Fill out a Candidate Consent Form and return it to the GHI office by Friday May 5<sup>th</sup>. Forms are available from Joan Krob at 301-474-4161 ext. 138 and from the GHI web site at <http://ghi.coop/about.htm> . Scroll down to the Nominations and Elections Committee section.

- To join a committee, call Member Services 301-474-4161 ext. 138 and ask for an application form or download a Personal Data Form from the website at [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop) by clicking on Committees.
- To be a Court Liaison, call Member Services 301-474-4161, ext. 138.
- To run for office, contact the Nomination and Elections Committee (see article on page 1).
- To submit a "Bright Idea" e-mail me at [revs.lew@verizon.net](mailto:revs.lew@verizon.net) or at [mgtoffice@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:mgtoffice@greenbelthomes.net) or call me at 301-474-3635.

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

**OFFICERS:**

**Sylvia Lewis**  
President  
(301) 474-3635  
revs.lew@verizon.net

**Sheila Alpers**  
Vice President  
(301) 345-8265  
Alpers@hud.gov

**Suzette Agans**  
Treasurer  
(202) 460-1532  
suzflower@yahoo.com

**Dorothy Lauber**  
Secretary  
(301) 474-3397  
wren0413@aol.com

**DIRECTORS:**

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

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

**Luisa Robles**  
(301) 313-0409  
lrobles@wildmail.com

**Ed Hickey**  
(301) 220-1966  
Ronnie\_ed@verizon.net

**Errol Mazursky**  
(202) 332-3320  
(571) 262-9101  
errol@elpnet.org  
eflynn23@yahoo.com

**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.

The Board of Directors took the following actions from February 1 through March 13th:

Approved and welcomed four new memberships:

- Jake and Gregory Gigliotti
- Lynn Pastellak
- Anne Salb
- Phyllis Wolfinger

Entered into the following contracts:

- B&P Utilities for emergency sewer repairs at 51 L-P Ridge Road -\$10,985.
- Hearn Insulation & Improvement Co., for replacement of 24 slate roofs, 32 porch roof flashing, and 14 gutter and downspout replacements- \$335,800.
- RRH Associates, LLC for 12 slate roof replacements - \$165,097.
- Warring Builders to make repairs to 8A Crescent Road - \$14,536.
- Reserve Advisors, Inc., to update GHI's current replacement reserve plan for its main housing units, at a cost not to exceed \$6200, and to conduct a new independent study for structural additions at a cost not to exceed \$4,100.
- Gott Custom Contracting for rehabilitation of 20K Hillside Road - \$22,138. and 9-L Laurel Hill, - \$25,759 (GHI will recover costs from terminated members on resale).

Appointed a five member team to study two suggested options regarding the reorganization of the following committees: Sustainable Design and Practices, Greener Greenbelt Task Force and Woodlands.

Approved a change in hedge height/maintenance rules to allow members to maintain their hedges so they do not encroach or obstruct walkways, access lanes, parking lots, or court driveways at any time. The Board will direct staff to enforce hedge height where hedges at court and road intersections exceed the City of Greenbelt's code requirement of 42" within a visibility zone.

Approved yard plats for 6 Court Ridge Road.

Removed the 25 foot limit on side yards for end frame homes.

Directed the Architectural Review Committee to investigate the cost and long-term impact of turning part of the boat storage lot into built or semi-permanent storage.

Approved an exception for a proposed skylight and light tube in the gardenside addition at 9-G Research.

Scheduled a March 20 work session to review committee reorganization.

## GIVE US YOUR "BRIGHT IDEAS!"

BY: SYLVIA LEWIS



**This column publishes suggestions from members on ways to make living in GHI even better.**

*From Angela Miotto* – "In light of our goal of sustainability, how about offering members the opportunity to purchase clothes lines at a savings such as is done with rain barrels? The umbrella style would probably be simplest to install. I know that I would use a line for many things but don't have one and would have difficulty having it installed. I even think that the Board might consider routinely requiring new members to have one. What do you think?" Thank you Angela! This idea has been passed on to the Sustainable Design and Practices Committee which is exploring ideas on how GHI can assist members in conserving energy and otherwise live up to the "green" in Greenbelt.

*From Robin Bailey* – two suggestions to improve communication:

- (1) Display the updates to the Owner's Manual on a web page.
- (2) Contact members to send in their email addresses and send the *Communicator* electronically to those that respond. (Of course if someone doesn't have an email then they would have to have it delivered).

