



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

# COMMUNICATOR

Bi-Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee

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## INSIDE

Message from President	2
Contact Information	2
Board Highlights	3
Spring is for Yard Work	4
Less Trash More Recycling	4
Spotlight: Marketing Com.	5
GHI Ad Contest	5
Election Schedule & Deadlines	6
Rain Barrel Article	7
Who's Who at GHI	7
It's A Date	8
Maintenance Schedule	8



**March 8 remember to set your clocks 1 hour ahead.**



**Have an idea for a story?**  
Send GHI your story ideas. See back page for submission information (see page 8).

## IT'S NOMINATION AND ELECTION SEASON AT GHI

BY MARAT MOORE

One of the best things about living in GHI is participating in the cooperative's grassroots democracy – by speaking up at board meetings, joining a committee, asking questions at an open forum with all GHI candidates, attending the annual May meeting and casting your vote for new GHI leaders – or maybe running for office yourself. GHI is one of the nation's largest, most stable, and most innovative housing cooperatives, and we need good leaders to keep it that way.

GHI's Nominations & Elections Committee is moving into high gear. Under GHI bylaws, we have four functions: to solicit potential GHI candidates; prepare the list of nominations for the annual meeting; conduct fair elections at the annual meeting; and present certified election results to the membership. See the complete election schedule on page 6.

The first goal is our main concern now – to solicit members to run for election. We need the help of members and GHI committees to put together a full slate of candidates this year for the Board of Directors (five open seats, two-year terms); Audit Committee (three open seats, one-year terms); and Nominations & Elections (five open seats, one-year terms).

Are you interested in running for office? Do you know neighbors or committee volunteers who would make strong candidates? Talk with them soon, and review the Frequently Asked Questions enclosed with this issue or read them online by going to the GHI Web site at [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop) and clicking on "Elections." Then contact us with any recommendations, and we will follow up directly with those members and answer any questions they may have. (Contact N&E members: Kathleen Gallagher, chair, [gallagher.k@verizon.net](mailto:gallagher.k@verizon.net); Marjorie Gray, 301-474-6224; Ginny Jones, [ginnyrjones@gmail.com](mailto:ginnyrjones@gmail.com); and Marat Moore, 240-475-7617.)

Any GHI member in good standing who is at least 21 years old may serve in an elected position. It's easy to get on the ballot – just fill out the candidate consent-to-serve form and return it to an N&E committee member or to GHI by Mon., May 11. To obtain an information packet for candidates, pick up a packet at the GHI office or download the materials from the Web site.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for GHI's annual meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday night, May 21. Besides hearing the latest developments at GHI and voting for GHI leaders, it's a great time to see your neighbors, take home a free native plant, and look at colorful displays about everything that's happening in this vibrant community. See you there!

See Schedule on page 6

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

### GHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS:

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Brenda Lewis: GHI Staff Support

Questions? Contact 301-474-4161 ext. 152 or blewis@greenbelthomes.net

As the weather becomes warmer and the days grow longer, the anticipation of spring seems to encourage us to do all we can to improve our surroundings. We plant and weed and spruce up our gardens. We clean, repair and paint our homes to make them more attractive to live in. Let us also look beyond the walls of our homes and the limits of our yard lines at what needs to be done in our wider community. GHI can use your time and talents on committees and in one-time volunteer opportunities. (See the Marketing Committee's article on page 5, check out other volunteer opportunities on [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop), or call Member Services at 301-474-4161, ext 138.).



Working toward maintaining and improving our cooperative is important. But we are aware that the quality of life for GHI members is also greatly influenced by what goes on beyond the physical boundaries of our planned community. Whenever possible we work in partnership with the City on projects. Many members volunteer on City committees, and in our schools and community organizations.



There is another way in which every one in GHI can help to keep our community strong and thriving. Businesses in Greenbelt need our help. The economic downturn is hurting them all. If any should fail and leave empty storefronts – especially in Roosevelt Center – it could affect the value of our property, not to mention City tax receipts. If we want the advantages of having stores and services on our doorstep we need to give them our support. When you eat out, eat out in one of Greenbelt's great restaurants. Whatever you need, from hardware to yoga, from trophies to toiletries, from food to massage, from clothes to books and electronics, can be found at Roosevelt Center, Beltway Plaza, or Greenway Shopping Center. Save gasoline and time, and support the economic vitality of our town by shopping locally. Keep the "green" in Greenbelt.

