



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

# COMMUNICATOR

Bi-Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee

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## INSIDE

Message from President	2
Board Contact Information	2
Board Highlights	3
WSSC Pipe Update	4
Pest Management Article	5
“Green” Garden Article	6
House & Garden Tour	6
Energy Survey Results	7
It’s A Date	8
Maintenance Schedule	8

**GHI Annual Yard  
Inspection Program  
Begins May 18**

**Community-Wide  
Yard Sale May 16**  
See page 8 for details.



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

## GHI ANNUAL MEETING THURSDAY, MAY 21, 7:30 PM

BY DAVID MORSE AND KATHLEEN GALLAGHER

One of the most important things you can do as a GHI member is to attend the annual meeting and VOTE. Our cooperative needs each and every voice. Do you think your voice deserves to be heard? This is your chance to make it happen and shape the community you live in.

You can hear speeches by the candidates running for the Board and Audit Committee, as well as discussions of issues listed on the agenda. And you can speak, too – during discussion of a proposed change in the bylaws, or – during a designated portion of the meeting--about any concern you wish to raise for membership consideration.

And if that’s not reason enough to come, there will be door prizes! (including four one-month \$100 fee reductions!)

### Election Information

Candidate speeches at the meeting are brief, but there are other ways to learn about members who are running for office. On Friday, May 15 at 7:30 pm, a Candidate Forum will be held in the Municipal Center that also will be broadcast on cable and live streaming video) Members of the audience may ask questions. The candidates’ biographies also will be published in the May 14 edition of the *Greenbelt News Review*. See page 4 for election details.

Two committees are elected by the membership because of the vital independent roles they play – the Audit Committee as watchdog of both the Board and management, and the Nominations and Elections Committee as guarantor of proper procedures and fairness in the elections process.

### President’s Award

This year, a new award will be presented: the “President’s Award” for exceptional volunteer service that has far-reaching, long-term benefit for GHI.

### Other Activities

The **Buildings Committee** will report on its progress in planning energy-efficient upgrades to GHI. Various committees will have display tables, including the **Woodlands Committee**, which will be handing out free plants, and the **Communications Committee**, which will be surveying members on plans to reorganize the GHI website. The **City of Greenbelt’s Recycling Coordinator** will speak about recent changes in the City’s recycling program.

continued on page 4

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

### GHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*"The world's favorite season is the spring. All things seem possible in May."*  
-Edwin Way Teale

May is an important month for GHI. It is the month that we get to exercise our most important membership right – when we choose which of our fellow members will serve on our Board of Directors and govern our cooperative for the next two years.

Members delegate responsibilities to the Board, including making decisions for a wide variety of concerns. If staff cannot resolve a complaint against a member, the Board determines what action should be taken. The Board awards thousands of dollars for maintenance contracts. When complicated issues arise that will have long term effects on the cooperative, our Board decides what the policy should be. For example, a recent issue concerned the best and most responsible way to protect our woods from invasive plants. After receiving a thoroughly researched recommendation from the Woodlands Committee, the Board voted overwhelmingly to continue its Integrated Pest Management system that safeguards the well-being of both our woodlands and our members (see article on page 5). (For the Woodlands Committee report, go to <http://ghi.coop/Woodlands/links.htm> and click on "Woodlands Committee Report: Use of Herbicides in the Stewardship of GHI Natural Areas").

There are obvious benefits to having a wide variety of knowledge and experience represented on the board. But perhaps the most important attribute we members should look for in a Board member is sound judgment. Board members must be willing to look at all sides of an issue and then use sound judgment in making a decision that is in the best interest of our whole cooperative. And effective Board members do not limit their focus to a single issue. They protect the interests of current members without jeopardizing prudent management of our co-operative and its assets. The stakes are not inconsiderable: GHI has a nearly \$8 million operating budget, over \$7.5 million in reserve funds, and property valued at over \$100 million.

This month the future of GHI is in your hands. Come to the Annual Meeting and make your wishes known. Use YOUR best judgment in choosing who will serve on the Board of Directors for 2009-2011.

### Get Involved! Join a Committee!

- To join a committee, call Member Services at 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.