Actually Robin, the Owner's Manual, aka the "Members Handbook," and our bimonthly newsletter, the *Communicator*, can be found on the GHI web site. The Member's Handbook is at <http://ghi.coop/govdocs/index.htm> under Governing Documents. the *Communicator*, issues from March/April 2004 to the present can be found at <http://ghi.coop/communicator/index.htm>. To get notifications that the latest *Communicator* is available electronically you can sign up for our e-communicator service. Go to the home page <http://www.ghi.coop> and fill out block on the upper right hand side where it says, "Get the GHI e-communicator". When a new issue is posted online,

usually earlier than the print copy reaches your home, you will get a short email notification from GHI with additional information.

The Communications Committee has discussed the option of electronic delivery through email addresses. Right now, delivery of the newsletter to your home is handled by staff. Unfortunately, it is difficult to keep track of who is receiving the newsletter electronically and who is getting it delivered, so everyone receives the newsletter in print form. We will be trying to figure out ways to give members this option--receiving the newsletter only in electronic form if they want after we have had a chance to enhance the web site. Thank you Robin for bringing it to our attention that members need more information on what is available on the web site.

- Sylvia Lewis, Board President, and Robin Everly, Chair, Communications Committee

### Have a Bright Idea?

Send it to Sylvia Lewis at [revs.lew@verizon.net](mailto:revs.lew@verizon.net) or email [mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net)

## Handbook Inserts



Recently, the Board of Directors took action that changes the rules and regulations dealing with hedges, and that of yards for end frame homes. You will find new page inserts for your Members' Handbook included with this issue.

**Hedges:** The Board removed the 5 foot rule for hedge height; however, members must maintain their hedges so they do not encroach or obstruct walkways, access lanes, parking lots, or court driveways at any time. The Board has directed staff to enforce hedge height where hedges at court and road intersections exceed the City of Greenbelt's code requirement of 42" within a visibility zone. Please remove the page 39b-05 and 39c-05 from your handbook and in its place insert the new page numbered as 39b-08 and 39c-08.

**Yard Area for End Frame Homes:** The Board abolished the 25 foot limitation on side yards for end frame homes. Please remove the page numbered 42i-06 and 42a.i-06 from your handbook and in its place insert the new page numbered as 42-08 and 42a-08.



## WHO'S WHO AT GHI

BY: BRENDA C. LEWIS, SPHR

### Sheri Swaim

As soon as you meet Sheri Swaim, the Executive Assistant in the Management Office, you know she has excellent customer service skills and a very positive outlook on life. Sheri spent several years working for a local church and uses diplomacy and her facilitation skills in her job at GHI. She has a background as a small business owner and is a trained Therapeutic Family Mentor.



Joining GHI at the end of January 2008, Sheri has very quickly adapted to her duties. She likes people and does not find the constant requests for services from members and staff at all stressful. She wants you to know that her aim is to find solutions to whatever problem is brought to her attention.

Away from her day job, everything revolves around her husband of 23 years, Dennis, and their three children, sons Jacob, 17 and Alex 13, and daughter Savannah who is 12. Everything, that is, except their new six month old dog, Gracie, two cats -- Zoë and Fritters, and ferret, Sparkee. Sheri and her family live in nearby Bowie, Maryland.

The entire family has a strong relationship with their church. They enjoy card and board games, as well as swimming, reading, and camping. When vacationing, they like to travel to West Virginia and other camping sites, but this summer they are planning an extensive vacation which will include Niagara Falls and New York City.

Sheri has fallen in love with walking around the lake on her lunch hour, and also enjoys reading the Greenbelters blog on the Internet, which keeps 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.

## LEGISLATIVE ISSUES UPDATE

BY: SYLVIA LEWIS

Members of housing cooperatives, who are over the age of 55 and have a household income below 80% of the area's median household income, will be eligible for low cost loans to make their homes more accessible later this year. A bill entitled the Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program – Loans to Members of Cooperative Housing Corporations has been passed by the state legislature this session. It will be signed by Governor O'Malley this summer and will go into effect on October 1, 2008. See for more details: <http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/billfile/HB0074.htm> and <http://www.dhcd.state.md.us/Website/programs/ahsp/ahsp.aspx>.

Up until now, housing cooperative members were excluded from State housing assistance programs because they did not have a deed to their property to use as collateral. General Manager, Gretchen Overdurff, and Board President, Sylvia Lewis, testified on the need of our seniors to have access to the program and suggested ways to secure the loans. The bill allows the State Department of Housing and Community Development to make housing assistance program loans of more than \$5,000 to a housing cooperative member if the loan is secured by a perfected security interest in the member's cooperative interest. This means that the member(s) sign a Security Agreement with the lender in which they pledge the proceeds of sale to secure the repayment of the note, thereby giving the lender first lien rights in the event of a default. This agreement is recorded with the Department of Assessments and Taxation, becoming a legally binding agreement.