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## **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, 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 November and December 2008, the Board of Directors took the following actions:

### **Policies**

- Authorized conducting of a survey of the members at 7,9,11 Courts Southway and 18 Court Ridge Road to ascertain the number of members who are interested in renting a proposed boiler room storage unit in 9 Court Southway at a fee of \$150 per month for a 4-unit layout or \$100 per month for a 7-unit layout.
- Accepted the proposal of the auditing firm of Murphy & Murphy to perform the GHI and GDC consolidated audits for the years ending December 31, 2008, 2009, and 2010 plus tax return preparations for Maryland and federal tax returns for both. Subsequent year's engagements will be brought back for reaffirmation annually, pending satisfactory performance of their services.
- Approved the 2009 Operating Budget in the amount of \$8,029,388 with depreciation on members' homes of \$503,508.
- Approved for first reading Expenditure Authorization #1 in the amount of \$6,930,020 to allow implementation of the new operating budget.
- Endorsed a compressed workweek policy for GHI employees effective February 1, 2009. This policy will be evaluated at the end of the first quarter for overall satisfaction and to evaluate budget impacts.
- Approved an expenditure of \$411,761 for renewal of the business owners' insurance package for 2009 with The Travelers.

### **Committee Referrals and Reports**

- Referred the subleasing policy/criteria to the Marketing Committee for review.

### **Exceptions to Regulations**

- Denied retention of an existing grass reed privacy screen in the gardenside yard at 13X Hillside Road and directed that it be removed by December 31, 2008.
- Allowed the installation of an existing non-conforming serviceside door at 10V Southway Road providing that the member paints the door black by March 1, 2009.

### **Other Actions**

- Approved 4 new memberships and 4 name changes to mutual ownership contracts.
  - Approved yard plats for 10 Court Plateau Place.
  - Closed offices on the Friday after Christmas, giving staff an additional day off.
  - Reviewed their strategic plan to be followed by a half-day work session with committee chairs in January.
  - Authorized Companion Animal Committee to use the GHI reception area as a collection point to receive donations for local animal shelters during the Christmas holiday season.
-

## SPRING IS FOR YARD WORK

BY MATT BERRES,  
MANAGER, SUSTAINABILITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

With warming weather, now is a perfect time to get a jump on the year and get your yard ready for the 2009 Community Beautification program. Clean out that shed, prune back that hedge, rake up those leaves, scrub down that moldy siding, give that rusty fence a new coat of paint. Here are a few tips to make your spring clean up easier:

- **Yard Waste:** The City of Greenbelt will collect "green waste" from your service side yard if it is bagged in paper bags or garbage cans marked with yard waste stickers. Call the City to get your free sticker.
- **Special Trash:** Have a lot of debris? Call the City at 301-474-8004 to arrange for a pickup.
- **Dirty Siding:** GHI will loan extension pole brushes and ladders at no charge to members to clean siding.
- **Fence Troubles:** GHI will remove unwanted fences for free. Call Technical Services for details. 301-474-4161 x143
- **Can't get grass to grow, need landscape advice?** Call Matt Berres at 301-474-4161 x132 to arrange for a consultation.

The 2009 GHI Community Beautification Program will begin on Monday, May 11. Stay tuned for the next issue of the GHI *Communicator* for more details!

**Have a Bright Idea?  
Send it to Sylvia Lewis at  
revs.lew@verizon.net**

### Notary Services Available

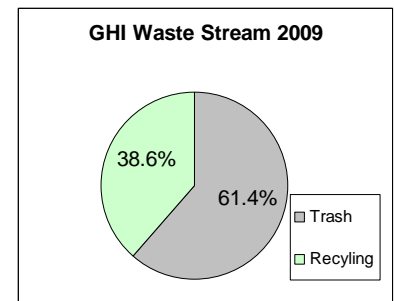
GHI has several staff members who can provide GHI members with notary services. Call the main number and ask the reception desk if a notary is available prior to coming to the Administration Building. No charges are made for the services.

## LESS TRASH, MORE RECYCLING

BY MATT BERRES

GHI is starting to talk trash – trash reduction that is. In an effort to save members money and help the planet, GHI is beginning an aggressive program to trim its waste stream and boost recycling rates. Waste data for the last few years shows that GHI is moving in the right direction.