## **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 January and February 2009, the Board of Directors took the following actions:

### **Policies**

- Adopted a policy to delay action on proposed significant changes in rules or policies so that members can discuss and comment on the proposals. Such proposals will be publicly advertised 30 days in advance of Board action on them.
- Approved of the revised subleasing policy as recommended by the Marketing Committee.
- Suggested the formation of a three-person ad-hoc committee (comprised of one member each of the Buildings, ARC, and Finance Committees) to address how to incorporate skylights into the Addition Replacement Reserve Program.
- Directed staff to give the tenant currently renting 69M Ridge Road first option to purchase membership rights to the unit at its current appraised price.

### **Committee Referrals and Reports**

- Held a work session with committee chairs on the committees' roles in carrying out GHI's Strategic Plan.
- Approved the Marketing Committee's request to sponsor a contest to solicit a creative and eye-catching ad to market our cooperative.
- Received a report from the Companion Animal Committee and suggested it work with the Sustainable Design and Practices Committee to devise an online survey.

### **Exceptions to Regulations**

- Postponed consideration of a request to retain two un-permitted skylights installed in the gardenside addition of 46H Ridge Road until a study is conducted on how to incorporate skylights into the addition replacement reserve program.
- Asked the Architectural Review Committee to reconsider an exception request to install large windows in an enclosed porch at 10M Plateau Place.

### **Other Actions**

- Scheduled the General Manager's performance review.
- Approved yard plats for 34 Court Ridge Road.
- Announced Paul Cocchiaro of 1A Westway as winner of the quarterly EZ Pay drawing which awards a GHI member or apartment tenant a one-month co-op fee or rent reduction of \$200.
- Approved 6 new memberships.

### **Contracts**

- Storm drain relining at 14A & 14B Ridge Road (Lyttle Utilities, \$8,660).
- Renovation of 8A Laurel Hill Road (Gott Custom Contracting, \$16,656).

### **Free Notary Services Available at GHI**

GHI has several staff members who can provide GHI members with notary services. Call 301-474-4161 and ask the reception desk if a notary is available prior to coming to the Administration Building. No charges are made for the services.

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

## UPDATE ON WSSC REPLACEMENT OF WATER PIPES

GHI and city staff met with officials of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) recently to discuss the status of the water pipeline replacement project that will affect a significant portion of GHI masonry homes.



WSSC proposes to undertake the work in four phases. The first phase does not affect GHI. The second phase will affect GHI's two single-family units on Northway Road and masonry units bounded by Northway, Hillside, Eastway and Ridge Roads. Phase 3 will affect GHI's Administration building as well as masonry units bounded by Eastway, Crescent, Southway and Ridge Roads. Phase 4 will affect masonry units bounded by Southway, Crescent and Ridge Roads.

WSSC has completed the design of Phase 1 and intends to begin construction work later this year. Last year, WSSC informed GHI that construction work in Phases 2 to 4 would begin in the spring of 2009. Because of the significant disturbance to landscape items that would result from the traditional trenching method (excavation and replacement of pipes), WSSC has decided to explore the use of the directional boring method for portions of Phases 2 to 4. Directional boring greatly reduces the amount of excavation that is required. Accordingly, the Commission is re-designing the construction plans for Phases 2 to 4 and now plans to begin construction work for Phase 2 in June 2010. Revised construction schedules have not yet been provided for Phases 3 and 4.

## ANNUAL MEETING continued from page 1

### Election Details

**Deadline for filing to run for GHI office is Monday, May 11.** For more information about running, duties of offices, or voting, go to [ghi.coop](http://ghi.coop) and click on Elections. Refer to Election FAQ (also enclosed with last month's Communicator). Or contact any member of N&E Committee: Kathleen Gallagher, [gallagher.k@verizon.net](mailto:gallagher.k@verizon.net); Marjorie Gray, 301-474-6224; Ginny Jones, [ginnyrjones@gmail.com](mailto:ginnyrjones@gmail.com); Marat Moore, 240-475-7617.