We commend our District 22 State Delegates Tawanna Gaines and Justin Ross for cosponsoring this bill, and especially Delegate Anne Healey who testified in favor of the bill before the House and Senate Committees.

GHI Legislative Issues Group



GHI Community  
Wide Open House

May 3

For more information, contact GHI Main office  
at 301-474-4161 or [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop)

## ONLINE FENCE SURVEY FROM ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Architectural Review Committee is preparing to review GHI rules for fences, and would like your input. We would like to know your opinion about typical styles of fences that 'fit' in terms of appearance.

Visit

[www.ghi.coop/ARC/fencesurvey.htm](http://www.ghi.coop/ARC/fencesurvey.htm)  
for more information and  
to register your opinion.

## HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR

The Member and Community Relations Committee is beginning to plan GHI's 2008 House and Garden Tour. This year the tour will be on the North end of town between Eastway and 71 Court Ridge Road.



We are seeking a wide variety of homes featuring architectural enhancements, remodeling and renovation projects as well as landscaped yards, including those that might show how you have added rain barrels or specialty features such as butterfly or rain gardens.

The tour is scheduled to occur on Sunday, June 22. It will take place from 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

If you are interested in showcasing your home or garden, please call the front desk at 301.474.4161 or e-mail [jkrob@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:jkrob@greenbelthomes.net).

Simply provide us with an address and we will take it from there. Also, if you are a walker and are interested in helping us identify homes that should be considered for the tour, we would appreciate your assistance.

## COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM TO BEGIN MAY 12TH

The 2008 Community Beautification Program will begin on May 12<sup>th</sup>. The Community Beautification Inspector is Herb Jackson. He performed this role for the first time last year.

This year, the inspector will enforce hedge height rules only at street right-of-ways and court entrances. Hedges at these locations should not exceed 42 inches in height.

This is a City of Greenbelt and a Prince Georges County legal requirement to ensure public safety and eliminate automobile hazards caused by an obstructed view. The inspector will also ensure that hedges are trimmed back so they do not obstruct walkways, access lanes, parking lots, and court driveways in either wet or dry weather.

We encourage members to direct questions and concerns to the community Beautification hotline at 301-474-4161, ext 139. Additional information about the Community Beautification Program and yard care tips can be found on-line at [www.ghi.coop/community](http://www.ghi.coop/community).



**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](http://www.ghi.coop/rainbarrels/index.htm) or contact Rean Secharran, Technical Services, at (301) 474-4161, ext. 143 or [rsecharran@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:rsecharran@greenbelthomes.net)**

## WHY NOT TRAP AND RELOCATE WILDLIFE?

By: ANIMAL COMPANION COMMITTEE

1. Trapping, without proper licensing, is against the law!
2. Trapping and relocating wildlife is often a waste of time and effort because it does not solve the immediate problem. If animals are removed, others from the surrounding areas will soon move in to their place.
3. Several studies have shown that relocated wildlife have reduced survival rates. When put in an unfamiliar area, wildlife have difficulty finding and competing for food and shelter. They may also get killed on roadways in an attempt to find their way back "home".
4. Many trapped and relocated animals are lactating females. Orphans left behind die of starvation. Orphans left to die in attics, chimneys, etc. will leave quite an unpleasant odor.
5. Some animal control agencies and "pest" removal companies will trap wildlife, but this often ends up with the animals being relocated or euthanized (put to death) unnecessarily.

For Humane Wildlife Solutions Visit:

[http://www.hsus.org/wildlife/urban\\_wildlife\\_our\\_wild\\_neighbor/humane\\_wildlife\\_services.html](http://www.hsus.org/wildlife/urban_wildlife_our_wild_neighbor/humane_wildlife_services.html)

## PESTICIDES AND WILDLIFE

The use of pesticides by homeowners accounts for the majority of wildlife poisonings reported to the EPA each year. Birds are particularly vulnerable, as they feed on the ground and often mistake pesticide granules for food. Pesticides are also routinely used to control weeds and vegetation along roadsides and borders which are used by wildlife as habitats for nesting and raising their young. When a bird or small mammal is sickened by pesticides, they neglect their young, abandon their nests and become more susceptible to disease and predators. Wildlife specialists are becoming increasingly alarmed by the pesticide contamination of lakes, rivers and streams which are essential food and water sources for so many species. —Grassroots Environmental Education

"Each year, we dump tens of millions of pounds of fertilizers and pesticides on our own backyards, thus poisoning birds and wildlife while creating one of the largest sources of pollution runoff in our lakes and streams." – John Flicker, President, National Audubon Society

## MEASURES TO PREVENT DRAIN STOPPAGES

Our maintenance staff handles several hundred work orders every year to unclog drains in GHI units. Following are some precautions that members can take to prevent drains from becoming clogged.