In 2008, GHI operations (maintenance service, common area clean up, administration, etc) sent approximately 82 tons of waste that to the landfill.



Although still a big number this is 14 tons (15%) less than 2007 levels – an annual savings about \$1,200 in disposal costs! And trash is only part of the picture. Last year GHI diverted an additional 48.5 tons of waste through its recycling efforts or 38.6% of its total waste stream.

Although recycling is not free, its cost is far lower than typical landfill fees. Taken together, these efforts saved members approximately \$5,000 in avoided landfill costs last year while helping the environment! For 2009, GHI has set an ambitious goal of recycling at least 50% of its waste stream. To reach this goal GHI is expanding its office recycling and starting to recycle concrete, brick, tile, lumber and other construction debris from maintenance operations.

You can help do your part by recycling at your home. The City of Greenbelt has greatly expanded its residential recycling program. For more information about what can now be recycled visit: [http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/public\\_works/Refuse\\_Recycling/index.htm](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/public_works/Refuse_Recycling/index.htm)

## GHI Ad Campaign Contest

The GHI Marketing Committee is sponsoring a contest for a new ad campaign to market and promote our houses and cooperative community throughout the greater D.C. metropolitan region.

Come up with a new slogan, sketch, or concept and you could win a \$50 gift certificate to the Greenbelt Cooperative grocery store and have the satisfaction of seeing your concept become the new face of GHI in our promotional materials and Web site. Send us a brief description of your idea and include a sketch if possible.

Please contact Kathie Linkenhoker at [klinkenhoker@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:klinkenhoker@greenbelthomes.net) for information on what should be included in the advertisement.

**Your submissions should be sent  
to Kathie Linkenhoker and  
Cynthia Newcomer, [cjnewc@igc.org](mailto:cjnewc@igc.org)  
by**

**May 1, 2009**

Contest open to GHI members and non-members.

### Get Involved! Join a Committee!

- 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.
- To submit a "Bright Idea" e-mail Sylvia Lewis at [revs.lew@verizon.net](mailto:revs.lew@verizon.net) or at [mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net) or call 301-474-3635.

## SPOTLIGHT: GHI MARKETING COMMITTEE

BY CYNTHIA NEWCOMER

The housing downturn has come to GHI. In 2008, the number of homes sold dropped by more than a third that of the previous year, although the number of homes on the market both years was about the same. The slowing market began to affect GHI prices in September 2008. Homes are still selling, however, and the GHI Marketing Committee believes that our cooperative has much to offer in these difficult times – affordability, walkability, public transportation, cooperative governance, great community services, and proximity to Washington DC.

In this market, there is more need than ever to spread the word about GHI. The Marketing Committee seeks volunteers to help implement fresh ideas including:

- a new GHI advertising campaign
- presentations at major local employers
- improved online marketing
- a neighbor- o-neighbor volunteer program to visit homes on the market and offer tips to members to improve home salability

If you love our community and want to spread the word, we can put you to work on one-time projects, recurring events or as a committee member who attends monthly meetings and supports ongoing activities. The Marketing Committee offers two community open houses a year, seller's seminars to provide information to members who want to put their homes on the market, and coffee socials to welcome new members and introduce them to our community. We also support staff on the pre-purchase orientations required of all prospective members.

Please contact me at 301-345-0730 or [cjnewc@igc.org](mailto:cjnewc@igc.org) if you're interested in marketing efforts to keep our cooperative thriving.