Candidates for Election	
Board of Directors	5 open seats (2-year terms)
Audit Committee	3 open seats (1-year term)
Nominations & Elections Committee	5 open seats (1-year term)
Pre-election Events	
Candidate biographies	Published in Greenbelt News Review, May 14
Candidate forum	Municipal Building, (Friday, May 15, 7:30 p.m.); rebroadcast on city cable channel (Comcast 71 and Verizon 21); live streaming video available on city website, later on demand
Voting in Person	
Board and Audit Committee	After meeting recess Thursday night; next day in GHI Board Room 7-10 am and 5-8 pm
N & E Committee	During meeting (nominated from floor)
Bylaws change	During meeting (presented from floor)
Other Voting	
By proxy (for votes during the meeting)	Get forms from the Director of Member Services; return to: (a) the GHI Office <b>by 5 pm on Thursday, May 14</b> , or (b) Board Secretary Ed James at 56D Crescent Road <b>by Saturday, May 16</b> .
By absentee ballot	Get ballots from Director of Member Services (from Monday morning, May 18, until noon on Wednesday, May 20); return <b>by 5 pm on May 20</b> .



## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT: FEWER PESTS, FEWER CHEMICALS

BY MATT BERRES

Controlling unwanted pests—from ants and mice to invasive plants and weeds—can be a real challenge, especially for a coop as large and diverse as Greenbelt Homes. Some pests can be mere annoyances; others can cause costly damage.

To balance these objectives, Greenbelt Homes Inc. follows an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy to control indoor and outdoor pests while minimizing pesticide and herbicide use. IPM is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach that focuses on long-term prevention or suppression of pests with minimum impact on human health, the environment, and other organisms.

An IPM program requires a thorough understanding of pests, their life cycles, environmental requirements and natural enemies as well as the establishment of a regular, systematic program for surveying pests and their damage.

Preferred IPM techniques include inspecting and properly identifying pests, cutting or hand removal of outdoor plant pests, and using naturally occurring biological control, alternate plant species or varieties that resist pests, and cultural techniques such as proper pruning, fertilization, and irrigation practices that reduce pest problems. To discourage indoor pests, sanitation and exclusion measures are typically used.

An integrated pest management program will use pesticides as a last resort when careful monitoring indicates they are needed. Pesticides with the lowest toxicities to humans and non-target organisms are always preferred.

For all common areas, GHI practices organic lawn care (by not applying synthetic chemical fertilizers or herbicides to any turf areas), and organic tree and shrub care (by utilizing mulch and organic fertilizer to control weeds and promote plant health).

For more information contact: Matt Berres, Manager of Sustainability and Quality Assurance at 301-474-4161, x132 or [mberres@ghi.coop](mailto:mberres@ghi.coop).

For indoor pests such as ants, termites, mice, and raccoons, GHI contracts with certified IPM contractors who inspect, recommend, and undertake the best treatment strategy. Often the solutions are simple and pesticide-free such as patching holes, encouraging members to remove pest food sources, or using live traps.

For pests like invasive plants, GHI staff is trained to follow IPM techniques such as hand-pulling, mowing, cutting, and mulching to control unwanted species. *Herbicides are used only when other techniques are ineffective.*

Currently, the only herbicide employed by GHI is a commercial preparation of a salt called glyphosate (commonly sold as Roundup Pro or Credit Extra). It has received extensive scientific study and is categorized as having the lowest level of toxicity by federal and state authorities. It can be purchased by homeowners without any special licensing and is considered safe for a wide variety of uses when used as directed. Nevertheless, GHI always practices extra care when applying herbicides and follows the most stringent State notification requirements. Key herbicide practices include:

- Limiting application to trained GHI personnel using hand-carried, low-pressure applicators
- Limiting product use by directly spraying surfaces of invasive plants from a few inches away or “painting” cut stems
- Applying products only at certain times of the year timed to plant growth cycles
- Applying products only during sunny, low-wind days and remaining onsite until the product has completely dried
- Notifying adjacent members in writing and posting warning signs prior to treatments
- Only applying herbicides when other control methods are ineffective.

### Tips for Controlling Indoor Pests

- Make sure screens do not have holes, and doors are sealed so insects cannot get through.
- Seal cracks and openings along baseboards, pipe openings, behind sinks and around windows with caulking.
- Clean up spills right away and do not leave garbage out to attract bugs. Remember that good cleaning is pest control.
- Store food in airtight containers.
- Reduce clutter and cardboard because these items can attract cockroaches and other pests.
- Try using bait gels in cracks and crevices for insects and traps for rodents instead of applying pesticide sprays when possible. If you have domestic animals or children do not use rodent baits.

## HOW "GREEN" IS YOUR GARDEN? SUSTAINABLE YARD CARE TIPS

BY MATT BERRES

Not all yard care is created equal. Try these tips to "Green" your garden this year.