Do not let food particles enter the drain attached to your kitchen sink. Use a drain screen to catch the waste and clean the screen regularly.

When you finish cooking, let the grease harden; scoop out as much as you can and throw it into the garbage. If you pour grease down the drain it will harden in your pipes. Hair and soap scum are major culprits in clogging bath and shower drains. Use a drain screen to catch the debris and clean the screen regularly.

Do not flush anything else down the toilet drain except toilet paper and human waste. Do not flush the following items down your sewer line: feminine sanitary products, dental floss, Q-Tips, handi-wipes, baby wipes, diapers, paper towels and facial tissue. These items may clear the trap in the toilet but clog the main drain to your home.

When grinding waste in a garbage disposal, always run cold water before and at least one minute after grinding is completed to wash the food waste down the drain line. Secondly, grind up food in small batches, allowing the food to wash down the drain line. Finally, avoid grinding up the following types of food: corn husks, corn cobs, onion peel, artichoke leaves, banana peels, celery, or any other fibrous foods.

**For assistance or questions,  
please call GHI maintenance at  
301-474-6011.**

**It's a Date May/June 2008**

May 3	Community Wide Open House	12:30-4:00 PM
May 7	Member and Community Relations	7:00 PM
May 14	Architecture & Environment	7:30 PM
May 15	Annual Meeting & Elections	7:30 PM
May 16	Continued Membership Voting	All Day
May 19	Communications Committee	6:45 PM
May 21	Woodlands Committee Finance Committee	7:00 PM 7:00 PM
May 26	Memorial Day, Offices Closed	
May 27	Ad Hoc Yard Line Committee	8:30 AM - 10:00 AM
May 28	Companion Animal	7:30 PM
June 4	Member and Community Relations	7:00 PM
June 12	Board of Directors	7:30 PM
June 16	Communications Committee	6:45 PM
June 18	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
June 19	Sustainable Design & Practice	7:00 PM
June 25	Companion Animal	7:30 PM
June 26	Board of Directors	7:30 PM

**IMPORTANT: ABOUT 2008 COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS**

Here is the 2008 schedule of deadlines for submission of articles, photographs, and announcements are due for the *Communicator* newsletter. **Please submit this information, no later than the due date, to Brenda Lewis at [blewis@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:blewis@greenbelthomes.net), not to individual committee members.**

We need to start enforcing our deadlines because we are still scrambling to get the newsletter to the printer and completed on time. As you know, we are all volunteers. Please help us to avoid this situation with future issues. Thank you! -Robin Everly, Chair

**Communicator 2008 Issues Articles Due By**

July/August	Monday, May 19
September/October	Monday, July 21
November/December	Monday, September 22
January/February 2009	Monday, November 17

**Greenbelt Homes, Inc. Board of Directors  
2008 May Meeting Schedule**

May 8	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting
May 15	7:30 p.m.	Annual Member Meeting
May 22	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting

**2008 Events Calendar**

*Sponsored by the Member & Community Relations Committee*

Date	Event
Jun. 14	GHI Annual Community Yard Sale 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Jun. 22	House & Garden Tour Noon until 4:00 p.m.
Aug. 30- Sept. 1	Labor Day Activities Info. Tables, Booth, & Float
Oct. 5	GHI Annual Picnic 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Note: Dates are subject to change. Check [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop) and click on the calendar on the right to verify the dates.

**GHI Maintenance Schedule**

Apr. – June	Slate Roofs & Copper Gutters 56 C-H, 58 E-H, 60 A-K Crescent 1 G-K Gardenway
May	Community Beautification Inspections
May	Trim Painting
May	Spring Gutter Cleaning (limited)
June	Spring Concrete Repairs
June	Underground Utility Repairs
July – Sept.	Slate Roofs & Copper Gutters 7 AB, GH Crescent 4 EF Ridge 2 E-K Westway
July	WSSC Water Supply Repairs (tentative)
July	Parking Lot Repairs
Sept.	Townhouse Furnace Replacements
Oct.	Fall Concrete Repairs
Nov.	Fall Gutter Cleaning