<b>GHI ELECTION SCHEDULE &amp; DEADLINES</b> <b>Nominations &amp; Elections Committee</b> <b>For Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 21, 2009, 7:30 p.m.</b>	
Tues., April 7	Members place items by petition on the annual meeting agenda to censor or remove a member of the Board or an elected committee.
Fri., April 17	Members place items by petition on the agenda for a specific proposition.
Fri., May 1 through Mon., May 11	Annual meeting notice and agenda mailed to all GHI members, including any proposed actions received in petitions and the rationale for proposed actions.
Mon., May 11	Candidates submit consent-to-serve forms ("consent forms") to GHI Office or an N&E Committee member, along with a 150-word maximum biographical sketch for publication in the May 14 <i>Greenbelt News Review</i> .
Mon., May 11	N&E Committee submits a list of nominated candidates for all elective offices to Board Secretary Ed James to be publicly posted by 8 p.m.
Thurs., May 14 by 5 p.m.	For nominations to appear on official ballot, any further nominations (which must be made by written petition with at least 10 member signatures) as well as a consent form by each nominee must be filed at the GHI Office or submitted to Board Secretary Ed James at 56D Crescent Road.
Thurs., May 14 through Sat., May 16	Official proxy forms must be received at GHI office by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, or by Board Secretary Ed James by Saturday, May 16 at 56D Crescent Road.
Fri., May 15, 7:30 p.m.	<b>CANDIDATES' FORUM:</b> All candidates for Board or Audit Committee give statements and answer questions posed by GHI members in the City Council Room of the Greenbelt Municipal Building. The forum will be cablecast on Comcast Channel 71 and Verizon Channel 21.
Mon., May 18 until noon on Wed., May 20	Pick up applications for absentee ballots from GHI Director of Member Services Joan Krob at GHI Office.
Wed. May 20 by 5 p.m.	Return absentee ballots to GHI Director of Member Services Joan Krob at GHI Office.
Thurs., May 21, 7:30 p.m.	<b>ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING</b> , Community Center gym. Attendees vote for N&E candidates during the annual meeting.
Thurs., May 21, after meeting is recessed	Members cast ballots for Board and Audit Committee Seats immediately after annual meeting is recessed.
Fri., May 22, 7-10 a.m. and 5-8 p.m.	Polls are open at GHI Board room to vote for Board and Audit Committee candidates.
Friday night after votes are counted	Election results will be posted at GHI Office and on Yahoo Greenbelters group late Friday evening, and at Co-op grocery on Saturday morning.

## Thank You!

A huge thank you to GHI members for donating so many wonderful items for the animals in the Greenbelt and Prince George's County shelters as part of the holiday donation drive. The Companion Animal Committee took 4 loads of animal beds, blankets, comforters, pillows, towels, food and toys to both facilities.

## ELECTRIC BUYING COOPERATIVE

An informational meeting will be held  
**Tuesday, March 3rd, 2009 7:30 pm**

At the Greenbelt Community Center Multipurpose Room

**Plan now to attend and find out how you can participate and save \$\$\$ on your electric bill.**

## IS THERE A RAIN BARREL IN YOUR FUTURE?

BY JOHN AUSEMA and the SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRACTICES (SDP) COMMITTEE

What happens to the rainwater that hits your roof? Eventually, it flows into local creeks that drain into the Anacostia River, the Potomac, and the Chesapeake Bay. And this can cause problems.



When rain hits hard surfaces or “impervious cover”--roads, sidewalks, and roofs--it runs off directly into local streams. According to the Chesapeake Bay Journal, the volume of pol-

luted runoff from a parking lot is 40 times higher than from a forest. As rainwater runoff flows over land, it collects pollutants, which flow into storm drains that empty into the nearest stream or water body. This polluted runoff interferes with the growth of underwater grasses--the base of the aquatic food chain-- and compromises the health of fish and other aquatic organisms. It also increases water temperature and can lead to severe erosion.

And this problem is worsening. In the DC region, impervious cover grew from 12.2% to 17.8% from 1986 to 2000, according to a 2007 report cited by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. The report notes that for every 8% increase in population, there is a 41% increase in impervious surface; in addition, the region’s population is expected to grow 10% in the next two decades.

You can help reduce the amount of this polluted runoff coming from your roof by installing a GHI-approved rain barrel. A rain barrel is a large container attached to a roof downspout. The rainwater it collects can be used to water your garden. It also slows down the flow of water. When the barrel is emptied a few days after a storm, the water can be absorbed into the ground rather than rushing into underground pipes and causing the problems mentioned above.

**Frequently Asked Questions About Rain Barrels coming next issue.** Or for more details, visit <http://ghi.coop/rainbarrels/> or call Rean Seecharan at 301-474-4161 x143.

## WHO’S WHO AT GHI

BY BRENDA C. LEWIS, SPHR

**John McBride** - John is a third-generation Greenbelter who has been employed at GHI since February 2007. Originally working as a carpenter because of his background at a fire restoration company, he was transferred to an apprentice plumber when a vacancy occurred on that team. John sees the value of working close to home and particularly likes the fact that he knows the “GHI way” of doing things.