**Plant Native.** Native plants are adapted to our area and grow well without fertilizers, pesticides, extra watering, or maintenance. Natives also provide excellent food and cover for wildlife.

**Test First, Fertilize Later.** Over fertilizing is a major contributor to water pollution in Greenbelt Lake and the Chesapeake Bay. A simple soil test can save time, money and the earth. Visit [www.hgic.umd.edu/](http://www.hgic.umd.edu/) for test info.



**Mow Mulch.** Ditch the bag on the mower and mulch clippings into your lawn. Mulched clippings provide valuable nutrients, reduce the need for fertilizer and prevent yard waste.

**Skip the Chemicals.** Avoid chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Try hand pulling weeds, mulching, and choosing pest resistant plants. See Integrated Pest Management article on page 5.

**Yank Invasives.** Invasive plants such as English ivy, bamboo, and others may be pretty in your yard but cause havoc when they "escape" into natural areas. Visit [www.ghi.coop/Woodlands/invasives.htm](http://www.ghi.coop/Woodlands/invasives.htm) to learn more.

**Compost.** Its nature's way of recycling yard waste. Set up a compost bin in your yard or call 301-474-8004 to schedule a free pickup. The City of Greenbelt composts yard waste into mulch.

**Mulch your beds.** 2-3" of mulch reduces weeds, protects plants from drought, and improves soil quality. Free mulch is available at Northway Field.

**Use Rainwater.** Install a rain barrel to collect free rainwater for your garden while reducing erosion and stormwater runoff pollution. See [www.ghi.coop/rainbarrels/](http://www.ghi.coop/rainbarrels/) for purchase details.

## HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR IS JUNE 14

BY CINDY CUTRIGHT

Each year GHI members have a chance to showcase their house and yard improvement efforts through the House and Garden Tour. Participants consistently mention the enjoyment they experienced meeting additional neighbors and sharing ideas. The 2009 tour is scheduled for June 14 and will include GHI units in the south end, from Gardenway to the first court of Crescent Road.



We also wish to share examples of indoor and outdoor sustainable practices. Those practices can include rain barrels, rain gardens, native plants, conservation landscaping, solar panels, indoor energy efficiency measures, "green" remodels, etc.

If you are interested, please contact Cindy Cutright no later than May 25 at 301-345-1552 or email at [cjcutright@comcast.net](mailto:cjcutright@comcast.net).

### Community Beautification Recognizes Stellar Yards, Starts Soon

Each year GHI recognizes members for excellence in beautifying their yards. Winners for 2008 are 1H Northway (Best Shady Yard); 4R Gardenway (Best Sunny Yard), and 5 Ridge (Best Overall Court). Winners will receive gift certificates from Behnke's Nursery. Who will win in 2009? It might be you! GHI's annual yard inspection program will begin May 18, 2009. Look for a door hanger with program details or visit [www.ghi.coop/community](http://www.ghi.coop/community).

## ENERGY SURVEY RESULTS

684 members responded to the survey that was conducted by GHI's Buildings Committee.

The results:

- Only 18% said their homes are always warm enough in winter; 27% said they are never warm; and 54% said they are sometimes warm.
- 77% keep their homes cooler in winter to avoid higher utility bills.
- Only 24% of the block home respondents are satisfied with the humidity levels in their homes. One-third of the respondents use dehumidifiers.
- 64% said GHI should consider a system that provides cooling as well as heating. Only 9% feel that GHI should not consider cooling systems.
- Less than 10% have undertaken energy efficient upgrades such as installation of programmable thermostats, increased attic insulation, insulation of water heaters, and installation of storm windows, heat pumps, or other central heating/cooling systems. 42% have installed storm doors. 21% have sealed their homes to reduce air infiltration.
- 91% have baseboard heating systems in their homes and 23% have supplemental heating units of another type.
- 80% have window air conditioners
- 58% have ceiling fans
- 32% of respondents in frame homes and 39% in brick homes have attics that are more than half-full.

During the last quarter of 2008, GHI's Buildings Committee developed a Request for Proposal for a comprehensive energy audit of six GHI units (one middle unit and one end unit for each of the frame, block, and brick home groups). Five firms submitted bids. The Committee recommended Ardently Green, a company based in Virginia. The Board of Directors approved the Committee's recommendation at its March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The company will study existing conditions in the six units and make recommendations for upgrades to the building envelope, insulation, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. The specific recommendations that are presented by the consultant will be extrapolated to include all frame, block and brick units.

The results of the recent energy survey will be provided to Ardently Green. Work on the audit will begin in April. A draft report should be completed by the end of June 2009.

### REVIEW THE MEMBER HANDBOOK!

The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) would like to remind you to *review the Members' Handbook BEFORE planning any changes to your home or yard*. This will save you – and GHI as well – time, money, and energy if you are thereby able to avoid requesting exceptions to GHI rules. (Every request must be evaluated by both ARC and the Board of Directors and requires you to personally appear before both bodies. Careful planning, moreover, can help you limit the scope of an exception request, which may make it more likely to be approved). The handbook is available online at [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop).

### Congratulations!

**Margaret Sydavar** (Ridge Road), **Anne Vore** (Ridge Road), and **Hugh Meyers** (Laurel Hill Road) were the lucky winners of the Buildings Committee Home Energy Survey drawing. Each received a cash prize of \$100.

### MARKET GHI AT THE JUNE 7 OPEN HOUSE

Let your fellow workers, relatives and friends know how great Greenbelt is. Invite them to the June 7 Open House. Take the enclosed flyer to work and post it on a bulletin board. More copies are available at the GHI offices.

Contact Kathie Linkenhoker at 301-474-4161, ext. 146 or at [klinkenhoker@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:klinkenhoker@greenbelthomes.net).

Now is the perfect time to purchase in GHI. Spread the word!



## It's a Date : May/June 2009

GHI Offices will be closed May 1, May 15, and May 25.		
May 4	Grief Support—Companion Animal Com. Pre-Purchase Orientation	7:00 pm 7:15 pm
May 6	Member & Community Relations Committee Nominations & Elections Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm
May 12	Ad-Hoc Yard Line Committee Sustainable Design & Practices	8:30 am 7:00 pm
May 13	Marketing Committee Nominations & Elections Committee Architecture Review Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm
May 14	Board of Directors	7:30 pm
May 16	Annual Community Yard Sale	8:30 am
May 18	Communications Committee Pre-Purchase Orientation	6:45 pm 7:15 pm
May 20	Investment Committee Woodlands Committee Finance Committee	6:45 pm 7:00 pm 7:30 pm
May 21	Annual Meeting	7:30 pm
May 22	Continuation of voting in GHI Board Room 7:00 am— 10:00 am & 5:00 pm— 8:00 pm	
May 26	Yard Line Committee	8:30 am
May 27	Buildings Committee Companion Animal Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm
May 28	Board of Directors	7:30 pm
June 1	Grief Support—Companion Animal Com.	7:00 pm
June 3	Member & Community Relations	7:00 pm
June 7	Community Wide Open House <i>*Table located at Roosevelt Center</i>	12:30 pm— 4:00 pm
June 10	Marketing Committee Architecture and Review Committee Nominations and Elections Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm
June 14	House & Garden Tour	12:00 pm— 4:00 pm

## 2009 GHI Maintenance Schedule

Apr-Sept	Slate Roofs & Copper Gutters & Downspouts
May-Sept	Community Beautification Inspections
May-Aug	Trim Painting
May-June	Spring Gutter Cleaning
May-June	Spring Concrete Repairs
June-July	Addition Roof Repairs
July-Aug	Underground Utility Repairs
July-Sept	Parking Lot Repairs
Sept-Oct	Garage Door Replacement RI11(9), WE1(2), RI9(6)
Oct-Nov	Fall Concrete Repairs
Nov-Dec	Fall Gutter Cleaning

## 2009 GHI Community-Wide Yard Sale

Date: May 16, 2009  
 Time: 8:30 am - 12:30 pm  
 Where: Parking Compound- GHI Office Grounds



Cost to Reserve Table - \$10  
 Contact GHI at 301-474-4161 to reserve table.

GHI ANNUAL  
 MEETING  
 THURSDAY,  
 MAY 21, 7:30 PM



Greenbelt Community Center

### Maintenance Department Notice:

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

### COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS:

Please submit information for the July/August issue no later than May 18 to Brenda Lewis at [blewis@greenbelthomes.net](mailto:blewis@greenbelthomes.net) (do not submit to individual committee members).

May 18 is the due date for articles for July/August 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.