He and Jacqueline have a 14-month-old son, John Franklin, who is the apple of their eye. John Franklin likes to run and play and his parents especially appreciate having nearby family members who serve as a good support system. The family vacations in West Virginia, as well as the wonderful beaches along the Delaware shore. John’s hobbies include camping, fishing, playing video games and working with crossword puzzles.

In addition to his plumbing apprenticeship, John has a background in business management. He attended Prince George’s Community College and because he misses the school work, is considering taking a few more courses. He states that his training in business helps him with the customer relation skills required of GHI employees.

When asked about his experiences working and living in the same community, John found only positives. He likes helping people and mentions that knowing most of the people he assists has tremendous advantages, as he has great respect for both GHI members and his coworkers.

It's a Date March/April 2009		
Mar 2	Grief Support – Companion Animal Committee	7:00 pm
Mar 3	Pre-Purchase Orientation	7:15 pm
Mar 4	Member & Community Relations Committee	7:00 pm
Mar 6	GHI Offices Closed	
Mar 10	Ad-Hoc Yard Line Committee Sustainable Design & Practices Marketing Committee	8:30 am 7:00 pm 7:00 pm
Mar 11	Nominations & Elections Committee	7:30 pm
Mar 12	Board of Directors	7:30 pm
Mar 14	Pre-purchase Orientation	11 am
Mar 16	Communications Committee	7:00 pm
Mar 18	Finance Committee Investment Committee Woodlands Committee	6:45 pm 6:45 pm 7:30 pm
Mar 20	GHI Offices Closed	
Mar 24	Seller's Seminar Ad Hoc Yard Line Committee	7:00 pm 8:30 pm
Mar 25	Buildings Committee Companion Animal Committee Architectural Review Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm
Mar 26	Board of Directors	7:30 pm
Apr 1	Member & Community Relations Committee	7:00 pm
Apr 3	GHI Offices Closed	
Apr 6	Grief Support Group – Companion Animal Committee	7:30 pm
Apr 8	Nominations & Elections Committee Architectural Review Committee	7:30 pm 7:30 pm
Apr 9	Board of Directors	7:30 pm
Apr 14	Ad Hoc Yard Line Committee Marketing Committee Sustainable Design Practices	8:30 am 7:00 pm 7:00 pm
Apr 15	Investment Committee Finance Committee Woodlands Committee	6:45 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm
Apr 17	GHI Offices Closed	
Apr 19	Appreciation Luncheon for GHI Volunteers – Member & Community Relations	12:00 pm
Apr 20	Communications Committee	7:00 pm
Apr 22	Buildings Committee Companion Animal Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm
Apr 23	Board of Directors	7:30 pm

GHI Maintenance Schedule	
2009	
Spring	WSSC Water Supply Repairs (tentative)
Apr-Sept	Slate Roofs & Copper Gutters
May-Aug	Trim Painting
May-Sept	Community Beautification Inspections
May-June	Spring Gutter Cleaning
May-June	Spring Concrete Repairs
Jul-Aug	Underground Utility Repairs
Jul-Sept	Parking Lot Repairs
Sept-Oct	Garage Door Replacement
Oct-Nov	Fall Concrete Repairs
Nov-Dec	Fall Gutter Cleaning

### Maintenance Department Notice

Maintenance reception desk is **CLOSED** for lunch between 12-1 p.m. daily. You can reach the main front desk reception for emergency calls during that time.

### IMPORTANT: ABOUT 2009 COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS

Please submit this information, no later than the due date, to Brenda Lewis at [blewis@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:blewis@greenbelthomes.net) and not to individual committee members. **March 23 is the due date for articles for June/July issue.**

### SUBMIT YOUR PICTURES



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 Brenda Lewis at [blewis@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:blewis@greenbelthomes.net).

When submitting pictures, please submit them in the following formats: JPEGs or TIF file format, at least 250 resolution, and please include your name and address. If you do not have an electronic copy of your photo, please let the GHI main office know and they will assist you with scanning.

### Help Make Old Greenbelt a Better Community

The Old Greenbelt Neighborhood Watch Needs You!

- Minimum time investment
- No experience needed
- For more information, go to [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com), click on Groups, type OGNW

